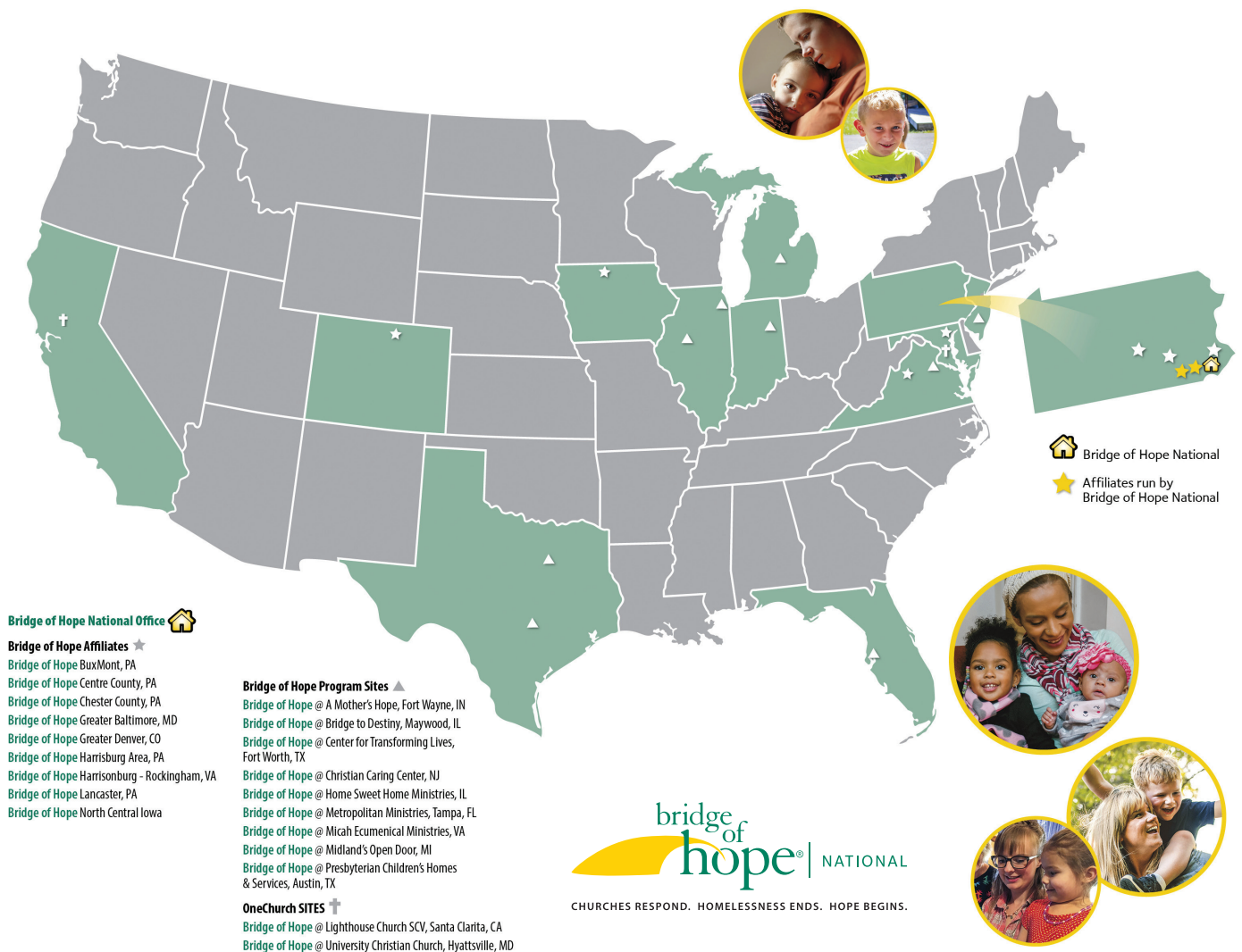
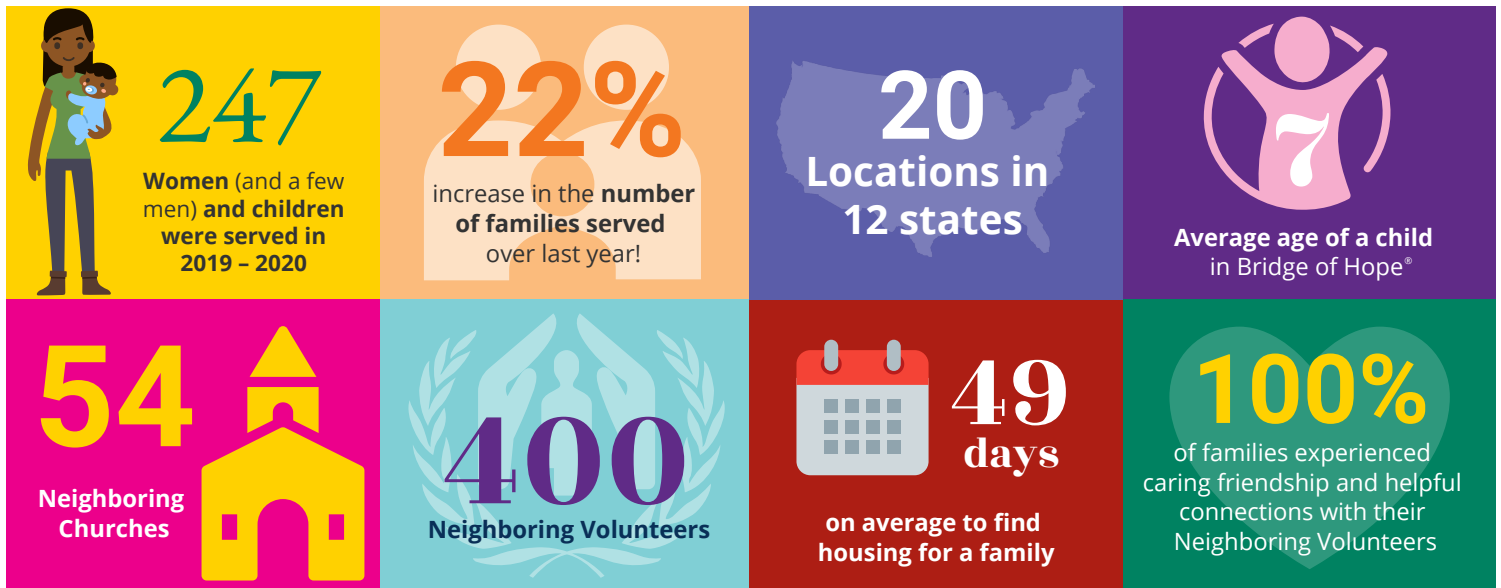


