

Hope For All Who Enter

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HSHM
HOME SWEET HOME MINISTRIES
since 1917

OCTOBER 2025

Building Hope:

The Bridge Shelter Village Takes Shape

On July 10, our community came together to celebrate a groundbreaking moment. That morning, we officially broke ground on **The Bridge**, McLean County's first-ever non-congregate shelter village. Since then, construction crews have been hard at work transforming a vision into reality.

"I am overjoyed to see this project moving forward," exclaims Audrey Cail, Home Sweet Home Ministries' Director of Client Services. "It has been a true blessing to have the support of so many from the community."

Already, the foundations are in place and the cabins are fully constructed. Each cabin will provide a safe, private space for individuals experiencing homelessness—something not previously available in our community.

"When I first saw the cabins being built, I felt a rush of pure joy and excitement," shares Audrey. "Unlike traditional congregate shelters, where dozens of people share a common living space, The Bridge offers dignity and stability through individual units designed for privacy and security. Each cabin will include a bed, desk and chair, wardrobe, microwave, and mini fridge. Individuals will be able to have a warm, welcoming space that truly feels like home."

Progress has continued at a rapid pace. In September, the doorways and walls on the bath house were completed. Crews also started the framing on the club house, giving shape to the layout of the campus. HSHM was also grateful to have the painting of the interiors of the cabins completed by wonderful volunteers.

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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

"Do to others as you would have them do to you."
– Luke 6:31

"What if...?" is a question that has always captured my imagination. As a young boy, I pondered this question by engaging in countless hours of imaginary play in worlds of my own creation and by reading the best science fiction and fantasy books I could get my hands on.

Today I continue to be captivated by that same question. But now it is about the world I see outside my window, as I take a walk around our community, or as I talk with the people we serve at Home Sweet Home Ministries. I try to think about how I would feel if I was someone experiencing homelessness, stuck outside with no safe place to sleep and no hope of having things improve. I try to imagine what choices I would be forced to make to survive and whether I'd have the strength to make good decisions. I wonder how it would feel if it was me who people mocked and shouted at as they drove by wherever I found myself trying to get some rest. The answers that come to me invariably break my heart – and challenge me to find ways to do something about the suffering I see in our community.

The Bridge is Home Sweet Home's answer to some of these hard "what if's". It marks a new way of trying to provide safety, stability, and hope for our hurting neighbors. It is the beginning of a new way of offering shelter and restorative services as we support their movement toward permanent housing. It is the result of relentlessly asking "What if?" as we grapple with unsheltered homelessness in our community.

As you read this newsletter, I hope your own imaginations are captivated by what's going on within our ministry. May God bless you all for your faithful support.

Matt Burgess

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Night In A Car 2026

Fall is here and we are so excited to once again promote our unique fundraising experience: Night In A Car! The NIAC 2026 event is being held Friday, February 6th with in-person and online options to accommodate participants of all ages. Night In A Car is a homelessness simulation that creates awareness, compassion, and hope for the many people in our community experiencing the difficult realities of homelessness this winter. **In honor of our 10th year, HSHM would love to have 100 teams join us.** Whether you are an individual, a youth group, or a team of employees looking to make a difference in Bloomington/Normal, Night In A Car is a fantastic way to get involved. Your support will help us drive out homelessness. Plus, it serves as a great way to earn volunteer hours! To learn more and sign up, please visit nightinacar.org. Thanks for joining the ride!



Like Us!

**Like us on Facebook
Home Sweet Home Ministries**

Help Feed A Family This Fall

Home Sweet Home Ministries, Midwest Food Bank, and Thrivent Financial need your help! We kindly ask for your support as we work towards gathering 2,000 turkeys this Thanksgiving to help families in need. Please kindly consider giving online at hshministries.org/donate. In the campaign box, just designate your gift for Give Thanks. Turkey donations will also be gladly accepted at Midwest Food Bank located at 2031 Warehouse Drive in Normal or at the Bread For Life Co-op located at 301 East Oakland Avenue in Bloomington. Thank you so much for helping us provide families with an opportunity to enjoy a wonderful meal this November.



Join Us In Prayer

As Home Sweet Home continues to nurture and comfort individuals and families this fall, we kindly ask your help in praying for:

- individuals, families, and Veterans seeking refuge and renewal.
- all those involved in the construction of The Bridge.
- our kitchen staff and volunteers preparing delicious meals for all to enjoy.
- community members and churches involved with Give Thanks distribution.
- our food source providers, including local restaurants and grocery stores.
- our volunteers, clients, and staff who devote their time helping others.

Your prayers are truly appreciated. Thank you for lifting up Home Sweet Home.

Night In A Car, February 6th, 2026
Sign up now! www.nightinacar.org

Join Us!

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Looking ahead, Home Sweet Home anticipates The Bridge to be fully operational by mid-December. Once open, the shelter village will not only provide immediate relief to individuals in crisis but also serve as a bridge to long-term stability. Residents will have access to support services that help address the root causes of homelessness, including mental health care and case management.



“HSHM is blessed to have the support of several local community partners including Project Oz, Bridgeway, Center for Youth and Family Solutions, Salvation Army, Chestnut Health Systems, FUSE, Center for Human Services, Mid Central Community Action, and the McLean County Health Dept,” says Audrey.



This project is a first-of-its-kind model for McLean County, and it has only been possible thanks to the generosity, vision, and commitment of our community. From donors and partners to volunteers and advocates, every person involved has played a role in laying the foundation for brighter futures.

“As construction moves forward, we are filled with hope and gratitude,” adds Audrey. “Together, we are not just building cabins—we are building opportunities, dignity, and pathways to stability.”

Stay tuned for updates as we continue to bring The Bridge to life. By mid-December, what started out as an empty lot will soon become a place where lives are changed, hope is restored, and new journeys begin.



Current Needs

With your support, Home Sweet Home provides hope and healing to families seeking a fresh start. We appreciate your help in collecting the following items:

- Disposable razors
- Hand towels
- New blankets
- Disposable water cups
- Ziploc snack size bags
- Coffee
- Shampoo/Conditioner
- Body Wash
- Paper Towels

Donations can be dropped off at the Bread For Life Co-op at 301 East Oakland Avenue in Bloomington anytime Monday through Friday from 9 am to 4 pm. Be sure to check out hshministries.org and click on the “Ways to Give” tab for updated current needs and links to our Amazon Wish list. Thank you so much for helping your neighbors in need. God Bless!