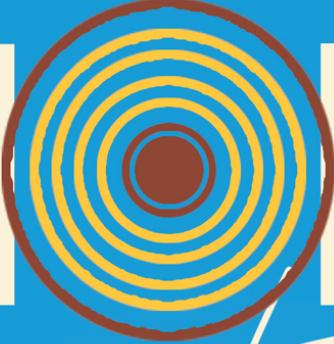


# HOPE



# *restored*

HOW OUR NEIGHBORS

FOUND RENEWAL

AND HEALING

KATIE GRUNOW

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EVANSVILLE CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTER

WITH MADISON SALAMANCA & KATIE SUTTON

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# SERVICES AND STORIES

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Produced by Katie Grunow, Katie Sutton,  
and Madison Salamanca

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Throughout this book, you'll read powerful stories from each of our services. To help you navigate, we've assigned a unique symbol to each service. You'll come to understand more about each one through the stories themselves, but here's a quick overview:



## GAIN INITIATIVE:

*A network that helps people overcome challenges through relationships. Participants join a supportive cohort that meets weekly to navigate life's obstacles together, gaining resources, guidance, and a sense of community along the way.*



## MEDICAL SERVICES:

*Our dedicated team, including a nurse practitioner, provides primary care for the underinsured and uninsured in our community.*



## PREGNANCY SERVICES:

*A medical program providing free pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, and prenatal vitamins to support early pregnancy care. While we do not deliver babies, we work closely with local OB/GYN offices to ensure mothers receive the care they need throughout their pregnancy. Our focus is on offering essential medical services to confirm pregnancy and support maternal health in the early stages.*



#### DENTAL SERVICES:

*Access to affordable dental care can be life-changing. Our clinic provides extractions, cleanings, and other essential services for those without dental insurance, ensuring that cost isn't a barrier to oral health.*



#### ACCENT ON CHRIST:

*A Christ-centered sobriety program that walks alongside individuals seeking freedom from addiction. Through mentorship, accountability, and biblical principles, participants find strength and support in their recovery journey.*



#### CREATING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS:

*An in-school program that equips middle and high school students with the knowledge and skills to build healthy relationships. Covering topics like communication, boundaries, and self-respect, the program empowers students to understand that what they do on their Friday nights affects their future.*



#### FINANCIAL POTENTIAL PROGRAM:

*A financial literacy initiative that helps participants build practical spending and life plans. By creating a personalized spending plan, setting goals, and managing resources wisely, individuals gain the tools they need to create long-term financial stability.*



#### FAMILY CARE SERVICES:

*A program supporting parents—both moms and dads—who are either expecting a child or already have a child. Family Care Services provides education, resources, and case management to help families thrive. In recent years, the program has been a vital partner for the Department of Child Services, guiding parents through challenges, reunification, or difficult decisions regarding parental rights. Many parents in the system feel lost and overwhelmed, and this program ensures they have someone to walk alongside them.*



#### FOOD CO-OP:

*A unique program available to participants who are in good standing of other qualified programs that allows families to shop for groceries at a significantly reduced cost. By bridging financial gaps, the Food Co-op helps families stretch their budgets while allowing choice in their food selection.*



#### CLOTHING RESOURCE DEPARTMENT:

*A resource where families can purchase clothing for 25 cents per item. Whether it's for job interviews, back-to-school needs, or everyday essentials, this program ensures that quality clothing remains accessible to those in need.*



#### VOLUNTEERS:

*Volunteers provide the means by which all of our services can make an impact. You will find some stories from the point-of-view of our volunteer team members.*

**A** One of my favorite quotes  
**NOTE** growing up was,  
**FROM** “*Go confidently in the*  
**KATIE** *direction of your dreams.*  
*Live the life you imagined.”*

At the time,  
I didn’t fully grasp its depth,  
but now I see it  
as an invitation  
to step boldly into the life  
God has designed  
for each and every one of us—  
a life of purpose,  
compassion,  
and hope.



When I was a senior in high school, my grandparents wrote me the most incredible letters. Tucked within the folds of those pages were words that painted a picture of who they believed I was destined to become—a woman of compassion, with an infectious positive attitude and a deep sense of purpose. They told me I was meant to make a difference, perhaps as a nurse or in a role where I would use words to help others heal, or walking alongside individuals as they found their way back to hope.

Now, stepping into my role as Executive Director of the Evansville Christian Life Center, I see those letters in a whole new light. They weren't just wishes for my future; they were callings—seeds of encouragement planted in my heart, preparing me for the work God had in store.

The Lord led me to the Evansville Christian Life Center—not just a place where I work but a place where every single day I get to witness lives changed, hearts restored, and hope renewed. Through the programs, the people, and the prayers that fill these halls, I've come to understand what living out a calling truly means.



And now, through *Hope Restored*, the book you're about to read, I see that same calling reflected—not just in my story but in the stories of countless others—including yours, whether you are a participant, volunteer, or donor.

For over 35 years, the Evansville Christian Life Center has been about more than just providing services. It's about guiding people as they rebuild their lives, helping them find the confidence to reclaim their future. It's about seeing potential where others see despair, offering grace in moments of greatest need, and believing wholeheartedly that the best is yet to come.

Housed in a monastery built in 1897, once home to the Poor Clare nuns, our walls have seen countless prayers, quiet moments of surrender, and triumphant breakthroughs. This sacred legacy, combined with the unwavering dedication of our team, donors, advocates, and volunteers, has created something extraordinary—a community where hope isn't just a word; it's a way of life.



Each chapter in this book invites you to step into the lives of our participants, uncovering stories of transformation through the programs that define the Evansville Christian Life Center. In the Health Clinic, you'll read stories of healing and restoration that go beyond the physical. Through Family Care Services, you'll see families finding stability and hope during life's most challenging moments. The GAIN Initiative offers inspiring accounts of people courageously breaking free from poverty, rewriting their stories with determination. And in the Clothing Resource Department, you'll witness the simple yet profound impact of meeting tangible needs, restoring confidence and dignity to those we serve.

My hope is that you'll savor these stories, one at a time, understanding that love, hope, and prayer are at the center of everything we do as an organization. This book is a testament to the generosity of our donors, the dedication of our advocates and volunteers, the hard work of our employees, and the grace of Jesus Christ, whose love and spirit filter through everything we do.



Since stepping into this role, I've been humbled and blessed to witness firsthand the profound impact this organization has had on our neighbors. Our first book, *The Community I See*, written by our former CEO and Executive Director Gina Gibson, cast a powerful vision of what our community could become. Gina has been an incredible mentor to me over the past several years, guiding me with wisdom, encouragement, and grace. Her leadership laid a strong foundation, and her faith in this work has been a source of inspiration as I've stepped into this role.

I know my journey here is not by accident. I was called to this path through the prayers of the sisters who once called this monastery home and the legacy of stories that came before my time. Their faithfulness and dedication created the fertile ground for the Evansville Christian Life Center to flourish, and I am humbled to walk in their footsteps as we continue to build on this incredible foundation.



As you turn these pages, I invite you to celebrate the victories, reflect on the struggles, and share in the joy of a community transformed by love. You may find yourself drawn to an area of hope—a program or story that speaks to your heart, inviting you to learn more, engage, or join in this life-changing work.

If my grandparents were here to read this with us, I think they'd say, "See? This is exactly what we meant." Not just for me but for all of us.



"Go confidently in the direction of your dreams. Live the life you imagined." Because when we dream together and live for something greater, God can create a life—and a community—beyond anything we could have ever imagined.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Grunow".

KATIE GRUNOW  
*EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*

**The following  
stories are true.  
Names and details  
have been changed  
or added to  
protect privacy.**

# **RISING TO- GETHER IN HOPE AND RESIL- IENCE**

Vivian's journey began in a single-parent household, where finances were always tight, and the world of extracurricular activities and extras seemed like a distant dream.

As she grew up, so did her own dreams—to become a nurse, to make a better life for herself and her children. Yet, life's challenges seemed determined to keep those dreams just out of reach.

Then, in 2019, everything changed.



She joined the Evansville Christian Life Center's Food Co-op through Habitat for Humanity, where every dollar saved on groceries translated to precious funds she could invest in her family. But that wasn't all she found. While visiting the Co-op, Vivian discovered the GAIN Initiative, and what started as a practical tool for managing her budget turned into something far deeper—a community that recognized her potential, offered support, and reignited hope.

Through the GAIN Initiative, Vivian accessed not only essential resources but also the confidence she'd lost. Surrounded by the support of GAIN partners, her family, and fellow participants, she began to believe again. Slowly, with the strength of those who believed in her, she returned to school. Nights were filled with studying once the children were asleep, balancing motherhood with her studies.



Eventually, her hard work paid off, and she graduated from Ivy Tech with a nursing degree.

Today, Vivian is not just a nurse at Deaconess but a symbol of resilience and gratitude, giving back to the very community that supported her journey. At a recent event, the ECLC team had the privilege of volunteering alongside her, witnessing firsthand the full-circle power of community support.

Vivian's story is a testament to the impact of collaboration. From Habitat for Humanity, to the Food Co-op, to the GAIN Initiative, organizations came together to help her—and others like her—succeed. Each partner played a vital role, proving that when a community unites, true change is within reach. Her story speaks to the power of shared struggle, resilience, and the strength found in lifting each other up.

**"For the first time in years,  
I sat in a doctor's office  
without worrying about  
how I'd pay."**

## **HEALING AND RECON- NECTION**

A patient came into the Evansville Christian Health Clinic for a test for an infection.

She was nervous, unsure of what the results might reveal, but grateful for the support she would receive.

As the appointment progressed, our nurse practitioner noticed something troubling—

signs of a serious and potentially dangerous condition that, if left untreated, could have serious consequences.



*Medical Services*



Without hesitation, our nurse practitioner acted swiftly, providing the necessary care and beginning treatment to address the infection.

She asked the patient gently, “Is there someone I can call to take you to the emergency room? This needs immediate attention.” The young woman hesitated for a moment. Her relationship with her mother was strained, and she was trapped in an unhealthy, toxic relationship. It seemed like no one was there for her.

But in that moment of vulnerability, she picked up the phone and reached out to her mother. Despite their past, her mother agreed to meet her at the hospital. It was a moment of quiet strength—a glimmer of hope in an otherwise dark time.

Fast forward to this week. The patient returned to the clinic for a follow-up appointment with our nurse practitioner. There was a noticeable shift in her demeanor—she was calmer, more grounded. She shared that her relationship with her mother had significantly improved, that they were building bridges they thought were long gone.



