

APRIL 2022

HOPE I BELONG

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served and be loved by others. By allowing these things to happen, I allow others to live out their purpose, too.

Something unique about Hope Street is that it is a place for EVERYONE to belong. Two years ago, I began volunteering at Hope Street with my church and was willing to serve in any area needed. We cleaned apartments, decorated for Christmas, stuffed envelopes, and hung out with the kiddos. The more I was here, the more I wanted to belong. I began to pray for opportunities and God began opening doors. Over the past summer, I showed up multiple days a week with an open mind, heart and hands willing to work. The more I served the more I felt I belonged and the more I felt I belonged the more I wanted to serve.

Whatever your experience has been with Hope Street up until this point, I'd encourage you to begin to pray for God to show you more, new and exciting ways to belong in this community.

**- MICHELLE WILLE;
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT**

BOARD IMPACT

There are lots of different ways you can belong at Hope Street. Each of them is invaluable to our success and wellbeing. In this last season, I am grateful for the intentionality of a committed board of directors who has bought into our mission and vision for the future. Ask any Executive Director, working with a board can be a challenge, but when on the same page and working towards the same goals - new heights can be reached. In this last season we have had to ask, and answer hard questions. For anyone who has been around Hope Street in recent years, you have heard the name Shechem more than a handful of times. It has been a 7 (plus) year dream in the making. We have paused,



gone full steam ahead, stopped, and started several times. Well that dream has come to fruition and later this year we will celebrate its Grand Opening. But it wasn't an easy road that got us here. In fact just over a year ago, our board had an important decision to make: pause once again until we had adequate funding needed to complete the construction project, or move forward with laying the foundation, and then waiting to see when more funds would come in. We left the board meeting with all "yes's" in favor of moving forward, and one "no" with a written explanation why. We didn't need a unanimous vote, however, I had to wrestle with that no. Why? Because it came from an invested and trusted voice on my board. A couple days later I wrote the dreaded email to our supporters that stated once again, we were going to take a pause and I was unable to say when we would start again. What I could promise was Shechem would be.

What I didn't see at the time, but get to celebrate now, is that NO led to multiple "Yes's" in the weeks and months moving forward. All of it, at the right time, in the perfect way. His way.

I am grateful that people take their belonging so seriously. I am grateful that people are willing to see their belonging inside of something greater than themselves. Hope Street continues to be a place of growth and flourishing because people are committed to welcoming new voices to the table, having dissenting opinions but still being able to move forward together, and most importantly becoming better reflections of Him: the one we serve and the reason we serve at Hope Street.

That NO was Darrell (DJ) Hines II, and I am excited for him to lead our board in this next

season as the Chair. I trust and know there will be more opportunities for us to grow, be stretched, and lean into Him more fully.

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE BOARD:

- Darrell Hines II:** Board Chair
- Toya Washington:** Board Vice Chair
- Christopher Slater:** Board Treasurer
- Rachael Stricker:** Board Secretary
- Patricia McGowan:** Board Member
- Bret Mckitrick:** Board Member
- Parker Lawson:** Board Member
- William Bowan:** Board Member

For more information about all those involved at Hope Street, be sure to check our website (hopestreetministry.org) and click the "About Us" tab.

**- ASHLEY THOMAS;
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

FAMILY DINNER: BUILD COMMUNITY

I hear the plates clanging and the silverware being taken out of the drawer. At age 16 I know that for the next hour I can set my homework aside and sit around a table with people I see everyday and just be.

Growing up I loved dinner time. While after school jobs and sports got in the way in different seasons, I looked forward to having a time to come together on good, bad and in between days. It, at the very least, was a touching point with people and, at the most, fed my body and soul.

As we entered into the Fall of 2022, I sensed a lull. Maybe it was the impending Fall season, or maybe it was coming out of the complexities of the last two years. Either way, I was hoping for a place at Hope Street where we could count on, every week, to be around the table over a meal together.

We have been doing just that for the last three months. Every Thursday we share a meal in The Vine. Sometimes a member cooks, sometimes a volunteer cooks and sometimes we all do a little bit of something. Every week, somehow, there has been food and there has been people.

If you are interested in being a part of Family Dinners, you could invest in a few ways. We invite people to cook a meal, purchase a gift card or join us on the first Thursday of the month for this meal.

- HANNAH DIRKSE; SOCIAL WORKER



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

REACH OUT TO
brooke@hopestreetministry.org

**HOPE
STREET**

**2522 W. CAPITOL DRIVE
MILWAUKEE, WI 53206**
hopestreetministry.org