

Helping Hand



BUILDING A FOUNDATION OF HOPE FOR FAMILIES

By Amber Davis

Parenting a teen can often feel exhausting. Parenting a teen who has encountered Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs, can often feel impossible. Every boundary is tested, every conversation turns into an argument, and every day feels like a losing battle. Sometimes your child would rather run away than deal with it all. And sometimes you would, too. You have more questions than answers and more tears than smiles. The level of emotional exhaustion is at an all-time high for both you and your child...and you don't know where to turn. You feel so lost. So alone. And the worst part is...you watch your child struggling just the same.

This is the state-of-mind for so many of the families we help reconcile at Hope Harbor. Parents come to us in need of knowing they're not alone and that there is, indeed, hope. After feeling judged and beaten down by the daily struggles of living with a teen who struggles with ACEs, they search for help outside their comfort zone, desperate to discover a place that can bring an element of peace that no longer resides at home. The courage it takes for a parent to walk through the

doors at Hope Harbor is immeasurable. In that moment, all pride is set aside as the yearning for change takes center stage. There has to be a better way. And there is.

Our program at Hope Harbor is different from any other program out there. We do not step into the parents' place. We do not judge them or their parenting abilities. Our goal is simply to meet these families where they are and give them the love and support they need to build a foundation that can withstand any trials life may throw at them in the future.

Hope Harbor is an immersive, trauma-responsive family reconciliation program built on a foundation of faith and excellence.

There are 7 major components to our program: Spiritual Life, Residential Life, On-Site Academy, Evidence-Based Counseling, Growing in Character, Intentional Hope, and Admissions & Aftercare. These 7 areas assist our families in building foundations that last long after they leave Hope Harbor.

If you are feeling lost and alone...pick up the phone. It's time to build your family's foundation of hope.

Courage and a Willingness to Fight Make Hope Harbor Families Strong.

By Jessica Hendricks, MA, LMFT

When teens and their families make the choice to partner with us and work through our process, two things are clear: 1. They have some level of brokenness or suffering that has prompted them to seek help and 2. They are fighters.

Our program is not for the faint of heart. The teens here participate in weekly individual and group therapy. While the initial steps of our Growing in Character model apply to every resident who is here, Steps 4-9 are customized to them and their needs. Their personal goalwork on these upper level steps is intensive. It is not only time consuming, but emotionally and mentally taxing as well. Their Step process is self-paced. We do not pressure them to complete the steps on a certain timeline as we know every person is unique. Concurrently, much is asked of their parents as well. We believe a wrap-around approach is essential. Parents attend family therapy sessions at



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least once a month and quarterly parent workshops. They work through their own nine step process called Intentional Hope. Some of their goals mirror their child's; some are different. These steps are demanding but when the entire family makes this investment there is great reward.

The teens who come here statistically have many layers of Adverse Childhood Experiences, therefore Hope Harbor staff takes a trauma responsive approach. While many of the residents and their families have been victimized in the past, as their therapist, one of my goals in therapy is to make every effort to view or treat them not as victims, but as able, capable, and strong. My goal is to help empower them. This includes helping them develop new ways of thinking, new ways of responding to their emotions, and new ways of relating to their families.

While I am clear that I will never force my faith on residents and their families, I am open about my



worldview and spiritual orientation from the beginning – which is Christ-centered and that God is the true healer. I share my worldview, because I believe value-free counseling is not possible. I want all of the teenagers who come through Hope Harbor to know that therapy is a safe place to explore and form their identities and spirituality. I work from a family systems framework, which focuses heavily on relational patterns and dynamics. Theoretically, I draw primarily from a Solution-Focused and Strengths-based approach, Bowenian Family Therapy, and Structural Family Therapy. I view therapy as “sacred space”. I am there to listen, be a safe person, and help them work through challenges that have been holding them back. Hope Harbor provides unique opportunities for therapy – not only do I meet with the residents and their families for regularly scheduled sessions, but I am also available to work through problems that may arise at the cottage or in the classroom. We work as a team and when conflicts occur or a teen’s emotions have taken over, I have the opportunity to come alongside that resident and other staff in “real-time” to help. I consider it an honor and a privilege to walk alongside families who have had the courage to seek out help and do the difficult work that is necessary for reconciliation.

