



Cooperative Effort

Your generosity over the past seven years has allowed the Bread For Life Food Co-op to help hundreds of individuals provide food for themselves and their families. From the single mom struggling to feed her children to the veteran with limited income, you have helped them gain access to fresh produce, meats, and canned goods to sustain their health.

Through your continued support and prayers, the co-op now has a new place to call home. In May, HSHM staff, volunteers, and community members celebrated the co-op's grand reopening at 301 East Oakland with a ribbon cutting. Co-op team members Samantha, Ethel, and Joshua are especially grateful.

"Seeing it all come together after five months of hard work and dedication, makes it all worth the wait," shares Samantha, Bread For Life Food Co-op Coordinator. "I just want to thank everyone that helped us along the way, especially our volunteers that helped with construction, painting, moving, and stocking."

Several improvements have made the co-op more inviting. A double-door entryway provides better accessibility. Nice big windows allow for natural lighting. There is more open space and more room for storage. The food co-op is also blessed to have a designated kitchen area, which makes a big difference when receiving donations like giant sweet potatoes. Staff can process these big donations and package them down into manageable portions. Our first members through the door say they really enjoyed the new shopping experience.

continued on page 3



**Bread
For Life
Food
Co-op**

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MISSION STATEMENT

Home Sweet Home Ministries demonstrates Christ's love through innovative approaches that instill hope, restore lives, and build community.



A Message from Matt

"Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as noon."

— Isaiah 58:10

I love to tell people about our Bread For Life food co-op. It is one of our more innovative models of service and is a wonderful embodiment of our desire to use "a better way" to help our neighbors who are experiencing a need for support. Recently I had a conversation with one of our long-term members and he said, "You have no idea what it means to me to be part of the co-op" as emotion welled up in his eyes. He went on to talk about how much he loves the people he works with and how important it has been for him to feel like he belongs here. While he certainly benefits from the food assistance he receives in the co-op, perhaps his feelings of belonging and purpose are what benefit him the most.

It is with those purposes in mind that we are now busy gathering input and making plans for a new community outreach center that will be located in the front part of our building at 301 E Oakland (where the Bread For Life co-op now occupies the back half of the space). We have been asking those we serve, church partners, and our colleagues in other organizations for their ideas on what meaningful services might look like – I look forward to sharing details with all of you in the coming months as we finalize those plans.

I pray that you are encouraged as you read through this month's newsletter. May God bless you all for your faithful support of our ministry.

Matt Burgess

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A Helpful Heart

On a Thursday morning, you can find Tena in the Bread For Life Food Co-op happily restocking the shelves. Can by can, she reviews expiration dates. She also checks for items that qualify for the Food Pharmacy.

"I worked in a grocery store when I was in high school and I loved organizing the shelves," shares Tena. "I'm very thankful for the opportunity to come and do this."

She has volunteered at HSHM for a little over a year. Tena says she really enjoys the co-op's atmosphere.

"Sam, Ethel, and Joshua have been so helpful and wonderful to work with," adds Tena. "When you have a fun environment, it makes it fun to do the job."

To get the co-op ready for its debut in May, Home Sweet Home relied on volunteers to get everything set-up. Tena was a big help through almost the entire co-op move, even coming in beyond her usual Thursday shift.

"I'm just helping wherever I can. It's been super rewarding."

Home Sweet Home admires Tena's devotion. Learn more about volunteering by visiting our website at hshministries.org and clicking on 'Opportunities to Serve' under the Volunteer tab.



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With the help of neighboring volunteers, families facing homelessness have found stable housing, employment, and friendship through Home Sweet Home's Bridge of Hope program. It has been a blessing to watch families connect with others and develop a lasting support system. Jamal, a Bridge of Hope participant, says it feels good to have people in your life that you can count on.

"They literally helped me to bridge the gap and eliminate some of the barriers I was dealing with. It allowed me to get on my own feet and walk across that bridge to my next goal."

Jamal's neighboring volunteer group, Christ Temple Church, provided him with hope and strength to move forward.

"They stepped in and helped me obtain my dream. I got out of being homeless. I found financial stability and a good place of employment."

Jamal shares that he is truly grateful to be a part of the program and for his new family.

"Thank you. Thank you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. You guys showed me a lot of love."

Home Sweet Home had the unique opportunity to work with a group of students from Illinois State University's COM 362 class this spring. They collaborated with us to create a promotional video for Bridge of Hope, featuring Jamal. Please visit our website at hshministries.org and click on the Bridge of Hope icon to watch how Jamal's life was transformed.



*"It allowed me
to get on my own feet
and walk across that bridge
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BRIDGE OF HOPE

Cooperative Effort

continued from page 1



Bill, our very first shopper, made his way around with ease. He perused items and filled his cart with hamburger, cheese, yogurt, fruit, cereal, bread, and pasta. "I love it. I'm really impressed. It's a very nice use of this space." Bill says it feels wonderful to be a part of the co-op and have an opportunity to provide for himself.

With more improvements planned in the near future, including a food forest outside the main entrance, Home Sweet Home continues to need your support. Please visit hshministries.org/donate to discover how you can make an impact. We appreciate your help as we grow. Thank You!

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Home Sweet Home Ministries**

Like Us!



Development at 301 Carries On



With the co-op settling in, Home Sweet Home can now focus on developing the front space of 301. The area has served as a simple meeting space but we look forward to even a bigger transformation. Our staff held a meeting in May with residents to brainstorm ideas for what they would like to see in the building. Varieties of suggestions were provided including a spot for coffee and food, a gaming area, offices, and space for chairs and tables. HSHM has also sought input from collaborating agencies. As we finalize the details, be sure to follow us on Facebook @HomeSweetHomeMinistries to stay up to date on the latest with renovations.

Join the Ride

We are experiencing some beautiful and warm summer days, but before you know it, cold weather will be coming around the corner. That means it is time to start thinking about **Night In A Car 2022**, so go ahead and save the date: February 4th, 2022. In the weeks to come we will be talking to you more about ways that you can join the ride by being a participant, sponsor, prayer warrior, donor, or volunteer. We cannot thank you enough for all of the effort, support, and momentum that we were all able to enjoy this year. Think cool and join us in February!



Current Needs

Every day Home Sweet Home provides healthy food and other essential items to individuals and families as they start to rebuild their lives. Please consider collecting the following items:

- Low/No Sodium items
- Low/No Sugar items
- Canned Fruit
- Canned Carrots
- Canned Tomatoes
- Lunch Meat
- Sliced Cheese
- Individual Bags of Chips

Donations can be dropped off at the shelter at 303 East Oakland Avenue in Bloomington at any time. Thank you so much for blessing a neighbor in need.

Join Us In Prayer

As Home Sweet Home continues to move forward, we kindly ask your help in praying for:

- our community as we all progress our way through the pandemic.
- individuals, families, and Veterans seeking a fresh start.
- volunteers, clients, and staff who devote their time in our shelter.
- the Bread For Life Food Co-op and its members.
- our food source providers, including local restaurants, grocery stores, and community gardens.
- all those involved in the continued development of 301.

Thank you for lifting up our ministry.