

MINISTRY VISION
for
Transitional Housing
(A H.O.P.E. House/Rahab House)

INTRODUCTION:

This vision includes the hope that this will be an example of what can be done and become the first of many H.O.P.E. houses.

(H)ospitality - Reaching out and receiving new people.

(O)ffer in Christ - Offering opportunities to make a commitment to Christ.

(P)urpose: Growing in the faith through participation in the means of grace.

(E)ngagement - Engaging in acts of service helping to transform our surrounding community.

Rahab House

she (Rahab) had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof- Joshua 2:6

The working name for this ministry is "The Rahab House" (RH). Because this is a story of a woman who stood up to the worldly powers of her day, and instead chose to put her trust in God and God's people. Though the King challenged her to send forth the spies sent from Joshua, she hid them and then helped them to escape over the wall. The scarlet cord she tied to her window identified her as the one to be spared when the city was taken. Rahab honored God and that the land was to be delivered to God's people. When the city had fallen, the men whom she helped brought her and her family safely away to live among them. In fact, in Matthew 1:5 she is mentioned in the lineage of Jesus.

*"Salmon the father of Boaz, **whose mother was Rahab**, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of King David." (Matthew 1:5-6a)*

Purpose:

Our pastor has many times met people whom seem to be trapped in a cycle of poverty. They are a part of the welfare system, which only allows for survival, and they want more. Many of these people are motivated to change their reality, but the system which minimally supports them, also oppresses them. Were they to go out and try to find work, they lose their safety net. But being unskilled, and often without proper education they cannot start out making enough to survive without the safety net. These are the families and individuals that this ministry is targeting. Those who are ready to do their part and invest their own effort to this blessing of moving from surviving to thriving, knowing that their church family will work as hard as they do to help them reach this goal.

The only help from welfare programs is a one size fits all system that includes monetary support and very limited personal support. This Ministry wants to provide a process that is adjustable to each individual/family's needs. This process will include significant person to person time to show them hospitality and hope that helps them see a bright light that can lead them and generations to come to a more thriving lifestyle.

Process Overview

The process for this ministry includes securing through purchase of an existing structure, or building on a site to suit our needs for a duplex in or near the downtown area of Manchester, Iowa. This location would provide shorter travel time for job and training opportunities in the community.

An application process approved by an ecumenical/community sitting board would contractually accept a family into the program to move into one of a fully furnished duplex. The family would need to fulfill the contract terms in preparation of transition from surviving to thriving in a maximum two year term. The family/person would participate in completing education and job training as necessary or begin job searching during the first phase of their journey to thriving. During this phase they may be eligible to live in the H.O.P.E. House rent and utility free, if meeting contractual obligations.

As the journey to thriving progresses the rent and utilities costs will be evaluated to determine how much the participants are able to contribute without preventing them from progressing to a thriving environment. It is important not to limit their growth, but also important for them to begin to take responsibility for their lives.

During this two year journey the most important aspect is not the monetary assistance, but the time, love and prayer support provided by their church and community families. They will be working with volunteer teams meeting in the home once per month. The volunteer teams will be split into two teams, one around life skills and the other around family and spiritual skills.

At the end of the second year or at a time when the participants feel they are able to thrive on their own, a special worship service celebrating all that God has accomplished will be held. This is also a time to reaffirm to them they will always will be part of their church families and this connection does not end when leaving the H.O.P.E. House.

It is also proposed that they be given a check to reimburse them for a portion of the rent they contributed during their journey to thriving. This is to assist in rental and utility deposits and a few months of rent to set them on their way to a HOPEful new beginning. They will also be invited to take from the duplex anything they need like beds, cookware, whatever, to start their new lives (excluding appliances).

The H.O.P.E. House will then be prepared for the next family the Spirit sends our way.

What Will Be Needed To Fulfill Ministry Vision

- Locate a standing duplex that can meet the needs of this Ministry or locate a site to build a structure. Building a structure on a site would provide an opportunity to complete another “House of David” type project. This would result in not only allowing the church families to participate, but the entire Manchester area community to become aware of this ministry and provide monetary, material and personal time support for this mission.
Volunteer labor and materials assistance would help lower costs to ensure security of the ministry asset funds by providing equity, if the ministry proves non-viable.

H.O.P.E. House Board- responsibilities would include:

1. The application process that includes; approval, authoring a contract and contracting with eligible families.
2. Follow up to ensure that the contract obligations and processes are being followed
3. Manage financial resources.
4. Assignment of host churches, and follow ups to ensure host obligations are being met.
5. Become advocates for community support
It is suggested that the board be kept to a smaller number representing churches and community leaders.
6. Prepare an application document for families to complete.

- Volunteer Teams. One to work with family on life skills around balancing a checkbook, dealing with health insurance, setting up a savings and when to use. Another team to assist in working with available family support agencies, obtains tutors for children as needed, and support and encourage parenting skills. Poverty is often hereditary, and assistance is needed on how to break the cycle.
- Ecumenical Ministerial Team to come together to “adopt” these families. To work together on the board, on Volunteer Teams, and to provide maintenance to clean up and prepare the duplex for the next family.
- Ecumenical Ministry Team to support the payment of utilities.
- Financial responsibilities of taking in donations and meeting the cost responsibilities will be housed at Manchester UMC.
- Applicants shall be located through pastor’s benevolence programs, and city and county homeless and poverty support programs. It is recommended to not have open advertised applications. This would work best as a professional referral program.
- Prayer, and more prayer, and prayer unceasing.

Assessment of Viability of this Ministry Vision:

A single \$100,000 pledge to support this project is available if the Ministry proceeds. In addition, other pledges of support have been made for financial support.

The other churches in Manchester and surrounding towns have indicated a willingness to participate both financially and in taking on the responsibilities of hosting a family in the Rahab House.

Manchester City officials are in support of the project and are actively assisting in looking for sites to construct a H.O.P.E. House. They feel that the House of David project shined a bright light on the City and feel that these types of projects are very beneficial to the entire area.

Manchester UMC Involvement:

Serve as the leader in moving this Ministry forward.

It is felt that this Ministry Project will be a standalone mission that will be supported by the area churches and community. This project is not expected to be funded from this church's general budget.

It is hoped that MUMC members may want to contribute money to this mission, but more importantly provide an environment of hospitality, leadership, and time and energy to help this mission succeed.

Other Notes:

The contract for providing a place of H.O.P.E. is proposed to be a month by month agreement that requires that the family/person meet expectations or face eviction from the H.O.P.E. House with 30 days' notice. This is the hardest issue for the church families to face, but it is important that participants truly understand that we will work as hard or little as they do to achieve a thriving lifestyle.

