

Volunteer Profile: Blair Anderson

If Blair and his wife, Ann, hadn't had too much furniture for their new home in Eau Claire, he might never have heard of Hope Gospel Mission. But friends who helped with the move told them to donate the extra goods to Hope Bargain Center. It was there that Blair learned about the ministry. He asked for a tour of the Mission and signed up to volunteer at the Hope Renewal Center for Men.

"It was a wonderful experience meeting these guys," Blair says. "They had all recognized their need and made an extraordinary commitment to get things straightened out."

Since last September, Blair has spent four hours every Thursday evening at the Men's Renewal Center, helping out and just talking or playing cards with the residents.

Blair also facilitates small groups for the Celebrate Recovery class. "It's opened up more opportunities to talk with more of the guys, especially in the discussion sessions after the class. It's impressive to see how God is at work in this place and in these individuals' lives. I'm excited about that," he tells us.

"There's a real opportunity for doing good here," Blair continues. "When guys go through an experience like this, they need support. They need a community that can be there to help them when their commitment falters."

Blair says another element is crucial to the success of men in the program. "What Hope has gotten right about this whole thing is putting Jesus Christ at the center of it. As the guys go through the program, it dawns on them how beneficial a relationship with Him is to their healing. For me, it's always a privilege to watch that light come on."

To anyone thinking about lending a hand at Hope, Blair says, "It's a great opportunity to just connect and share and be supportive. You can be of significant help to people who really need it. Hope Gospel Mission is really changing lives and it's a beautiful thing. It's humbling to me to be a part of that."



"You can be of significant help to people ..."

Bethanne lost all hope ... until God spoke to her

Armed with a gun, Bethanne marched into the woods, determined to put an end to her torturous life. She had been miserable and abused for as long as she could remember. As a child she watched her mother pass away and witnessed a suicide. By age 9 she was smoking marijuana to numb the pain.

One bright light came from her father, who taught her about God and how He was always with her. She clung to that knowledge, even when she left her family behind at the age of thirteen and went out into the world on her own.

She was a child living in an adult world, surviving with help from caring families here and there. But abuse showed up all too quickly in her relationships with men. Drinking alcohol gave her some peace, but not enough. She tried to kill herself many times. And then came the day when she walked into the woods with a gun in her hand, ready to take her life.

As she walked, God spoke to her. "What if a child finds you?" He asked.

That stopped her in her tracks. There was no way she would traumatize a child by having them find her like that. She then realized she needed help urgently and immediately went to a local mission. They gave her a safe place to stay and help to become sober. But she couldn't shake off the pain from her past.

One of her doctors suggested Hope Gospel Mission, thinking that Christian counseling would help her. And it did.

