

The Story of New Hope Ministries: Founded by Three Brethren in Christ Churches

By Marian Musser*

New Hope Ministries, headquartered in Dillsburg, Pennsylvania, is celebrating its fortieth anniversary this year (2023). No one could have predicted forty years ago that the ministry would grow from helping a few dozen people each month with food and household essentials from one tiny location to serving more than six thousand people each month from nine centers. This is the story of how one letter would inspire a few individuals from three Brethren in Christ congregations to begin a ministry that has become a vital and well-respected part of the community social service networks in three counties.



*The fortieth anniversary logo for
New Hope Ministries.*

The beginning

The letter

On January 4, 1982, Reverend Charles Best, pastor of Monaghan Presbyterian Church and president of the local Dillsburg Ministerium wrote a letter to his colleagues in the Ministerium (see Appendix 1).

At a time of rising unemployment in northern York County, especially with layoffs at Caterpillar and Harley Davidson, many families who had never before sought assistance found themselves facing financial crisis. Pastors of local churches were experiencing many requests for assistance from families and individuals in the general community, not just from

* *Marian Musser served several stints on the New Hope Ministries Board of Directors for a total of twenty-seven years, including seven years as chair and six years as secretary. After having grown up in and attending the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church for many years, in retirement she and her husband attend The Meeting House, Carlisle, PA. All photos are courtesy of New Hope Ministries.*

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Some of the New Hope Ministries founders at the kick-off to the fortieth anniversary celebration on November 1, 2022. From left to right: Linda DeCroes, Jolene Ness, Donna Bert, Marian Musser, Ray Bert, Charles Best.

those within their own congregations. There were more requests than they were able to meet. The federal government had also announced major cuts to domestic programs, particularly in human services. Because of these cuts, Community Progress Council of York County would be phasing out the programs of Dillsburg-Dover Social Services (DDSS), the only social services center in the area, by the end of the year. Leaders in the community had worked many years to get this service and others to come to northern York County, and now all of it would be discontinued.

In his letter, Reverend Best expressed his frustration at the prospect of losing this public service to the region. He wrote:

As a pastor, when I am asked for help (usually a handout—and I may be receiving more [requests] with the increase of unemployment, etc.) all I have to do is phone Priscilla [community organizer and social worker for Community Progress Council of York County assigned to DDSS], and I know immediately what the circumstances are with the particular family or individual. Then I can act accordingly. My action may be referral to her and the Social Services, or we [she and I] may coordinate our resources, or I may act entirely on my own through my congregation. The point is, I know what the real problems are in total perspective and then am better able to serve or give opportunity for the congregation to serve.

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I personally don't know what I will do without the Social Services if they are cut back to non-existence and even more people ask the congregation for help. They [DDSS] coordinate so many helpful things on behalf of the low-income people of our community. . . . We desperately need to get some good solid people involved. . . .¹

Already news of these cuts and the likely closure of the local social services center was circulating in the community, and my physician husband, who was employed by Holy Spirit Hospital to provide medical services in Dillsburg at the hospital's first satellite health center, easily heard about the proposed closure of the center. The health center and the social services center shared a common waiting room.

My husband took these concerns to the January 5, 1982 meeting of the Peace and Social Justice Committee at the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church. In the minutes of that meeting, Item V listed two questions as agenda for the next meeting: "1. What can we do to supply the deficiency created by cutting of social service funds with regard to local needs, as cited by Dr. Musser. 2. What is our relationship with the ministry of the local food bank?"²

The Peace and Social Justice Committee was one of the committees of the Church Outreach Commission. At some point I must have agreed to chair the Peace and Social Justice Committee because the minutes of the February 11, 1982 meeting mention me as the new chairperson. The February 24, 1982 minutes of Church Outreach Commission confirm me as the new chairperson of the committee.³

This provides some background to how the New Hope Ministries story started for me personally. One night toward the end of January 1982 when my husband came home following evening office hours at the health center,

¹ Charles W. Best, letter to Dillsburg Ministerium, January 4, 1982, New Hope Ministries administrative office, Dillsburg, PA (unless otherwise indicated, all New Hope Ministries materials are housed at New Hope Ministries administrative office, Dillsburg, PA).

² Minutes of the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church Peace and Social Justice Committee, January 5, 1982, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives, Mechanicsburg, PA (hereafter cited as Minutes, Grantham Church PSJC).

³ Minutes of the Grantham Brethren in Christ Church Outreach Commission, February 24, 1982, housed in the Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives, Mechanicsburg, PA.

he dropped a letter on the kitchen table, and commented, “You’re now the chairperson of the Peace and Social Justice Committee at the Grantham Church. What can you do about this?” It’s still a mystery exactly how Reverend Best’s letter got to my husband. I always thought the community organizer at DDSS gave him the letter, but she has no memory of having done so. Recently, I contacted Priscilla Stambaugh (nee Whitman) who had been community organizer at DDSS at that time to ask her. Her comment was that likely Jean Schaeffer, the nurse at the clinic, gave a copy of Reverend Best’s letter to Dr. Musser.⁴ Jean is no longer living, but those of us who knew Jean knew that she had a heart for those in need in the community and had been involved in helping to bring social services to Northern York County. With the passing years, Bob doesn’t remember either. He does remember that his days at the office were filled with patients, charts, dictation, and calls. It’s still a mystery, but somehow that letter got to Bob, and he brought it home.

I took that letter to the February 11, 1982 meeting of the Peace and Social Justice Committee. At that time the committee was comprised of Donna Bert (co-owner of Bert Brothers Restaurant and co-founder of the pre-school at Messiah Village); Harriet Bicksler (a free-lance writer and editor for the Brethren in Christ Church); Steve Hayes (public school educator and soon to be instructor at Messiah College); Sally Ramirez (part-time adult art student at Messiah College); Ray Zercher (professor at Messiah College); and myself (former high school teacher). When Ray Zercher resigned in February because of too many commitments, Martin Schrag (professor at Messiah College) served on the committee for the rest of that year. Ken Martin, vice president of operations at Messiah College, joined us in October.⁵

None of us had experience in social services, but we understood the need described in Reverend Best’s letter and discussed the impact the closing of the only social services center in the area would have on the community. What would happen to the 430 families being served? We

⁴ Priscilla Stambaugh (nee Whitman), telephone conversation with author, November 11, 2022.

⁵ Minutes, Grantham Church PSJC, February 11, 1982; Grantham Church PSJC Council Meeting Report, January 25, 1983.

understood that individual churches alone were not prepared to handle the task of emergency assistance in a community. Without a designated center, assistance to those struggling with real survival needs can become very haphazard. However, by networking together in a spirit of cooperation with one another, churches can provide an organized center of social services, emergency assistance, encouragement, and hope to those struggling with real survival needs. The question for us was whether we should engage ourselves in exploring what would be involved in developing an outreach ministry that would help fill the void when the government-funded center closed. Scripture teaches us to be involved in loving, caring, and sharing ways with those in need, and to offer hope to those who would despair. What would Jesus have us do now?

Item V of the minutes that evening entitled “Local Needs” reads, “After discussion of means to greater awareness of and response to local needs, we decided to contact the Dillsburg-Dover Social Services, Inc., for their suggestions. Donna consented to make this contact.”⁶

At the March 11, 1982 meeting of the Peace and Social Justice Committee, Donna Bert reported on her contact at DDSS. She had also contacted the Dillsburg Borough Council. The prospect for continued services seemed bleak since funds for York County Community Progress Council were being cut significantly. Dillsburg Borough Council, claiming that Dillsburg had no need for social services, would not advocate for continuation of DDSS. The committee designated Donna Bert and Sally Ramirez to do some more leg work.⁷

Donna and Sally met again with Priscilla Whitman at DDSS, to find out all the services DDSS offered, the number and kind of services provided in a given year, and the estimated potential number of eligible recipients in its catchment area. They took a look at their policies to better understand poverty guidelines and frequency and limitation of services given to any one individual or family in a given period of time. I met with Irene Paul, the community organizer of the next-closest social services center, Redland Community Action Program Incorporated, located in Lewisberry, about

⁶ Minutes, Grantham Church, PSJC, February 11, 1982.

⁷ Minutes, Grantham Church, PSJC, March 11, 1982.

ten miles east of Dillsburg, asking for the same information. I also took a look at services available in the Carlisle area.

The following is a sketch of the kind of center the Peace and Social Justice Committee began to envision if we were to be involved in getting a center started.

1. A faith-based center where Jesus's love would be demonstrated.
2. A center where comprehensive services would be provided: assistance with food, rent, fuel, utilities, and referrals to other agencies (since we did not want to duplicate services already available in the community).
3. A center where there would be screening of clients to determine eligibility for services.
4. A center that would have regular hours Monday thru Friday, and not just be open one or two days of the week for an hour or two.
5. A center that would have a broad base of support from churches and businesses in the community.
6. A center where good records were maintained to ensure future grant ability.

The task force

How would we go about getting such a center operating? The committee decided a task force comprised of members beyond our committee needed to be formed. Minutes from the June 24, 1982 meeting of the Peace and Social Justice Committee read: "There is a common belief that Dillsburg-Dover Social Services is dying a slow, painful death! . . . We discussed the possibility for area Brethren in Christ churches (Cumberland Valley, Dillsburg, Grantham) to band together to provide a sound Christian motivation to meet the needs of people. Marian will contact both of the other churches to see whether a cooperative ministry could develop."⁸

We never intended to form a denominational ministry, but so that we did not bog down in doctrinal differences with other denominations, we had decided to ask Grantham's two sister churches in the Dillsburg area to join us in forming such a task force: Dillsburg Brethren in Christ Church and

⁸ Minutes, Grantham Church PSJC, June 24, 1982.

Cumberland Valley Brethren in Christ Church (now the Dillsburg campus of The Meeting House). As it turned out, the pastors of those two churches wanted to be part of the task force. They were members of the Dillsburg Ministerium and had received Reverend Best's letter. The members of the task force were Pastor Ray Bert from Cumberland Valley Brethren in Christ Church; Pastor Robert Keller from Dillsburg Brethren in Christ Church; and Donna Bert, Sally Ramirez, and Marian Musser from Grantham Brethren in Christ Church.