The toxic relationship she'd been in? It was over. She was free.

Our nurse practitioner's heart swelled with joy as she listened to the patient's progress. She handed her a list of area churches, inviting her to join her family at a service. The patient's face lit up with gratitude, a new sense of direction taking root in her heart. The road ahead was still uncertain, but she was no longer walking it alone.

For our nurse practitioner, this was more than just a medical visit—it was a reminder of the power of care, compassion, and second chances.

**"When I walked into the pregnancy services program, I felt overwhelmed.**

**But I left with hope, a plan, and the tools to give my baby the best start in life."**

# **A WHISPER OF HOPE: CONFI- DENTIAL CARE IN TIMES OF CRISIS**

A young woman called our clinic, her voice barely a whisper, hesitant to even speak the word "pregnancy".

With each question she asked, it was clear how afraid she was of judgment and being exposed.

She wanted to know that her visit and records would remain private.

Our front desk staff reassured her, explaining our commitment to confidentiality and HIPAA laws and ensuring that no one would know or be told about her appointment.



*Pregnancy Services*



When she arrived, the weight of her fear was visible. She was clearly overwhelmed, her eyes red from crying, her body trembling with anxiety. She was in an incredibly difficult personal situation, filing a restraining order and struggling to find safety in an unsafe world. She needed to know she could trust us with her vulnerability, and we listened with open hearts. We didn't rush her; we simply offered the comfort and care she so desperately needed.

During her visit, she was seen as a pregnancy patient and gently counseled by our clinic staff, who provided medical advice and a sense of safety and compassion. When the appointment ended, she had scheduled an ultrasound, her voice filled with gratitude for the kindness we showed her. We promised to pray for her and continue to lift her up in our hearts.



Later, she confirmed her ultrasound appointment, and we were grateful for the opportunity to walk beside her through the uncertainty. We were honored to offer her care and sanctuary amid her turmoil.

**"For years,  
I avoided dental care  
because I couldn't afford it.**

**Receiving affordable treatment  
not only restored my smile  
but also gave me back  
my confidence."**

## **A PATH CLEARED**

During a recent Dental Blitz, amidst the familiar sounds of dental equipment and hushed conversations, the team met Ian.

Ian arrived with two problematic teeth and a palpable sense of hope.

His eagerness stood out, contrasting sharply with the typical apprehension many feel about dental visits.

Ian's attitude was intriguing, even for those who groan when their dentist's office calls with a check-up reminder.



As often happens during the Dental Blitzen, conversations started while people waited in the crowded lobby, and Ian had much to share. These weren't just painful teeth he was about to have extracted; they were obstacles preventing him from receiving crucial heart surgery. As a veteran, Ian was caught in a bureaucratic maze, lacking dental coverage. His health and future hung in the balance, threatened by potential infection and red tape. Unfortunately, situations like Ian's occur too often in the community. Insurance denial here, an impossibly high deductible there—many people make just enough money not to qualify for Medicaid but not enough to pay out of pocket. Ian's situation was all too familiar to the staff and community members.

That day, everything shifted for Ian. The volunteers—skilled professionals with generous hearts—did more than extract teeth; they removed barriers. With each careful procedure, they were paving the way for Ian's improved health and brighter future.



As treatment progressed, a change was noticeable in Ian. When the procedure was complete, Ian's relief was palpable. He ran his tongue over the spaces where his troublesome teeth had been, his expression a mix of disbelief and gratitude. "I can't believe it," he said, his voice thick with emotion. "You folks have no idea what this means."

The team actually did have an idea. They had seen it time and time again—how addressing one medical need could set off a chain reaction of positive changes in a person's life. For Ian, these extracted teeth meant more than just dental health; they represented a hurdle to overcome, a step closer to heart surgery, and a renewed hope.

As Ian prepared to leave, he paused at the door. "Thank you," he said, "but thank you will never be enough." A staff member assured him that this moment—this opportunity to help—was precisely why they were there, dedicating their time and resources.



While not every problem can be solved or every hurt healed, a difference is made, time after time. Reflecting on Ian's visit and countless others like it, there is a deep sense of purpose and gratitude. This is why the team is here. This is why they persist, even when challenges seem overwhelming, volunteer lists thin, and funds stretched; in every pain eased, every barrier overcome, they see the face of their community becoming healthier, stronger, and more whole.

That, more than any words of thanks, keeps them going.

**FROM  
DESPAIR  
TO  
GRACE**

James had spent most of his life searching for something to fill his void.

For years, he tried to drown it out with drugs, alcohol, and anything else that promised even a moment of escape.

But by 2009, everything had spiraled out of control.





At 57 years old, he felt like his life was beyond saving. The weight of his addiction and mistakes pressed down on him so heavily that he saw only one way out—leaving this earth.

One night, in absolute desperation, he cried out to God.

“Stop me from doing what I’m doing,” he begged. “Change me, or take my life.”

A week and a half later, his answer came—not in the way he expected, but exactly how he needed it. The police arrived at his door, and James was arrested. He pled guilty, fully expecting a lengthy prison sentence. James had tried Alcoholics Anonymous before, but it never worked. This time, he was willing to try again. A friend introduced him to Accent on Christ (AOC), and that’s when something began to change.



James started laying everything in God’s hands. He didn’t know what his future held—whether he’d go to prison or not—but for the first time, he trusted that God did. James began attending a Bible study, even though he was still wearing an ankle monitor. At first, he sat on the sidelines, hesitant to join the circle. But the more he listened, the more he realized—God wasn’t finished with him.

During a Tres Dias retreat, James had a spiritual experience, unlike anything he had ever had. One night, he awoke with an overwhelming feeling in the room, a presence he couldn’t ignore.

“God, is this you?” he asked in his mind.

“Yes,” came the answer.

James felt fear like never before. “I fear You,” he admitted.

“You should,” God responded.



James couldn't understand. "How can I ever be with You? How can someone as wicked and broken as I am ever go to heaven?"

At that moment, he saw a vision—Jesus on the cross. A light turned on inside him, and warmth flooded his body. He realized then what he had been missing all these years. The thing he had searched for in substances, reckless living, fleeting highs—it had never been of this world. It had always been Jesus.

Peace settled over him, the kind he had never known. Even though he faced legal consequences, he knew he wasn't alone. When his trial came, he was so upfront about his past that the prosecutor had to tell him to stop talking. His lawyer noticed the transformation in him. Twenty-one men from AOC and his church came to support him. He stood before the judge and apologized—not just for what he had done, but for who he had been. He even thanked the prosecutor, telling him he understood he was just doing his job. In the end, James received the minimum sentence.



Even in prison, God continued to work in him. He was protected and respected and took every opportunity to share his faith with others. Once he was released, he remained committed to his recovery and his faith. He was baptized, and his mother was able to see him give his life to Christ before she passed away in 2010.

Now, James is deeply involved in his church and the recovery community. He helps with food donation pickups at ECLC, does light maintenance, and remains steady in AOC. He's completed the sobriety steps, participated in three Bible studies, and mentored others walking the same road he once traveled. He knows the importance of community and accountability and wants everyone in the program to feel safe and supported.

"The thing I was looking for to fill the void was never of this world," James says. "It was Jesus. He's the only way to fill that infinite void."



Romans 7 speaks to him deeply: the struggle between good and evil, between flesh and spirit. He knows the battle isn't over, but he also knows where his strength comes from.

For James, it all comes down to grace—the thing he never thought he deserved but has now built his life upon.

## **GROWING THROUGH THE AWKWARD MOMENTS**

We often hear students reflect on the lessons with surprising honesty and insight—especially regarding the more sensitive topics we tackle.

One 6th grader put it perfectly with a shy smile and an embarrassed laugh:

“I think it’s helpful but embarrassing.”



*Positive Relationships*



We totally understand. Talking about body changes, intimacy, and emotions can feel a little awkward at first.

But we love to see how, over time, that initial discomfort starts to fade as the students realize how crucial these conversations are. After an activity that helped them assess their behaviors, one student shared, “I liked how we did the assessment activity. It helped me see myself.”

Another chimed in, “I enjoyed this lesson and what we talked about,” revealing that the conversations, even the uncomfortable ones, resonated.



One of the biggest takeaways we see in these early lessons is realizing what makes a relationship healthy or unhealthy. “I learned about the signs of a healthy relationship versus an unhealthy relationship,” one student said thoughtfully. Connecting those dots shows us that they’re not just hearing the lessons—they’re internalizing them, understanding their importance.

By the time we start talking about self-respect, boundaries, and personal growth, it’s clear that these lessons are making an impact. One student even admitted, “I know now that I need to work on self-confidence,” which marks a massive step in their personal development.

It’s a journey for all of us, and watching these students take those first steps toward self-awareness and positive change is why we do what we do.

**PSALM 33:18**

**"But the eyes of the Lord are on those  
who fear him, on those whose hope is in  
his unfailing love."**

**GUIDING  
THE  
WAY  
TO  
SUPPORT**

When Rebecca first contacted the Financial Potential team, she was feeling overwhelmed.

She had recently learned that she was eligible for Medicare grocery benefits but didn't know where to start or who to contact.

With so many resources out there, she felt lost and unsure of how to access the support she needed.



*Financial Potential*



Our team and volunteers worked with Rebecca to guide her through the process, showing her the right people to call and what questions to ask. It wasn't just about filling out forms but about helping her understand how to navigate the system confidently.

A couple weeks later, Rebecca called us back, her voice full of gratitude. "Thank you so much for helping me understand how to access my benefits," she said. "I never would have figured it out on my own. It's such a relief to have that support."

Knowing that we had been able to guide her to the right help, giving her the tools and knowledge she needed, made all the difference for Rebecca.

It was a reminder of how important it is to connect people with the resources they need and how small steps can create significant changes in someone's life.

## **DIANA AND JACK'S JOURNEY TO REUNI- FICATION**

Diana and Jack had been part of the Family Care Services program for a while because of an open Department of Child Services (DCS) case where two of their children had been removed from the home.

Our team was able to join them for a Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM).



*Family Care*



Before these meetings, we always hold a prep session with the parents, walking them through what to expect so they can feel as comfortable as possible.

After the September CFTM, Diana reached out to our Family Care Services team.

“It was the best meeting we’ve had,” she said.

