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**Subject:** When your shoes are too tight

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**March 2022**

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



### **When your shoes are too tight**

Bishop Steven Charleston says if your shoes are too tight, kick them off and run barefoot for a while.

Perhaps it's just my own mid-March longing for spring – but this image is very inviting for me these days! At Bridge of Hope, we are giving women who are caught in the crisis of homelessness a chance to catch their breath and, even just for a moment, kick off their shoes and dream of future possibilities. Time to catch their breath has meant that 75% of families, upon exiting Bridge of Hope services this past year, have increased their income.

Families like Jamaica and her 3-year-old son, who were living with her grandmother until she passed away. Suddenly, they found themselves with nowhere to live. Bridge of Hope stepped in and found housing for the pair, but the young mother's relief soon fizzled when she discovered she was pregnant.

"I kind of disappeared from Bridge of Hope for a little bit because I didn't think they would accept the fact that I was pregnant," Jamaica explained. But when Jamaica got up the nerve to share her situation with her Bridge of Hope case manager, she was heartened to learn that her Bridge of Hope network of support was strong. Her newly found community was not going anywhere. For just a moment, Jamaica could kick off her tight shoes and run barefoot, knowing that Bridge of Hope and her 8 Neighboring Volunteers were holding space with her.

"Bridge of Hope played a huge role in my life," Jamaica reflected. "At the time I wasn't driving, so they would take me to work, pick me up from work, take my kids to the park, bring me groceries, and help me learn budgeting. They all did so much."

Today, Jamaica, 31, and her sons, now 12 and 8 years old, have lived in the same home for the past 8 years, and her finances have remained stable even through the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Jamaica is still in close contact with one couple who became like family. "Meg and Dan stayed in my younger son's life because his paternal family is not involved in his life. They gave Elijah something he didn't have," Jamaica said. "He spends weekends with them, we go over for dinner, holidays, birthdays... They're like parents to me and grandparents to him."

Single moms facing homelessness are wearing shoes that are so tight they can barely breathe some days. The presence of Neighboring Volunteers and a case manager can create space that allows them to kick their shoes and run barefoot for a moment, dreaming of possibilities like education, safe housing and friends to dream along with.

Who do you know who might need encouragement to kick off those tight shoes and run barefoot, even just for a moment?



Edith Yoder  
Chief Executive Officer



**Welcome to Jonathan Matías, our new National Development Director.**

**Affordable housing** is at such critical levels across the country! Help us reach our goal of \$30,000 for our [Stable Housing Fund](#).

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