

# KEEPING

the

# Freezers Stocked



## and the Community Strong

For over 12 years, Home Sweet Home Ministries' Bread For Life Co-op has been more than a place to access fresh food. It has been a place of dignity, purpose, and community.

In 2025, the co-op served 117 active members and filled 1,871 shopping carts. Behind every stocked shelf and organized freezer are faithful volunteers who help make it all possible — volunteers like Bob Gordon.

"I started back when the co-op was still in the basement," he shares.

Twelve years later, Bob still volunteers three to four days each week. Bob oversees much of the meat and frozen food that arrives from partner stores. He organizes the main freezer, restocks the floor freezer for shoppers, and makes sure everything stays ready to bless families in need.

"What I take the most pride in is helping people," he exclaims. "I've seen volunteers grow into promotions

and leadership roles. It's been rewarding to watch that happen."

If you ask Bob what he loves most about the co-op, his answer is simple: the people.

"The supervisors and staff are really friendly, and everyone is willing to help each other out," he says. "As I've gotten older, some of the work has become harder physically, but people are always willing to step in and help."

That spirit of care is part of what makes the co-op so valuable. "You donate a little bit of your time, and you get a lot in return," Bob explains. "The co-op gives people a chance to volunteer no matter their age or ability level. There's something for everyone to do, and the staff really work hard to meet people where they are."

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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

*"Then God said, "Let the land sprout with vegetation—every sort of seed-bearing plant, and trees that grow seed-bearing fruit. These seeds will then produce the kinds of plants and trees from which they came."*

— Genesis 1:11

Every July, the new fiscal year at HSHM begins. And just like the crops in the fields, we see new growth in our ministry as the seeds we planted earlier in the year start to flourish. This year, we're settling into the reality of having an expanded campus that spans across multiple properties and programs.

In our food co-op, we see new members joining and new ways of connecting people to food assistance. At The Bridge and at our traditional shelter, we see transformation occurring among those who are experiencing rest and renewal after moving inside. In our dining center, we see (and hear) the children in the families we serve growing stronger from our nutritious meals. In case management meetings, we witness our residents making new strides toward goals ranging from physical and spiritual recovery to employment and housing.

We never quite know what new growth a new year will bring, but we remain faithful to living out our mission to "Demonstrate Christ's love through innovative approaches that instill hope, restore lives, and build community."

As you read this newsletter, I hope you share in the excitement of the "new things" going on within our ministry. May God bless you all for your faithful support.

*Matt Burgess*

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# Room to Grow



Home Sweet Home Ministries is happy to share that we are officially the owners of the former Eastview Community Center located at 602 South Main Street in Bloomington. Our friends at Eastview Christian Church graciously donated the building to us in June. Our immediate plans for the building are to utilize it for extra office and storage space in addition to staff meetings and trainings. HSHM is excited for the ability to have a contiguous campus between our main shelter, The Bridge, The Junction, and the Bread For Life Co-op.

No major development is planned currently, but having the opportunity to grow even more in the future is such a blessing. Home Sweet Home is grateful to Eastview Christian Church and their compassion to help others in need in our community.

*Impact A Life Today*

Discover more and donate at  
[hshministries.org](http://hshministries.org)



## Beautifying The Bridge

Since the opening of The Bridge, Home Sweet Home volunteers and community partners have been working hard to transform the landscape into beautiful scenery. The Central Illinois Woodworkers Club completed wooden arbors representing the nine Fruits of the Spirit in April. Due to the efforts of the Ecology Action Center, The Wild Ones, Bloomington-Normal Garden Club, and Coneflower and Company, The Bridge has sprouted green grass, a vegetable garden, and flower beds. Colorful shrubs and trees have also been planted around the perimeter. HSHM is blessed to see the landscape bloom into life. Thank you to all who continue to make The Bridge a warm, inviting place for our residents.



## Mark Your Calendars!



Our 11th annual Night In A Car fundraiser is happening on **Friday, February 5th, 2027!** This impactful simulation fuels Home Sweet Home's efforts to drive out homelessness in our community. Participants "live" out of their cars during the overnight hours, getting a small glimpse of what it is like to experience homelessness.

Your participation makes a real difference. No matter if you can join us for just the evening activities or stay all night, all levels of participation are welcome. Goals can start at \$250 and up, but we challenge you to raise \$1,000 per team to support the vital work of Home Sweet Home.

Looking to jump start your fundraising efforts? Registration is now open. Speed your way over to [nightinacar.org](http://nightinacar.org) to sign up or learn more today. Thank you!

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Home Sweet Home Ministries

Like Us!



# Keeping the Freezers Stocked and the Community Strong

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What also makes the co-op especially meaningful to Bob is the dignity it offers. "It's not just a handout. You're working for it. There's dignity in that. Beyond the food, there's fellowship. You meet and talk with others which creates connection and purpose."

Staying involved for over a decade has been one of Bob's greatest joys — growing alongside Home Sweet Home and witnessing how God continues to work through the ministry to serve more neighbors in need. HSHM is grateful for faithful servants like Bob that help nourish our community.

Every cart filled and every life touched at the Bread For Life Co-op has been possible because of generous donors like you. As we continue to build upon the success of our programs like the co-op, we look to generous support from individuals like you who care deeply about investing in the restoration of lives. Thank you!



## Current Needs

Because of you, Home Sweet Home can provide comfort and strength to individuals seeking refuge. We kindly ask for your help in collecting the following items:

- Bottled Water
- Coffee
- Peanut Butter
- Liquid Coffee Creamer
- Toilet Paper / Paper Towels
- Shampoo
- Body Wash
- Lotion

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](http://hshministries.org) and click on the "Ways to Give" tab for our updated needs and Amazon Wish Lists. Thank you so much!

## Join Us for Big Give



Home Sweet Home Ministries, Midwest Food Bank, and Thrivent are busy preparing for Big Give and we need your help! We are looking for churches, youth groups, schools, and businesses to get involved. Big Give occurs in September and October. We are asking you to collect items for meal boxes that we will distribute during Thanksgiving. You can choose to do special shopping days or have a planned food drive. We are happy to provide shopping lists, boxes, and arrange pick-ups. It is a great opportunity for you to give back in a big way! Last year's efforts helped to feed over 1,500 families. If you are interested in participating, please reach out to Leslie Bunge, HSHM's Director of Development at [lbunge@hshministries.org](mailto:lbunge@hshministries.org) or 309-319-2820. Thank you!

## Pray With Us

As Home Sweet Home uplifts our neighbors this summer, we appreciate your help in praying for:

- the Bread For Life Co-op and its members.
- individuals, families, and Veterans seeking a fresh start.
- our staff and community partners involved with The Bridge.
- community gardeners that provide HSHM with fresh produce.
- the well-being of volunteers, clients, and staff who devote their time to our shelter.

Your loving thoughts and prayers are truly appreciated. God Bless!