



# 2025 – A Year of Hope

## Renewed Hope for Willard Area Families

In 2025, many individuals and families in the Willard area faced daunting challenges, including the threat of eviction, homelessness, utility shut-offs, job loss, health issues, and food insecurity. In the midst of feeling isolated, hopeless, and confused, they all discovered a common source of hope: Starting Point Outreach Center. During the year more than 675 client visits were recorded by Starting Point. The number of people served is much higher than this number when spouses, children and other family members are included.

## Compassionate Support and Crisis Resolution

At Starting Point Outreach Center, people found a caring community. Staff and volunteers listened closely to their stories, offering empathy and understanding. With a genuine desire to help, the team assisted individuals and families in resolving pressing crises. Clients also learned vital skills to help them avoid similar difficulties in the future.

## A Community United in Caring

One of the most significant discoveries for those seeking help was realizing how deeply the Willard community cares about its neighbors. Community members consistently demonstrated their willingness to help others through difficult times, providing a renewed sense of hope for all.

## Transforming Despair into Action

Regardless of the nature of the crisis—whether financial, personal, or medical—the Starting Point Outreach Center’s staff and volunteers worked tirelessly to find solutions. Their efforts focused on securing resources and support so that families could receive assistance, encouragement, and hope precisely when they were needed most.

## Resourceful Advocacy and Creative Solutions



Although resources in the Willard area are limited, the Starting Point team proved to be both resourceful and creative. Advocating for their clients, they explored every possible avenue and referral to meet a wide range of needs. This included spending countless hours researching online, making phone calls to local businesses, churches, agencies, and organizations, and piecing together multiple resources to resolve each crisis. The staff guided clients through completing applications and forms, scheduling appointments, arranging transportation, and more.



*“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me... “*

**- Matthew 25:35#**

## **Providing a Hand Up, Not Just a Handout**

Helping someone through an immediate crisis is just the beginning. The Starting Point Outreach Center team remains engaged with clients, encouraging them to utilize available resources to prevent future problems. Through a variety of programs, including online and in-person classes, training, mentoring, referrals to counseling, and other opportunities, clients are empowered to pursue self-sufficiency and lasting success.

## **Inclusive Community Support**

By collaborating with churches, businesses, schools, organizations, and individuals throughout the Willard area, Starting Point Outreach Center ensures that assistance, encouragement, and hope are available to everyone who walks through its doors. Support is provided regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, or gender, reflecting a strong commitment to inclusiveness and compassion. We are “People Working Together Helping People.”

## **Helping Our Immigrant Neighbors**

A representative from The Immigrant Worker Project (IWP), a nonprofit based in Canton, Ohio, holds an immigration legal clinic at Starting Point Outreach Center on the second and fourth Monday of each month. At these clinics, clients receive assistance with renewing residency and work permits, DACA, and other immigration applications and forms, as well as answers to their questions. IWP offers these vital services at little or no cost to those in need, and in 2025, 139 clients were helped, with many returning for follow-up visits.

In addition to legal support, language assistance plays a crucial role in empowering clients. To address this need, Starting Point volunteers provide translation services for Spanish-speaking clients whenever necessary. Live translation is often essential for navigating various situations, and volunteers also assist with completing applications and other important documents.

Further reinforcing the spirit of community collaboration, Starting Point sponsored English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in partnership with the Christian Alliance Church. These classes, held at Grace Methodist Church, exemplify how local organizations work together to support and uplift community members.

Moreover, Starting Point Outreach Center, in partnership with Wiers Farm, serves as an independent Spanish/English resource for farm workers. Through this initiative, Wiers Farm employees have an anonymous channel to convey grievances, concerns, and questions directly to Wiers Farm ownership via Starting Point, ensuring their voices are heard and their needs addressed.

## 2025 Success Stories\*

### Leon and Lois

Leon, age 58, and his wife Lois were facing significant hardships due to serious medical issues. In November of 2024 Lois underwent cancer surgery, and unfortunately, her cancer had returned, requiring additional surgery. Leon experienced a medical emergency, resulting in the amputation of his left leg below the knee in March of 2025. Prior to this, Leon was employed and was the family's sole provider. Since losing his leg, he had been unable to work, leaving the couple without any income or insurance coverage.

The cost of a new prosthetic leg for Leon was quoted at \$18,000.00. Starting Point Outreach Center took proactive steps by researching various prosthetic providers and successfully scheduled an appointment for Leon at Capital Prosthetic and Orthotic Center in Mansfield and arranged transportation to get him there. During the appointment, the Center staff was informed that Leon and Lois did not have insurance or funds to pay for the prosthesis. Despite this, Leon's measurements were taken, and the prosthetist indicated that he would submit the information to the corporate office for review.

