

YEAR END NEWSLETTER | 2022

# HOPE I BELONG

## WOMAN AT THE WELL

**PSA » THERE IS A WATER FEATURE  
WHEN YOU ENTER SHECHEM AT  
HOPE STREET ON YOUR RIGHT...**

A couple of people have found this out as they stepped, sat or dropped something into it. Which we have been able to laugh about, of course after making sure people are OK.

This water feature symbolizes a “well”. The well that inspired the name Shechem. The well in Shechem was Jacob’s well and it was the site for lots of horrific and also glorious encounters. Shechem had space for the mess and beauty of life, and it continued to be a place God intentionally showed up and met his people. Our Shechem is very much the same.

We have had the honor and privilege of welcoming so many new faces into this space. To date we have 249 members, and counting. When each new person arrives, they speak of the friend that invited them to join. Each time we hear of the referral source I can’t help but think of the woman at the well, and her immediate desire to go back to “town” and share with her community what she had

experienced. Many of our young men and women are doing the very same thing — their comments sound like: “There’s a nice gym on 26th and Capitol”, or “There’s this brand new building, and it’s a place for us to go and hang out”. On the surface, we have created THE hang out place in the garden homes neighborhood, on a deeper level we have become a place where people are curious, engaging, and coming back to be a part of something bigger.

There is a water feature when you enter Shechem at Hope Street. We are just scratching the surface



on the many “well moments” or stories of impact this space will provide, but we are rejoicing in the glimpses God shares as His people find their belonging in a place made especially for them.

**BY ASHLEY THOMAS**

# 2022 IN REVIEW

## COMMUNITY IMPACT

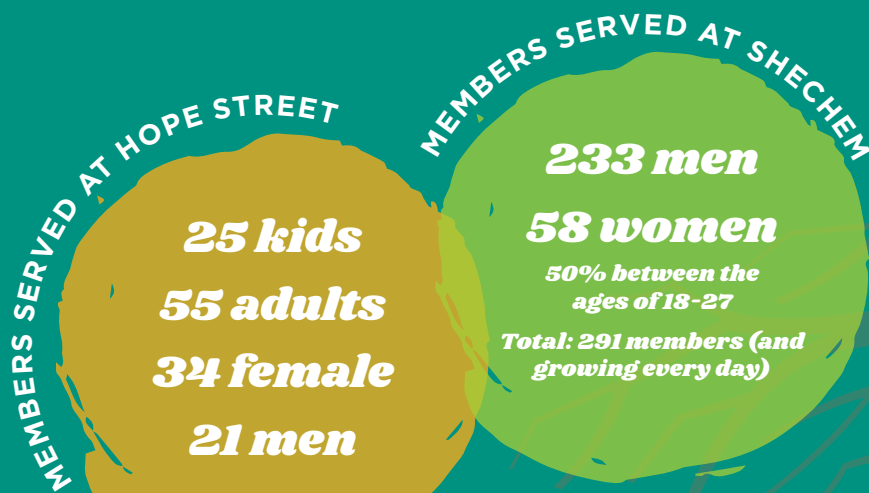
On Thursdays from 10:00am to 2:00pm, Gene and Linda come to Shechem to offer guidance on the computer. For some, this could look like learning how to respond to emails, to others it could be searching the web. We are in an era where many are divided by their computer skills or lack thereof. Every Thursday, Jill, a 60 year old woman, shows up for computer support. I will never forget the first day she came to Shechem. She entered, frustrated, because she had, one, waited outside the door for just a little longer than she would have liked and, two, to her dismay, our computer help timeframe was not beginning until the following week. That day she left, I was unsure we would see her again. On Thursday, September 22nd, Jill entered Shechem ready to go. I greeted her with a smile and she proceeded to head to The Green Space. From that day forward Jill has been present at Shechem every Thursday ready to learn, but it does not stop there. We all have had the opportunity to truly get to know Jill. She's shared about her family, her struggles and her goals. We have seen and heard the impact that this space and opportunity to grow has had on her life. Shechem has allowed her to feel seen and supported with no judgment of her age or skill set and has given her a reason to show up for HERSELF each week. Jill is truly a testament to what Shechem is meant for. It's a space for all.

## CLASS OFFERINGS

Within the last couple of years, Hope Street has established a class schedule on a trimester basis. With the addition of Shechem, we have been able to increase the opportunities available to our current members living at Hope Street as well as those within our greater community. We have been fortunate to have volunteers who so graciously have transitioned their teachings into Shechem to allow all to engage in a time of learning, discussion and fun! Within this last year we have introduced topics on internal healing, establishing healthy habits, tools on creating smart financial decisions, and have been able to partner with organizations like Above the Clouds to offer dance classes for our kids.

## FAMILY REUNION RECAP

For the second year in a row we hosted our 7th annual Family Reunion Fundraiser at Discovery World. This year's theme was Belong. Current and Former members along with volunteers shared how they have been able to be a part of Hope Street and the impact that being a part of this community has had on their lives. A panel was conducted asking participants to share what Hope Street is using one word. As is often heard, the common words shared were love, family, confidence to grow, hope and relief. One member summed it up as, "Hope Street Rocks".