Network Program

Annual Report 2019-2020



Our Mission: To engage Christian faith communities in ending family homelessness through neighboring relationships that demonstrate Christ's love.

Helping a Family Bloom



"I feel strongly about ending homelessness, and Bridge of Hope has given me the opportunity to help with a family," Peggy Brenneman said. "I appreciate Mother Teresa's quote, 'Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love.'"

This explains, in part, why on any random day you might find Peggy texting a woman, who is younger than her own granddaughter, to see if she's free for a porch visit. As a Neighboring Volunteer, Peggy and five other volunteers recently committed to supporting the 22-year-old single mother of 3-year-old twins as she transitions from homelessness to long-term stability.

Like it did for so many activities, the COVID-19 pandemic affected training for the Neighboring Volunteers this spring. The Neighboring Volunteers met via Zoom and collected household goods at their church, and then on June 6, finally met the family when they helped them move out of a local shelter and into their own rental home. For Peggy, the role of a Neighboring Volunteer

has been a comfortable fit. She relishes the experience of purely being a friend, just stopping by to chat or to drop off homemade cookies for the children. "As a Neighbor, my job is simply to support, listen and help out where I can."

Peggy has enjoyed an easy relationship with the young mother from the start. Peggy raised her family in a row home in the same neighborhood the woman is now raising her family, and at one point, Peggy's daughter was also a young single mother in need of a home. The five decades between Peggy and the mother seem irrelevant when they're together. They recently made plans to transform the family's overgrown tiny backyard into a colorful, flower-filled garden. "This woman is a loving and caring mother, and her children are the most important thing to her. If, as a mother, you don't feel you can provide for your children adequately, that's hard," Peggy said. "So, if I can do one little piece that makes her life easier, that makes my role as a Neighboring Volunteer very satisfying."

Keeping Hope Through NEIGHBORING

They say that numbers speak for themselves. In 2019-20, Bridge of Hope served 247 single mothers, a few fathers, and children; 83 households were supported by 400 Neighboring Volunteers. Those numbers may impress or not, but it's really about hope. These 400 volunteers didn't sign up for a service day – they volunteered to bring hope to families through relationships. Relationships that cross the usual socioeconomic, racial, cultural, and religious differences, and now a pandemic. 400 Neighboring Volunteers helped to locate housing, collected furnishings, and assisted on move-in day. They provided transportation, meals after surgeries and the births of babies, and childcare while parents worked. They addressed plumbing issues, celebrated milestones, took kids to the pool, went for walks, delivered groceries, offered a listening ear when the load felt heavy, and they prayed.

In the first quarter of the new fiscal year, 66 new Neighboring Volunteers helped a dozen new families keep hope in the midst of the pandemic. While new economic challenges loomed, families lost jobs and income, children were schooling at home and everyone was social distancing for personal safety, more volunteers stepped up. They joined virtual training, met families via Zoom and are finding amazing ways to be deeply present to them. For these families, it's not about the numbers ... it's about *Keeping Hope*.



Racial diversity of families served, as self-identified by each family:

Caucasian	49%
African-American	27%
Latina	13%
African/Black	6%
Multiracial	3%
Pacific Islander	1%
Middle Eastern	1%