The task force met every week or so from July through the end of 1982. We did not take formal minutes at these meetings but rather maintained task and assignment lists on paper tablets, even scraps of paper. The challenge would be to create and fund a center that would have a compassionate and credible presence in the community. There were times along the way that I asked myself, "What in the world are we doing?" And, "How are we going to do all this?" None of us had done anything like this before, yet we had this clear vision of what churches of various denominations could do by working together cooperatively. We knew we needed to pray a lot, and so we began each meeting with a session of prayer.

We felt we knew our mission, but we needed a mission statement, a name, a logo, an office location with space for a food pantry, legal documents related to incorporation, bank account, someone with social service training who was willing to serve as a part-time director of the center on a low salary, and a way to network with the larger community to share what was happening and encourage their being part of this exciting opportunity. Because DDSS was to close at the end of the year, we projected opening this new center on the first Monday of the new year, January 3, 1983.

Organizational matters

We chose the name "New Hope Ministries" to reflect the new hope Jesus offers to all who look to him and the hope the assistance and encouragement provided at New Hope Ministries would give those who walked through its doors.

Sally Ramirez, the art student among us, was asked to come up with drafts for a logo. We suggested using the cross to symbolize our Christ-centered identity, and a butterfly as a symbol of hope and transformation. The logo was adopted by New Hope's board on January 18, 1983.⁹ There

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have been several revisions since, but the cross and butterfly are still there, though in a slightly different arrangement.

Pastor Keller generously offered the Dillsburg Brethren in Christ



Left: the original logo, adopted in 1983. Right: the current logo.

Church as a base for New Hope to begin its operations. There was a very accessible entrance off the parking lot, and the food pantry could be located in the corner basement. Interestingly, Dillsburg Brethren in Christ Church had been the location of the DDSS Center when it first started. New Hope Ministries was housed at the Dillsburg Brethren in Christ Church for its first six years.

We sought legal counsel from Attorney Jeffrey Ernico, a member of the Grantham Church. Pastor Ray Bert and I went to Attorney Ernico's Harrisburg office to explain what we were planning. He was willing to draw up all the documents we would need at a cost of \$1000. As yet, we had no funds with which to pay such a bill. Attorney Ernico graciously and generously made the first contribution to New Hope Ministries to cover that cost. With that \$1000 we established a bank account and secured a lock box in which to keep legal documents, but because the Articles of Incorporation had not yet been signed by the founding board and filed with the state, there were some complexities to overcome. Samuel J. Stone, vice president of the Commonwealth National Bank on the square in Dillsburg, established a special account for us until New Hope Ministries became a

⁹ Minutes of the New Hope Ministries Board of Directors, January 18, 1983, housed in New Hope Ministries administrative office, Dillsburg, PA (hereafter Minutes, NHM Board).

legal entity and all its documents were in order.

With the help of Attorney Ernico, we stated New Hope's purpose this way in the Articles of Incorporation: "To provide a non-profit service that will minister to the spiritual, physical, material, and emotional needs of those people in the northern York and Adams Counties and southeast Cumberland County area who are seeking help and desiring assistance. This ministry is in obedience to the Word of God as revealed in the Old and New Testament and in the name of Jesus Christ."¹⁰ We then wondered how to create a meaningful succinct mission statement from that official statement of purpose on the legal documents. We eventually came up with a statement that has served New Hope Ministries well over the years: "New Hope Ministries is a Christian social service agency that shows the love and hope of Christ by serving our neighbors in need." The words "and supporting their efforts toward stability" were added twenty years later.

In September and October 1982, the task force approached the church boards of the three Brethren in Christ churches represented on the task force with the proposal that each church provide seed money of \$4,000 for a total of \$12,000 to get New Hope started. At the Grantham Church where I presented the proposal, Item 6-B of the agenda for the church board meeting of October 4, 1982 included under the Church Outreach Commission report, the "proposal to fund a ministry to the poor in our area in cooperation with the Dillsburg and Cumberland Valley Churches. To be called New Hope Ministries." Item 5-b., under the commission and committee reports of the minutes of that October 4, 1982 church board meeting, stated:

The Peace and Social Justice Committee presented a proposal for New Hope Ministries.

1. The proposal asked for \$4,000 for the administrative operations of the ministry.
2. The ministry will be for low income and welfare families of the Dillsburg area. The ministry is to determine the needs, validate the needs and then direct the people to the proper agency for aid.

¹⁰ Statement of Purpose, Articles of Incorporation, New Hope Ministries, signed November 9, 1982 and filed with the Corporation Bureau of the State of Pennsylvania November, 29, 1982, copy, New Hope Ministries administrative office, Dillsburg, PA.

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3. The ministry will be supported by the Dillsburg BIC, Cumberland Valley BIC, and the Grantham BIC Churches.
4. The ministry is an attempt to continue services offered by the Dover-Dillsburg Social Services Agency. This agency is no longer funded by the federal government.

The church boards of each of the three Brethren in Christ churches approved the proposal and included a line item in their proposed 1983 budgets for \$4,000 for New Hope Ministries, which was subsequently approved at their respective congregational council meetings.

On November 4, 1982, Pastor Ray Bert wrote two letters. One was a letter to all the churches in the Dillsburg area reviewing what was happening with the closure of DDSS, the projected incorporation of a faith-based service center, and inviting representatives from those churches to attend an informational meeting about New Hope Ministries on November 16. The other letter was addressed to the directors of New Hope Ministries, announcing an organizational meeting in just five days on November 9 at the Dillsburg Brethren in Christ Church. We had recruited nine people from the three Brethren in Christ churches that had put up the initial seed money of \$12,000 to serve as the founding members of the board of directors, three from each church: Cumberland Valley: Pastor Ray Bert, Paul Lebo (businessman, co-owner of Oak Grove Farms), Susan Lauver (receptionist/secretary, Cumberland Valley Church); Dillsburg: Donald E. Bowers (claims adjuster, counselor for the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry), Gail E. Brubaker (teacher), Pastor Robert Keller; Grantham: Donna Bert (former teacher, co-founder of the pre-school at Messiah Village), Marian Musser (former teacher), and Sally T. Ramirez (home economist, part-time adult art student at Messiah College.¹¹ There were four items on the agenda outlined in the letter:

1. Organization of Board of Directors
 - a. Assignment of terms
 - b. Selection of chairperson, assistant chairperson, secretary, and treasurer
2. Approval of Statement of Purpose for New Hope Ministries

¹¹ Articles of Incorporation, New Hope Ministries, signed November 9, 1982 by nine founding board members.

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(please read enclosed copy before meeting)

3. Approval of by-laws (rough draft being prepared by Jeff Ernico)
4. Approval of proposed budget for 1983 and 1984 (can be very rough—is for purposes of incorporating). Please see enclosed copy of budget proposals).¹²

Ray also stated that there was a \$75 fee for incorporation. The task force thought the members of the Board of Directors could personally care for this item. This may have seemed presumptive, but five of the members of the new Board of Directors were also members of the task force, and they are the ones who made this decision. Ray went on to state that there had been “no intention for anyone to feel any sense of obligation, only if you have desire and means to help.”¹³

At that meeting members worked out staggered, renewable two-year terms so that terms didn't all expire in the same year. The terms were as follows: two years: Don Bowers, Gail Brubaker, Paul Lebo, and Marian Musser; one year: Donna Bert, Ray Bert, Robert Keller, Susan Lauver, Sally Ramirez.¹⁴ The terms were for two years, but that would soon change to three years. Executive officers that first year were Marian Musser (chairperson), Ray Bert (vice chairperson), Don Bowers (treasurer), and Sally Ramirez (secretary).¹⁵ The Articles of Incorporation for New Hope Ministries were signed at that November 9, 1982 meeting and filed by Jeff Ernico with the Corporation Bureau of the State of Pennsylvania on November 29, 1982. The need for a part-time Christian professional to serve as director and administrator of the center was discussed and the chairperson was to prepare an application form for applicants. No action was made regarding advertising the position, so apparently the search was to be conducted by personal contact and word of mouth. Future board meetings were set for November 23 and December 21, 1982.¹⁶

Following the November 9, 1982 board meeting, I began sharing

¹² Ray Bert, letter to New Hope Ministries Director, November 4, 1982.

¹³ Bert, November 4, 1982.

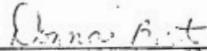
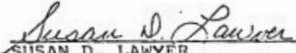
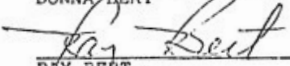
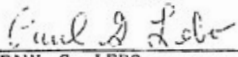
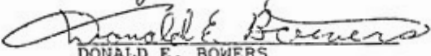
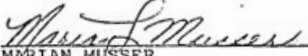
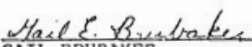
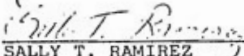
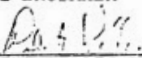
¹⁴ Minutes, NHM Board, November 9, 1982.

¹⁵ Minutes, NHM Board, November 9, 1982.

¹⁶ Minutes, NHM Board, November 9, 1982.

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IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, the incorporators have signed and sealed these Articles of Incorporation this 9th day of November, 1982.

 _____ DONNA BERT	 _____ SUSAN D. LAWYER
 _____ RAY BERT	 _____ PAUL G. LEBE
 _____ DONALD E. BOWERS	 _____ MARIAN MUSSER
 _____ GAIL BRUBAKER	 _____ SALLY T. RAMIREZ
 _____ ROBERT KELLER	

Signatures on the Articles of Incorporation.

with the Discipleship Sunday School class at the Grantham Church, which both Donna Bert and I attended, the developments related to New Hope Ministries and the need for a part-time social worker to direct and administer the center. One Sunday a member of the class approached me expressing possible interest in this position. Jolene Ness was a graduate of Messiah College with a degree in Behavioral Science. She was currently pursuing her master's degree in social services at the University of Maryland. In a November 29, 1982 memo from Marian to the members of the board, Marian noted Jolene's interest in working for New Hope Ministries.