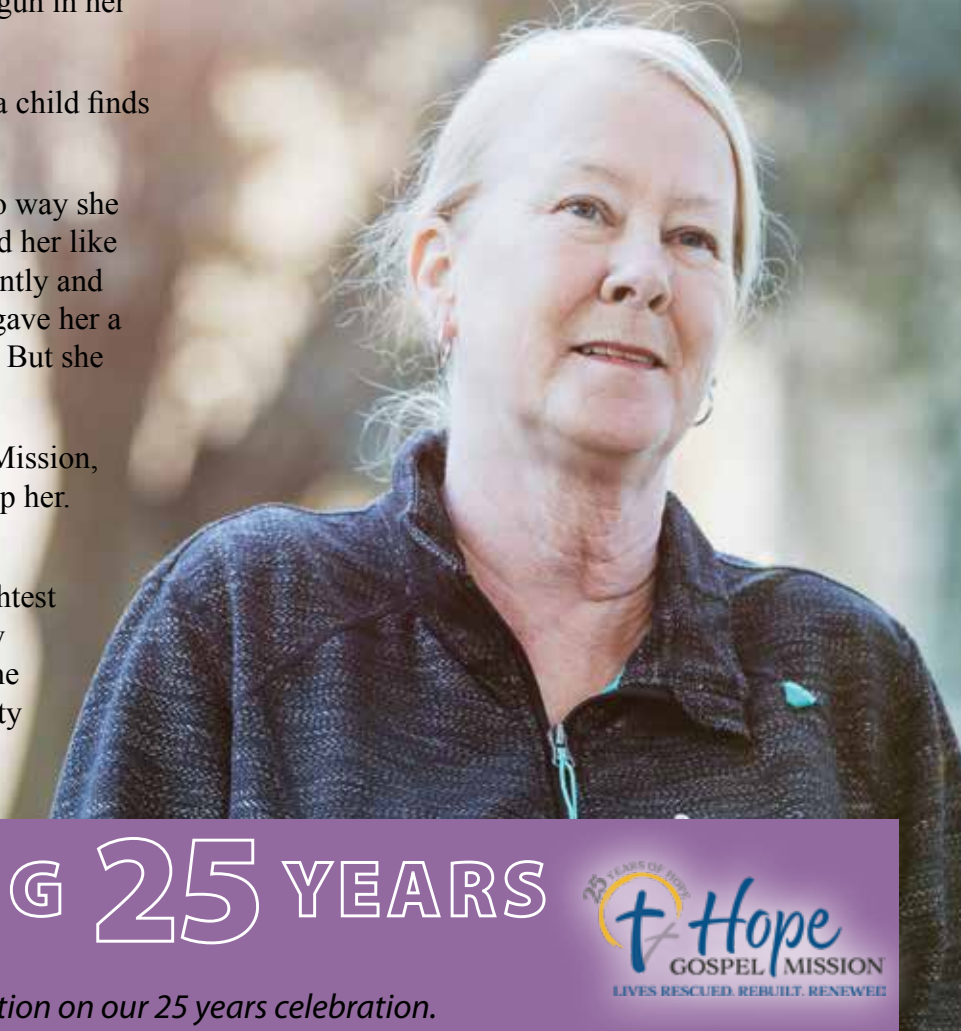
"Finding Hope Gospel Mission was the brightest day of my life!" she said with tears. "I knew God never left me, and I feel like I have come home!" Bethanne found strength and stability in the programs. "Having a Christian-based

Mission allows me to have faith in the One who will never let me down!"

Reading the Bible and attending church eases Bethanne's pain and dark thoughts. She is now looking forward to graduation and joining the choir in her much-loved church. She is excited to see which direction God will lead her in life, knowing it will be to glorify Him.

Thank you for your continued support of Hope Gospel Mission. Your donations keep the doors open and help people like Bethanne begin a new life!

**Thank you for providing a place for
Bethanne and others who need to
find hope in the darkness.**



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS
1998 - 2023

Stay tuned for more information on our 25 years celebration.



the hope



*Transforming Lives
for 25 Years*

PO Box 1127, Eau Claire, WI 54702 | 715-552-5566 | HopeGospelMission.org

Inside: Bethanne's Story • Renewed Hope Program • Volunteer Highlight



Sandi Polzin
Executive Director

**Therefore, if anyone
is in Christ, he is a
new creation. The
old has passed away;
behold, the new has
come.**

— 2 Corinthians 5:17, ESV

A special THANK YOU to
Trinity Lutheran Church
Endowment Trust - Eau Claire,
Immanuel Lutheran Church Trust -
Eau Claire and
Ann Gunderson Thornburg
for your generosity!
*You are changing lives
of people in desperate need.*

Blooming to New Life

Dear Friend,

If you’ve ever planted tulip bulbs, you know they’re not pretty. In fact, they look dead. But come spring, they burst forth, fulfilling the promise of new life.

In a similar way, when our hurting neighbors come to Hope Gospel Mission, they seem to have barely any life left in them. You can see how deeply they’re wounded by life. Most times they look ragged on the outside and feel empty on the inside.

