

NOVEMBER 2023

HOPE BEGINS HERE

MEET JAMIE!

“WE KNEW GOD WAS LEADING US TO THE CITY OF MILWAUKEE.”

Whenever someone asks for my family’s story of moving from rural Kentucky to the inner city of Milwaukee in 2019, that’s the phrase I always land on. The story really doesn’t make sense apart from the Lord.

We moved here with no agenda other than to be neighbors in a community with people from different backgrounds and experiences. We wanted our two kids to grow up with a broader perspective and to learn to live with compassion and care in spite of a world that rejoices in causing division. Moving here to the city, my husband and I dreamed of someday opening an apartment community where folks in periods of transition would experience love and respect in a safe and beautiful environment. A place where each person could experience the healing and restoration that we ourselves have. It wasn’t until two years later that I stepped foot in Hope Street, while chaperoning a group of middle school volunteers for a service project. Until that point, I didn’t know anything about the Greenhouse for People. As Brooke gave the tour, I did my best to hold back

tears, overwhelmed at the beautiful peace of this place that was so much like the apartments we’d envisioned.

Joining staff in September of this year, I needed a place of peace. God’s been working on my heart in some pretty painful ways over the last year. And through His presence, the hurt and sadness is bringing me deeper into trust with Him. My life has been spent trying, trying, trying to help others, thinking it was my job to do things for God. He’s instead led me to a place of encountering life with Him.

It’s true most of the time that “it’s more blessed to give than to receive.” But here at Homes, I’ve learned to step back from just giving, and am learning to accept the blessing of receiving. Receiving the prayers and hugs from members who have gone through so much themselves,

and yet live in such graceful gratitude. To accept the help of coworkers who have supported me in the midst of personal insecurities. To receive the peace that comes from trusting God’s story. What a privilege it is to join with Him and so many others, in the work of receiving in this place of hope. Thank You Lord, for leading us here.

Father God, thank You for this place of peace and hope. May every person that steps foot within these walls know that they are beloved by You, seen by each of us, and so desperately needed and valued. May this community continue to be a place of safety and refuge, and a launching point for Your will to be done in this city and beyond. Thank You for inviting each of us into this journey with You. **AMEN.**

- JAMIE CHAPMAN



LITE THE HOAN

In building Shechem at Hope Street we often talked about it as a bridge, a connector between communities. Since being open, Shechem has lived that out.

It's been a bridge as a place to remain connected to Hope Street for former Homes at Hope Street members. It's been a bridge between our (once) little community and Milwaukee. It's been a bridge between suburbs and city, between kids and adults, and people at different socioeconomic levels. Shechem has given us the ability to invite more in and reach further out, get further connected to the greater community and shine the light further.

It was quite fitting then, for "Light the Hoan" to reach out to us, and present us with an opportunity to light up the Hoan Bridge, which serves as an important cultural landmark to

Milwaukee. On September 29th, Hope Street supporters, members, and staff got on a Milwaukee Riverboat that toured the Milwaukee River and Lake Michigan passing under the Hoan Bridge. The boat stopped at the bridge and when 116 Clique's song "Light Work" came on over the speakers the light show began. The light show honored Hope Street's historical brand colors of yellow, white and green and reminded us of the light we have been shining in Milwaukee on our corner of 26th and Capitol for nearly 25 years.

When 116 Clique's song shifted from a rap into a melodious singing of, "I wanna shine for you," so did the bridge's lights.

Shechem's orange brand color shined out and we got an opportunity to honor the shift we have gotten to experience with the creation of Shechem. Jesus shines a light in the darkness. Period. This can and does happen everywhere, but with the creation of Shechem we've gotten to experience it especially well. We've gotten to see people come into this space and experience something new and different - hope. We've seen those same people go back out into the community and invite others into that hope. Those on the boat held up candles, representing the opportunity we all have to shine the light into the darkness.

