

insideout

HOPE
HOMELESS OUTREACH
PROVIDING ENCOURAGEMENT

Fall
2017

THE NEWSLETTER OF H.O.P.E. - HOMELESS OUTREACH PROVIDING ENCOURAGEMENT, LONGMONT, CO

CLIENT PROFILE

A Character to Remember

You could be blindfolded, standing at the HOPE van, and as soon as you heard, "Hello mom, how are you today," you would know who it was. It's that friendly, loveable, and sometimes annoying character from our HOPE past, flashing his warm, broad smile that he is renowned for! We helped him with meals on those nights when he really needed some food in his system. We found him a motel room for a week when he stepped off a curb and shattered his ankle. Over the course of many, many nights, HOPE handed him many coats, hundreds of socks, and multiple supplies from the van. Last year we sheltered him at our evening warming shelter, and on that last scary Sunday night, we called 911 and squeezed his hand goodbye as he left unconscious for the hospital.



Reuben is thriving, no; he is doing better than that. REUBEN IS LIVING! After that cold, scary Sunday night at our shelter, Reuben made a commitment to himself to be sober, a weak one at first, but one nonetheless. Then his resolve grew, and each month that Reuben would call the HOPE office to report on his success, he would say, "I am never going back to that life again!"

At the end of September, Reuben stopped by the HOPE office with his counselor to show off where HOPE was, what it looked like inside with all the life-saving donations, and pictures of many volunteers and staff on the wall who were integral in keeping him alive back when nights were difficult. Reuben also came to the HOPE office to announce that he was moving into an apartment. HOPE staff assured him that once the volunteers got wind that he was successful and moving into a place of his own and needing to furnish it, they would respond in droves. Reuben's counselor was astounded by HOPE'S help. He said, "I wish that I had known about HOPE a long time ago!" We explained that volunteers and staff alike all love Reuben. Today, of course, Reuben's apartment is nicely furnished!

Twenty-five plus years ago, Reuben made a trek halfway around the world from Nigeria and landed in Colorado. He lived in Boulder for a while and then moved to Longmont. Reuben is an exceptional Scrabble player; beat only by few, as he is that good. He is an avid reader and is well versed in politics and expresses his political views to all who will listen. Yes, Reuben is quite intelligent. He is a quiet, shy person now and you have to spend some time with him for that broad smile to re-appear.

And though he was saying, "Hello ma'am, how are you today," with his accent it sounded like the word mom and that is very fitting as HOPE has been his "mom" for many, many years.

Reuben is successful today because of HOPE and the Longmont Senior Center, as well as the Longmont Police Department, the Edge Program, Mental Health Partners, the Angel Initiative, Agape Family Services, and Longmont United Hospital; as well as many other agencies and individuals who helped support Reuben's path out of homelessness.

Coordinating an End to Homelessness

Boulder County recently launched a new effort to address homelessness. The Homeless Systems Collaborative is a joint effort between government, nonprofits, the faith community and people with lived experience to reduce homelessness in the community. This innovative approach follows a national trend resulting in successful housing outcomes and HOPE is a key stakeholder. In the past, homeless services have been spread across a host of providers, with different missions, strategies, and results. The new model improves coordination, aligns resources, and measures success based on the attainment of sustainable housing.

People seeking support will access all city and county homeless services through the new Coordinated Entry (CE) system. CE features a streamlined assessment process resulting in one of two paths: higher need folks are directed to the housing-focused shelter at the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless for long-term assistance; lower

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Letter from the Board President

For months now this phrase has been stuck in my mind for several reasons: “Winter is coming.” HBO’s Game of Thrones has been beating this saying into viewers’ minds for the past seven years and there is significance to it. We live at 40° latitude, or parallel, and there is significance to that. Not only are we five parallels north of the 35° latitude where weather can be considerably less cold in winter, we also live high in elevation. As most of you know these two factors can create harsh winter conditions at times from October to April.