At the time Jolene was contemplating shifting her graduate studies from the University of Maryland to Temple University. This would make it easier for her to work on her degree on a part-time basis, which would be necessary if she were to take the position at New Hope. Dale Bomberger, a member of the Grantham Church, worked with the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare,. He also was an instructor at Messiah College, and in that capacity related to the Messiah College Temple program in social services. He was willing to serve as a consultant to New Hope's board as an ex-officio member of the board whereby he



Jolene Ness, New Hope's first executive director.

could supervise Jolene's work, which would allow her to receive field service credits toward her degree while she worked for New Hope.¹⁷

Jolene was interviewed at the December 21, 1982 board meeting, and the board hired her as the first social worker, director, and administrator for New Hope Ministries.¹⁸ I still remember that interview. When asked why she thought she might be the right person for this position, Jolene characterized resourcefulness (in addition to her heart for such ministry and her training) as one of the predominant strengths she would bring, something we all knew would be vital as we launched this ministry.¹⁹ Over the years those involved with New Hope and in the community saw Jolene's resourcefulness in action as she resourced assistance for clients, recruited volunteers to help with new programs, and sought consultants to help inform and/or train staff and board members. Jolene remained with New Hope for the next twenty years in various administrative roles, providing spiritual leadership and creative guidance to New Hope's development.

At the November 16 informational meeting that had been announced in Ray Bert's letter to churches, there were nine churches represented. We shared that the Dillsburg Dover Social Services Center would be closing, we described the need for such a center in our community, and we explained the faith-based nature of New Hope Ministries. We also shared our vision of churches working cooperatively to have such a center in our community. We would start out with one part-time paid director, but much of its operation would be volunteer dependent. We were confident that as churches saw what was happening, they would want to be part of this. It was a good meeting, and many present signed up to volunteer and pledged to seek funding from their churches. I remember that the Methodist Women's Thrift Shop of Dillsburg's Calvary United Methodist Church immediately contributed \$500.

The early years

¹⁷ Marian Musser, Memo to Members of New Hope Ministries Board of Directors, November 29, 1982.

¹⁸ Minutes, NHM, December 21, 1982.

¹⁹ Jolene Ness, conversation with author, November 1, 2022. Jolene still remembers telling her interviewers that if she were hired, resourcefulness was a strength she would bring with her to New Hope Ministries.

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At the entrance to the first New Hope center at the Dillsburg Brethren in Christ Church.

Opening the doors

On January 3, 1983, New Hope Ministries opened its doors in an approximately 15' x 25' space at the Dillsburg Brethren in Christ Church, with a food pantry of about 10' x 12' in a limestone-walled basement corner accessed only from the outside at the corner of East Harrisburg and South Chestnut Streets. (Those guesstimated measurements cannot be verified today because of renovations that have taken place in those spaces.) That first month, with just one part-time but very committed staff person and many dedicated volunteers, New Hope was able to have its doors open from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Jolene's hours were from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. with volunteers covering the first and last hours. Their duties covered four areas: 1) office assistance: answering phones, greeting visitors, providing information and referrals, filling food boxes, recording and shelving food donations, typing and clerical work, filling out client forms; 2) budget and peer counseling; 3) providing transportation; and 4) collating publicity materials. Even with all this assistance from volunteers, after just one month, because of the heavy case-management load, Jolene's hours needed to be increased from just four to six hours each day.²⁰

²⁰ Minutes, NHM Board, February 8, 1982.

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Ruth Landis volunteering at the original center in Dillsburg.

New Hope Ministry records show that the first month of New Hope's operation (January 1983) fifty-six families were served.²¹ That number jumped to eighty in February.²² In just two months, New Hope Ministries had served 109 different family units, that number reflecting some family units served in both January and February.²³ By the end of that first year the total number of families served was 239.²⁴ Direct services provided through New Hope funds and by partnering with volunteer professionals and local businesses using a voucher system were: food, fuel, clothing, electricity, medical and prescription, gasoline for cars, rent, budget counseling, job referrals, job hunting skills training, transportation to appointments, and interviews. Other services administrated by New Hope were: Emergency

²¹ Preliminary Application for Affiliation with United Way of York County, March 18, 1983, Appendix I, page 11, January 1983 Monthly Report, NHM administrative office, Dillsburg, PA.

²² Preliminary Application, Appendix II, page 12, February 1983 Monthly Report.

²³ Preliminary Application, Appendix II, page 12, February 1983 Monthly Report.

²⁴ Application for Affiliation with United Way of York County, January 12, 1984, Appendix II, Yearly Total 1983, NHM administrative office, Dillsburg, PA (hereafter, cited as Application for Affiliation, January 12, 1984).

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Electric Energy Assistance Program; Metropolitan Edison's Project Good Neighbor Funds; Emergency Fuel Assistance Program; Weatherization Kits & Water Heater Blankets; Federal Cheese and Butter distribution. The federally funded Women, Infants & Children Program (WIC) used New Hope's office one day each month to administer its services to WIC clients in the area. By April, Salvation Army approached New Hope Ministries asking New Hope to administer their funds for the area.²⁵ Later in the year, York Rescue Mission asked New Hope to distribute thirty-seven Thanksgiving baskets in New Hope's service area.²⁶ In December New Hope conducted its own Christmas dinner distribution of sixty-six boxes of food donations and wrapped gifts for children.²⁷

From New Hope's beginning, a simple one-page newsletter was issued to churches and others supporting New Hope. Testimonials from clients were often included in the newsletter. In the May 1983 edition, Jolene related the story of a family referred to New Hope in February because they were in need of food and fuel, and their resources had been depleted. Jolene wrote:

The father had been laid off work and was presently unable to collect unemployment. New Hope was able to assist this family with boxes of groceries and a bag of coal. New Hope also assisted the family to make application for an emergency fuel program funded through the federal government. Temporary work was provided through a local citizen who had previously called and requested help for doing some odd jobs around her home. Permanent job opportunities were also discussed. The family expressed a faith in God and were encouraged to continue to look to Christ and trust Him to care for them during this time of crisis. This family is now collecting unemployment and has even made a contribution back to New Hope Ministries in gratitude for the help they received.²⁸

Increasing church and community support of New Hope

An Advisory Council comprised of representatives from area churches was established to serve as liaisons between New Hope and the churches

²⁵ Minutes, NHM Board, April 19, 1983.

²⁶ Application for Affiliation, January 12, 1984.

²⁷ *New Hope Ministries Newsletter*, February 1984 (hereafter, cited as NHM Newsletter).

²⁸ "New Hope For One Family," *NHM Newsletter*, May 1982.

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and to provide suggestions for meeting needs in the community. At its first meeting on February 14, 1983, fifteen people attended, representing ten churches.²⁹ The Advisory Council met monthly and was a great source of support and encouragement to New Hope's outreach.

The following churches and church-related groups provided financial support to New Hope Ministries during the first year of operation:

Arnolds United Methodist Church	Franklintown United Brethren Church
Assembly of God, Dillsburg	Grantham Brethren in Christ
Barrens Lutheran Church, Dillsburg	Harmony Bethel Church of God
Calvary United Methodist Church, Dillsburg	Monaghan United Presbyterian
Central PA Conference, United Methodist Church	Mt. Pleasant Church of God
Chestnut Grove United Methodist Christ Lutheran Church, Fileys	St. John's (Franklin) Parish (Lutheran and U.C.C.)
Cumberland Valley Brethren in Christ	United Methodist Women of the Calvary United Methodist Church
Dillsburg Brethren in Christ Church	Warrington Monthly Meeting, Religious Society of Friends
Dillsburg Ministerial Association	West Shore Evangelical Free Church
Franklin United Church of Christ	Wolgemuth Church of the Brethren

In addition to churches, some board members began meeting one-on-one with a number of civic and business leaders in the community involved in bringing social services to Northern York County. Jeff Ernico also suggested that we solicit surrounding townships since New Hope would be providing services to low-income residents of their townships. This entailed writing letters and showing up at township budgeting meetings. As evidence of community support, by the end of 1983, financial contributions came from twenty-two churches and church-related groups, forty-one individuals, eight local businesses, one high school club, seven civic/community organizations, and three townships for a total of \$33,844.62.³¹

²⁹ Typed list of those who attended the February 14, 1983 Advisory Council. New Hope Ministries May Newsletter reported twelve churches represented at the February Advisory Council Meeting.

³⁰ Application for Affiliation, January 12, 1984, Appendix IV, 1983 Contributions from Churches.

³¹ These statistics were culled from the following sources: Application for Affiliation, Appendix VI, 1983 Contributions to New Hope Ministries from Individuals; Appendix III, 1983 Contributions to New Hope Ministries from Businesses; May 1984 *NHM Newsletter*; Application for Affiliation, January 12, 1983, Appendix V, 1983 Contributions From Civic/Community Organizations; Appendix VII, 1983 Contributions to New Hope Ministries from Townships; Annual Budget Report Forms, 1984 Allocation Request Form, United Way of York County, Budget Form 4, to accompany Application for Affiliation, January 12, 1984.

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What this figure doesn't reflect are the direct assistance funds New Hope Ministries was able to bring into the community from outside sources and administer for our area because of New Hope's presence. This was the multiplier effect to the community of the contributions from local churches and others to provide this center of assistance.



Mildred and Homer Kraybill deliver day-old bread from local bakeries.

A statement of faith and theological rationale

The purpose for New Hope Ministries as stated in the Articles of Incorporation included this second sentence: "The ministry is in obedience to the Word of God as revealed in the Old and New Testament Scripture and in the name of Jesus Christ."³² To help ensure that New Hope Ministries' faith-based foundation wouldn't erode over the years, and to assure churches in the area of New Hope's Christ-centered focus and to encourage their pledge of support to this type of ministry, New Hope's board of directors added a statement of faith to its documents in addition to the purpose.

