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Subject: Loving like Jesus

April 2024



CHURCHES RESPOND. HOMELESSNESS ENDS. HOPE BEGINS.



A year ago, Ayanna and 4-year-old Raymond spiraled into a world of unknowns. A broken relationship raised many questions. Where would they live? Who would hire her? How could she provide for her son with special needs while working?

Today, Ayanna has experienced the love of strangers in life-transforming ways. Her Neighboring Volunteers have been very present with her, showing up on move-in day, helping her settle into her new home and being present when things were difficult. **“Strangers can love you,” she said. “They have changed my life.”** Read Ayanna’s [full story here](#).

When my neighbor looks different than me, has different values, different life experiences, different abilities and mental health needs, how do I authentically love, without fear or judgment?

Over the years, I’ve heard Neighboring Volunteers wrestle with hard questions about how to love across differences in life experiences, choices, background:

- Does love mean trying to change someone else’s behavior?
- Does love mean insisting that how I see the world is the correct way?
- Does love mean endorsing her decision to buy cigarettes and a lot of cable channels instead of buying healthy groceries?

- How can I best love this child with very special needs, whom God has created and loved?

Loving our neighbors facing homelessness can be a beautiful, growing experience. And it can also be full of learnings and self-reflection, when we recognize our own judgmental attitude, desire to control others or propensity to over-help someone who doesn't want our help.

But when I love my neighbor as myself – when I love my neighbor who is facing homelessness the way that I want to be loved, I recognize that love means acting without judgement, without expectation, without rules or conformity. Loving my neighbor means a willingness to live with heartbreak when my own hopes and expectations aren't met. It means embracing the messiness of relationships, like relating across cultures, (“I'm so sorry I mispronounced your name again when I introduced you”) struggling with conflict, (“I know I sounded judgmental about your grocery bill. I am so sorry”) and walking humbly with God.

I'm so incredibly grateful for Ayanna's Neighboring Volunteers who love her and Raymond so well.

May we all learn to love a bit more like Jesus.

Edith Yoder
Chief Executive Officer



Two exciting achievements for our Bridge of Hope national network this past year!

With our fiscal year ending on March 31, I'm delighted to share two significant achievements for our [national network of 21 locations in 13 states](#).

- Our network served **360 adults and children** this past year, in ending family homelessness
- **653 Neighboring Volunteers** walked with families in their journey out of homelessness
- A **26% decrease** in the length of time it takes to match families facing homelessness with their Neighboring Volunteers! We are grateful to so many churches for continuing to step into this work of loving like Jesus!

Watch for our online auction! Even if you're not attending our Spring Gala, you can still participate and bid on unique items and experiences!

Preview begins on May 1 at <https://new.biddingowl.com/BridgeofHopeNational>.

Bidding opens on May 6 at 8 am.

[**Donate Now**](#)

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