Keeping this in mind, we at HOPE have been striving to create sustainable lifesaving opportunities to serve our fellow citizens who are struggling in many different ways. This is a year of significant change for HOPE. We are redefining our core approach to our services and joining a county-wide effort to address critical needs of those without housing. This large scale effort and emphasis is driving the adjustment to our efforts and was put into action on November 5th. As part of a “housing focused” effort, we are working in collaboration and partnership with City of Longmont, OUR Center, Central Longmont Church, Heart of Longmont Church, The Journey Church, United Church of Christ, Boulder County, Boulder Shelter for the Homeless and Bridge House (just to name a few). Please read more about the details on p. 1.

All of these groups are joining forces with similar goals in an effort to house people in areas that best fit their needs. HOPE is adjusting our street outreach, emergency shelter service and staff to center around this effort. It will be a learning experience for all groups involved and we are committed to this effort and specifically the people experiencing such difficulty without basic housing.

I’m sure you will hear about successes and failures along the way but just as with any difficult endeavor we will mark the successes and work to learn and turn the failures into wins. We on the HOPE board thank all who support this cause and welcome anyone who would like to assist in this effort. It is absolutely a community effort and in the end the community will be the biggest beneficiary when the cycle of homelessness can be broken.

As board president I look forward to embarking on this effort with all of you. “Winter is Here” and what a great time to start working together toward this tough but exceptional goal.

Thanks,



Eric Jepsen – HOPE Board President

DONOR PROFILE

Tom and Kathy Digsby

“You must have food; it’s the core of your existence.”



The core value of the Digsby family is “You must reach out.” Tom’s grandma showed him about helping people. Tom experienced poverty. When he was a child, his family moved many times. As a result, he saw so much which in turn made him very empathetic. His grandma and grandpa and many social programs saved his family from living on the streets.

Kathy’s dad was her example for helping others. He’d bring less-fortunate neighborhood kids to the house and Kathy would take care of them: serving snacks, wiping noses, brushing hair – maybe that was her early calling to later becoming a teacher. As a teacher, she sees so many families in need. When Tom and Kathy hear stories of people in need, they are moved to give.

They have been generous donors, street outreach volunteers and soup angels for HOPE for over 3 years. “We give so much because we know we are so blessed”, said Kathy. Even when Tom lost his job early in their marriage, they lived by the philosophy “Pay it forward – we can’t just sit and wait.” They believe it’s their job to lift up those in need and give them hope.

During a very cold street outreach shift, Kathy encountered a family of five. The mother in the family was having such a rough day that she wasn’t able to get out of the car to get in line for food. Kathy brought a meal to her in the car and shared, “Never in my life have I seen such despair in a person’s face.” It was torturing Kathy to think about this family of five sleeping in their car on such a

cold night. She knew money was tight at the time for her own family, but she called Tom anyway asking if they could afford to pay for a night in a motel for this family. Tom said, “Do it.”

Tom and Kathy instill compassion in their children and grandchildren. “It could be taken from us in a day,” was a repeated saying in their home. They have always worked hard not to sit in judgment. “You don’t know other people’s stories – so don’t judge.” Their son, Lucas, once asked them why they help HOPE. Kathy told him, “Simple – we have food every night – they don’t. We hand them a meal and they say thank you.” Lucas has since generously offered to help maintain HOPE’s vehicles. Their 6-year old grandson, Issac, helps make the soup angel meals. When asked why he helps, he replied, “A homeless person is someone who doesn’t have food or a house. We have to help them so they can stay alive. HOPE will help them in a storm.” He is in a club at school called “Mission Possible Kids.” Their current mission is to decorate lunch bags with encouraging words and pictures and fill them with non-perishable food to be given to HOPE.

When asked why they continue to support HOPE financially, they said the statistics HOPE has shared confirms there is a great need for help for individuals experiencing homelessness here in Longmont. Kathy said, “We like giving to HOPE because we see the work right here in our community. Let’s all give what we can.”

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Suzanne Johnson

In each newsletter, we feature some of our wonderful volunteers.

Why did you get involved with HOPE?

I saw a newspaper article several years ago about a 3rd grade class at St. John's that was making meals for HOPE. My son was attending Rocky Mountain Christian Academy and I thought heck, those 3rd graders are on to something with helping our neighbors. And perhaps HOPE could use meals made by the students at RMCC as well. I reached out to Michele McCracken, who not only shared a wealth of information about HOPE and our neighbors in need, but she even came to the school with Chris, who was transitioning out of homelessness and spoke to the students. The students learned so much, and Chris was very candid with them about how hard it is to live on the street. Shortly after getting the kids involved, our family became soup angels, and have been ever since. This past year my mom and my sister came on board as well.