³² Statement of Purpose, Articles of Incorporation, New Hope Ministries, signed November 9, 1982, filed with the Corporation Bureau of the State of Pennsylvania November, 29, 1982.

Even before the November 23, 1982 meeting of the board, the topic regarding a statement of faith must have been discussed but not noted anywhere in writing, because in the “old business” portion of the minutes of the November 23, 1982 meeting we find this: “a statement of doctrine [as the secretary termed it] may be an important and needed addition to New Hope’s charter.” Ray Bert, Bob Keller, and I were tasked to work on this.³³

My memory regarding the origins of New Hope’s statement of faith was triggered during a November 4, 2022 conversation with Eric Saunders, executive director of New Hope Ministries for the past sixteen years. He wondered who wrote the statement.³⁴ I did some digging, and in a box of files of contacts made in 1982 and minutes of those early meetings of the board of directors, I found some notes and letters that brought back memories. I had a meeting with Pastor Ross Morrison to share about the founding of this faith-based community social service agency and ask for support from West Shore Evangelical Free Church. His first and very reasonable question was whether New Hope Ministries had a statement of faith. These were uncharted waters for me, so he helpfully suggested that I write to the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) to inquire if they had a model we might use. He didn’t think NAE’s Statement of Faith was copyrighted, though he wasn’t sure. He made a copy of their statement and gave me the contact information so I could inquire.

At the December 21, 1982 meeting of New Hope’s board of directors, Ray Bert recommended, and the board approved, that the NAE Statement of Faith be adopted for incorporation into the by-laws, contingent on the permission of NAE.³⁵

In a February 1, 1983 letter to Billy Melvin, executive director of NAE, I briefly described New Hope Ministries, including the fact that it was founded by three congregations of the Brethren in Christ Church, a member of NAE; acknowledged that the NAE Statement of Faith was broad enough that most groups could ascribe to it doctrinally; and inquired whether NAE

³³ Minutes, NHM Board, November 23, 1982.

³⁴ Eric Saunders, conversation with the author, November 4, 2022.

³⁵ Minutes, NHM Board, December 21, 1982.

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would grant permission to incorporate their statement or one slightly edited into New Hope's documents.³⁶ In his February 11, 1983 reply, Billy Melvin said that the NAE statement of faith is not copyrighted, granted permission for New Hope to use the statement in any way that would be helpful, and said that it was not necessary to identify the statement as being NAE's. He requested that we not identify it as the NAE statement should any additions or deletions take place.³⁷ New Hope Ministries adopted the statement. It centered on the core beliefs of the Christian faith with which most churches would agree.

The decision by the Board of Directors at its December meeting to adopt the NAE statement contingent on permission was confirmed by the board at its March 15, 1983 meeting.³⁸ That statement of faith is still part of New Hope's by-laws and remains important to New Hope's identity. It is a statement with which all board members, administrators, and staff must be in agreement.

I am grateful for the guidance given to me that day in 1982 by Ross Morrison, pastor of that relatively new church plant that has become one of the largest churches in the area and a great supporter of New Hope Ministries. The statement of faith helped anchor New Hope's biblical and Christ-centered identity and today serves as a compass providing guidance in recruitment and hiring decisions. In our November 2022 conversation, New Hope's executive director expressed appreciation that the statement of faith had been formalized in New Hope's documents.³⁹

A theological rationale was added to the statement of faith later in 1983, written by new board member Tom Sell, pastor of the United Church of Christ, St John's (Franklin) Parish. At our February 8, 1983 board meeting, it was announced that Pastor Bob Keller had asked to resign because of the heavy personal burden he was carrying following the tragic death of his

³⁶ Marian Musser, letter to Billy Melvin, February 1, 1983, in NHM Board Minutes, February 1983.

³⁷ Billy Melvin, letter to Marian Musser, February 11, 1983, in NHM Board Minutes, February 1983. As stated on the website of National Association of Evangelicals, Statement of Faith: The NAE intentionally has not copyrighted its Statement of Faith so that it may be used widely. If including the NAE Statement of Faith on your website, include: "As adopted by the National Association of Evangelicals," <http://www.nae.org>.

³⁸ Minutes, NHM Board, March 15, 1983.

³⁹ Eric Saunders, conversation with author, November 4, 2022.

wife in a house fire five months earlier.⁴⁰ Tom Sell agreed to serve and was welcomed to the board at the March 15, 1983 meeting.⁴¹ He volunteered to write a theological rationale to accompany New Hope's statement of faith. At the July 19, 1983 board meeting, I was assigned to write a preliminary introduction to the statement of faith.⁴² The theological rationale was presented to the board and adopted at its October 18, 1983 meeting⁴³ (see Appendix 2).

United Way

Early on, members of New Hope's Board of Directors realized that affiliation with United Way of York County would be a way to establish credibility for New Hope as a recognized social service agency in the region. At the January 18, 1983 board meeting we decided that we would make preliminary application for United Way funds.⁴⁴ In March, Jolene and I made our initial contact with United Way of York County. In that first interview, the director of United Way indicated they weren't looking to affiliate faith-based non-profits. I reminded him that there was already precedent with Catholic Charities and Jewish Family Services. He agreed that New Hope Ministries should complete a preliminary application, and if that were approved, an application for 1984 affiliation with United Way of York County could be filed.

The minutes of the March 15, 1983 board meeting indicate that we went right to work. The board approved the preliminary application that had been put together, and we submitted it to United Way of York County on March 18, 1983.⁴⁵ In May we received a letter from Gordon Roe, chair of the Affiliation and Evaluation Committee of United Way of York County asking us to submit a completed application for possible 1984 admission. The application was due January 15, 1984. Mr. Roe went on to say that there was nothing to disqualify New Hope from admission, and that the committee was impressed with the services New Hope was providing the

⁴⁰ Eric Saunders, conversation with author, November 4, 2022.

⁴¹ Minutes, NHM Board, March 15, 1983.

⁴² Minutes, NHM Board, July 19, 1983.

⁴³ Minutes, NHM Board, October 18, 1983.

⁴⁴ Minutes, NHM Board, January 18, 1983.

⁴⁵ Minutes, NHM Board, March 15, 1983; Preliminary Application for Affiliation with United Way of York County, March 18, 1983.

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Dillsburg community.⁴⁶ We followed through, and on April 23, 1984 the United Way of York County Board of Directors voted to accept New Hope as a member agency.⁴⁷ New Hope Ministries has been a partner agency with United Way of York County ever since. With the addition of other centers, New Hope is also a partner agency of United Way of Adams County and of the Capital Region.

Growth of staff, programs, and centers

At the end of 1983, New Hope's director Jolene Ness took maternity leave. Linda DeCroes, a community organizer for Community Progress Council of York County who had worked at DDSS prior to her own maternity leave in 1978, now came to work for New Hope. When Jolene returned from maternity leave in the spring of 1984, administration of the Dillsburg Center moved to a much-needed full-time service, with Jolene and Linda each working twenty hours, Jolene as director, Linda as assistant director. The center was open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. instead of 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.⁴⁸ By this time there were thirty volunteers helping at New Hope Ministries.⁴⁹



Linda DeCroes, assistant director, with Jolene Ness, director.

⁴⁶ Gordon A. Roe, letter to NHM Board, May 2, 1983.

⁴⁷ NHM Newsletter, August 1984.

⁴⁸ NHM Newsletter, May 1984.

⁴⁹ Annual Budget Report Form for United Way of York County, page A5, January 9, 1984.

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The following are some of Linda's thoughts as she reflected about her coming to work with New Hope Ministries:

When I first learned of New Hope Ministries a year ago I wondered how a small group of concerned people could operate a ministry of such magnitude. Then a verse of scripture came to mind: "Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful but workers are few'" (Matthew 9:37). I am continually impressed by the number of people who labor for God through New Hope Ministries. The volunteers who man the telephones, do the typing, filing, and keep the office running are truly wonderful. Each one possesses a special gift that is an enormous help to this ministry.

Praise God for the Board of Directors who saw the need for this ministry and the community whose generous giving makes this ministry possible; also for our director, Jolene Ness, who is a true laborer for God. I am honored that God has found me worthy of sharing in this important work. My prayer is that God will continue to bless New Hope Ministries and that we will grow in his grace.⁵⁰

In September 1984, New Hope hired a part-time secretary, volunteer Rosalie Fraser from the Grantham Church.⁵¹ With two case managers, volunteers and a secretary, New Hope was outgrowing the 15' x 25' office space being used. James Spurrier, associate pastor at Dillsburg Brethren in Christ Church, made several more rooms available for New Hope's use, which gave much-needed private space for counseling clients.

During the summer of 1984, through the generosity of individuals and churches in the community, New Hope offered sponsorships for children of families served by New Hope to experience a week of Christian camp. The idea for this grew out of a desire to bring positive influence into the lives of these children and to hopefully begin intervention in what was, for some families, a cycle of poverty. That first year five children took up the offer to attend camp at Christian Retreat Center (CRC), a Brethren in Christ Camp near East Waterford, Pennsylvania.⁵² In 1985, New Hope shifted to

⁵⁰ Minutes, NHM Board, November 20, 1984.

⁵¹ Linda DeCroes, NHM Newsletter, February 1983.

⁵² Minutes, NHM Board, November 20, 1984.



Rosalie Fraser, right, assists Linda DeCroes as she works with a mother.

Camp Hebron, a Mennonite-owned and operated camp and retreat center in Halifax, Pennsylvania. Twenty-one children attended.⁵³ The numbers of New Hope children attending summer kept increasing, with a record seventy-three in 1992.⁵⁴ (In more recent years, New Hope has switched back to sending children to Christian Retreat Center.)

The following is a mother's story of the changes she saw in her children as a result of their camp experience.

I don't know where to start, so I'll start with Becky, my nine-year-old daughter. She is a little insecure and does not make a lot of friends. Recently her best friend moved away, and Becky felt very alone. When the opportunity came for her to go to camp she wanted to go but was afraid. So I took a very insecure and frightened little girl to Camp Hebron and one week later picked up a more secure, more sure of herself little lady. She was singing and telling stories of Jesus the whole way home. She told of the love she and the other little girls had for each other. She also had a list of pen pals and

⁵³ NHM Newsletter, August 1985.

