



# HOME — OF — HOPE

*at* Gwinnett Children's Shelter

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



#### MESSAGE FROM MAUREEN

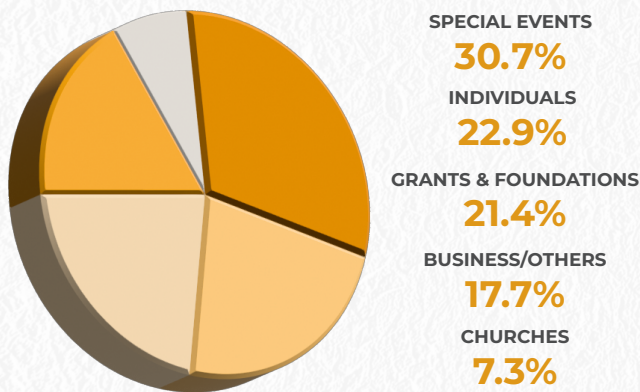
As we look to the future and leave Covid behind us, we continue to serve our young families in need. Did you know that when we started in June of 2014 as Home of Hope, we served 17 families and 39 children that first year? As we head into our 10th year, we are proud to say we have touched the lives of more than 350 families and 1,100 children! Home of Hope is extremely proud to be a hand up, not a hand out for families in need. Our multigenerational approach is a customized plan for each young family designed to deliver them from homelessness. We couldn't do what we do without each of you and we are grateful.



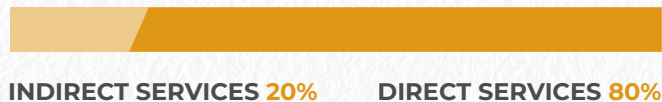
Come see us today!

*Maureen*

#### WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM



#### DISBURSEMENTS



Our first year we served 17 families and 39 children. As we start our 10th year as Home of Hope, we've helped over **350 families** and **1,100 children!** We are so grateful for the ability to grow to this level of care.

#### EXECUTIVE BOARD

Doug Meyer  
Chairman of the Board  
Community Member

Jennifer Bridwell  
Vice Chairwoman  
Gwinnett Market President  
Georgia Banking Company

Ray Stanley  
Treasurer  
Community Member

Ruth Davis  
Secretary  
Community Member

Lever Stewart, Legal Counsel  
Attorney-COO & Co-founder  
Accushield

#### BOARD MEMBERS

David Ehrhardt  
Associate Vice President  
Hazen and Sawyer  
Facilities and Maintenance/Fund Development

Melody A. Glouton  
Attorney  
Andersen Tate & Carr, PC  
Fund Development

Andrew Hedrich  
CPA, Manager  
Smith+Howard CPAs and Advisors  
Finance Committee/Fund Development

Matt Hopkins  
President & CEO  
SEI Group, Inc.  
Fund Development

Natasha Leeper  
Assistant Vice President/Support Center Operations  
Federal Reserve Financial Services

Jim Lloyd, President  
President & CEO  
InsuranceHub Leavitt Agency  
Fund Development

Mark McGrath  
Partner  
WMBO CPA Group  
Facilities & Maintenance/Finance Committee  
/Fund Development

Barry Sanders  
President & CEO  
Complete Care Medical  
Facilities and Maintenance/Fund Development

Amanda Thomas  
Vice President  
Senior Business Relationship Manager  
City National Bank  
Fund Development





# Jennifer Bridwell

**Say hello to Jennifer Bridwell, our new Chairwoman of the Board starting in 2024! Jennifer has been a member of our board for the past two years, and we are honored to have her serve in this new role. She has an exceptional banking career with over 25 years of experience in the industry.**

Throughout her professional life, she's specialized in commercial real estate, community banking and customer service; however, what truly sets her apart is her commitment to building and maintaining client relationships. Jennifer also spent much of her career as a professional and personal mentor. This skillset has been a great asset as a board member and will be very beneficial in her incoming position as Chairwoman.

Her connection with Home of Hope dates back to 2005 when she organized a charity golf tournament for us, and she's been passionate about our mission ever since.

"When I knew them in the past, it was just a children's shelter. But what it has evolved into now — it has turned into something even better, if that's possible. It's not just a place to go and live. It helps these families get back on their feet and regain independence. This ends the cycle of homelessness for two generations at a time," said Jennifer.

We're grateful for Jennifer's heart and dedication to Home of Hope over the past eighteen years and are thrilled to have her serve as our new Chairwoman. Thank you, Jennifer!



# Redefining Possibilities

## Sara's Rise from Homelessness to Empowerment

**She'd never been homeless before. "But I suppose there's a first time for everything," said 31-year-old Sara, single mom to boys ages 10 and five.**

Sara has provided full-time for her family for years. But a procedure in March of 2022 greatly affected her physical, mental and emotional state. Sara didn't even want to continue with life.

Despite knowing her situation, Sara was let go from her job via a separation notice in the mail. Her savings dwindled, and Sara and her family became homeless in July of 2022. They stayed in a hotel for a month, with a family friend for a week, and even slept in their car for a few nights.

"After calling around, I had a page front and back of places to call for help. I was waitlisted, told places had no space and a bunch of different things. Home of Hope was the last place on my list – they were literally my last hope," she said.