She explained how our classes and how we truly listened to them had reignited their hope. For the first time in a long while, Diana and Jack felt like they could move forward, not being held back by the weight of judgment. Diana shared how deeply it meant to them that we didn’t look down on them for having a DCS case. That simple act of not judging them opened a door for them to engage with the classes they so desperately needed without fear or shame, and then they were one step closer to reuniting with their children.

**A  
FULL  
CART,  
A  
FULL  
HEART**

Janet is a single mother of four, working tirelessly to create a better future for her family while going to school to earn her degree in Business Administration.

Balancing school, work, and raising her children was a daily challenge, and each grocery trip was a painful reminder of everything she couldn’t provide.



She often had to deny her children even the smallest essentials, explaining that they simply didn't have enough.

That was until Janet joined our GAIN Initiative and discovered the ECLC Food Co-op. Here, she found a supportive community and a place where she could finally say "yes" to her children. With access to affordable, nutritious food and household essentials, Janet no longer felt the strain of overwhelming grocery bills. For the first time in a long while, she could fill her cart with items her family needed—fresh produce, toiletries, laundry detergent, and more—all thanks to the generosity of those who support the Food Co-op.

Through the Food Co-op's help, Janet can focus on her studies and work towards her degree, building a pathway to greater financial independence for her family. Her participation with the Food Co-op has turned her constant "no" into a joyful "yes," bringing relief, dignity, and hope back into Janet's life.

## HEARD AND HELD

Teresa walked into the Clothing Resource Department, shoulders slumped, and eyes already filled with tears.

One of our team members greeted her softly, "Hey, how are you doing?"—a question that went beyond a simple greeting and opened a space for honesty and support.

Teresa shook her head, tears spilling over as she pulled aside her collar slightly, revealing a scar that began at her chest.



*Clothing Resource*



Over the next fifteen minutes, Teresa shared her story in fragments, piecing together a narrative of pain and resilience. It had started with a severe case of salmonella poisoning, leaving her hospitalized and weakened. Just when she thought she might recover and begin rebuilding, doctors discovered a football-sized tumor. The surgery removed it, but it also severed her vocal cord, leaving her with barely a whisper and the scar she now bore as a reminder.

Before the poisoning, she had been offered a fresh start—a job as an Administrative Assistant, one she'd looked forward to. However, her illness delayed her plans, and after the surgery, that opportunity slipped away entirely. Before this, she'd been working concessions at the Ford Center, scraping by and just managing to support herself. Losing that job cost her SNAP benefits, and she now found herself without income, work, or support.



Living alone and isolated from family, Teresa was constantly afraid of losing her home. Looking at the staff member, she explained how people kept telling her, “You’re going to be fine,” before quickly walking away. She wasn’t fine, she said, and every word seemed to weigh heavily, longing for someone to understand.

At that moment, our staff member saw her—not just her scars or silence, but the person beneath it all. Gently, they took her hand, offered a prayer, and encouraged her, reminding her that she was not alone.

This work isn’t just about providing clothes; it’s about creating sacred moments to offer a compassionate, listening ear and a chance for people to be seen, heard, and held.

#### **ISAIAH 40:31**

**"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."**

#### **HEALING IN HELPING OTHERS**

Bethany had been volunteering with Family Care Services for a while, drawn in by the mission to support and uplift families.

She felt called to be there, believing that God had placed this opportunity in her path for a reason.

But what she didn't expect was how the work would end up impacting her own life as much as those she served.



*Volunteer Stories*



One day, Bethany was helping a woman enrolled in the program who had experienced significant childhood trauma. As they talked, Bethany suggested a video on overcoming trauma that she thought might help. But Bethany decided to watch it alongside her instead of just recommending it.

The experience was transformative. Bethany found herself deeply moved by the video, gaining insights into her own experiences and healing old wounds she hadn't fully recognized. She realized that sometimes, in guiding others toward healing, we find healing ourselves.

Through this experience, Bethany saw firsthand the beauty of mutual support—that everyone, whether volunteer or participant, could offer something valuable.

In helping others, we often find pieces of ourselves restored.

## TRACING DREAMS

When Emily joined the GAIN Initiative, she could barely imagine where it would take her.

Life had been an uphill journey for a long time, and being on disability income left her feeling like her dreams would have to wait.

Even so, she'd always held a deep love for family history and genealogy, knowing she had a unique gift for weaving together the stories of those who came before.

What if, she wondered, she could turn that passion into something more?





GAIN became her lifeline, connecting her to the resources and people who helped her see a way forward. With the guidance of a dedicated mentor, Emily worked step-by-step to create a plan for her dream business. She even launched a website where she could finally showcase her work, making the leap from an idea to a reality. “GAIN showed me it’s possible to do things again,” she said, a warm glow of confidence in her voice.

Soon, she took on more significant challenges—attending conferences, preparing business pitches, and learning to introduce herself as an entrepreneur. Emily had once felt her confidence slipping, but now, thanks to GAIN and the community she built, she found her footing.



GAIN’s Staying Ahead program taught her the skills to navigate the business world and developed the resilience to reach her goals despite the challenges.

Now, her business is beginning to blossom. Emily is fully immersed in a major project, the kind that would have felt like an impossible dream just a short time ago. As she dives into her research, piecing together stories and tracing histories, she reflects on how far she’s come. “I feel like I’m finally putting myself out there,” she said with pride.

Through GAIN’s support, Emily has not only built a business but also rekindled her belief in herself and her future.

**"I used to put off doctor visits  
because I couldn't afford them.**

**This clinic didn't just see me—  
they treated me like I was worth helping.**

**And for that, I'll always be grateful."**

## **A BREATH OF HOPE**

In a rent-controlled apartment, a mother of three had been battling an infection for a week, pushing through each day despite her aching body.

Bills kept her from resting, and though a nagging cough deepened, she brushed aside the thought of it being anything more than a cold.

She knew the cost of urgent care would mean sacrificing too much—a price she couldn't afford with three little ones depending on her.



*Medical Services*



Instead, she contacted the Evansville Christian Health Clinic, knowing she'd receive the care she needed regardless of her ability to pay.

After hanging up the phone, she let out a sigh—a small breath of relief, but with so much more within it. In that sigh was promise. In that sigh was hope. In that sigh was a touch of beauty, a reminder of God's provision.

One less worry for a mother means one more reason to rejoice.

## SHIFTING PATHS

The phone call came in sharp and cold, her voice tinged with disgust.

She wanted a pregnancy test, and there was no mistaking her tone—it was clear she was not happy about it.



*Pregnancy Services*



We quickly scheduled her for an appointment, wanting to offer her care and support no matter her feelings. Her mother accompanied her when she arrived, but the patient insisted it was just a work-related appointment. There was an air of detachment around her, almost as though she was going through the motions without really engaging.

Throughout the visit, she was quiet and distant, making it clear that she didn't want children. She mentioned that she had been told she couldn't get pregnant, adding another layer to her reluctance.

As the appointment wrapped up, she asked a question that caught us off guard—"Do you perform abortions?"

She didn't schedule an ultrasound, and there was a heaviness in the room as we quietly reassured her that we were there for her, no matter what she decided.



The nurse was deeply concerned. The patient's words and demeanor hinted at a still uncertain mind, and the nurse encouraged her to reach out if she wanted to talk more or if she needed further care. It was a moment of gentle guidance, offering the patient space to decide in her own time.

The following day, much to our surprise, the patient called again. This time, her voice was softer, more thoughtful. She asked about scheduling an ultrasound, which was a complete change in tone from the day before. We made an appointment for her the next day, offering her the care and support she needed.

It was a reminder of the power of time, patience, and compassion—sometimes, all it takes is a little space for someone to change their mind.

### **ROMANS 15:13**

**"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."**

### **CARE BEYOND COST**

Aaron had been on our waitlist for over a year, waiting for an extraction appointment.

The morning of the Dental Blitz, he called to cancel, saying he couldn't afford the \$40 fee.

We immediately called him back, reassuring him that he could come in regardless of his ability to pay.

Aaron showed up deeply grateful for the care he received and thankful that financial barriers didn't prevent him from getting the help he needed.

**"Recovery wasn't just about quitting—  
it was about discovering who I truly am  
without the crutch of addiction.**

**And now, I love the person  
I see in the mirror."**

## **DARK- NESS TO LIGHT**

For years, Vincent lived on the edge, selling drugs, chasing money, and embracing a lifestyle that seemed glamorous on the surface but was leading him down a dark path.

When a close friend was murdered, everything spiraled out of control.



*Accent on Christ*



He drowned his pain in heavy drug use, trying to outrun the grief and the reality of his choices.

Amid his chaos, Vincent found what he thought was the love of his life. They had a son together, but their relationship was built on fragile ground. They were both addicted to drugs, lost in the cycle of addiction and eventually, they became homeless. Vincent found himself living on the streets, eating out of trash cans and wondering if there was any way out.

In 2019, something shifted. Desperate to turn his life around for the sake of his son, he entered rehab. At that time, he didn't know Jesus, but he knew he wanted to stay sober. That decision changed everything. As he built a new life, he became involved in Alcoholics Anonymous, working his way up to a place of leadership within the organization. He took a job at a fast food restaurant, working diligently for a year and a half before transitioning into the medical industry—a move that taught him so much about himself. He learned what it meant to have a vision, not just for his work but for his life.



After nine months of sobriety, a friend from an AA meeting invited him to Accent on Christ. He was scared at first, stepping into a new environment filled with unfamiliar faces. But then, someone approached him and said, "He will never leave you or forsake you." Those words stuck with him. He kept coming back; over time, he began to understand what love truly meant.

His journey with Christ deepened when he attended Tres Dias, an experience that changed him in a meaningful way. Through that, he found Jesus—not just as a name, but as a Savior. Since then, Vincent has been preaching at his local church, sharing his testimony and the hope that transformed his life.

He also went through the GAIN Initiative at the Evansville Christian Life Center and attended the Financial Potential Program, where he learned how to manage his finances and build a stable future.



With the guidance of financial mentors and others, he gained the tools he needed to navigate financial stability. And in August 2023, his story came full circle when he got married, stepping into a new chapter with a foundation built on faith and renewal.

Through it all, Vincent has realized that while sobriety is a gift, Jesus is greater. It was Jesus who carried him out of darkness, gave him purpose, and showed him a love that never fails.

## THE POWER TO CHOOSE

Jessie sat quietly at her desk, her fingers nervously tapping on the edge of her notebook.

As a sophomore at Harrison High School, she had always been a good student, excelling in her classes and keeping to herself.