The following week, Starting Point Outreach Center contacted Capital Prosthetic and Orthotic Center for an update. They received encouraging news: the Center could provide Leon with a refurbished or recycled prosthetic leg for a reduced cost of \$4,120. The Starting Point team sprung into action, calling on local resources and individuals for help. Within less than two weeks the money had been raised, and the prosthesis was paid for. Leon received his prosthetic leg and while their difficulties are not over, they now have renewed hope for their future.

### James

Despite living with blindness and diabetes, James has met life's obstacles with unwavering strength and a gentle heart. For more than three years, he has maintained his apartment with consistency, never missing a rent payment, and building a foundation of stability.

However, everything changed when James misplaced his debit card—the only link to his Social Security Disability Insurance benefits. Suddenly, his ability to pay rent disappeared, and with his replacement card still weeks away, the threat of eviction became alarmingly real. When he reached out to Starting Point Outreach Center, our staff immediately grasped the urgency and contacted his landlord. Unfortunately, the landlord had already begun eviction proceedings and refused to provide extra time for payment, leaving James just three days to resolve the crisis.

This was the moment our commitment to offer practical help and hope truly mattered. Our team sprang into action, pooling resources and collaborating quickly to pay James's outstanding rent, effectively stopping the eviction and preserving his home. More than just financial support, we offered reassurance and encouragement, helping James weather a temporary setback without losing everything he had worked for. Hearing the relief and gratitude in his voice as he held his new debit card reaffirmed the impact of our mission. Stories like James's are a testament to how your support empowers us to intervene in critical moments, stopping short-term problems from becoming lasting hardships.

*"The people at Starting Point didn't just hear a problem; they heard me. They were so kind and moved so fast; they gave me back my stability. Knowing there are people out there who genuinely care and will fight for you when life hits you hard is the most comforting feeling." - James*

### Christmas Families Initiative

During the holiday season, employees of Dutch Maid Logistics demonstrated remarkable generosity by reaching out to Starting Point with a special request. They asked Starting Point to identify three families within the community who might struggle to afford a Christmas celebration. Their goal was to ensure these families experienced the joy of the season by providing a complete Christmas dinner, as well as new clothes and gifts for every family member.

Starting Point took on the responsibility of selecting the families most in need. After identifying the families, they gathered detailed information from each one, including food preferences, clothing sizes, and gift ideas. With these specifics in hand, Starting Point coordinated the delivery times to ensure everything arrived smoothly and on schedule.

Thanks to the dedication of Dutch Maid Logistics employees, each family received a festive meal, new clothing, and thoughtful gifts. Their efforts made the holiday season brighter for these families, serving as a shining example of how members of our community come together to help one another. This initiative truly reflects the spirit of People Working Together Helping People.

\*Some information like names and times have been changed to protect the privacy of our clients.



**The Girls Closet** at Starting Point Outreach Center underwent significant renovations in 2025. The program, which started in two cabinets in the conference room, was transformed into a free store encompassing an entire dedicated room. The Girls Closet program provides essential personal care and hygiene items, including feminine products and some makeup, to teen girls in need.

This initiative empowers young women to prioritize their self-care and well being by offering these items at no cost, which their families might otherwise not be able to afford.

The program is sustained by generous donations from community churches, organizations and individuals, and is open to girls residing in the Willard area on Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.

## Partner With Us to Make a Lasting Impact

### Be the Difference for Those in Crisis

You have the power to make a meaningful impact on the lives of individuals and families facing crisis situations. By partnering with and donating to Starting Point Outreach Center, you can demonstrate Christ's love to those in our community who are hurting and in need. The challenges people face are varied—some are financial, others are medical or related to job loss, and while some may result from personal choices, many stem from generational cycles or circumstances beyond anyone's control.

### How We Support Our Community

At Starting Point Outreach Center, we work closely with individuals and families to address the immediate crises they are experiencing. Our support does not end there; we continue to walk alongside them, providing guidance and resources to help prevent similar situations in the future. This ongoing support can include mentoring, referrals to additional resources, specialized training, guidance, and more.

### Your Role in Our Mission

Our ability to offer these vital programs and services depends on the generosity of donors like you. Your contributions make it possible for this community-focused ministry to continue bringing assistance, encouragement, and hope in the name of Jesus. Please consider supporting us by donating and praying for our work—both are essential to fulfilling our mission.

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