⁵⁴ NHM Newsletter, Spring/Summer 1992.

very high hopes of going to camp next year. The change in her was wonderful: at camp they accepted her for who she was and she was thrilled to be cared for like that. She had definitely grown and I am very excited and thankful.

One week later my eleven-year-old son, Ben, went to Camp Hebron. Ben is much more secure than Becky, but I was still surprised when I picked him up after a week at camp. Half the camp shouted goodbye to him. He had made so many new friends. He too sang songs he had learned and asked me to please let him go next year. He also came home with pen pals. One other outstanding new thing is he started reading his Bible. He started in Genesis; he said that was the best place to start.

The week each of them spent at Camp Hebron was instrumental in the growth and change I see in my children now. Both have received something special. I honestly feel the changes are positive and will be a good memory they will carry through life. I owe much thanks to New Hope, Camp Hebron, and God for the blessing they have given my children. Thank you, L.K.⁵⁵

Nine-year-old Jonathan Bergdoll had this to say as he reflected about his first year at camp, also in 1985:

Never before had I gone to camp and I turned nine years old this summer. My friends and cousins had been to overnight camp and I always wondered what it would be like. Well, last spring I found out I would get a chance to go to camp, too, this summer.

When I got to camp there were seven boys in my cabin and guess who was the one boy who got homesick the first two days? Yes, it was me. I don't know why but I felt like I wanted to cry. Then on the third day things changed all the way around and I became very happy to be at camp. I liked the boys and really liked my counselor. . . .

We hiked overnight and climbed up Peter's Mountain which is a very high climb. . . .

⁵⁵ NHM Newsletter, August 1985,

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Camp was very special and I made some good friends. I look forward to seeing them next year. My counselor helped me learn more about God, and that nine-year-olds can have Jesus in their hearts. Thank you for making camp possible for me. Love, Jon.⁵⁶

In 1989 Naomi DeCrisco described her first camping experience and her thankfulness to those who made it possible.

This is the first time I've been to summer camp. I enjoyed it very much. The cabins were neat. I liked my counselors very much. There were two of them [who] were very helpful and nice. My favorite part about camp was when I went swimming. I liked going hiking. I learned a lot of new songs. Most of all I'd like to thank the New Hope Ministry people for making it possible for me to be able to spend the week at camp this summer. Also I want to thank Camp Hebron for having me this year. I love you all and God bless you one and all.⁵⁷

The Fall 1990 issue of New Hope's newsletter included an article on ministry to children which included some comments by kids about camp. One camper enjoyed pulling vegetables for meals, even washing and drying dishes. Another camper gave six reasons why he or she liked camp:

1. Away from my sister.
2. I was allowed to swim.
3. I was allowed to go horseback riding.
4. We cooked out.
5. We had Bible study.
6. We could write home.⁵⁸



Naomi DeCrisco, one of the campers sponsored by New Hope.

⁵⁶ NHM Newsletter, August 1985.

⁵⁷ NHM Newsletter, Fall 1989.

⁵⁸ NHM Newsletter, Fall 1990.

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Volunteer Melva Brandt assists a mother in filling out forms.

James Miller started attending Camp Hebron at the age of nine. He continued attending camp every year until age sixteen when he aged out. He then went back as a counselor-in-training and worked there two summers until he graduated from high school, at which time he took on a full-time year-round position. He met his wife at Camp Hebron, attended Bible College several years later, and went on to become a pastor. That Christian summer camp experience was a door to life transformation for him!⁵⁹

In 1985, representatives from the Dover Area Ministerium came to New Hope Ministries requesting a meeting to explore whether New Hope Ministries would consider opening a center in Dover.⁶⁰ An Advisory Council was established, and the Dover Center opened in April 1986 at Calvary Lutheran Church.⁶¹ Similarly, in 1988 the Mechanicsburg Council of Churches came to New Hope asking for advice in setting up a ministry for emergency assistance in the Mechanicsburg area. Already some of the Mechanicsburg area churches were contributing to the center in Dillsburg,

⁵⁹ James Miller, who is now living in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada with his family, is a friend of Bob and Marian Musser.

⁶⁰ Minutes, NHM Board, May 23, 1985.

⁶¹ Minutes, NHM Board, March 18, 1986.

but there was need for such a center in Mechanicsburg. The Council decided to come under the incorporation umbrella of New Hope rather than go to the expense of incorporating a separate new agency, especially when there was so much interconnectedness between these two neighboring towns.⁶² The Mechanicsburg Center of New Hope Ministries opened January 17, 1989 at the Trindle Spring Lutheran church.⁶³ The fact that churches provided the first locations for all three New Hope centers—Dillsburg, Dover, and Mechanicsburg—gives one an indication of the involvement of churches in New Hope's growth and operations.

January 1989 was a busy month for New Hope. Because the operation at the Dillsburg Center had outgrown its space at the Dillsburg Brethren in Christ Church, the very same month that the Mechanicsburg Center was



The entrance to the first New Hope Ministries center in Mechanicsburg.

launched, the Dillsburg Center moved on January 28 to larger space at 6 North 2nd Street in Dillsburg.⁶⁴ The Dover Center had also outgrown its space at Calvary Lutheran Church, and a year later on May 21, 1990 the Dover Center moved to 1836 Industrial Court.⁶⁵

Continued growth of programs, partnerships, and centers

Children and youth

Sponsoring children to summer camp was the beginning of programs developed for children. In the spring of 1988, the Dillsburg Center launched a six-week summer recreation program to enrich the lives of children

⁶² Minutes, NHM Board, January 17, 1989, Items X and XI, page 3.

⁶³ Minutes, NHM Board, January 17, 1989, Items X and XI, page 3.

⁶⁴ Minutes, NHM Board, January 17, 1989, Item VI. C.1., page 2.

⁶⁵ Minutes, NHM Board, May 15, 1990.

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(ages seven to eleven). Because it met on Wednesdays it was called “The Wednesday Club.” The Wednesday Club was a day-camp offering arts and crafts, music, recreation, Bible lessons, and lunch followed by a trip to a nearby swimming pool, park, museum, or other attraction. There was enthusiastic response from parents, and twenty-seven children registered to attend.⁶⁶ Although average attendance each week was just seven to ten that first year, the dedicated and caring volunteers considered the program enough of a success that it was conducted again the following summer of 1989, this time with fifty children attending.⁶⁷ That fall, James Spurrier, associate pastor at Dillsburg Brethren in Christ Church, and his wife Faithe organized a long day’s field trip for the participants. They and their volunteers guided forty children, some of whom had never been out of their home community, on an exciting and wonderful opportunity to see their nation’s capital city, including a morning tour of the White House and an afternoon at the National Zoo.⁶⁸

In addition to the program to reach younger children of families served by New Hope, in the fall of 1989 New Hope received a Venture Grant from United Way of York County to begin a support group for chemically dependent young adults. The program offered drug and alcohol counseling for the young adults who attended. New Hope’s Teen Venture Program for New Hope’s older kids took off from this initiative.⁶⁹

In 1990, New Hope received a \$10,000 grant from Governor Robert Casey’s Penn Free Community Based Drug Prevention Program to expand the summer children’s Wednesday Club program to run year-round. Because there was already a registered “Wednesday Club” in Harrisburg, New Hope changed the name of its children’s program to Kid’s Klubhouse. The goals of Kid’s Klubhouse were to strengthen young lives spiritually, morally, physically, and to help young people develop the faith and skills needed to stand up to pressures they faced each day at home and school. In addition to recreation and a Bible lesson, tutoring was also an important part of the program. The program met weekly during the school year for children ages

⁶⁶ NHM Newsletter, Summer, 1988.⁶⁰ Minutes, NHM Board, May 23, 1985.

⁶⁷ NHM Newsletter, Fall, 1989.

⁶⁸ NHM Newsletter, Fall, 1989.

⁶⁹ NHM Newsletter, Fall, 1989.



Children gathering for Kids Klubhouse.

seven to thirteen. That first 1990-1991 school year, forty children from second through fifth grade attended.⁷⁰

New Hope initiated a “Buddy Program” in 1993 in which twenty-one students from Messiah College became big “brothers” and “sisters” to children of families served at New Hope. The students meet with a New Hope kid two or three times a month to build relationships and model a Christ-centered lifestyle. New Hope introduced this new program because the children of many New Hope families are at risk.

For many, their childhood years have lacked good moral training and effective discipline. Many are failing in school, experimenting with drugs and alcohol, and becoming sexually active at an early age. New Hope staff working in the program for children and youth believe the greatest hope for these children is the transformation of their lives through Jesus Christ. They also believe that the greatest way to share that hope is through a caring relationship with a positive role model. Such a relationship has been shown to be a strong protective factor in the prevention of risky behavior in children.⁷¹

Today New Hope conducts programs of age-appropriate classes and activities from birth through age 18, as well as classes for expectant mothers.⁷²

Fair-Share Community Partnership Program

Because of the many medical and dental needs my husband was seeing in his medical practice, he began asking whether New Hope Ministries

⁷⁰ NHM Newsletter, Summer, 1990.

⁷¹ NHM Newsletter, Spring/Summer 1993.

⁷² Information from NHM staff, Summer 2022.

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Marion Yoder, a member of the Grantham Church, chaired the board in 1996.

could encourage medical and dental providers in the area to cooperate in providing free or reduced cost care to low-income residents who would be screened and referred by New Hope. I remember that Bob and I met with Dr. George Jackson and his wife Alyce to explore such an idea. Dr. Jackson had recently retired as Director of Nuclear Medicine at Harrisburg Hospital and was the president of New Hope's board of directors at the time. New Hope went

to work on the idea, and in the fall of 1989 New Hope Ministries joined forces with the Northern Community Task Force to conduct a needs assessment for Northern York County. On the basis of that assessment, it was determined that 4,800 adults and children in Northern York County were unable to access or afford medical services. New Hope Ministries took the initiative to establish a Medical Services Committee, and within a year the Fair-Share Community Partnership Program was developed to provide four types of medical services to eligible clients of Northern York County: family physician care, dental care, eye care, and prescription services.