But recently, things at home—and in her relationship—had started to feel heavy.



*Positive Relationships*



Her senior boyfriend had been saying things to her that she couldn't quite shake. At first, it was small comments—about how she should dress, who she should hang out with, and even how she spent her time. But over the last few months, those words had grown sharper, more controlling. The little things had escalated, and Jessie began to feel more isolated. It wasn't physical abuse, not yet anyway, but the emotional and psychological weight was suffocating. She didn't know how to explain it, but she felt like she was losing herself in his world, constantly trying to please him, always on edge.

"I'm just doing it because I care about you," he'd say when she questioned his behavior, his words coated in that all-too-familiar charm. Jessie told herself that maybe it was normal—relationships were complicated, right? But deep down, something didn't feel right.



Then, one day, a facilitator from the Creating Positive Relationships program came into their classroom. It was just another presentation, she thought. Once the facilitator began to talk about what a healthy relationship looked like—what respect, trust, and support truly meant—Jessie felt something inside her stir. The words they spoke were familiar, like the things she had heard growing up, but they felt different now like they were meant for her.

The facilitator discussed healthy boundaries and how relationships should lift you up, not tear you down. She described the signs of toxic relationships—where control, manipulation, and verbal abuse were often disguised as "care" or "love." Jessie's heart pounded in her chest. She'd never heard anyone speak so openly about this before. She had thought what she was experiencing was something every couple went through, a test of their commitment, but now she realized it wasn't.



By the time the class ended, Jessie felt a strange mix of relief and fear. Relief because she wasn't alone in how she felt, and fear because she now saw her relationship for what it was.

After class, Jessie stayed behind, waiting for a moment when she could speak to the facilitator privately. When the room cleared out, she approached, her voice quiet.

"This week, I learned my relationship wasn't healthy, it's... it's controlling," Jessie confessed, her eyes meeting the facilitator's with a mixture of vulnerability and newfound strength.

The facilitator smiled gently, giving a supportive nod and offering encouraging words and other resources for the next steps.



Jessie walked out of the classroom that day feeling a sense of clarity she hadn't known before. It wasn't just about leaving her boyfriend—it was about choosing herself, about understanding her worth. And while the decision wasn't easy, she knew now that she could walk away from what wasn't healthy and build something better for herself.

The journey wasn't going to be simple, but with the knowledge and support she had gained, Jessie knew she was on the right path. With that, she stepped forward, ready to start living for herself—free from control and fear and open to the possibility of a life filled with real love and respect.

**PHILIPPIANS 4:13**

**"I can do all this through him  
who gives me strength."**

**BUILDING  
DREAMS**

Matt met with our team to explore  
Financial Potential classes.

Through these conversations,  
he gained valuable insights  
that helped him refine his goal:

*becoming a homeowner.*



*Financial Potential*



With determination and focus, Matt put in the work to turn that dream into a reality. Just last month, he officially closed on his house and received the keys.

When reflecting on his journey, Matt shared that our team encouraged him to stay committed and believe in the process, reminding him that his hard work would pay off. One team member urged him to persevere, no matter the challenges.

While the path was his to walk, Matt acknowledged that the Evansville Christian Life Center's support and encouragement helped him stay motivated as he took the necessary steps toward homeownership.

## FROM HOME TO THE FIELD

Jerome is new to the Family Care Services program, and he's already seeing a difference in his life.

Since joining, he's picked up a wealth of new skills, especially when communicating with his teenage kids.



Family Care



He shared how the lessons have helped him and his wife connect better, even in those challenging parenting moments.

It hasn't stopped there; Jerome has been using what he's learned to coach his little league team, and he's already noticed positive changes in how the kids respond to him.

Family Care Services helped Jerome build stronger relationships and make a lasting impact on those around him, whether at home or on the field.

## **NOURISH- ING HOPE**

This year, one of our Food Co-op members stopped by, a grateful smile on their face, just to say thank you.

They shared how this resource has made a world of difference for their family.



*Food Co-op*



With the Co-op's support, they can now afford healthier, more nutritious meals, a change that seemed impossible just months ago.

This vital access to affordable food is helping them focus on paying off debt without compromising their family's well-being.

Their gratitude was a powerful reminder of how much hope and security the Co-op brings to those working toward a brighter future.

## WE'LL BE THERE

Angela approached us quietly, her expression a mix of hope and worry.

She asked if we could pray for her husband, who was anxiously awaiting a response after a job interview.



As we talked, she glanced down at the small bag of clothes she had just picked out for her two-year-old. “I don’t come here every month,” she said softly, “but it’s such a comfort to know that whenever I really need something, you’re here.”

For Angela, the clothing resource department is more than just a place to find essentials—it’s a steady presence in uncertain times. Whether someone comes in regularly or only in moments of unexpected need, we’re here to provide more than clothing. We offer reassurance, a listening ear, and the reminder that no one has to walk through challenges alone.

For Angela and so many others, knowing there’s a place where they are always welcome brings hope when it’s needed most.

## SMALL ACTS, BIG IMPACT

For Heidi, volunteering has become a part of her life’s rhythm.

Over the past nine years, Heidi and her close friend Abby have faithfully served in the GAIN Initiative, providing meals to participants.

Each time spent with a cohort, Heidi says, reminds her why she keeps coming back.



Volunteer Stories



What began as a one-time outreach project for their singles group transformed into a commitment that has spanned nearly a decade.

“We were looking for an opportunity to serve as a group, and GAIN was introduced to us,” Heidi recalls. “It felt like a perfect fit. After that first time, Abby and I kept returning, and here we are, still serving nine years later.”

While there isn’t one standout memory that defines her time as a volunteer with GAIN, Heidi treasures the moments of fellowship she’s shared—both with her fellow volunteers and the participants. Each meal served is an act of kindness, a way to bring hope and a sense of community to those in need.

## FROM THE GROUND UP

When Robert arrived in Evansville, he had little more than the clothes on his back and a determination to start over.

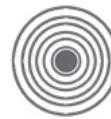
Recently released from prison, he found himself staying in a family member’s house, which had fallen into disrepair over the years.



With no job, no savings, and no clear direction, Robert turned to the GAIN Initiative—initially needing to fulfill community hours for his release, but hoping that maybe this place could give him more than just a checkmark; maybe it could give him a chance.

GAIN became the foundation he needed. The team welcomed him, offering support while he worked on getting his life back on track. Soon, with the encouragement and guidance of GAIN partners, he landed a job at a local factory, a position that gave him stability and a renewed sense of purpose. Robert poured himself into the work, driven by an intensity he hadn't felt in years. His commitment did not go unnoticed—he was promoted not once but twice!

From zero income to an income that allowed him to support himself comfortably, Robert is now saving diligently, working to rebuild his credit, and aiming for a down payment on a home. With reliable transportation, he no longer has to rely on others for basic needs. It's a path that requires grit, but he's stayed the



course with one goal in mind: to create a better future, not just for himself but for his family. In two years, he hopes to welcome his wife, a woman he reconnected with after high school, into the new home he's working so hard to provide for her.

Robert's journey is his own, but he was supported by the sense of belonging he found in GAIN. "A lot of people turn me down because of my past," he admitted. "But this place is welcoming." For Robert, being part of GAIN's community has offered a unique sense of connection.

"It's being part of a group process," he reflected. "I love the community aspect. Being part of these groups always leaves me feeling energized."

**"When I thought I had no options,  
the health clinic provided  
the medical care I needed  
and reminded me  
that my health matters."**

## **OPEN DOORS**

She came to the clinic  
as a new patient seeking guidance  
and support—  
a woman without a permanent home,  
living in her car alongside her two dogs.



*Medical Services*



As our team sat with her, they discussed her health and shared a few words about her faith. Her immediate needs were many: safety, shelter, food, and resources for her beloved pets.

A few days after her appointment, she reached out to share a bit of good news. Friends had offered to open their doors, taking turns giving her a place to stay. She had found a new home for her larger dog and had begun searching for a job. She was grateful for the kindness and non-judgmental care she received at the clinic, which, she said, had renewed her faith in humanity.

She was thankful for the listening ear, for the prayers we shared, and for the sense of hope our team offered her.

## TO- GETHER IN RESTOR- ATION

When Tara first called, her voice trembled with exhaustion.

Seven months pregnant, homeless, and without a single OB visit to her name, she felt invisible and unheard.



Pregnancy Services



Tara admitted to using meth and marijuana, painfully aware of how this path jeopardized both her future and her child's. Still, a glimmer of resolve remained, and with that, she reached out to us.

The clinic typically doesn't treat pregnancy patients beyond 20 weeks, but her situation demanded attention. She needed someone to listen and help her find a way forward, and so we welcomed her in. In the exam room, sitting with our team, she opened up even more. She confided her need for shelter and, in a moment of raw honesty, mentioned her openness to adoption if it meant her child could have a better life.

Our team immediately contacted GLAD, a trusted adoption agency in Evansville. Within a short time, GLAD staff arrived, bringing compassion, experience, and the understanding that there could still be a hopeful path for this young mother and her baby. They listened to her story and offered options despite encountering challenges.



With her legal troubles keeping her out of many shelters, it would have been easy for her to feel shut out once again. But GLAD didn't give up. They secured a safe place for her to rest that night and arranged for her admission into Stepping Forward, an addiction treatment program within Stepping Stones, the following day. Stepping Stones offered the specialized care she needed to confront her addiction, paving the way for a new start for her and her unborn child.

Before she left, we made sure she had food, and GLAD provided phone minutes and other essentials. In these moments, it wasn't just about care—it was about affirming her dignity and assuring her that she wasn't alone. Months later, she was still working with GLAD, receiving counseling and support as she took steps forward. This journey of partnership—ours, GLAD's, Stepping Stones, and Tara—became a symbol of love and hope, guiding her toward the renewal she had feared was lost.

**ISAIAH 41:10**

**"So do not fear, for I am with you;  
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you;  
I will uphold you with my righteous  
right hand."**

**BEYOND  
A  
SMILE**

Andrea had been waiting patiently for a date to have her dental extraction.

When we called to schedule her appointment, she asked if she could work off her fee through volunteer work, and we were happy to do this for her.



During this conversation, we learned more about Andrea's situation—life had been incredibly tough for her. Currently homeless and searching for employment, she was facing challenges that many of us can hardly imagine. Moved by her story, we shared with Andrea some resources we offer, like our Clothing Resource Department, Free Education Classes, and more. We also told her she could contact us anytime, whether she needed someone to talk to or medical services. We felt blessed to help her with her dental health and so much more.

