



**Bridge of Hope Ministries Report  
Stephen and Robin Boda  
2018 District Conference**

**Our Community:** Bridge of Hope is located in the Ville neighborhood of St. Louis, one of the most historically rich African American communities. In its prime, the Ville was home to Homer G. Phillips, the first African American training hospital west of the Mississippi; Harris Stowe Teacher's College; Sumner High School; and a host of African American arts and business opportunities. It is our prayer that partnering together with the Ville Collaborative we can play a part in restoring some of our neighborhood's former glory. While others make use of some of our offerings, the primary audience is the homeless and at-risk homeless population – the poorest of the poor. We spend every day **meeting the most basic of needs** and **celebrating the “imago dei”** – the IMAGE OF CHRIST – in each of them.

**Our Team:** Together with Pastor Michael Robinson, Virginia Savage, and Obadiah Boda, Stephen and Robin Boda oversee the daily activities at Bridge of Hope. Stephen and Robin have been in the neighborhood since 1992, **listening to and loving neighbors**. Stephen is the executive director, managing the team, expanding our job training program, coordinating community partnerships, and cultivating a culture of peace and hope for all who enter our doors. Robin is the education director, running Hope Education, whose primary focus is boosting basic academic skills - reading, writing and math (working with students of all ages). Pastor Mike pastors Destiny Family Church (which meets in our building), and as a part-time Bridge of Hope staff member, he coordinates our feeding program, community outreach, and social work aspects of the ministry. Virginia oversees our clothing ministry, laundry and shower services, and assists with meals. Obadiah works with the youth, assisting Robin with tutoring, and providing unique hands-on science activities.

**Our Mission & Vision**

**Mission:** Connecting people and cultivating practical faith by breaking down barriers and meeting basic needs

We break down barriers of age, race, culture, economics, and education. We cultivate practical faith by meeting basic needs, providing service opportunities, and discovering Jesus' heart for urban communities together.

**Vision:** A Safe Place Meeting Today's Needs for a Better Tomorrow

**Current Updates**

**Unexpected Emergency Homeless Shelter:** Community needs often cannot be anticipated. The implications of a city government decision last summer to close a homeless shelter, in conjunction with the closing of another large day facility, left the poorest of the poor without housing in the extremely cold temperatures this winter. Bridge of Hope opened its doors and hallways. Several Hope Education middle school students spent their Saturday computer time organizing donations of toiletries and supplies.



Adult students served meals, washed dishes, mopped floors, and set up cots. The building was a buzz of activity being a community caring for each other.

**Job Training:** For the last three years, we have been identifying ideal future employees. Those currently in our job training program were immensely helpful in the emergency shelter set up and take down. We look forward to establishing jobs for them this summer, financed through Good Life Growing, a vital, sustainable gardening initiative that provides healthy food for our neighborhood and gainful employment for workers through the sale of produce to local restaurants.



**Future Priorities:**

- Develop the next 3-year strategic plan
- Strengthen Alliance Church partnerships
- Facilitate “Samaria” connections – Many churches have requested this piece, feeling they have identified their “Jerusalem, Judea, and uttermost parts” but are missing their Samaria.
- Cast greater vision for urban ministry within the District
- Host weeklong exposure experiences – a chance to work alongside us
- Offer internships to those seeking further experience in urban contexts
- Continue existing programs and initiatives



***Our lives have been forever changed by living among the poorest of the poor. We believe that the Body of Christ thrives when we nurture His creative variety. We are immensely grateful for the support of the MidAmerica District over the years.***

<b>January &amp; February Totals</b>	
Overnight Beds Provided	693
Meals Served	1255+
Showers	92
Laundry	122
Hangout Room Visits	1165
Clothing Room Visits	124
<b>Hope Education 2017-2018 (through February)</b>	
One-on-One Student Hours	986
Relational Science Hours	667
Volunteer Hours	212