New Hope Ministries became the lead agency in performing the necessary initial screening and referral of clients to participating medical professionals. Clients with a family income of below 200 percent of poverty level paid 20 or 40 or 60 percent of full fee. During the first thirteen months of operation the program served 160 individuals with over twenty health-care providers participating. In 1992 New Hope Ministries received the "Helping Hand Award" from United Way of York County for the Fair-

Share program. The Fair-Share Program was the subject of a research paper that was presented to the Pennsylvania State Association of County Commissioners and to the Pennsylvania Association of County Human Service Administrators.⁷³ New Hope's Fair Share Program operated until 2010 when some local health clinics opened their services to lower income clients.⁷⁴

Spiritual growth for those served

Recently, I came across a tract-like brochure printed sometime after the three centers were established and the Dillsburg and Dover Centers had moved to their second locations. The brochure represented a desire to share the message of Christ's love with those served and invite them to open their hearts to Jesus's saving love. The brochure was entitled, "How to Find New Hope at New Hope Ministries." Inside the brochure were three main topics, one at the top of three vertical panels: 1) "What is Hope?"; 2) "The Source of Hope" 3) "Experiencing Hope." The question "What is Hope?" was followed by three answers, each accompanied by a brief explanatory paragraph: "Hope is expecting your immediate desires to be fulfilled"; "Hope is feeling good about the future"; and "Hope is being ready to meet God in eternity". On the second panel entitled "The Source of Hope" the reader is told about the God who provides hope, and on the third panel entitled "Experiencing Hope" the reader is invited to speak to one of the directors about these matters or to pray on one's own something like the simple prayer that was provided.

It is hard to assess the effectiveness of having tract-like brochures available for guests of New Hope. It is also hard to know how reliable statistics are that give the percentage of decisions made for Christ by someone reading such a brochure. It may take years for someone who picks up a Bible, brochure, or copy of *Our Daily Bread*⁷⁵ to actually open his or her life to God. But New Hope wants to make God's transforming Word available. Today, there are Bibles in several languages, current copies of *Our*

⁷³ NHM Newsletter, Spring/Summer, 1993.

⁷⁴ Information from staff, Summer 2022.

⁷⁵ Name of a devotional published since 1956 by Our Daily Bread Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI, <http://odb.org>.

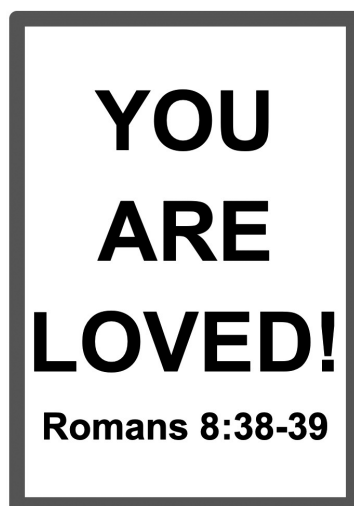
Daily Bread, and other relevant brochures prominently displayed and available in the reception areas of every New Hope center. Executive Director Eric Saunders says guests do help themselves, and if *Our Daily Bread* rack is empty, guests ask for copies.⁷⁶

There are frequent reminders of God's love throughout each center and a welcoming atmosphere of care for guests, volunteers, and staff. This extends even to the exits from parking lots! Beneath the STOP signs at the two exits of the parking lot at the Dillsburg Center, there is a 10" x 14" white sign, edged in bright blue, with bold black lettering. One sign reads, "GOD LOVES YOU, John 3:16." The other reads, "YOU ARE LOVED, Romans 8:38-39."

Ten years ago, New Hope formed a Spiritual Development Committee to lead New Hope's staff to cultivate interest in clients for spiritual development. The Spiritual Development policy encourages staff to have faith-based conversations with clients who demonstrate interest. This might even include a client's interest in making a decision to learn more about and become a follower of Jesus Christ. Should a client desire more conversation beyond this, a referral would be made to a local church.⁷⁷ Several years ago the role of the Spiritual Development Committee was incorporated into the work of the Program Committee.

Connection with Messiah College (now Messiah University)

Since a few years after opening that first center in Dillsburg, New Hope Ministries has partnered with professors from Messiah College (now Messiah University) to conduct board development seminars, evaluate New Hope's programs from a professional perspective, involve students



One of the signs posted underneath an exit stop sign.

⁷⁶ Eric Saunders, conversation with author, November 1, 2022.

⁷⁷ Spiritual Development Committee Job Description, Draft, July, 10, 2012.

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in conducting surveys for New Hope, and refer students to New Hope for practicums and internships. In my October 13, 2022 conversation with Eric Saunders, executive director, he told me that he has supervised thirty to forty interns, half of them with social work majors, but some from other disciplines, such as Christian Ministries. In addition to Messiah interns, there have been fifteen or twenty non-Messiah interns coming from other universities and Harrisburg Area Community College for human service experience. There have also been some seminary students. Currently there are three interns, including a Messiah graduate in a Master's level program at Fordham University. Numerous students from Messiah have also volunteered to help with children and youth programs. Eric said he believes that this connection with Messiah professors, staff, students, and spouses of professors and staff over the years has nurtured the growth and development of New Hope Ministries significantly. A shared Christ-centered mission has contributed to personnel at Messiah wanting to be involved with New Hope. A number of Messiah staff have served on New Hope's Board of Directors, as well as Messiah grads after having established themselves in careers and business in the area. Others, after volunteering or interning with New Hope during their college years have come on staff. A number of Messiah grads are on staff today.⁷⁸ One of those is Joel Giovannetti, who volunteered in New Hope's children and youth program eight years before coming on staff in 2002.

Joel has been an employee with New Hope for twenty years. He started volunteering in the children and youth program at New Hope in September 1994 during his first year at Messiah and volunteered during all four of his years at college. After graduating in 1998, he went to work at Philhaven Hospital for four years but continued volunteering in the children and youth program at New Hope. In 2002, he was hired to direct the children and youth program, a position he held until 2018, when he transitioned into New Hope's Development Department.⁷⁹

Recently, I had the privilege of meeting with Carrie Bair, a Messiah student intern at New Hope's West Shore Center in Lemoyne. Carrie is a

⁷⁸ Eric Saunders, conversation with author, October 13, 2022.

⁷⁹ Joel Giovannetti, email to author, October 25, 2022.

sophomore social work major. She said she is having an excellent intern experience at New Hope. She first learned about New Hope Ministries when she was in high school, participating with Cross Keys Fellowship Youth Group in New Oxford to stock shelves for the food pantry New Hope operated there.

Now as an intern she might be assigned to the “front” desk to greet guests, help them with applications for assistance, log their background information, guide their on-going progress relative to the assistance they receive. At the “back” desk, she makes calls to schedule guests to come for food shopping and makes appointment reminder calls. In the back she might also organize the pantry and stock shelves. She also observes case managers meeting with guests and teaches the Dollars to Sense classes. She especially enjoys the interaction with clients and the opportunity to encourage them. She can tell that some of them are really hurting, and she tells them, “I’m here to listen.”

Carrie meets every week with New Hope’s executive director who is supervising her, but she also receives good guidance from staff and experienced volunteers. Her conclusion is that New Hope is a great place to intern, and she wouldn’t mind returning, which is a good possibility since social work majors are assigned internships every year.⁸⁰

PANO (Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations)

PANO (the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations) is a statewide membership organization supporting thousands of nonprofits that serve millions of people in the Commonwealth. PANO offers training, tools, and resources to support organizations in meeting the highest standards, legal requirements, and regulatory compliance of nonprofit governance, management, and operations.⁸¹ From its beginning, New Hope, in addition to remaining faithful to its mission, has worked hard for excellence in its operations and programs. In 2009, New Hope completed the lengthy agency evaluation process for PANO’s Standards for Excellence,

⁸⁰ Carrie Bair, interview with author, November 9, 2022.

⁸¹ PANO, <http://www.PANO.org>.

⁸² Molly Helmstetter, interview with author, January 26, 2023.

and August 20, 2009 achieved the Standards for Excellence certificate,⁸² a tribute to all those board members, staff, and volunteers who had served New Hope with such dedication, vision, and faithfulness from its inception.

Every five years agencies who have achieved Standard for Excellence certification need to apply for re-accreditation and go through a process of extensive evaluation and review by the PANO Standards for Excellence Committee and a team of trained peer reviewers. New Hope has just completed its second re-accreditation round and on December 2, 2022 was again awarded Standards for Excellence certification.⁸³

More centers, mobile food pantry, stability and workforce programs

In the same way that the Dover and Dillsburg Centers had outgrown their first locations after a few years of operation, within ten years, the Mechanicsburg Center outgrew its space. Because of so many requests for service coming from the West Shore, New Hope's geographic service area was expanded to include residents of the West Shore. This was a major decision for New Hope's board of directors and opened the door for even more expansion to come. In January 2009, a much larger facility was purchased at 5228 East Trindle Road toward Camp Hill, and the newly named Mechanicsburg West Shore Center was opened in January 2010.⁸⁴ At the same time, New Hope changed its food pantry system to the Choice Pantry Model. Instead of a volunteer filling bags or boxes of food according to the number to be served for a certain period of time, guests could now select their own items from food arranged by category on shelves, and in refrigerators and freezers. Each guest is given colored cards according to categories, each card with the number of items from each category that the guest can select. This provides more dignity for the guest—like shopping in a grocery store—and there is less food waste than when guests are just handed a box or bag of food that may contain items they can't or won't use.⁸⁵

At some point, New Hope Ministries was called the best kept secret in South Central Pennsylvania. That changed as New Hope Ministries

⁸³ Molly Helmstetter, January 26, 2023.

