

**From:** Bridge of Hope, Anne Dunnenberger <AnneD@bridgeofhopeinc.org>

**Sent:** Wednesday, May 5, 2021 10:00 AM

**Subject:** Church Volunteers Can Multiply Your Impact

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## May 2021



*Going further  
together to end  
family homelessness*



**A quarterly resource from Bridge of Hope helping nonprofits and churches come together to transcend family homelessness.**

### Further Engaging a Ready Resource

- Tara\* was working part-time at a gas station. As a mother facing homelessness, the limited, unpredictable hours and meager pay were not enough, but it was work. She was scrambling to support herself and her children, but was not able to move forward.
- Dixie\*, a community college instructor, remembers when she and her then 8 year old son faced homelessness after a series of disabling hits. An abusive marriage, forced isolation from friends, divorce, caring for aging parents and—the final blow—being financially deceived by a family member, all took their toll. She tried to make do with monthly visits to a food bank, but was overwhelmed when the eviction letter came.
- Chris\* was paying \$500 a week to rent a hotel room for her teenage daughter and herself, which left the single mother with no money for a car. Every morning, she walked two miles to get to work, and every afternoon, two miles back “home” to the hotel room. By evenings, she had no energy and was consumed with just trying to keep up.

The stories we hear from families facing homelessness are unique to the experiences of each individual family. But there is often one common thread – the lack of a strong support system. The *Bassuk Center on Homeless and Vulnerable Children & Youth* finds that many homeless women have exhausted their supports after months and sometimes years of doubling-up in overcrowded and often substandard apartments, setting the stage for entering emergency shelter. They write, “Support networks are women’s social capital, a resource which poor women and women in crisis must often draw upon very heavily.” Close relationships with friends and family serve to ease the strains of daily life, and to protect in times of economic and social stress, which help families to remain housed.

If you’re called to address the need for supportive relationships, you can further engage a volunteer resource you may already have to assist families who lack healthy social supports. Christian faith communities believe that God calls the Church to

- relationships
- bless others
- vulnerability
- be a renewed community

Especially today, church members are hungry to make a difference and to be part of solutions. They are seeking out new ways to help families facing homelessness in their communities, in their school districts and in their own congregations. You can help prepare church volunteers to be a resource of support for the families you serve by providing training and guidance. Building social supports is one of the most impactful ways you can help families reach long-term success. At Bridge of Hope, we call it [Neighboring](#).

Thank you for your deep care of the families you serve,

Anne Dunnenberger  
**Director of Outreach**

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## The Bridge of Hope Model



### FAQ:

Why does the Bridge of Hope model engage Christian faith communities in ending family homelessness through Neighboring? Find out more about [how Neighboring](#) helps churches to live out the teachings of Jesus. With Bridge of Hope, the complete Strangers to Neighbors® curriculum provides the training and guidance they'll need to build healthy relationships with the families you serve.

### Our Network is Growing!

Since our last issue of Transcend, the following nonprofits and one church are implementing the Bridge of Hope model.

**Family Assistance Ministries, Orange County, CA.** FAM provides resources for food, shelter, and personalized supportive counsel and aid to those in need. Having many churches who already support them, Neighboring gives them opportunity to get more deeply involved in helping homeless families succeed for the long term.

**New Life Church of God in Christ - Toledo, OH:** While Bishop Cook and his congregation are building a Family Life Center, they feel drawn to begin serving families in the community now; particularly single parent families that were living on the margins and experiencing additional pandemic-related challenges. Using Bridge of Hope program resources and Neighboring makes that achievable in the midst of the larger project.

**Ripple Community Inc. – Allentown, PA:** Currently providing safe and affordable housing and case management, RCI realized that families still felt isolated and lacked healthy supports. Bridge of Hope Neighboring will help the church volunteers and the families share life and build relationships for healing and growth.

**Family Promise of Greater Pittsburgh – Pittsburgh, PA:** Because of the pandemic, Family Promise of Greater Pittsburgh has not been sheltering families in local churches. They are shifting their focus to homelessness prevention and felt the Bridge of Hope model was the perfect fit. Neighboring allows them to keep the local churches engaged with the families they serve.

## Of Interest:

- **Would Neighboring help the families you serve?** Bridge of Hope National helps your church or agency replicate the model by providing all program resources, including the Strangers to Neighbors® volunteer training curriculum. [Click Here](#) for more information or contact Anne directly: [anned@bridgeofhopeinc.org](mailto:anned@bridgeofhopeinc.org).
- Learn more about the **Bassuk Center's** 30 year research in their report; **Services Matter, [How Housing and Services Can End Family Homelessness](#)**.
- **Healthy Outcomes for Positive Experiences (HOPE)** has shared some suggestions on how to bring **[HOPE in the face of adversity](#)** into the daily practices of self-care for adults and children.



[Launch a Local Program](#)

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