"For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)" - Ephesians 5:8-9

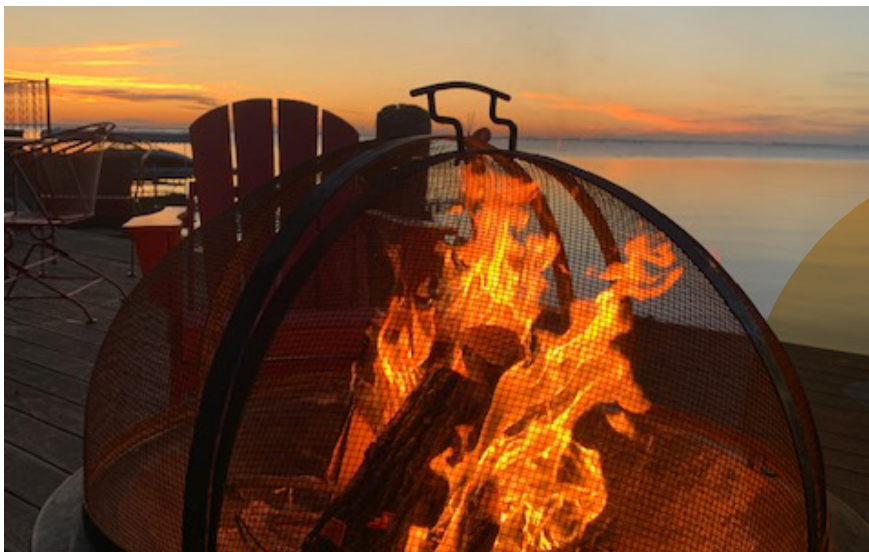
Keep a look out for the video release from the night!

- KENDALL SCHOENIKE



HIGHS AND LOWS OF BEING AT HOPE STREET

When I first started working at Hope Street in 2016, I remember Ashley acknowledging that Hope Street could be a difficult place to work.



I understood what she meant, but I hadn't yet felt the gravity of prolonged, compounding grief alongside my own losses, disappointments and fears.

In August of this year, I celebrated seven years at Hope Street. Over the last seven years we have welcomed hundreds of new members, and said goodbye to many of those members along the way for various

different reasons. Some for a period of time, some in changing relationships, some in positive ways and others in the final loss of death.

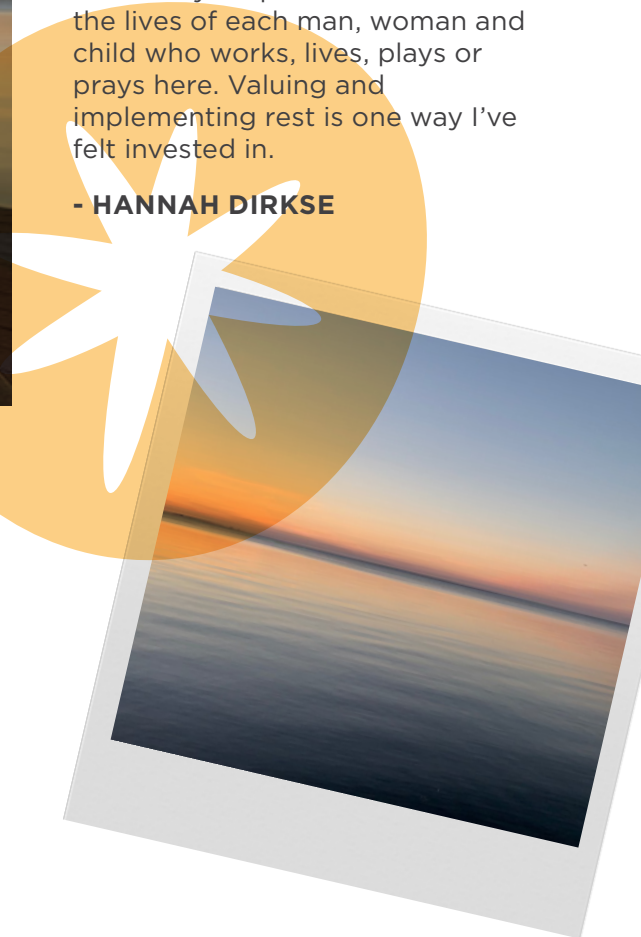
There are small, daily losses and bigger, more final losses, and sometimes, we forget how each has its own impact if we don't pay attention, name it and allow the pain to move through us instead of getting stuck.