⁸⁴ New Hope Ministries Timeline of Events (by location).

⁸⁵ Information from staff, summer 2022.

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developed and expanded its programs and partnerships. More neighboring communities, usually initiated by pastors and churches, approached New Hope to inquire about New Hope establishing a center in their community. At this stage in its development, New Hope has been poised to be able to add more centers. For each request, data is gathered regarding the need in that particular community and contacts are explored to determine the local support to sustain such a venture. Today, New Hope Ministries has grown to include nine centers, with projection to open its tenth in Spring Grove in January 2024. Except for the projected Spring Grove center, New Hope now owns rather than rents the properties of all of its centers and is therefore not subject to decisions by landlords to raise the rent or sell the property. Here is a list of New Hope centers and the year each was opened:

- Dillsburg Center opened January 3, 1983
- Dover Center opened April 1, 1986
- Mechanicsburg Center opened January 23, 1989
- Hanover Center opened August 1, 2012
- West Shore Center opened November 16, 2016
- New Oxford Center opened February 15, 2017 (services provided beginning December 2016)
- Littlestown Center opened August 24, 2021 (services provided beginning Summer 2016)
- Enola Center opened January 19, 2021
- Redland Center opened November 30, 2022
- Spring Grove Center projected to open January 2024



The food pantry at the Dillsburg center.

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The entrance to the current New Hope Ministries Center in Dillsburg.

New Hope Ministries also operates pantries with its unique Mobile Pantry trailer and truck at sixteen locations where there is no center:

Abbottstown	Lewisberry
Boiling Springs Citizens Fire Company	Middlesex Elementary School
Budget Inn New Cumberland	Paradise Homes Community (boxes only)
Country View Mobile Home Park	Red Land High School
East Berlin	Susquehanna View (boxes only)
Fairview Bethel Church of God	Wellsboro
Gardners	York Haven
Goldsboro	York Springs

The “boxes only” designation refers to pre-packed boxes that are delivered to residents at Paradise Homes Community (Thomasville) and Susquehanna View (Camp Hill). The recipients are not given choices, unless there are specific allergy considerations. These boxes are delivered to those who can’t get to any of New Hope’s centers or mobile sites. If a guest wants a box delivery, the arrangement is made through the center in the service area where the guest resides.⁸⁶

In addition to the “self choice” model on the mobile pantry trailer and at each center, a healthy home-cooked meal is served each day from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, at the Café in the Market Place, which is part of the food pantry at each center. The Market Place is open to

⁸⁶ Information from staff, summer 2022.

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One of two mobile food pantries operated by New Hope Ministries.

anyone throughout the day; it is not limited to the lunch hour or connected to one's appointment to "shop." At the Market Place anyone is welcome to come in to get a meal or to help oneself to bread, fresh fruit, and vegetables.⁸⁷

Stability and workforce programs

In addition to its direct services and children and youth programs, New Hope Ministries has created stability and workforce development programs. New Hope offers some of the programs on its own, while others are in partnership with other agencies and businesses in the region. The following are the current stability and workforce programs New Hope offers.⁸⁸

- **United Way of the Capital Region** recently launched **Road to Success**, a workforce development pilot project to help the unemployed and underemployed obtain jobs where they can earn a living wage and advance in the workplace. New Hope Ministries is one of five service partners providing case management services.
- **Dollars and Sense** is a basic money management class providing participants with the tools to increase income and decrease spending. Both day and evening classes are available at all New Hope Centers.
- At **Job Junction**, guests of New Hope meet one-on-one with a

⁸⁷ Information from staff, summer 2022. I was the beneficiary of some of those hearty meals. On some days I was going through boxes in the conference room of the administrative office, I would walk to the Café in the food pantry.

⁸⁸ Information from staff, summer 2022, New Hope Ministries Administrative Office, Dillsburg, PA.

volunteer to help with resume building, cover letters, interview skills and job searches. Job Boards also provide information on more job opportunities in the area. At Job/Career Fairs hosted at New Hope Centers, guests are given an opportunity to meet face to face with local hiring businesses. Job/Career Fairs are open to the public.

- **Soft Skills** training is given to expand interpersonal skills of guests and understanding of what it takes to be a good employee in the current job market. Topics covered include: communication, teamwork, and conflict resolution. This training is a pre-requisite for all New Hope job training programs including Forklift Training, Nurse Aide, etc.
- A twelve-to-sixteen-week evening **General Education Development (GED)** program provides the opportunity to gain the knowledge needed to obtain a GED.
- A **Nurse Aid Program**, currently held during the spring and fall semesters five times a year, involves five weekday classes (one week of pre-clinical courses at a New Hope Center and three weeks of clinical courses at a local nursing facility). This program provides the opportunity for students to find stability through a great career that has room for education and growth. Those interested must attend Soft Skills Training, Dollars and Sense Class, and fill out an Education and Workforce Training Application.
- **CDL Class A Drivers License Class** is offered in partnership with S&H Express for those interested in obtaining a Class A CDL. Application can be made to receive a \$500 scholarship towards enrollment at Shelley Truck Driving School in York, PA. Those interested must attend Soft Skills Training, Dollars and Sense Class, and fill out an Education and Workforce Training Application.
- **Forklift Training** is provided for those wanting to expand their job skills to find work in the forklift operator field. Those interested must attend Soft Skills Training, Dollars and Sense Class, and fill out an Education and Workforce Training Application.
- New Hope partners with HACC (Harrisburg Area Community College) to offer the **EMT course**. This course provides the knowledge and skills required to perform pre-hospital care and function as an EMT as set forth by the National Registry of EMTs and the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Those interested must attend

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Dollars and Sense Class, Soft Skills Training and fill out an Education and Workforce Training Application.

- **Rise Up training** provides training for guests interested in getting into the customer service or retail industry.
- Training to receive a **Child Development Associate Certificate (CDA)** is available for those interested in obtaining a daycare or preschool position.
- Guests interested in being a **Pharmacy Technician** can sign up for such training at their local New Hope center.
- New Hope partners with HACC (Harrisburg Area Community College) to offer full time or part time training to become a **Phlebotomy Technician**. Full-time day classes are for seven weeks and part-time evening classes are for fifteen weeks.



Volunteers preparing Christmas baskets.

- Guests interested in a **Medical Assisting** career are encouraged to sign up at their local New Hope Center.
- Because of the increasing number of homeless and near-homeless individuals and families coming to New Hope centers, in February 2023, New Hope created a new program to address homelessness. The **Housing and Homeless Coordinator** will screen homeless and near-homeless individuals and families for emergency housing assistance, address homeless prevention, and support permanent housing for individuals and families through case work and ongoing engagement.
- At Christmas, New Hope conducts a **Christmas Blessing Express**. Instead of collecting new gifts to give to each member of those families receiving a Christmas Basket, now new unwrapped gifts, generously donated by individuals, churches, and businesses, are brought to the centers, arranged on tables, and the families New Hope serves do their own “shopping” by selecting gifts for the members of their families. This is a wonderful and exciting time for staff, volunteers, and families.

Most wonderful for staff and volunteers are the expressions of gratitude for assistance received. On November 29, 2021, exactly thirty-nine years after the Articles of Incorporation for New Hope Ministries were filed with the Corporation Bureau of the State of Pennsylvania, Melissa Fetty, in a neatly hand-written letter, expressed appreciation for the help given during a time of need:

I wanted to thank you for helping my husband and me in our time of need. We received help with food. Also my husband, Djibo, received help to attend Welding Classes. He was so happy taking those classes. He loved learning welding! Sadly, he passed away shortly after beginning them.

He suffered from heart problems for many years and his heart was wearing out. He was from Niger, Africa. All of his family was living there. His heart problems were discovered while he was visiting the U.S. He had a life-saving open heart surgery and was told he would die if he returned home because of the medical system. He lived for 11 years after that. Perhaps God allowed him to live here so that I could meet him.

I loved him dearly and went through great difficulty after he passed away. I wanted to do everything on my own, but had to

accept help from my parents. I should have accepted their help all along. I have loving family and am very blessed to have them.

I have become closer to God who has helped me and never left my side. I will never forget how you shared Christ's love. We came to New Hope Ministries back in 2018.

I live with my parents and recently began work again with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I want to donate one paycheck to you. I want to bless others by my gift so that you can [help] people like me in a time of need and get to a better place.⁸⁹

Ongoing Brethren in Christ support

I want to return to the theme of Brethren in Christ interest in and support of New Hope Ministries. Interestingly, the January 3, 1983 minutes of the Grantham Church Board included this recommendation from its Executive Committee regarding New Hope Ministries: "Our commitment of \$4,000 for New Hope Ministries does not imply further solicitations for money or goods from the congregation for this ministry. Any designated monies will not be considered."

In Pastor Ives's copy of those minutes, which has been donated to the Brethren in Christ Archives, the words "not be considered" were crossed out and "go to that ministry" were written in. Church Board's approval of \$4,000 for New Hope Ministries was for one year only.⁹⁰ However, an item in the June 16, 1983 minutes of the Peace and Social Justice Committee noted a plan by the committee to bring a request for the Grantham Church to again allocate \$4,000 in its 1984 budget for New Hope Ministries.⁹¹ The November 7, 1983 minutes of the Grantham Church Board noted passage of a motion that Stewardship Commission consider funding New Hope Ministries for \$4,000 in 1984.⁹² At the January 31, 1984 Congregational Council Meeting, in its vote to approve the projected 1984 budget, the Grantham congregation

⁸⁹ Melissa Fetty, letter to author, November 29, 2021.

⁹⁰ Minutes, Grantham Church Board, January 3, 1983.

⁹¹ Minutes, Grantham Church PSJC, June 16, 1983.

⁹² Minutes, Grantham Church Board, November 7, 1983.

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again approved \$4,000 to support New Hope Ministries.⁹³ According to the report from the Peace and Social Justice Committee for the 1984 Congregational Council, there were twenty members from the Grantham Church volunteering at New Hope Ministries during 1983.⁹⁴ There were also volunteers from the Dillsburg and Cumberland Valley Brethren in Christ churches.