"While we volunteer making meals, we know that what we are really providing is love, warmth, and care for marginalized people in our community. I can't think of a more rewarding pursuit."

What do you like about volunteering with HOPE?

We love knowing that the meals we make are serving people in our own community who we likely pass at the library or the store - people who really need a meal and some love and prayer right now. We also enjoy the over the top appreciation that is shown to the volunteers. I have volunteered with many organizations, and while you always feel appreciated, it is nothing like HOPE.

What other volunteer activities is your family involved with?

We give blood, help at CalWood educational camp, hand out bulletins and warmly welcome people at our church, help at Precious Child, Christmas Eve homeless outreach in Denver, and Room at the Inn with HOPE.

Anything else you would like to share?

While we volunteer making meals, we know that what we are really providing is love, warmth, and care for marginalized people in our community. I can't think of a more rewarding pursuit. From the beginning I have prayed over each meal and tried to visualize the person that is eating that meal. It is my hope that they know they are loved. We also put a note of encouragement in the bag - nothing fancy - just words of encouragement so they feel noticed. Thank you to HOPE for providing the vision, the organization, the compassionate staff, and the infrastructure that allows families like mine to plug in and love on those in need.

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need individuals are directed to a navigation site in Longmont or Boulder. Navigation is intended to eliminate or reduce time in homeless services for those who may be able to resolve their housing crisis with limited assistance.

Boulder's navigation services are offered by Bridge House. In Longmont, HOPE and OUR Center are providing a collaborative service model: HOPE provides nighttime navigation from 5:30pm - 7:30am and offers basic needs services including meals, overnight sleeping space, showers, and laundry for up to 50 people. Nighttime services will feature an expanded version of last winter's program with United Church of Christ joining the continuing foundation laid by Journey and Heart of Longmont Churches. OUR Center provides daytime navigation 8am - 5pm where clients work with a case manager to develop a housing plan, receive assistance and links to county and other community programs as needed.

As part of the new system, HOPE is adding a daytime street outreach service to support the transition of nighttime outreach to a search and save model, which is designed to engage people experiencing homelessness at a deeper level. This incredibly important work establishes supportive relationships and increases the chances that individuals will access the array of programs to help them move off the streets and into housing. Search and save volunteers connect vulnerable individuals to services and provide emergency transportation to nighttime navigation in severe weather.

HOPE is optimistic the new model will prove successful. It's been ten years since a handful of volunteers founded our organization providing basic needs services to people experiencing homelessness in Longmont. The past decade has seen increasing and unrelenting need. And while our commitment to the people we serve prevails, the time is right for a fresh approach.

Our Mission Statement

HOPE provides life-sustaining and supportive services for homeless and at-risk individuals to encourage stability and self-sufficiency.

Our Donation Acceptance Policy

We primarily are in need of men's outdoor-type clothing. We cannot accept donations of children's clothing, appliances, or furniture. Thank you for your understanding.

Donations accepted at:

HOPE, 804 S. Lincoln St., Longmont, CO

To arrange a donation time, please call HOPE at: **720-494-4673**

or email us at: info@hopeforlongmont.org



P.O. Box 756
Longmont, CO 80502
720-494-4673 (Office)
www.hopeforlongmont.org

SAVE THE DATE!

**On December 5th
Your Donation Goes Further!**



We hope you will think of us on Colorado Gives Day. This 24-hour movement happens on December 5, 2017, and is a chance to increase the value of your donation, thanks to the \$1 Million Incentive Fund.

HOPE, Love & Chocolate: March 2, 2018

Celebrate HOPE: September 7, 2018



Meet Lexi

Please join us in welcoming Lexi Fromal to our team as volunteer coordinator. Lexi began volunteering with HOPE as a soup angel in May and has enjoyed the opportunity to further support the community through her work at HOPE. She is engaged in volunteerism through the local Humane Society, as well as other Boulder County non-profits, and is passionate about supporting those in Longmont experiencing homelessness. Welcome, Lexi!