

From: Bridge of Hope, Edith Yoder <EdithY@bridgeofhopeinc.org>

Sent: Tuesday, September 21, 2021 10:00 AM

Subject: What was your first day of kindergarten like?

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September 2021

**CHURCHES RESPOND.
HOMELESSNESS ENDS.
HOPE BEGINS.**



What was your first day of kindergarten like?

Five year old Seth couldn't wait to get off the bus to tell momma about his first day of kindergarten.

He and his mom had just moved out of a homeless shelter, and were now living in a third floor apartment. I watched as he ran as quickly as his legs would carry him up the stairs to give his momma a huge hug, the excitement spilling out of him as he shared first-day stories.

And I thought to myself, "This is what it feels like for a five year old to know

he has a safe place to come home to at the end of the day.”

This past year, the average age of a child in Bridge of Hope dropped from 7 years of age to 5 years of age. A Kindergartener. It’s sobering.

Homelessness and the lack of affordable housing is at a **crisis level across our country**. Most communities today do not have adequate affordable housing for a single mother working full-time, earning \$12 per hour. Landlords are requiring applicants to have income that is three to four times the monthly rent, which is typically over \$1,200 in most communities. Housing becomes out-of-reach for the families we serve.

Families like Saralyn’s. She earns \$12 per hour, with a monthly (gross) income of \$2,016. After deducting taxes and adding back in a monthly child care tax credit, she still has very little wiggle room. Over the 12-18 months that Bridge of Hope is working with each family, we are providing temporary rental assistance and assisting in setting goals to help families increase their income and earning potential, but finding safe and sustainable housing is key in a family’s capacity to reach stability and avoid returning to homelessness. Last year our average number of days to find housing was at an all-time low of just 32 days. Today, the number of days to find housing is rapidly increasing and families are forced to remain in their homeless situation for much longer.

Even so, the Bridge of Hope model is helping communities **multiply their impact for families facing homelessness**. Neighboring Volunteers also actively help families look for affordable housing and may draw on their social capital for other resources. Landlords who can alter their requirements, overlook a past eviction or shaky credit history become vital partners with Bridge of Hope in our commitment to ending family homelessness.

The work of ending family homelessness is not easy work – but it is critical work. We welcome more **landlord** and **church partners** to join us! Together, we can end family homelessness, one family and one church at a time, in communities like yours across the country!



Edith Yoder
Chief Executive Officer



In October you will be receiving a letter from me about Ana and her children, inviting your financial support of Bridge of Hope. I hope you'll respond.

We also invite your prayers:

- All children in Bridge of Hope, returning to school. Pray for safety, minds ready to learn and a sense of belonging in their classrooms.
- Housing for two families in particular who are struggling to find a landlord willing to rent to them and who are increasingly discouraged after months of looking.
- Families who have lost their homes this month due to Hurricane Ida and the flooding in the aftermath of the storm.

Bridge of Hope National is seeking a Director of Cultural Humility & Network Enrichment. Learn more [here](#).

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