All three founding Brethren in Christ churches have continued to support New Hope Ministries financially and with volunteers. Congregational Council records of all three churches show a budget line item for New Hope Ministries from 1983 until the present.⁹⁵ When Cumberland Valley Brethren in Christ Church joined The Meeting House in 2015, support continued for New Hope. In 2016, New Hope was the focus of The Meeting House Christmas Give, and New Hope remains a line item in The Meeting House annual budget.⁹⁶ When the Mechanicsburg New Hope Ministries Center was being planned and then opened in 1989, Mechanicsburg Brethren in Christ Church became actively involved with volunteers and financial support. More recently, Redland Valley Brethren in Christ Church has also become involved.⁹⁷ So, even though New Hope Ministries isn't a "Brethren in Christ" ministry, and was never intended to be, the Brethren in Christ churches in this region remain very involved in this ministry that was birthed out of the Grantham Church Peace and Social Justice Committee and developed in cooperation with the Cumberland Valley and Dillsburg Brethren in Christ churches.

Current agency-wide statistics

Many of us have heard the statement, "Little is much when God is in it." I think of that often when I reflect on the humble beginnings of New Hope Ministries. Today, the number of centers, services and programs offered,

⁹³ Grantham Church PSJC Council Meeting Report, January 31 1984, Budget Report.

⁹⁴ PSCH Report, 1983.

⁹⁵ Congregational council meeting budget reports for Cumberland Valley Church, Dillsburg Brethren in Christ Church, Grantham Brethren in Christ Church, Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives.

⁹⁶ Rich Love, telephone conversation with the author, October 2022, The Meeting House, Carlisle, PA.

⁹⁷ Molly Helmstetter, New Hope Ministries Director of Development, Fall 2022.

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guests served, volunteers involved, supporting churches and businesses and foundations, and the size of the budget far exceeds what any of the founding members could ever have imagined! Here are some statistics for fiscal year July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022.⁹⁸

Budget, FY 2022-2023:	\$10,922,629
Number of employees:	40
Guests served, FY 2021-2022:	15,567 individuals from 6,088 families
Volunteers, FY 2021-2022:	1,073 volunteers served 104,609 hours
Number of supporting churches, FY 2021-2022:	280

Reflecting

This telling of the story of New Hope Ministries has been with broad brush strokes—broad because many details have not been included. For fear of inadvertently omitting some, I have not listed the names of the many committed and dedicated board members, executive directors, center directors, staff, advisory council members, and countless volunteers who have served over the years. They all worked faithfully out of a desire to serve our Lord and share the love of Jesus with neighbors in need and support their efforts toward stability. Each one contributed in vital ways to what New Hope is today. For the same reason, the names of businesses and foundations that have so generously partnered with New Hope over the years and for special projects have not been listed. They, too, contributed in vital ways to what New Hope is today. So many have invested so much in time, talents, gifts (both spiritual and fiscal), and vision!

Like most growing organizations and agencies, New Hope Ministries experienced the up-and-down challenges of a growing agency. After the addition of Dover and Mechanicsburg Centers there was experimentation with decentralized administration, but it was soon determined that decentralization was too confusing, cumbersome, and unwieldy, and that a centralized administrative structure worked better.

⁹⁸ Statistics provided by New Hope Ministries staff, January 2023.

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Seeking to operate consistently in the spirit of Christ is always a major challenge. To help keep focused on its mission and source of provision, prayer has remained an important part of the life of New Hope. There is prayer prior to board meetings and at the beginning of each day. As staff gather for their work the call goes out, “it’s time to pray,” and all those in the building—staff, volunteers, and guests—are invited to join in. After the Mechanicsburg Center opened in 1989, a group of people from the community met there early in the morning one day a week to pray for New Hope Ministries, its administrators, its staff, and those who came for assistance.

As I reflect on the modest beginnings of New Hope, I am humbled by the way God has guided and blessed this ministry. New Hope has grown from one to ten centers and multiple mobile sites. Board members and staff have changed, but as New Hope has held firm to its mission, God has graciously provided. When New Hope had a desperate need for staff, God raised up the staff needed. When the food pantry was empty, he filled it again. At each step, the needed resources have come.

I have said many times that Dillsburg was the right place to embark



Marian Musser with a volunteer in the original lime-stoned basement food pantry at the Dillsburg Brethren in Christ Church.

on this venture. The Dillsburg community had one Ministerium, not several ministeria divided by doctrine or race like numerous surrounding communities had. There was unity among the clergy. The Dillsburg community leadership had already experienced working together and partnering with churches and businesses to bring services to that distant northern corner of York County. And so, when members of New Hope's founding board approached these same leaders, businesses, and churches, these leaders were grateful for what was happening and wanted to do what they could to support this effort to help those in need in their community!

That initial venture was a huge step of faith, but God was gracious to us, and all along the way we saw his faithfulness.

Acknowledgements

I want to express my appreciation to those who have helped with this endeavor to tell the story of the founding of New Hope Ministries.

- Glen Pierce, archives assistant at the Brethren in Christ Historical Library and Archives, met me at the archives numerous times and assisted me in securing documents held there from the Grantham, Dillsburg, and Cumberland Valley Brethren in Christ.
- Molly Helmstetter, the director of development at New Hope Ministries, and her assistant Michelle Zemba graciously hauled dusty boxes of records and memorabilia of New Hope's early years to the conference room in New Hope's administrative offices for me to dig into. They were also readily and cheerfully available to answer my many questions, provide current information and statistics, and put scanned photos (the "oldies") on my thumb drive.
- Linda DeCroes, former community organizer for Community Progress Council of York County at DDSS and employed by New Hope Ministries from 1983-2022 in case management and various administrative roles, kindly read the initial draft and offered helpful clarifying suggestions and several corrections to details.
- Eric Saunders, executive director of New Hope Ministries for the last sixteen years, came to the conference room to welcome me on several occasions and willingly gave time for conversation in his office.
- Harriet Bicksler, editor for Brethren in Christ Historical Society, as a member of Peace and Social Justice Committee at the Grantham

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Church for most of the years from 1978 on has known about New Hope Ministries from its inception. She encouraged me to write this and offered suggestions. I value her critical editorial eye and skills.

- Finally, I want to thank my husband Bob. As a senior couple, for environmental and stewardship reasons, my husband and I are trying to scale back and share technical and other apparatus. I am thankful he doesn't complain about the time I have spent at the computer we share, and I have tried not to let this writing interfere with the gardening and Rails to Trails biking we enjoy together. I hope time spent writing hasn't interfered too much with care for family members.

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APPENDIX 1

The letter that launched New Hope Ministries, from Rev. Charles Best, president of the Dillsburg Ministerium, January 4, 1982.

FROM: Rev. Charles W Best
President on the Dillsburg Ministerium

January 4, 1982

Dear Colleagues:

Clergy in the Dillsburg area are invited to our Dillsburg Ministerium. We meet the first Wednesday of the month. Our next meeting is this Wednesday, January 6th, 9:00 a.m. at the Senior Citizen Activity Center at Harrisburg Pike and 2nd street, Dillsburg, Pa. We will make plans for a Bacalaute Service for our high school seniors, etc. Coffee and tea are always provided by the Senior center.

Last November we discussed the changing situation of our Dillsburg-Dover Social Services. Federal cutbacks have caused the loss of some programs for our low-income people and have created uncertainty of other programs. It is very possible our center here in Dillsburg may not exist after May.

Other communities are facing similar cutbacks, of course; but our service center, unlike other communities like Carlisle, receives very little community support. Such communities have dedicated people serving on their center's Council; so they are making decisions to benefit their community in light of the cutbacks. In other words, they will at least have something available after all the cutbacks for information and referral.

We in our area may be left with nothing. Right now, only one volunteer attends the Council, or should I say serves on the Council. The rest, if any, are low income individuals and Priscilla Whitman, our paid Community Coordinator. It was not always like this. Many community members were involved, but when the Holy Spirit Hospital Health Center in Dillsburg was created (a big task) community volunteers diminished to the present situation.

As a pastor, when I am asked for help (Usually a handout, and I may be receiving more with the increase in unemployment, etc,) all I have to do is phone Priscilla and I know immediately what the circumstances are with the particular family or individual. Then I can act accordingly. My action may be referral to her and the Social Services, or we may coordinate our resources, or I may act entirely on my own through my congregation. The point is, I know what the real problems are in total perspective and then am better able to serve or give opportunity for the congregation to serve. I personally don't know what I will do without the Social Services if they are cutback to non-existence and even more people ask the congregation for help. They coordinate so many helpful things, on behalf of the low-income people of our community. Will I be able to get as much help from the York office?

Cutbacks are one thing. None-existence of a local center or office is something else! We desperately need to get some good, solid people involved in the Social Services Council!

Their next meeting is Monday, January 25th, 10:00 a.m. They meet the fourth Monday of each month. Please contact Priscilla at 432-3053 if you or someone else from your congregation could help serve on the Council.

Enclosed are some statistics I asked from Priscilla regarding services rendered by our Dillsbur-Dover Social Services. By the way, Dover is named only because our Social Services has jurisdiction in some of that post office area.

Charles Best

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APPENDIX 2

New Hope Ministries Statement of Faith



New Hope Ministries Statement of Faith

The incorporators of New Hope Ministries believe the Bible to be the inspired, infallible, authoritative Word of God, and in seeking to live in obedience to the truth and teaching found in the Bible, have incorporated New Hope Ministries to provide a service to minister to the physical and spiritual needs of others.

It is the intent of the incorporators of New Hope Ministries that the services and programs provided extend the message of Hope found in the witness of God's love through the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

To ensure the continued focus on this original intent, the incorporators of New Hope Ministries are including in the By Laws the following Statement of Faith and Theological Rationale for the work of New Hope Ministries. *As adopted by the National Association of Evangelicals.*

Statement of Faith

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
2. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the deity of our lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
4. We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
5. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
6. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved into the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
7. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.