# MEET OUR STAFF

## **MICHELLE WILLE**

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT  
CAME ON STAFF - FEBRUARY 2022

### **WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED IN YOUR TIME ON STAFF AND WHAT HAS IMPACTED YOU THE MOST?**

One of the most important things I've learned in my time on staff, and also one of the things I hope impacts most people who walk into the doors of Hope Street is that you'll get out of it what you put into it. Just like a relationship with Jesus, we are invited in, without pressure. He wants us to befriend him, know him, spend time with him and become more like him. In the same way, Hope Street provides opportunities for us both individually and in community to know ourselves better, learn and grow into who He has planned for us to be. But, we must take the first step. We must immerse our daily walk, be vulnerable, be authentic, and from that — He will bless us greater than anything we can imagine. He has created a space to open up authentically in front of others so they may know my heart, in hopes that they will also desire to share what Jesus has put in their hearts.

The thing that has impacted me most is going to have a lifelong affect. The value of discovering self through being authentic with others and with oneself. Sitting across from two former members of Hope Street at the most recent Volunteer dinner, I was moved to hear each person share their experience of living and being at Hope Street through their perspective. Each was so moved by the authenticity they received from others, they could not even put it into words. They felt heard, seen, supported. They experienced compassion and understanding. Now, I haven't been a member here at Hope Street, but as a volunteer and staff member I can say I have experienced these same sentiments and have been moved to explore deeper into who God has created me to be alongside others who are doing the same. I desire to be a lifelong learner of what God's purpose is for me. And as Jesus pursues each of us authentically, I am learning to do so with him. Hope Street has taught me this is okay, it has been a safe place for exploration - and I desire to create an environment for others to feel the same.



## **Ashley Thomas**

Executive Director  
Came on staff -  
December 2013

## **Rhonda Norton**

Ministry Director  
Came on staff -  
October 2020

## **Brooke Thomas**

Director of  
Community Relations  
Came on staff -  
May 2019

## **Stephanie Todd**

Youth Programming  
Coordinator  
Came on staff -  
August 2022

## **Hannah Dirkse**

Social Worker  
Came on staff -  
August 2016

## **Lisa Perkins**

Security  
Came on staff -  
August 2022

## **Kendall Schoenike**

Assistant Executive  
Director  
Came on staff -  
March 2020

# LOOKING AHEAD AT 2023

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Hope Street now has 3 annual events and we are excited to be adding one more to the mix in 2023. Mark your calendars for our very first **golf outing** which will take place on Monday, August 14th at The Legend at Merrill Hill.

For our non-golfers, don't worry, we still have some fun opportunities to look forward to. Our **Women's Luncheon** will be returning to the Brookfield Conference Center on Thursday, February 16th. Gather your closest friends for an afternoon full of stories, food and good conversation.

We will also be bringing back our **Hike for Hope** on Saturday, June 17th. Kickstart Father's Day weekend with a beautiful hike through Nashotah Park. This family friendly event is a great way to learn more about Hope Street while exploring nature.

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

For information on how you can get involved at Hope Street and Shechem, be sure to check out our website at <https://www.hopestreetministry.org/volunteer>



2522 W. CAPITOL DRIVE  
MILWAUKEE, WI 53206  
[hopestreetministry.org](https://www.hopestreetministry.org)

# FINAL ASK

This has been a year of great growth for us. In no more than 2 months, we increased the number we serve 5x over. It has been encouraging to see how our culture at Hope Street has translated into our new space.

One Friday, Milwaukee kids had off school for parent teacher conferences. 3rd grader, Lauren, came into Shechem with her cousins who live nearby. She spent the day painting, playing basketball, eating snacks, and playing on the computers. Lauren felt comfortable exploring and asking questions. She asked, "What do you think will happen when God comes to Earth?" From there, we got to dive deeper with her. We got to know her heart, hopes and fears. Lauren said that if she weren't at Shechem, she'd be watching TV all day. Instead she got to run and play, learn, be creative, and be inquisitive. She was stretched. This is what happens everyday at Hope Street, and now Shechem. Members have the opportunity to engage in something new, something different and from there, grow.

# WITH GROWTH COMES NEED. HOW CAN YOU HELP?

## A ONE TIME GIFT

We had a generous donor decide to match each dollar given up to \$30,000 in our year end campaign. This means your gift before December 31st will be doubled!

## A DECLARATION OF INTENTION.

While Shechem is here, we have 3 years left of our Shechem loan. We want to end those 3 years with the building completely paid for, leaving us debt free. This will be no small feat, so we need our supporters to faithfully consider how much you can contribute. You can help us in this, by filling out a declaration of intention card, "pledging" to us how much you plan to give to building Shechem over the next 3 years.



« SCAN TO  
GO TO CARD