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Sent: Tuesday, May 21, 2024 10:01 AM

Subject: Has an act of kindness changed you?

May 2024



CHURCHES RESPOND. HOMELESSNESS ENDS. HOPE BEGINS.



Have you ever experienced an act of kindness and connection that deeply impacted you?

I remember being stranded in my car one afternoon as I was racing from work to meet the after-school pick-up time, when Jenn was little. In a panic, I called my neighbor Susan who dropped everything and went to pick up Jenn, while I waited for a tow truck. Ten years later, her act of kindness still moves me deeply.

"We are hardwired to connect with others, it's what gives purpose and meaning to our lives, and without it there is suffering," Brene Brown writes in her New York Times bestselling book "Daring Greatly."

The Psalmist says it this way, "God places the lonely in families."

This is our work, every day, at Bridge of Hope. No one can make it alone in today's world. We all need connections to survive and thrive, whether we are housed or un-housed, single or married, living on the margins or living with great wealth.

At Bridge of Hope, we open up a sacred space for the creation of intentional relationships of support, within what we call a "Neighborhood of Support" between a family facing homelessness (typically a single mom with several children), 6-10 Neighboring Volunteers, and a Bridge of Hope staff person. Recently Ayanna shared her story, saying "Strangers can love you. They have changed my life." [Click here to watch Ayanna's story.](#)

We are created for community and connection, and I loved talking about this recently with Niro Feliciano on her [podcast "All Things Life."](#) Bridge of Hope alumna, Shadell Quinones, shares her beautiful story of faith in the face of homelessness on this podcast. It's so inspiring

Here are a few of the ways that Neighboring Volunteers have recently shown kindness:

- The first evening that a group of Neighboring Volunteers met the family they are walking with, they threw the soon-to-be-1-year-old his **first birthday party**. They brought desserts, party hats, decorations, and presents. AND he had his first cupcake! The Neighboring Volunteers went above and beyond to make this first meeting a special night! And by the end of the evening, you would have thought they had known each other for years.
- A Neighboring Volunteer is currently keeping a mom's son until school starts each morning, allowing mom the opportunity to start a new job that comes with a \$4/hour **pay increase** and work on setting up a more permanent childcare solution.
- Last summer, a Neighboring Volunteer who has a pool taught the kids in the Bridge of Hope family how to be safe around water and **taught them how to swim**. This spring, the children can't wait to swim in her pool, and it has built a special bond between this Neighboring Volunteer and the children.
- A Neighboring Volunteer and his brother picked up a washer/dryer donation and installed them for a mom. He also showed her where all the shut off valves were in her new apartment and how to turn them off if there's ever a water leak.
- A fourth grader wanted to **join an afterschool club** which meant she couldn't take her bus home from school. But her mom's work schedule wasn't going to allow for leaving work early. Two Neighboring Volunteers arranged to pick up this girl after the club and drive her home. The child -- who is part of a very large family -- loves this one-on-one time in the car with her Neighboring Volunteers!

These stories of kindness are changing the lives of those both on the giving and receiving end. Kindness changes how we see the world and our ability to see God in our midst.

I am grateful for [Neighboring Volunteers](#) for diverse church traditions, across the Bridge of Hope network in 21 locations across 13 states, who are showing up every day with acts of kindness that are changing the trajectory of families facing homelessness.

Join the [Neighboring Movement](#) today!

Edith Yoder
Chief Executive Officer



Are you or a friend/colleague in Berks County, PA and interested in helping launch Bridge of Hope to end family homelessness in that community? Reach out to Anne at

AnneD@bridgeofhopeinc.org if you'd like to get involved or know someone who might have connections in Reading/Berks County, PA.

The Annual Golf Classic is coming up on July 24, 2024! For signup information, visit: <https://bridgeofhopeinc.org/annual-golf-classic/>.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the Bridge of Hope Spring Gala a big success again this year, exceeding our stretch goal! Save the date for next year, May 9, 2025 with social worker turned comedian, Andrea Flack-Wetherald.



Bridge of Hope is hiring a Chief Mission Officer, effective September 2024. To learn more, visit: <https://bridgeofhopeinc.org/job-opportunity-chief-mission-officer/>.

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