## **BREAKING MISCON- CEPTIONS**

On a flight back to Evansville, one of our Creating Positive Relationships facilitators sat beside a man with whom she struck up a casual conversation.

As they swapped stories about their work, the facilitator noticed a shift in the man's demeanor when the topic turned to the classes she taught to high school students.

“So, abstinence-only education?”  
the man asked sharply.



*Positive Relationships*



The facilitator smiled, sensing an opportunity. “Well, not exactly,” she replied.

She had heard this type of reaction before—misconceptions about programs like Creating Positive Relationships, where people assumed it was all about shaming students for their choices without offering any real guidance.

This was her moment to truly explain what Creating Positive Relationships was all about. She shared how the program went far beyond the surface, teaching students about what healthy relationships look like, how to spot the signs of abuse, and how the choices they make in high school can shape their futures. She explained how it covers everything from building healthy friendships, learning about the realities of STIs, and navigating the complexities of romantic relationships.



As she spoke, she could see a change in the man’s posture. The tension in his shoulders eased, and the skepticism began to fade. It was clear that the facilitator had made an impact, helping another parent understand the importance of what Creating Positive Relationships offers. It wasn’t just about giving students facts but providing a neutral space to express themselves, ask questions, and learn how to form healthy connections with others.

At that moment, the facilitator realized that small shifts in attitude, one conversation at a time, were powerful. It wasn’t just a victory for her or that man—it was a win for the entire community.

By helping others understand the value of these programs, they are ensuring that more students will have the support and tools they need to build positive, healthy relationships.

#### **ISAIAH 58:10**

**"If you pour yourself out for the hungry  
and satisfy the desire of the afflicted,  
then shall your light rise in the darkness  
and your gloom be as the noonday."**

#### **FINANCIAL EMPOWER- MENT**

Holly joined the Food Co-op as a St. Vincent de Paul cohort member for the GAIN Initiative and quickly embraced the opportunity.

She jumped right into the services available, eager to make a change.

She started with Financial Potential and began with an intake session, where our team asked Holly what she wanted to get out of the experience.

The next step was to assign Holly five BrightCourse lessons, which provided an excellent foundation for her financial journey.



*Financial Potential*



We set up her next appointment, bringing our Financial Potential mentor to guide her further.

At the time, Holly hadn't had a job for months and was living off savings and credit cards. She wanted to work in childcare but didn't have a degree. Our mentor learned that Holly had only \$100 left during her intake appointment. The situation was dire, but we focused on creating a spending plan and helped Holly understand how much money she needed to make to cover her expenses. The goal was clear: Holly needed a job that paid at least \$17 an hour.

Holly had been living in an apartment on the west side and had been struggling, but our team provided guidance that helped her see the path forward. Our Clothing Resource Department offered her clothing for interviews, and Holly couldn't help but tell everyone how amazing she felt getting so much support.

Holly was also motivated by her goal to be able to spend money on her soon-to-arrive granddaughter.



It became a driving force in her journey. Soon enough, Holly secured a job working 18 hours a week. The support she received from the ECLC team, along with the tools they gave her, made her feel like she was finally in control of her future. "This is a respite from my life," she said. "It's so good to have someone listen and give me direction."

The Financial Potential program didn't just help Holly get back on her feet—it shortened her journey and lightened her load. They even helped her create a script to communicate with her debt collector, giving her the confidence to handle difficult situations. It was incredible to see Holly's hope renewed. "There's a light at the end of the tunnel," she said, knowing she would get there no matter what. Financial Potential helped her take the wheel, letting her control her finances instead of letting money control her.

Holly, with her newfound hope and confidence, told everyone about the great services she had received and encouraged others to participate in the Financial Potential program, as well.

**"Family Care Services didn't just help me—they helped my entire family. Together, we've found stability and strength we never thought possible."**

## BY THEIR SIDE

Parenting and building a family can be overwhelming for anyone.

Even with a strong support system, there are times when we need someone to listen, offer guidance, or simply remind us that we're not alone.

Unfortunately, many parents face the struggle of raising children without that kind of support, leaving them to carry the weight on their own.



Family Care



Misty, a single mother, knows this all too well. For years, she navigated the challenges of parenting without the comfort of a safety net. She struggled with questions about how to raise her kids well and give them the future they deserved, and sometimes, she just needed someone to talk to when life's daily struggles became too much to carry alone.

Misty found support in Family Care Services—something she hadn't known she was missing. She started working with a team of caring individuals who were there to listen, offer advice, and help her find the strength to keep moving forward. Misty no longer had to carry the weight of her worries alone. The classes she joined gave her the tools to become a better mom and a better version of herself.

When Misty spoke about her journey, her words reflected a deep sense of relief and gratitude. "Thank you so much for being here; this means so much to me," she said. "As a single mom, knowing the right next steps is hard. These classes have helped me become a better person and mom."



With tears in her eyes, she added, "You'll never know what this means to me."

Misty's story is one of many. It's a reminder that sometimes, all it takes is the right support to make a world of difference. For Misty, finding that support meant the difference between struggling alone and moving forward with hope, strength, and the belief that she didn't have to face it alone. In that simple act of finding someone to walk alongside her, Misty began to rebuild—not just her life but her sense of purpose and confidence as a mother.

It's a reminder for all of us that we all need someone to lean on. Whether we're raising children, building a future, or just trying to get through the day, the power of support—of knowing we're not alone—changes everything.

**"Paycheck to paycheck  
is no longer my reality.**

**I finally feel stable, secure,  
and ready to dream about  
what's next."**

## **STRETCH- ING DOLLARS, REACHING DREAMS**

For Phoebe and Marcus, parents of three young children, the ECLC Food Co-op has become more than a place to get groceries—it's been a lifeline on their journey toward a better future.

Before they joined, the couple was stretched thin financially.

Their goal of buying a home and paying off debt often seemed out of reach, with so much of their income tied up in essential living expenses.

Grocery shopping felt like an uphill battle, with rising food prices adding strain to an already-tight budget.





Then they discovered the Food Co-op and became members through the GAIN Initiative and quickly felt the impact. Instead of paying high supermarket prices, they could stock up on groceries for a fraction of the cost. The Co-op's setup was simple yet effective: What was the average cost of items? Only about 21 cents each.

For Phoebe and Marcus, this meant they could save over \$100 weekly on groceries. The Co-op covered about 60-80% of their family's monthly food expenses, so they had room to breathe. The savings were more than numbers on a budget sheet; they were freedom. With more financial stability, Phoebe and Marcus could reallocate the funds toward their goals, chip away at their debt, and even start a small savings fund to make a down payment on a home.

The Co-op's impact didn't stop at food. Staff and volunteers took a trauma-informed approach, providing understanding and support for the challenges families face. This wasn't just about groceries—it was a safe, welcoming community that understood their journey and the pressures they navigated daily.

## WHERE LAUGHTER SPEAKS EVERY LANGUAGE

The diversity in languages and cultures has brought challenges and beautiful moments to the Clothing Resource Department.

We witnessed a little scene that made it all worth it:

Children from three different nations, chatting in a blend of languages none of them fully understood, were happily playing together as their parents waited to check out.

Their laughter and squeals filled the room, a joyful reminder that some things—like play—need no translation.



*Clothing Resource*

**GALATIANS 6:10**

**"So then, as we have opportunity,  
let us do good to everyone,  
and especially to those who  
are of the household of faith."**

**A  
MOMENT  
OF  
GRACE**

Beatrice sat quietly on a bench  
on the patio of our building  
in the warm glow of the morning sun.

She reflected on the journey that led her  
to this moment, filled with unexpected  
turns, purpose, and growth.

As a volunteer with the Clothing Resource  
Department, she found herself deeply  
moved by the impact she could have on  
people's lives.

It wasn't always easy, but it was meaningful.



*Volunteer Stories*



After Beatrice retired, she discovered a deep and unshakable desire to serve others in a way she had never done before. She had spent years working in various roles, but it was during her retirement that she realized how much more she could offer. She wanted to make a difference, no matter how small.

One particular day stood out in her mind—a day that would remain with her always. It was just another routine shift, or so she thought until she encountered a man who had recently made a life-altering decision. He had just dedicated his life to The Lord, and the light in his eyes was unmistakable.

As Beatrice checked out his items, she couldn't help but feel a pull in her heart. She had seen the weight of life's struggles in many faces, but this man's face was different. It was full of hope. Without hesitation, Beatrice asked him, "Would you mind if I prayed for you?"

The man paused, his eyes filled with a mix of surprise and gratitude, and then, with a nod, he agreed.



Beatrice closed her eyes, took a deep breath, and led him in a prayer, asking for strength, guidance, and peace to fill his heart. She prayed that his newfound faith would continue to lead him down the path of love and light.

When the prayer ended, the man's expression had transformed. A genuine, radiant smile spread across his face. He looked at Beatrice, his eyes twinkling, and said, "Thank you. That meant more to me than you know."

As he left, his steps were lighter, his spirit lifted, and his smile infectious. Beatrice watched him walk away, a sense of joy swelling in her heart. That moment, that simple act of prayer, was one of the most fulfilling experiences she had ever had as a volunteer.

And in that moment, Beatrice knew she had found her true calling. She was exactly where she needed to be.

### ROMANS 12:4-5

**"For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."**

### RISING ABOVE

Mary joined the GAIN Initiative just last year, desperate to escape the constant struggle.

She was determined to turn her life around and find some balance amidst the chaos.

At the time, Mary wore a thousand different hats: working as a chef at a local restaurant, doing meal prep, teaching music lessons, and driving for a delivery service in whatever free moments she could find—all while caring for her child.



She worked tirelessly, but no matter how hard she tried, she always felt like she was just scraping by.

The weight of her life, especially after a difficult divorce, had drained her savings, and rent was a constant source of anxiety.

Mary joined GAIN with hope in her heart. She dreamed of learning how to budget, how to stabilize her finances, and how to find some peace amidst the storm. However, the pressure of so many responsibilities—coupled with her growing health concerns—became overwhelming. By week 13, she found herself at a breaking point, realizing she couldn't continue on without first taking care of her mental and physical well-being.

She took a step back, something that felt impossible for her at first, but with the support of the GAIN team, she found the strength to continue. She attended as many sessions as possible, pushing through the most challenging moments. Despite the setbacks, she walked across that graduation stage, proud of what she had accomplished.