But no matter how rough they look, God is ready to make them beautiful inside. They just have to cry out to Him for help, and He will hold them in His arms like a shepherd who loves His sheep. He will carry them all the way home with great celebration. Jesus promises, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”

It’s easy to see many here have accepted God’s invitation just by looking at them. It’s more than clean clothes. It’s the light in their eyes that wasn’t there before. It’s the confident set of their shoulders and the purposeful way they walk. It’s the smile that comes from knowing, “I’m worth something because God knows me, loves me and forgives me.”

These people truly grow and bloom with the warmth of God’s love and the kindness you provide. They find strength in believing the Gospel to overcome all the troubles of this world. No matter how far a person has fallen or how unworthy they feel, Jesus offers His forgiveness and friendship to all.

Thank you for sharing the good news of eternal life at Hope Gospel Mission this spring and always!

Sincerely,

Sandi Polzin
Executive Director
Hope Gospel Mission



No Barriers to Recovery in our Renewed Hope Program

At Hope Gospel Mission, it’s easy to give someone a meal and a bed for the night. However, the heart of our mission — the Renewed Hope recovery program — is a different matter. Intake Chaplain Kim Jensen says, “The work here is messy, but it’s so beautiful and it’s so needed. This is where the real change happens.”

Our program allows more time for Hope Gospel Mission staff to connect with clients and help them work on the root issues in their lives. While some other programs only allow for 30 days, we have the ability to offer a full year.

“I knew Hope Gospel was different,” Kim tells us. “The secular world is very fast-paced. Building a relationship is far more important.”

Kim also notes that hard work, dedication and a relationship with Christ lead to a much higher success rate among residents. “I think we do a good job of showing kindness and Christ’s love. We are God’s hands and feet here.”

Success, according to Kim, is not always defined by graduation. “For some, success can mean they were sober for 30 days, something they’d never been able to do before. Or if they didn’t finish the program, they’re still doing well. We give them the tools for success.”

One woman, in particular, left an impression on Kim. Although she did not graduate, this resident is overcoming a lifetime of abuse, has earned a degree and started a new career — in her 60s!

There is never any judgment for those who do not graduate. “They feel cared for,” says Kim. “And our door is open for those who desire to return and try again.”

Still, Kim and all the staff are greatly encouraged by every resident who makes it through the program and establishes an independent life outside the Mission. “Many learn to advocate for themselves,” she says. “One lady couldn’t qualify for Section 8 housing because she was a felon. She was encouraged to write and let the agency know what she had accomplished in 18 months here. They reversed the decision! She had a voice. She tried and was rewarded and she felt so good about that.”

The Renewed Hope program does more than guide men and women through the recovery process. It builds their confidence and helps them see how God looks at them. It affirms the fact that they are created by God to live in His love. “Some people don’t realize there are people who love them and want to come alongside them. We’re here to show them that,” Kim says.

“It’s remarkable to see the difference from when they first come to the Mission and when they leave — seeing how they feel loved and accepted,” she continues.



Kim knows there will always be a need for Hope Gospel Mission and the Renewed Hope program. “Homelessness and addictions continue to increase, and it’s not too far away from any one of us. If we’re honest, there’s someone we know who is deeply affected by the hardship of addiction.”

Fortunately, as Kim tells us, there are no barriers to recovery at Hope Gospel Mission. A secular program may cost thousands of dollars for a 30-day stay, but Hope offers its programs completely free of cost, with the support of caring people like you.

**Thank you for providing a place of
hope and healing for our hurting
neighbors!**

1998



Hope Gospel Mission
is founded under the
direction of Mark
Donnelly

2000



Downtown Men's
shelter officially
opens to serve
homeless men with
emergency shelter

2003



Hope Bargain Center -
Eau Claire opens

2005



Ruth House, the first
shelter for single
women in western WI,
opens

2006



Building Hope, a new
and used building
materials store, opens

2013



The Solomon
Learning Center
moves into a larger
facility

2016



Hope Bargain Center -
Mondovi opens

2018



Hope Bargain Center -
Menomonie opens

2019



The Hope Renewal
Center for Men opens

2020



The Hope Renewal
Center for Women
with Children opens

2021



The Hope Renewal
Centers for Women
and Women with
Children opens