

Building Bridges

Ending and preventing homelessness in our community . . .
one church and one family at a time.

MISSION

Bridge of Hope ends and prevents homelessness for women and children with the help of trained mentoring groups from within congregations.

Our goal is to exemplify Christ's love and to promote physical, emotional, social and spiritual wholeness.

Single mothers obtain:

- permanent housing
- financial self-sufficiency through employment
- life-changing friendships
- growth and wholeness

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A LOCAL MOM'S STORY

"Now I know that I'll never give up."



"Ike the Spike" greeted Nija and her son, Stevie, at Bridge of Hope's Mother's Day Walk on May 9.

When a friend finally convinced Nija that she deserved a better life, Nija left an abusive relationship and took her then 4-year-old son to safety in one of Centre County's shelters.

She had dreamed of becoming a police officer and was accepted into the Criminal Justice program at South Hills Business School; Nija began to get her life on track. However, being a full-time student and a single parent with no support in the area was more difficult than she had imagined — no way to work in the evenings or weekends without

"I felt helpless — like there was no way out."

childcare, no money without working, no friends or family to ask for help.

I was receiving some assistance, but not enough to cover the bills. I didn't know if I should quit school so that I could get a full-time, but low-paying, job, or continue with school so that I could get a good job when I was done. I felt helpless — like there was no way out."

Nija was completing a job skills assessment at CareerLink one day when her growling stomach gave her predicament away. Del, one of the counselors, asked where her lunch was. She confessed that she wasn't able to eat lunch that day because she had to make sure that she had lunch money for her son, Stevie; she simply could not afford for them both to eat lunch. "He told me not to panic, that there was always a way out. He told me about Bridge of Hope."

Nija has been in the Bridge of Hope Centre County program for about six months, and has been paired with

a mentoring group from State College Presbyterian Church. For now, Nija says that she is "closer to where I want to be in my life. I know now that I'm capable. I can stay optimistic. I used to feel like giving up, but now I know that I'll never give up."

Watch for updates on Nija's progress in future newsletters.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Simple Ways to Support Bridge of Hope

July 10 — Whistle Stop Restaurant

Enjoy lunch or dinner at the Whistle Stop Restaurant on Route 144 in Centre Hall (15 minutes east of State College) on **Saturday, July 10**, from 11am to 9pm. (814) 364-2544

10% of all food sales that day will be donated to Bridge of Hope Centre County!

August 18 — Spikes Game

Bring your family and friends to the August 18 7:05pm Spikes vs. Jamestown game and the **Spikes will donate \$2 for every ticket sold through Bridge of Hope.**

Call the Bridge of Hope office (237-4673) or go to www.bohcc.org before August 12 to order your tickets.

Many thanks to Grace Lutheran Church — their Social Ministry Committee organized an "alternate offering" for Easter Sunday services and Bridge of Hope Centre County was the blessed recipient of \$500.



(l-r): Jim Campbell (Grace Lutheran Social Ministry Committee), Pastor Larry Louder, Kris Santillo (BOHCC), and Becky Krantweiss

Make your tax-deductible donation to Bridge of Hope Centre County:

- online at www.bohcc.org
- or by mail:

Bridge of Hope Centre Co.
P.O. Box 433
State College, PA 16804

MOTHER'S DAY WALK: Inaugural Event a Success Despite the Weather!

Thanks to the participants and sponsors, over \$15,000 was raised for Bridge of Hope during our first ever Mother's Day Walk, held on a windy and chilly May 9. Participants enjoyed appearances by "Ike the Spike," the "Little Lion," and Rita's "Ice Guy," as well as food, prizes, chair massages from Diane Crebs and free Rita's Water Ice.

Thank you to all 165 walkers, including groups from Sam's Club and Curves, to our many generous contributors, including all those who donated goods and services, to our wonderful planning committee, and especially to our sponsors.

Mother's Day Walk 2010 Sponsors

Presenting Sponsor: Stocker Subaru

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Vautour Family
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WBLF-AM, 970

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Laurie Voinchet brought some great Subarus to the Mother's Day Walk and walked the route alongside BOHCC Board Member Terry Padden.



STOCKER STEPS UP AS PRESENTING SPONSOR

Bridge of Hope had the following conversation with Laurie Voinchet, Sales Manager for Stocker Subaru, the Presenting Sponsor of the 2010 Bridge of Hope Mother's Day Walk.

Did you know about homelessness in Centre County before sponsoring the Mother's Day Walk?

LV: No, not to the extent that truly exists here. I was generally aware that there are people who are struggling and some are homeless but didn't realize the great need in our community.

What struck you most about the Bridge of Hope story?

LV: We assume we are insulated in Centre County because of the university and education level of so many people who live here. But it was an eye-opener to learn that these mothers are struggling and in need of a home. The issues with the economy really make things much worse. But the Bridge of Hope program can turn a homeless mother's life around. The program works.

What one image from the Walk sticks out in your mind?

LV: It was great to see the moms and their children in the program at the Walk. It truly put a face on what the organization can accomplish.

What other causes does Stocker Subaru support?

LV: Every holiday season Subaru donates \$250 from the sale of each car sold between Christmas and New Year to the charity of the customer's choice. Organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, ASPCA, Boys and Girls Clubs and Meals on Wheels receive the donations. It's a national effort.

Did you enjoy the event?

LV: It was a blast!