



CHURCHES RESPOND. HOMELESSNESS ENDS. HOPE BEGINS.

NEIGHBORING WHILE PHYSICALLY DISTANCING

Neighboring in Bridge of Hope is providing tangible support and building a relationship between a family facing homelessness and a group of Neighboring Volunteers from a local Christian church, Bible study or small group, house church etc. Walking alongside a family provides the encouragement and social support to enhance resilience and empower a family toward stability. Neighboring is connecting, and now more than ever, connections are critical for families facing homelessness and in crisis.

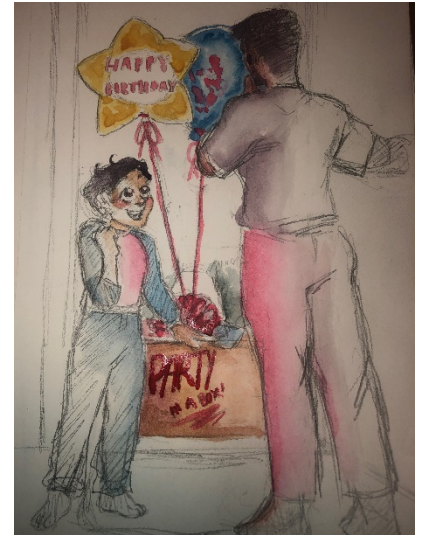
Connecting with a family as part of a Neighboring Volunteer group is similar to what you do to support friends and family. Neighboring **can be done** while physically distancing for health and safety. In fact, in this time of physical distancing, finding ways to connect is more important than ever.

Neighboring Step by Step, while Physically Distancing:

1. **Training for Neighboring Volunteers:** Training is now available via video conferencing and online modules, if in-person training is not possible.
2. **Neighborhood Launch:** The first meeting to introduce the family and the Neighboring Volunteer group is ideally done in person, but it can also be done very successfully by video conferencing.
3. **House hunting/move in:** Finding available housing is continuing to be accomplished online and by word of mouth, however, walk-throughs and signing leases may now be done by video conferencing and document scanning apps. The move-in day is an important milestone for a family who has not had safe or stable housing. Moving can be accomplished by a small group and will depend on current public health guidelines, likely including wearing masks and physical distancing as much as possible. It will also depend on the comfort level of each Neighboring Volunteer.



4. **Neighborhood Gathering:** Neighboring Volunteers get together with the family to share a meal, celebrate a birthday or participate in a group activity. This can be done using video conferencing, or in small groups in person on a case-by-case basis.
5. **Supportive Connections:** Each Neighboring Volunteer will find their niche and way to support and connect. See below for the many creative and innovative ways Neighboring Volunteers continue to support and connect with families despite physical distancing.



Ways to connect:

- Encouraging texts, phone calls or video conferencing (i.e. FaceTime, Zoom) to check in - How are you doing? How can we support you right now?
- Dropping off groceries or a meal
- Dropping off ingredients for a meal then video conferencing to make or eat together
- Scheduling restaurant delivery or take out
- Sending gift cards – grocery store, meal delivery service, restaurant, gas, Amazon, etc.
- Dropping off toiletries (toilet paper, Kleenex, diapers and wipes, toothpaste, etc.)
- Sharing games/books/crafts that are not currently being used in the Neighboring Volunteer’s home
- Delivering a birthday party in a box and celebrating together using video conferencing

Activities that can be done as a group via video conferencing:



- Game Night (i.e. Pictionary, hangman, Scattegories, Yahtzee) – consider delivering snacks and a game to the family’s house beforehand
- Share a meal or dessert together – consider delivering a meal or dessert to the family beforehand
- Coffee/tea date
- Bible study/prayer group
- Talent Show
- Book Night - reading favorite children’s books

It’s inspiring to hear all the ways Neighboring Volunteers are thinking “inside the box” and discovering new ways to build relationships using the unique talents, resources and technology available. We look forward to hearing your church’s Neighboring Volunteers share their stories of building connections in these days of physical distancing. **Neighboring is continuing – even if it has to be 6 feet apart...for now.**