Six months after completing the program, Mary's life had shifted in ways she had never imagined. She secured a job with a steady income, something she had dreamed of for so long. She moved into a more affordable living situation with a family member, easing the burden of her rent.

Beyond the stability, Mary felt something more: hope.

Hope for the future. She was now determined to follow her dream of owning her own business. Whether it's a small restaurant or a food truck, she is ready to take the next step. Mary's journey hasn't been easy, but it's been one of strength, perseverance, and unwavering determination.

She's not just surviving anymore—she's building a future, one step at a time.

**"They didn't just treat my symptoms—  
they cared about me as a person.**

**Walking out of that clinic,  
I felt seen, heard, and hopeful  
for the first time in years."**

## **TRUST AND COMFORT IN HEALTH- CARE**

At the clinic, we often see patients who need a place where they feel comfortable and experience less anxiety around healthcare experiences.

Our clinic provides just that—a space where people can find support and compassion.



After years of avoiding doctors and hospitals, Richard finally decided to give our clinic the chance he hadn't given any other place. Uncomfortable in medical settings and without insurance, he'd long resisted getting any care. Health concerns piled up over time, but Richard kept putting them aside—until he was faced with a serious and potentially costly medical decision that he couldn't ignore.

Arriving at the clinic, it was clear that Richard felt overwhelmed, uncertain of what to expect, and weighed down by the financial challenges ahead. Despite his concerns, he was met with patience and understanding from the first visit.

Our nurse practitioner took the time to carefully research and present different options, openly discussing each one to guide him through his choices. With every appointment, she reassured him that his health and comfort were the clinic's priority and that he was never alone in making these difficult decisions.



He felt at ease in a medical setting for the first time in years. It wasn't just the medical care that provided relief; it was the genuine care he received from the entire team. In their hands, he discovered a place of comfort and respect where he felt valued, no matter his circumstances.

Now, he trusts the clinic as a place he can return to—a place that cares for him not just as a patient but as a person deserving of kindness and compassion. This support has given him renewed confidence in his health journey, and he knows he's finally found a team that stands with him every step of the way.

**"Taking charge of my pregnancy  
meant taking charge of my life.**

**It wasn't easy,  
but I discovered a strength within me  
I never knew I had."**

## **SOME- WHERE**

Somewhere in a small bedroom on the  
Eastside of Evansville, a sixteen-year-old  
girl stared down at two pink lines.

Her breath caught, and tears blurred  
her vision as the reality set in.



*Pregnancy Services*



She wasn't ready for this. She wasn't ready to tell her mom, unsure of what her reaction would be. Her dad had been gone for years—there was no one to turn to on that side either. And her boyfriend? She knew he wouldn't be thrilled.

She felt lost, but she knew she needed to tell someone. She needed a place to go, a way to face what was happening, to see this new reality with her own eyes. A quick Google search led her to the Evansville Christian Health Clinic. Heart pounding, she drove there alone. It was one of her first outings since getting her license just weeks before. She never imagined this would be one of the first places she'd go on her own.

When she walked in, she was met with warmth instead of the cold, clinical feel she was expecting. The woman at the front desk greeted her with a kind smile, and the clinic felt more like a place of comfort than a sterile doctor's office. She couldn't quite meet anyone's eyes, but no one seemed to mind. They gave her gentle smiles and spoke in soft tones as she answered their questions and waited for confirmation.



When it came, in the quiet of a small exam room, it was what she already knew but hoped wasn't true: she was pregnant.

At that moment, the weight of it all overwhelmed her. Tears spilled over, and she felt like she was breaking under the pressure.

The nurse stepped closer, her eyes full of understanding. She didn't have to say anything—just being there, steady and kind, was enough. Then, in a gentle voice, she asked, "Can I pray with you?" Somehow, that simple question filled the girl with a sense of peace she hadn't expected. It felt like, maybe, she was not completely alone.

She realized now that coming here was the right choice. The future still felt daunting, and the path ahead was unclear. Sitting beside someone who cared, she felt ready to take the first step forward. The clinic had given her more than answers; it gave her peace and a small bright light leading her toward her new future.

**ACTS 20:35**

**"In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"**

**THE  
WEIGHT  
OF  
A  
PARENT'S  
LOVE**

The day before a recent Dental Blitz, a father walked into the clinic holding his 7-year-old daughter's hand.

They were both Spanish-speaking and through a translator, the father explained that his daughter had been in constant dental pain for some time.

His voice was filled with worry as he described her struggles, knowing that her teeth were in poor condition.



After examining her, it became clear that she was suffering from severe decay in several teeth, some of which were beyond repair. The pain she had been enduring was heart-wrenching.

The staff reassured the father that his daughter could return the following day for treatment. When they returned the next day, the little girl was seen by one of our compassionate dentists.

With the help of a translator, the father and daughter were gently walked through a treatment plan that would help get her back on track to a pain-free smile.

As the father listened, his eyes filled with gratitude. For the first time in what felt like a long while, he could breathe a little easier, knowing that his daughter's health and happiness were no longer out of reach.

## FROM CLASS TO CONVER- SATION

One of our Creating Positive Relationships facilitators had a rewarding experience with Olivia, a 7th grader.

After class, Olivia approached the facilitator, eager to email more questions about the topics they had discussed.

The facilitator, happy to continue the conversation, got permission from the school principal to engage with Olivia further.

What happened next was even more exciting. Instead of just reaching out to the facilitator, Olivia decided to take her questions home.



*Positive Relationships*



She talked to her mom about sex, relationships, and the lessons they'd covered in class.

As facilitators, we love helping students explore these critical topics. Still, one of our primary goals is to create an environment where they feel comfortable discussing these issues at home.

Olivia's choice to reach out to her mom was a huge win—it showed that the seeds we're planting in the classroom can grow into meaningful conversations within families, helping students develop a deeper understanding of healthy relationships both in and outside of school.

## **BREAKING FREE**

For as long as Hannah could remember, money had ruled her life.

It had ruled her parents' lives and her grandparents' too.

The saddest part was that she never had much of it, and neither did her family.





She grew to resent her friends, who didn't have to think about living paycheck to paycheck. Her job, where she'd worked for five years, only paid \$15 an hour—just enough to scrape by but far from what she'd dreamed of doing as a child. Working as a cashier in retail was never part of her plan, and she never had enough money for travel, presents for her family, or even an occasional meal out. She often stuck with tuna, mac and cheese, and peanut butter.

The thing about not having money is that it consumes your thoughts—it becomes like a god, constantly demanding your attention and ruling your life. Hannah knew she needed a change, and when a friend suggested the Financial Potential program at the Life Center, she was hesitant. She figured it would just be another lecture on cutting back, something she was already doing to the bone. But what could they possibly tell her that she didn't already know?



From the first moments of her intake session, though, Hannah could feel herself relax. Her financial mentor called it a “spending plan” instead of a budget, and that alone made her see things differently. It wasn’t just about not spending money; it was about planning for the life she wanted. They talked about local opportunities, resources, and the kind of job that could actually lift her up financially.

Her mentor helped her update her resume and referred her to positions that paid enough for her to start saving and even afford some of the little things she'd missed out on. One of the jobs they discussed was working as a receptionist at a local manufacturing company—a job paying \$18 an hour with potential for advancement. Another opportunity they found was logistics support at a distribution center, a job paying \$19 an hour with full-time hours and benefits, and the possibility of growing without needing a college degree.



A few weeks after her first meeting, she landed that higher-paying logistics support position. The first thing she did was buy a gift for her niece's birthday. She even started looking for an apartment closer to work, with a little more space and better suited to her needs. One day, during a shift at her new job, Hannah had a surprising realization: she hadn't thought about money all day. There was no pit in her stomach, no constant dread.

For the first time in her life, money didn't control her day or her emotions. She knew life would always have its challenges, but she felt empowered by her Financial Potential mentor's guidance and honest, practical advice. Finally, money didn't hold all the power—it was just a part of her life, not the ruler of it.

## FOR HIS FUTURE

Recently, we met a couple named Monica and Liam, who found themselves in one of the most challenging seasons of their lives.

They were no longer together, and every encounter seemed to end in shouting matches that hurt them and their child.

Eventually, the court intervened, placing their child in foster care—a home that, unbeknownst to Monica and Liam, would prove to be unsafe.



Family Care



With nowhere else to turn, they came to our Family Care Services program at DCS's recommendation. The goal was simple on paper but hard in reality: They had to learn to communicate and co-parent. Every session seemed fraught with tension, and at one point, our team wondered if there was any way forward. Screaming and anger flared up so often that our team had to separate them just to get through some meetings.

Even so, we kept returning to the root of the problem, helping Monica and Liam peel back the layers of hurt and resentment to understand what had brought them here. Our team used strategies from the GAIN program to teach them communication skills and equip them with tools they hadn't had before. Little by little, we watched the changes—small breakthroughs that soon grew into real progress.

The turning point came during a DCS team meeting. To the surprise of everyone in the room, Monica and Liam interacted calmly, working together rather than against each other.



The caseworkers who had seen their history were amazed. For the first time, Monica and Liam co-parented peacefully, putting their child's needs above their own frustrations.

Months later, their efforts paid off: they regained custody. Even more remarkable was how they continued to stay in touch with us, even after their official meetings were over. Recently, Liam called our team late one evening to say, "We're best friends now, all because of what you did. Thank you for giving us this chance to put our child first."

Now Monica and Liam aren't just navigating a court-ordered arrangement—they are creating a healthy environment for their child. In doing so, they've discovered the hope of a new beginning.

### **1 CORINTHIANS 12:25-27**

**"That there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it."**

### **SPICING UP LIFE**

The little things often made the biggest difference for John, a father of two.

While his family always had enough to get by, meals were usually basic, lacking the ingredients to make them truly enjoyable.

It wasn't that they didn't want to eat better—things like olive oil, spices, and seasonings were simply out of reach.



*Food Co-op*



That changed when John joined the ECLC Food Co-op.

Unlike typical food pantries, the Co-op provided not just staples but also the extras that turn simple meals into something satisfying. For the first time in a long while, John could cook meals that weren't just filling but flavorful.

These small additions brought more than just better meals—they gave John the ability to create a sense of normalcy and dignity for his family. The Food Co-op wasn't just about saving money; it was about empowering families like his to enjoy the simple comforts of a well-prepared meal while working toward a more stable future.