*I've also learned to stay present in the moment; to put myself and my children first; to give myself a ton of grace and compassion; to not worry about other people, places and things that don't inspire, drive or support me; and that I don't need anybody but God and a good support system around me.*



"I called them and continued to persevere, and they decided to interview us. We met with Ms. Renita, and she approved our stay. After applying for around 75 jobs, within 30 days of getting to Home of Hope, I got a job in a gastrology office, where I still work as the front desk representative."

Since coming to Home of Hope, Sara has had the chance to learn – and unlearn – a lot. Practically, Sara has gained a number of skills while at Home of Hope, but she's gotten to know herself better, too.

"Home of Hope really has been home for the past year. I've learned structure, stability and consistency in classes every Wednesday; to be held accountable; to communicate; to relearn myself; and heal from previous traumas and situations I allowed," Sara said.

"I've also learned to stay present in the moment; to put myself and my children first; to give myself a ton of grace and compassion; to not worry about other people, places and things that don't inspire, drive or support me; and that I don't need anybody but God and a good support system around me."

Having the support she needed has allowed Sara to look past her struggles to see a brand-new future she could only have dreamed of before.

"One of my goals for the future is to own at least an acre of land to have my own spot and stability for me and my children," she said. "I also want to become a life coach. I've been through addiction, homelessness, being a single mother, abusive relationships and toxicity. I want to let others know that they're not alone – and if I can overcome these obstacles, they can, too."

*For those who donate to Home of Hope, **Sara is grateful**, firmly believing that Home of Hope has set her and her kids up for success.*





# Charity Golf Tournament

WOW! The North Gwinnett Kiwanis Golf Club hosted its annual Golf Classic at The Legends Golf Club in mid-September. Over \$100,000 was raised through this event, and, for the third consecutive year, all proceeds from the tournament directly benefited the women and children at Home of Hope. Thank you for raising money to care for our moms and kids!

## Sip & Swine

We're blown away! Over 200 volunteers helped out at this year's Sip and Swine, and together we raised over \$80,000 to support our moms and families. Thank you for making this event such a success!



## 2022 Gala

Our anniversary gala was a huge success, thanks to you! Thank you for your continued support and desire to help moms and their children who are experiencing homelessness in Gwinnett County. Together, we are providing a hand up rather than a handout and ending homelessness two generations at a time.



# Bridging the Gap

## Financial Empowerment Through Home of Hope

**At Home of Hope, we understand that financial stability is essential.** Many families need extra assistance due to a lack of financial literacy. That's where Lisa Jackson steps in. With over 25 years of experience in banking and finance, she volunteers as a Life Skills teacher to empower our residents with financial knowledge during our weekly Wednesday evening classes.

Lisa's volunteer journey at Home of Hope began when she learned about our mission to help women and children rehabilitate their lives. Financial education is a key part of this mission.

"I just loved their story. I met Maureen through one of my associates around three years ago, and we instantly became friends. She shared how Home of Hope helps women and children really rehabilitate their lives; I knew I wanted to get involved. They teach finance classes, and finance is my life," laughed Lisa Jackson, AVP and Manager of First Citizens Bank.

In her five-month Life Skills class, Lisa covers essential aspects of financial literacy, including budgeting, improving credit scores, and setting SMART goals. These classes go beyond the basics and address the emotional and psychological aspects of money management, helping residents make better financial decisions.

"There's a lot that is not normally taught. We talk about how your values and feelings play a lot into your decisions about money. We talk about peer pressure, how you respond to emergencies, if you plan ahead

or tend to act in the moment. The decisions you make today often determine what your future will look like," said Lisa.

Lisa understands the power of financial literacy and has a heart for sharing this tool with the moms at Home of Hope.

"If your finances are not in order, then your life is not going to be in order. Financial stress causes so many problems, and I wanted to help these women build a strong financial foundation so they could find independence," said Lisa.

Through the Life Skills classes, Lisa has found a way to impact not only the women of Home of Hope but also herself.

"Finance is boring, but we make it fun," laughed Lisa. "These women are definitely here to change their lives. I see that desire in their hearts and in how they respond in class. They're here to learn and gain wisdom to help them rehabilitate their lives. It's amazing. It's very rewarding for me, and I think for them too."



Help even more kids and their young moms!

## Here are 3 easy ways.

### GIVE ONLINE AT [HOMEOFHOPEGCS.ORG](http://HOMEOFHOPEGCS.ORG)!

Whether it's a one-time gift or a monthly donation, your giving makes a difference in the lives of our children and families.

### DONATE!

Encourage your neighborhood, church, civic groups and social organizations to host a drive to benefit our children and families. From non-perishable items to gift cards and passes, there are many ways to help. Find a complete list on our website.

### VOLUNTEER!

We have many volunteer needs throughout the year. Find your spot on our website. (Please note that we do background checks on all our volunteers.)



← **GIVE NOW!**





*"Since the first day I entered the program, I have had such an amazing experience. It definitely felt like home".*

*- Home of Hope Mom*

*"We are all thankful for you helping us get on our feet, and you guys are the best shelter there is. You also gave us happiness. Thank you very much!"*

*- Home of Hope Kid*

*"Our dream for Home of Hope families is for them to know that they – like each of us – are born with a purpose."*

*- Sandra Strickland, longtime supporter of Home of Hope.*

**HOME  
OF  
HOPE**  
at Gwinnett Children's Shelter

**HOME OF HOPE AT GWINNETT CHILDREN'S SHELTER**

P.O. Box 527 Buford, GA 30515-0527

**HomeofHopeGCS.org**