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Bridge of Grace Announces Public Phase of Capital Campaign

Fort Wayne, Ind. (June 7, 2022) – Bridge of Grace Ministries is pleased to announce the public phase of its capital campaign to revitalize southeast Fort Wayne. Through the **HOPE Unleashed** campaign, Bridge of Grace is focused on **Housing, Opportunity, Progress, and Education** initiatives for the residents of the Mount Vernon Park and Pettit-Rudisill neighborhoods. To date, Bridge of Grace has raised \$10 million of the \$15 million capital campaign goal.

The purpose of the HOPE Unleashed capital campaign is to advance the underdeveloped southeast Fort Wayne community. Bridge of Grace is committed to tearing down barriers that limit the residents in the Mount Vernon Park and Pettit-Rudisill neighborhoods by cultivating home ownership, implementing economic development tactics, revitalizing the neighborhood with a clinic and renovated park, and building a high-quality, inclusive early childhood development center.

“We envision a supported neighborhood where residents flourish because they have access to resources they need and opportunities they deserve,” said Javier Mondragon, Bridge of Grace Founder and CEO. “We believe it is imperative to create the momentum that will advance social equity and increase neighborhood sustainability.”

Since February 2022, HOPE Unleashed has been championed by the Bridge of Grace staff and board of directors, as well as capital campaign co-chairs, Chuck Surack and Vicki James, and campaign committee. Over the next two years, HOPE Unleashed will respond to the existing and realized needs of southeast Fort Wayne community residents.

“Chronic poverty is an issue our neighbors in southeast Fort Wayne are facing,” said Chuck Surack, HOPE Unleashed campaign co-chair. “Our community deserves a solution to looming opportunity gaps.”

Through a holistic and comprehensive approach, Bridge of Grace aims to improve the quality of life for residents of Mount Vernon Park and Pettit-Rudisill. The HOPE Unleashed capital campaign will not only raise funds to deliver great outcomes for these residents, it will also change the narrative of southeast Fort Wayne.

“This tremendous campaign will uplift and transform southeast Fort Wayne,” said Vicki James, HOPE Unleashed campaign co-chair. “These components of hope have the capacity to create a thriving southeast Fort Wayne neighborhood.”

Bridge of Grace will break ground in September 2022 on the building complex that will house an early child care development center, comprehensive health clinic, Bridge of Grace offices, and a community workspace. The campus is expected to be completed in December 2023.

About the Areas of Focus:

Housing – Housing renovation is a key component of the Bridge of Grace neighborhood revitalization strategy. According to US census data, approximately 60% of residential properties in Mount Vernon Park are rentals. Bridge of Grace considers housing to be a tool that increases access to wealth and home equity for low-income residents in southeast Fort Wayne. Between 25-30 blighted homes will be purchased and renovated in target neighborhoods with the goal of creating a permanently affordable and community-owned housing stock.

Opportunity – Opportunity and equity are vital components to the success and economic growth of southeast Fort Wayne. Accessibility, proximity, and resources have become barriers to some residents of our underserved community. To serve business owners and consumers, Bridge of Grace plans to purchase identified vacant commercial lots and establish a low-risk, multi-tenant incubator space and offer a community workspace to create a network of support.

Progress – Bridge of Grace is driving the resurgence of the Mount Vernon Park and Pettit-Rudisill neighborhoods. Neighborhood revitalization strengthens southeast Fort Wayne by shifting residents’ perceptions. Revitalization efforts include the renovation of Brewer Park. Beautification and wellness features include playgrounds, sport courts, walking paths, and an art garden. Also included in the park renovation is a pavilion with restrooms and drinking fountains which will allow the Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department to distribute summer meals to neighbors.

Education – Education is key to breaking the cycle of poverty. There is a prevalent opportunity gap for children in the Mount Vernon Park neighborhood. Ensuring strong starts for children in southeast Fort Wayne requires improved quality of child care, early education opportunities, advocacy, and nurture of the whole child. To support families, caregivers, and child care providers, Bridge of Grace will build a high-quality, inclusive development center that will provide high-quality early care and education. The center will serve 200+ children and their families. To demonstrate a commitment to the health and development of southeast Fort Wayne, Bridge of Grace will partner with experts to build a mental health, physical care, and developmental clinic in the Mount Vernon Park neighborhood.



www.hopeunleashed.org

www.bridgeofgracecmc.org

About Bridge of Grace

Founded in 2012, Bridge of Grace Ministries, a faith-based nonprofit organization, endeavors to empower our neighbors to build on their God-given spiritual, academic, physical, and emotional strengths to transform our community.

We are passionate about our mission because we see lives being changed in our neighborhood every day. Hope of a better life and a better community is rising as people are being empowered to make a difference. We are excited to have developed a model that can be replicated in other neighborhoods to transform more lives and more communities.

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