## ONE OUTFIT, ONE OPPOR- TUNITY

“Yes!” Meredith squealed as she opened her email, hardly able to believe her eyes.

She'd landed the job—the one that would genuinely change things for her and her two-year-old daughter, Ellie.

Now Ellie could finally get the physical therapy she needed, something Meredith had only dreamed of affording.

Now, she could start saving for a car, finally moving away from relying on the Evansville bus system.

The new job's hours would allow Meredith to spend more time with Ellie, and her mom wouldn't need to watch her as often.



*Clothing Resource*



For the first time, it felt like things were falling into place.

Rewind to a few weeks earlier, and Meredith hadn't even been sure she'd get an interview. When she did, her stomach sank when she realized she had nothing suitable to wear. Living paycheck to paycheck meant shopping for new clothes was out of the question, and even thrift stores had become too costly.

Desperate, she found herself at the Evansville Christian Life Center's Clothing Resource Department, where every item was just 25 cents. A warm volunteer, noticing her hesitation, gently helped her find a blazer, skirt, and shoes—all she needed to look and feel professional.

With that outfit, Meredith confidently walked into her interview and left feeling proud. Seeing that email, she knew her small but significant journey to the Life Center had made a difference. In that outfit, with that boost of encouragement, she'd taken her first steps toward a brighter future for herself and Ellie.

## GENERATIONS OF SERVICE: DENNIS'S JOURNEY AT THE LIFE CENTER

Dennis had always felt a deep calling to serve others, but it wasn't until years after his mom had worked as a receptionist in our building that he fully understood the impact of that calling.

His mother, a gentle and welcoming presence at the center, often shared stories of families who walked through the doors in need and left with not only their needs met but also their potential realized.





Dennis had watched his mom from a distance, marveling at how she made everyone feel seen and cared for. What he didn't realize then was that her work, her passion for helping others, was slowly planting the seeds of his own desire to make a difference. He never imagined that one day, he would be standing in the very same spot she had, offering a hand to those who needed it most.

Dennis was back at the Life Center years later, now volunteering with the Food Co-op. What started as a desire to give back grew into something far more fulfilling than he ever expected. He wasn't just helping families pick up food; he was part of something much larger—helping them take steps toward stability, one small act of kindness at a time.

Each day he volunteered, Dennis saw firsthand the barriers families faced, and yet, he also saw the strength and resilience in their eyes. Dennis knew that every time he sorted a donation or handed over a bag of food, it wasn't just a meal he was offering—it was a step toward a brighter future for someone.



The work was challenging at times, and there were days when it felt like there was never enough time or hands to do it all. But Dennis never minded. He knew that every task, no matter how small, was making a difference. He understood that every moment counted, whether it was helping to sort donations, assisting families with their grocery pick-up, or just offering a listening ear.

**“We all have  
a past,  
a present,  
and we can all  
write our own  
future story.”**

**- Stephen Ralph,  
Director of GAIN Initiatives**

## **STEPHEN'S STORY**

Stephen never imagined  
his life would lead him here.

Fourteen years into directing  
the GAIN Initiative, he still finds  
himself humbled by the journey that  
brought him to this place of service,  
of restoration, of hope.

Before he could guide others toward  
a new path, he had to first find his own.



Before Evansville, before the shelters, before the battles he barely survived; there was his mother. She was his anchor, his reason. When she was diagnosed with a terminal illness, Stephen devoted himself to her care. He watched her strength wane, feeling the helplessness of knowing he could do nothing to change the outcome. When she passed, his world crumbled. Everything—getting up in the morning, holding a job, finding a reason to keep going—became an impossible mountain to climb.

Alcohol became his escape. The numbing relief of a drink quickly became a crutch, then a chain. Jobs slipped through his fingers, relationships frayed, and before he knew it, he was drowning. One night, amid a downward spiral, Stephen made a decision that didn't come with a grand revelation or a clear plan, only a deep, desperate need to leave. To run.



He ended up in another city, hoping for a fresh start, but demons don't disappear with distance. The struggle continued—living in motels when he could afford it, couch surfing, taking temp jobs that never lasted. He got in trouble with the law, still refusing to face the real battle inside him. One night, an altercation with police left him in a hospital bed, where he met a nurse from Evansville. A connection was made, a relationship formed, and soon he found himself in a new city.

A new city didn't mean a new life. The relationship was rocky from the start. One night, things escalated, and the police were called. Stephen, exhausted and raw, asked them about a homeless shelter. The only place that would take him required him to lower his blood alcohol level first, so he walked the streets of Evansville until he was sober enough to be admitted to the Rescue Mission.

That was the beginning of two years of homelessness.



After the Rescue Mission, he moved to another shelter. In early 2009, an opportunity came—a chance to move into an apartment. He took it but knew he needed more than just a roof over his head. He needed a path forward.

That's when a friend told him about The GAIN Initiative. With nothing to lose, Stephen joined. The program forced him to slow down, to really take stock of where he was and what he needed to do to move forward. Stephen learned where to find help in the community, and, most importantly, he learned to accept it. For the first time in years, he wasn't running. He was building relationships, stability, and a future.

One of those relationships was with Paul, a man who saw something in Stephen that he hadn't seen in himself for a long time. Paul offered him a job at the children's museum. Stephen started as a floor worker, then worked his way up—two promotions in, he realized something: he was capable of more than he had ever allowed himself to believe.



Then came the offer from the Evansville Christian Life Center.

Lead the GAIN Initiative. Help others who were where he had been. This wasn't just an opportunity. This was a calling.

Now, fourteen years in, Stephen looks back with gratitude. The work hasn't always been easy, but it has been worth it. If his journey has taught him anything, it's that no one can move forward alone. Pride and stubbornness had kept him stuck for so long, but true strength came when he accepted help and embraced community.

Now, each day, he offers that same hope to others—because we all need help to get to a better place.

**PSALM 46:1**

**"God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever-present help in trouble."**

**FROM  
STRUGGLE  
TO  
STRENGTH**

Nadia had recently moved to the area with her young daughter, seeking a fresh start after escaping an abusive relationship with her partner.

After months of uncertainty, they found shelter with Nadia's best friend and her family, staying on the sofa as they rebuilt their lives. Though Nadia was an educated woman, she felt like life had dealt her a tough hand, but now, for the first time in a long time, she felt safe.



At our clinic, we had the opportunity to sit down with Nadia and discuss several community resources available to help her and her daughter through this challenging time. She was incredibly grateful for the connections we made, and in the days following her appointment, she reached out to share some fantastic news.

Nadia had secured a new job, one that would allow her to use her education, and she was excited about this new chapter in her life. She thanked our clinic for being so supportive, saying that the warm welcome and assistance she received had made all the difference.

In her words, it wasn't just the healthcare she needed—it was the sense of hope and support that came from knowing she wasn't alone. She wanted to call and share her success with us, letting us know how much our help meant to her and her daughter.

## FINDING HER WAY

Katherine came to the clinic with a mixture of excitement and fear, hoping to confirm an unexpected pregnancy.

Young and facing her first experience as a mother-to-be, she admitted to being nervous, even though her family and boyfriend were supportive.

After scheduling her first ultrasound, she left the clinic with information, prenatal vitamins, and a glimpse of what lay ahead.



Conversely, Katherine called back the following week in a different state of mind. Her voice shook as she asked for information on abortion and adoption, unsure of what to do and overwhelmed by the weight of her decision. The clinic staff listened, offering gentle guidance and letting her know about a trusted adoption agency that could help her explore all her options. Before the call ended, she allowed the staff to pray with her, a quiet moment of shared hope amid her uncertainty.

Days passed, and the agency reached out to the clinic. They hadn't heard from Katherine, and worry crept into the hearts of everyone who had been praying for her. The clinic staff feared the worst but continued lifting her in prayer, holding on to hope that she was finding her way.



Then, nine days later, her boyfriend called. He asked for more prenatal vitamins and explained that Katherine was struggling with nausea and indigestion.

The news felt like a beacon of light—she was still moving forward in her pregnancy. The clinic staff prepared an ample supply of vitamins and printed resources on managing pregnancy symptoms. For the first time, they rejoiced over the news of morning sickness, grateful for this sign that she was choosing life.

**MATTHEW 25:35-36**

**"For I was hungry and you gave me food,  
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,  
I was a stranger and you welcomed me,  
I was naked and you clothed me, I was  
sick and you visited me, I was in prison  
and you came to me."**

**LIVES  
SAVED**

Many of our patients come to the clinic urgently needing dental clearance to start life-saving treatments such as chemotherapy, heart surgery, organ transplants, or osteoporosis medication.

Without dental insurance or limited coverage, they struggle to get the care they need in time.



Some are referred to us by specialists from places like the Mayo Clinic, needing extractions before proceeding with their medical treatments.

At our clinic, we quickly assess their needs and provide extractions or treatment during our dental blitzes, ensuring they can proceed with critical care. In just the past few months, we've helped a man in his 30s awaiting heart surgery, two women needing osteoporosis treatment, multiple joint replacement candidates, three organ transplant hopefuls, and a patient starting chemotherapy—helping them get one step closer to the life-saving care they need.

## BUILDING BRIDGES

Through our partnership with the Salvation Army, we've extended a helping hand to many in our community seeking financial stability.

Recently, numerous individuals have been referred directly from their team, each looking to take control of their finances and build a brighter future.





For many, this journey begins with seeking assistance for utilities or other immediate needs. But rather than just offering a temporary solution, we provide an opportunity—a hand-up—to help individuals break the cycle of financial strain.

Through the Financial Potential program, those who come to us gain access to tools and mentorship that equip them to create lasting stability.

This partnership makes a real impact, connecting us with those who might otherwise struggle alone. Together with the Salvation Army, we're building a network of support that empowers people to take charge of their finances and make meaningful, lasting change.

## SIDE BY SIDE

The day began with a Clothing Resource Department team member's referral.

They had connected us with Tory, a new mother of twins who arrived feeling a little overwhelmed but eager to find support.

Caring for two newborns had stretched her thin, and she was grateful for someone to talk to who could offer real help.

As we sat down together, she opened up about the challenges of managing life with twins and her worries about ensuring they had everything they needed.



We listened, reassured her, and completed her intake. By the time Tory left, her face had softened with relief—she no longer felt alone on this journey. She now had a support system to lean on, and she walked out feeling optimistic about the road ahead.

Later that afternoon, Tory's sister, Sophie, appeared at the door. She carried a quiet nervousness, unsure of what to expect but curious after hearing about her sister's experience.