A couple months ago, Ashley saw a need in me that I didn't name on my own. I was gifted three weeks of time off. Three consecutive weeks of being completely removed from Hope Street and intentional time to do things that would build and restore what has been depleted in me over time. I was removed from text chains, I didn't have access to email and anything that wasn't finished before leaving was picked up by a teammate or waited until I got back. It was a gift.

During my time away, I felt the relief of not being called upon and simply being taken care of. I saw how God invests in us, we invest in ourselves, we invest in others, God invests in others, others invest in themselves, and others invest in us. This cycle is sustainable and lovely. It demonstrates our healthy interdependence on one another and God and the importance of taking a rest.

I'm thankful to work for an organization that values this and sees the importance of extended time away. Hope Street invests in the lives of each man, woman and child who works, lives, plays or prays here. Valuing and implementing rest is one way I've felt invested in.

- HANNAH DIRKSE



ON THE BRINK OF 25 YEARS



"Now what?" Seemed to be the recurring question throughout 2023. There was a lot of built up anticipation of opening Shechem's doors, we celebrated, took a deep breath and hit the ground running.

It has been more than we could have hoped or imagined. The building has become the vessel needed for more people to encounter the love of Jesus. We have been able to offer new programming, build new partnerships, meet new faces and have lots of fun along the way! There hasn't been time to think about what's next because truthfully our hands were full with being present and showing up for the men, women and children who come through our doors. Beyond that, this last year felt like a necessary time to pause and thank people for joining us. It still brings tears to my eyes when I think about all of the gifts (time, talent and treasure) that came pouring in over the last several years to get us where we are today. Owning one building outright, slowly paying off the loan on a brand new state of the art building, a full staff (9 people) and serving over 250 people on a weekly basis in both spaces - you make it possible for us to purposefully do life with people on 26th and Capitol.

So, the what will always follow the why and thankfully that has been clearly defined by our Father - He says people matter. Restoring dignity in people and places is His work and we get to join Him. As we continue to know and love more men, women and children - we ask for your prayers, time (if you have it) and treasures (generous gifts) to help empower us to obediently follow after His will.

It seems like our 20th celebration just happened. Yet another 5 years have come and gone.

Life at Hope Street feels like that sometimes too. As I scroll through photos over the years, I see the evidence of growth - babies I once held are thriving in school, members have become homeowners, and many have added more years of sobriety under their belt. Beyond the external, we hear stories of joy, peace, resilience and breakthrough.

These keep us grounded as we are met with the inevitably hard moments where we grapple with grief, poor choices and fall out. It has become excruciatingly difficult to hold all things in the proper balance. As life circumstances compound we are met with the very real tension of being aware of the brokenness but not being consumed by it, because we still have Hope.

So that's the theme for our 25th anniversary: 25 years of Hope. Without Hope we have nothing - no purpose, no direction, nothing to offer people. We will look back at all that Hope has done, and look ahead to where Hope will take us. We hope you will join us!

**WE HAVE TWO MAIN
EVENTS IN 2024**

FEBRUARY 22

Women's Luncheon
at Terrace 167

OCTOBER 17

**Family Reunion:
25 Years of Hope**
at Baird Center

I will leave you with the team of faithful people who steward your gifts well, meet people where they are at and continue to point men, and women and children to our great Hope. We wish you and your family a blessed Holiday season and we look forward to being with you soon!

- ASHLEY THOMAS

**Interested
in other ways to
get involved?**

REACH OUT TO
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25
YEARS
OF
HOPE

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