



Centre County is an amazing place to live. There are so many opportunities in this area that are present because of community members, businesses and educational institutions. **We hear that it is a place to raise a family and a place to retire. However what we don't hear about is homelessness.** This is the secret that exists in Centre County that is a much larger problem than many would imagine or even believe. For single mothers, the risk of finding themselves homeless is an even larger concern. **In one month alone, we received 20 phone calls seeking assistance** and that doesn't count the women we met at events in the community who asked for help. If you are anything like me you want to help but you want to make sure that your help is truly making a difference and not just enabling people to be "stuck" in the place that they find themselves today. Bridge of Hope Centre County addresses that need. **We work to provide a hand-up instead of a hand-out.** Our program is an intensive 18-24 month program where we walk beside a mother and her children to assist them in gaining financial stability through education and employment while developing a support system from a local mentoring group.

*How does this work financially? One family who comes through the program receives approximately \$25,000 in resources through case management, rental assistance, education, etc. This seems like a lot of money for one family. Yet homelessness is increasing for children with numbers now at 1 in every 30 children homeless. Of that number 40% require professional mental health support to survive the trauma of this experience. When the community and Bridge of Hope Centre County spend what seemed like a large amount of money on one family, the **Centre County community gains back \$575,000.** This is money that comes from the mother and family earning a living in Centre County as well as money that would have been spent in assistance, service programs, extra educational supports, tax income, etc. for that mother and her children. When we look at those numbers, one family can change a whole community. This doesn't even begin to address the emotional change that arrives by assisting a mother in recognizing her skills and talents in feeling like a productive member of our society. If we come together and address homelessness for mothers we reduce the risk of the homelessness becoming generational for that family.*

In order to do this we need you. We provide these services through donations and fundraising only. We operate on a small staff model with no full time employees. **With your help, we are ready and able to serve more women than we have in the past. Bridge of Hope Centre County has set the goal to serve 25% more women and children this year. Will you join us in this goal with your donation?** Now is the time. Please prayerfully consider Bridge of Hope Centre County in your holiday and end of year charitable giving.

With Gratitude and Thanksgiving,

Sue A Patterson, MA CAADC
Executive director