Sophie had recently welcomed her first child, and though she loved being a mom, the weight of new responsibilities had left her feeling anxious and isolated. Seeing Tory's relief after her visit gave Sophie the courage to come in, and as she shared her story, we could see that same hope beginning to flicker in her eyes. By the end of her intake, Sophie smiled for the first time since arriving, comforted by the knowledge that she, too, had a place to find help and encouragement.



What began as a simple outreach from a Clothing Resource Department team member grew into something much more—a lifeline that linked two sisters and their young families to a supportive community. Now, Tory and Sophie are walking this journey together, leaning on each other through the ups and downs of motherhood. They've found strength in one another and the care they've received—proof that even the most challenging moments can become a little easier with the right support.

#### **ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12**

**"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!"**

#### **ADVO- CATES OF HOPE AND COM- MUNITY**

David and Jeanie, a married couple, joined the Food Co-op through Habitat for Humanity while their house was being built.

From the very beginning, they approached the Co-op with an openness and gratitude that left a lasting impression.

As their time in the Co-op drew to a close, what stood out most to the staff was their deep passion and commitment to the program.

David and Jeanie often shared how much the Co-op had meant to them, not just in terms of the financial relief it provided but also the hope it gave them during a time of transition.



*Food Co-op*



They spoke about the significant savings they enjoyed while shopping and how it allowed them to stretch their budget further—allowing them to focus on their future rather than worrying about every dollar.

But it wasn't just about what they received but also about what they gave. David and Jeanie went out of their way to support others in the Co-op, sharing tips on food storage and creative ways to make the most of their groceries, like turning cake mix into cookies—a simple, cost-effective way to create something special. Their generosity of spirit was contagious, and they became a source of inspiration for others in the program.

As the time came to say goodbye, the Co-op team felt gratitude and sadness. David and Jeanie's enthusiastic support of the program had touched so many lives, and their advocacy within the Habitat for Humanity community left a lasting impact. They had made the most of the resources available to them and helped others see the value of the Co-op—showing that with a bit of help, they, too, could create a brighter, more stable future.

## DIGNITY IN CHOICE

Brianna came to the Life Center for the first time, seeking clothing as part of her journey through a nearby rehab facility.

Her shirt was faded and stained, showing the wear of hard days.



*Clothing Resource*



As a volunteer helped her browse, Brianna's eyes brightened, her hands running over the soft fabrics of neatly folded shirts and sweaters.

"This is really nice," she said softly while checking out. "The only clothes I've ever had were ones someone gave me. I've never been able to pick out my own things before."

In that simple moment, Brianna experienced the dignity of choosing for herself, a small but meaningful step toward reclaiming her life.

## IN THE MIDST OF THE UN- KNOWN

The day Jolie walked into the clinic, she seemed unsure and nervous.

She had come in for a pregnancy test and ultrasound, not knowing what to expect.

When the results came back, they brought a shock—Jolie was already 27 weeks along.

She hadn't realized how far her pregnancy had progressed and hadn't received any prenatal care.





Her last experience with pregnancy had been so challenging that she'd chosen adoption, and now she wasn't sure what to do.

Our team sat with Jolie, listening to her share her story. They offered her information about both parenting and adoption, encouraging her to take time to explore her options. Slowly, Jolie's uncertainty began to shift. By the time she left, she seemed more hopeful, smiling as she said, "I've got something to keep me distracted on Thanksgiving." Despite facing challenges at home, she walked out with a renewed sense of purpose—her baby was now a bright spot in an otherwise dark situation.

This experience reminded us how important it is to walk alongside people like Jolie during uncertain moments. With compassion and practical resources, we can help them see new possibilities and find hope in the unexpected.

## OVER- COMING FEAR, EM- BRACING CARE

The day before a recent appointment at the Evansville Christian Health Clinic, a woman named Ruth walked in, visibly anxious.

She had been told she needed to have a tooth pulled, but fear had kept her from following through.

Stories she'd heard from others only made things worse, and now, standing at the clinic, she was overwhelmed.



One of our team members noticed her hesitation and took the time to sit with her. For over an hour, she patiently listened, explaining the procedure in a way that helped ease Ruth's fears. With gentle reassurance, our team encouraged her, reminding her that getting the care she needed was a step toward better health.

When Ruth returned on the day of her appointment, another challenge arose—the dentist she had specifically asked for couldn't be there due to a family emergency. It was enough to make anyone reconsider, but once again, we were happy to be there as a comforting presence. Our team reminded her of the skill and compassion of the rest of the team, helping her feel safe enough to go through with the procedure.

Later, Ruth called twice—just to thank all of us. Her fear had turned into relief, her hesitation into trust.

## NO MORE SURFING, ONLY LIVING

When we first met Jay, he was in a tough spot—dealing with a DCS issue and living situation that had left him couch surfing and uncertain about his future.

He came to us looking for support, unsure of where to turn next but eager to find a way forward.



Family Care



Over time, we worked together—supporting him through the ups and downs of his case.

Recently, Jay reached out to let us know that he had just completed his final Child and Family Team Meeting—CFTMs are meetings where family members and community supporters come together to create a plan for a child. They are a central part of the foster care system. The weight of it all had lifted, and he expressed his deep gratitude for the guidance he had received along the way. He now has his own apartment, a place he can call home. His focus has shifted toward self-improvement as he works toward reuniting with his child.

When Jay spoke about his journey, he said, “Thank you for taking the time to help me get through all of this.” It wasn’t just the end of a case for him—it was the beginning of a new chapter where he could rebuild his life with the support he needed to succeed. His DCS case may be closed, but the lessons he gained throughout the program will stay with him as he continues to grow and strive for a better future for himself and his family.

## **GOD'S GRACE, FOUND IN THE AISLES**

Lisa, a woman in her 60s, came to the Food Co-op looking for something that had been out of her reach for quite some time—a doctor-recommended supplement to help with the joint pain she had been battling.



*Food Co-op*



For months, she had struggled with the decision to go without it, knowing how important it was for her health but unable to afford it. That day, though, something shifted. As she walked through the aisles, she spotted the supplement on the shelf, a small but significant moment of relief.

When she shared the news with her grandsons, her throat closed up from tears. Lisa spoke of how, just when she thought she couldn't find a way, God had provided exactly what she needed. Her faith and thankfulness were evident in every word as she told them how she'd prayed for this moment, teaching her grandsons about God's provision in ways that went beyond the supplement. It was a powerful reminder that even the smallest needs can be met with unexpected grace.

For Lisa, it wasn't just about finding the right product—it was a moment of faith confirmed, a lesson of hope passed down, and a reminder that God always provides.

## A NEW DIA- LOGUE, A NEW BEGIN- NING

Abby and Raymond are a new family involved with Family Care Services, currently navigating a DCS case.

Though no longer married, they both recognize the need to improve communication.

Raymond tends to be rough around the edges, while Abby is more reserved and keeps to herself, making it difficult for them to connect.



Family Care



Our team has met with them individually, and even the thought of being in the same room together was uncomfortable for them. The tension was palpable, and working through their issues seemed insurmountable.

However, our team received a call; Abby and Raymond's CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) worker reached out to let us know that, despite the tension, they had managed to have a productive, adult conversation. For the first time in years, they were getting along.

Later, Abby shared with us how, after seven years of strain, she and Raymond had finally had a "normal" conversation that didn't end in frustration or avoidance. They expressed their frustrations about the DCS case, but Abby mentioned that, despite it all, she felt a sense of gratitude for the positive interaction. Even their younger son noticed the change, saying that when Abby talks to Raymond now, she no longer walks away with her phone, a small but significant sign of progress.



This moment reminded us how powerful the right resources and support can be in a family's journey. By offering the tools to improve communication, we can help families like Abby and Raymond build stronger, more respectful relationships, one step at a time.

#### **HEBREWS 10:24-25**

**"And let us consider how to stir up  
one another to love and good works,  
not neglecting to meet together, as is  
the habit of some, but encouraging one  
another, and all the more as you see  
the Day drawing near."**

#### **A FINAL WORD FROM KATIE**

Serving as the Executive Director of the Evansville Christian Life Center is a calling that stretches far beyond the confines of a typical workday.

Each day feels like an invitation—a chance to witness transformation and hope in action.

Within these walls,  
I experience God's love unfolding in both  
quiet moments and bold breakthroughs.

Whether I'm sharing a heartfelt conversation with a donor eager to make a difference, walking alongside a participant rediscovering strength, or collaborating with our devoted staff, I'm continually reminded that every interaction carries the promise of change.



These historic walls have absorbed countless stories—tales of trials met with courage and victories celebrated in quiet, steadfast prayer. They hold the legacy of those whose hopes and dreams laid the very foundation of our ministry, and it's through their faithful support that we continue to thrive.

There is a gentle rhythm to this work. Some days are filled with the joyful chaos of possibility, while other days offer a serene quiet that speaks directly to the heart. In each moment, I feel God's presence guiding our path—the compassionate embrace of a mother finding relief through our Family Care Services, the determined stride of a father in our GAIN Initiative program discovering a new path, and the warm welcome felt by a community member stepping into our Health Clinic and finally being seen.

These encounters are living proof that when faith meets action, miracles happen. Our mission is not just about service; it is the unfolding of dreams nurtured by courage and sustained by the belief that transformation is possible.



I often return to the words of Henry David Thoreau: *"If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams and endeavors to live the life which he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours."*

These words have carried me through many seasons of life, and now they echo even more deeply in our collective journey. This mission is not mine alone—it's a shared vision, a dream imagined and nurtured by many hearts coming together to build a community where hope prevails and lives are transformed.

As you close this book, I invite you to hold these stories close. Reflect on the lives touched by our ministry—the participants, the volunteers, the donors, and our dedicated team—all united in the pursuit of a common purpose.



As you do, ask yourself:

*How will you continue to be part of this work?*

*How will you help strengthen families and restore hope in our community?*

Go confidently in the direction of your dreams.

Live the life God has planned for you.

When we embrace His purpose  
with boldness and love,  
we step into something far greater  
than we ever could have envisioned—  
a place where lives are renewed,  
dreams are realized,  
and **HOPE IS RESTORED.**



**If you would like to take a step  
toward restoring hope through Jesus  
in the work of the Evansville Christian  
Life Center, learn more at:**

**restoringpeople.com  
@restoringpeople  
info@restoringpeople.com  
812.423.9222**