



Spring 2022 • Newsletter

FROM VOLUNTEER TO EMPLOYEE,

Anna hardly has the words to express what a blessing it is to be a part of the staff of Amanda's House.

Anna Bontrager has been a part of the vision of Amanda's House since the very beginning. She started out volunteering in the St. Joseph County jail with a group from Riverside Church where they would meet with inmates dealing with issues of addiction. Their work with these women led to the vision of a recovery home where women like the ones they were meeting could have a safe place to go and continue their recovery. Anna and her husband were also a part of the team that renovated the home that would eventually become Amanda's House.

Her next volunteer position was as a House Angel. "I was really nervous to get started. I didn't know what to expect." After some time as a House Angel Anna found out that her days at Amanda's House were extremely fulfilling. A House Angel's day starts out by leading the girls through their current Bible Study. "Most of the rest of the day is spent with helping the girls, spending time with them, working through life skills, and taking the girls to their appointments." Anna's focus during her days as a House Angel was just to be there for the girls as much as possible. "I made sure to



BOOMERANG OF BLESSINGS

Anna Bontrager
Amanda's House Coordinator

always eat lunch with the girls when I was there and made sure that I was investing time with them." Anna says that she sees this time spent with the girls as planting seeds in her relationships with them.

In the new year, Anna became an employee at Hope United as the coordinator of Amanda's House. She says that she is excited to get to spend time doing what she is passionate about and to be a part of continuing to grow the ministry of Amanda's House.

Anna says that as long as you have time and can be yourself, you have everything that you need to be a House Angel. When asked what is the most impactful part of being a House Angel? Anna says that it's having the opportunity to become friends with the girls. Showing them a level of authenticity is something most of these girls haven't had in their lives. It helps to establish a true relationship with the girls. "Scripture says we are blessed to be a blessing. It's a boomerang of blessings." If you think that the Lord might be calling you to share your gifts and time with the girls at Amanda's House, please contact Anna at **269-858-5016**.



RESTORING LIVES, BRIDGING COMMUNITIES



5K / 1 MILE SUPERHERO FUN RUN

June 18, 2022
Three Rivers, MI

Be on the
lookout for more
details on our
website and
social media!

MORE THAN JUST A ROOF OVER HER HEAD

Holly considered herself lucky to be in a place in her life to have a roof over her head, but a roof was all she had. Until a friend told her about Hope United. She reached out to the staff and quickly received some essential furniture and kitchen items. After days of sleeping on the ground, Holly says she was most excited to get a bed, so excited that she spent most of the next day in the bed relaxing. She is extremely grateful for the team at Restored Hope Furniture and says that she will continue to pass along this incredible resource to others she knows. If you would like to donate new or 'gently used' pieces of furniture or volunteer visit our website www.hopeunitedsjc.com.



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HAVING WORTH, VALUE, AND KNOWING YOU ARE TRULY LOVED

Amanda's House Resident Keri, has experienced God's 'above and beyond' provision. Last fall, Hope United was contacted by Sturgis Area Community Foundation who had a donated car and were looking to make a difference in someone's life. Keri, who had been saving for a car, gladly said 'yes'. This enabled Keri to use her savings to have the car fully insured and plated. She shared that this is the first time in her life that she has been able to have a car and drive it fully insured, and it is by far the nicest car she has ever owned. Through her experience of living at Amanda's House, Keri knows that she has worth, value and that she is truly loved. The gift of the car has further demonstrated to her that people care about her. Many thanks to Sturgis Area Community Foundation for their part in showing God's incredible love for his children.



I find it amazing that the commandments to love God and love neighbor bore such weight that Jesus stated that anything that had ever been taught through the law and by the prophets was dependent on them. I believe, in essence, Jesus is saying we really can't separate the two commandments or choose only one of them. We can accept both or reject both, but we cannot choose just one or the other.

We show God our love by surrendering our will to Him and following His ways for our life. Loving our neighbor is also demonstrating our love for God. We show our neighbors love by caring for their whole being and helping to meet their spiritual, mental, and physical needs. Jesus gave us a great example of what it looked like to love our neighbors through the story of the Good Samaritan. I think we can draw some great points from the Samaritan's care of his neighbor.

- His love was **observant**. He chose to have eyes to see his neighbor's needs.
- His love was **responsive**. He chose to take action when he saw his neighbor's needs.
- His love was **sacrificial**. He chose to give his time and resources to meet his neighbor's needs.
- His love was **merciful**. He chose to show love to one who may not have been loving to him.
- His love was **effective**. He chose to care for his neighbor in ways that brought healing and hope to one who was broken and lost.

Love of God and neighbor is central to every aspect of Hope United's ministries. Our House Angels at Amanda's House demonstrate Christ's love to our residents by giving of their time and talents to live life with our ladies and pour themselves into their lives. Our Hope United Mentors do the same by developing relationships with individuals who desperately need some guidance and hope for their lives. Restored Hope Furniture Ministry shows love to individuals in a practical way by providing for their physical need of furniture and household items when they have nothing. This demonstration of love often leads to mentor relationships as we offer to help assist with their mental and spiritual needs as well.

The fields really are "white unto harvest" right here in St. Joseph County. We have many neighbors all around us that are desperate for hope and healing for their lives. You can be a part of helping to meet the spiritual, mental, and physical needs of those crying out for help. Won't you consider joining our efforts to love our neighbors in St. Joseph County well by getting involved today? Contact us at Hope United to learn more. www.hopeunitedsjc.com or **269-858-5583**.



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