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Oh, Happy Day!

Hope Harbor Academy's First Official Graduation July 12, 2019



By Dr. Bob Whiddon

July 12th, 2019. This was an historic day, this day was 72 years in the making. For the first time in our history, Hope Harbor conferred diplomas upon six High School Graduates.

Hope Harbor has worked with the idea of reconciling families, even in our early days. Our program has evolved over the years to where we are now one of the premiere Family Reconciliation organizations in our nation.

Hope Harbor found early on that we needed to help our youth get caught up in their studies at public school. In the mid-1970s Mrs. Sharon Milligan volunteered to tutor children who resided at Turley Children's Home, which was our name from 1947 to 1996. In 1978 Mrs. Milligan was one of three teachers hired full time to help tutor children. In 2003 she was named as Education Director and Program Director for Hope Harbor. She continues today as a volunteer for Hope Harbor and serves as President of our Board of Directors. She says, "I started as a volunteer and I am ending as a volunteer."

In 2008, Ms. Carol Case was hired to be the new Education Director for Hope Harbor. Ms. Case worked tirelessly to continue building the school at Hope Harbor. She brought the school through the difficult and tedious process of accreditation. Hope Harbor school received full accreditation with Christian Schools International in February of 2016. This also gave us full status as an accredited academy with the State of Oklahoma so that credits earned at Hope Harbor Academy are transferable to public schools.

In 2017, Mrs. Kay Dalton became Director of Education for Hope Harbor. Her vision was to steer the school towards STEM education (Science, Tech, Engineering, Math). She has impacted the school already with classes in the programming and use of drones. She also made it possible for students at Hope Harbor Academy to receive credits for electives as well as the core subjects.

Besides these three great women, there have been hundreds and even thousands of loving, faithful Christian men and women who have given in one way or another to the success of Hope Harbor and Hope Harbor Academy. All of the staff here at Hope Harbor are building upon those people who worked here before us. All of our supporters, both individual supporters and churches who give on a monthly basis, are continuing the work that others began years ago.

May God bless us and may Hope Harbor always be a place where we can reconcile families.

Hope Harbor Family Reconciliation Program



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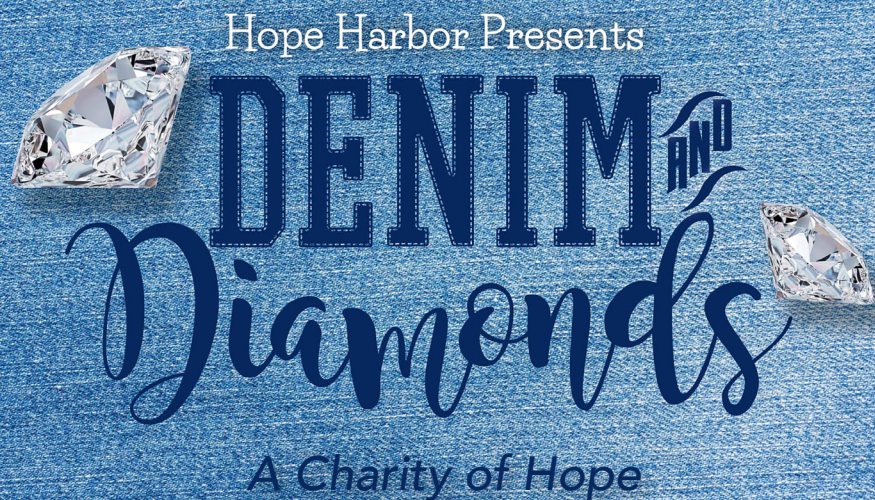
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