Church Planting in the Heart of Brokenness
BHITC Lays Out the 'Welcome Mat' in West Park
Hundreds Light Up CLE!
Impact more than Tripled at Second-Annual Christmas Store of Hope!

Hope Speaks Speakers Bureau
God's Hand-Picked Messengers of Hope and Encouragement
A Church to Call Home
Where brokenness and healing collide is where we find Jesus and His Church. That viewpoint explains a lot about Crossroads Lutheran Church, an emerging new congregation being piloted by church planter Dave Walters.

Starting in 2015, Building Hope in the City (BHITC) is fueling Crossroads with five years of financial support, in addition to equipping Walters through its Transform216 initiative. We asked Walters to tell us about Crossroads and its mission. Here’s what he had to say.

BHITC: What’s the status of Crossroads as a new congregation?
Walters: Most of 2014 was invested in building a core team of people who are committed to this effort. We also spent lots of time getting to know our community by participating in several community events in Brook Park. Late last year, we held an Alpha course as a means of introducing new people to the Christian faith and Crossroads. In December, we started weekly services with about 30 people attending. We’re planning now for a public launch of weekly worship by Easter.
BHITC: What’s the mission of Crossroads?
Walters: We want Crossroads to be a safe place for churched and unchurched people alike to unpack the messiness of life and learn how to move forward in a relationship with Jesus Christ.

BHITC: “Unpack the messiness of life” seems a key phrase to this vision. How is that being lived out already?
Walters: It’s being witnessed just about every day! The church plant was given an old Denny’s Restaurant located on the 160th block of Brookpark Road in Brook Park. It’s situated amid hotels, several strip clubs and adult entertainment venues. It’s a part of the community that most ‘church folk’ don’t visit. Yet, through His guidance, God has planted us here and is bringing us into relationship with all sorts of different people; many of whom feel so disconnected from ‘normal people’ and God that they would never think of darkening the door of a church. As a new church called to the highways and hedges of the community, we believe God wants us to invite ALL of His people to His Holy banquet by walking along side of them through whatever life they’re living at that moment.

BHITC: How would you describe your call to ministry and to this effort?
Walters: The vision and mission of Crossroads comes largely out of my own experience and call from God. I have not walked with the Lord my whole life. In fact, for my first 27 years, I was my own god. I served myself and made decisions based on my own desires. Eighteen years ago, God took hold of my life and called me into serving Jesus, who had loved me and paid a debt I could never pay. Like the man in John 9, I once was blind and now I see.

When that transformation happened, I wanted to share my experience with all the people I knew. My wife (who was also being changed by God’s Word) and I drove down to Florida to stay with some life-long friends for a vacation. While there, I was able to talk to them about the miraculous change that had happened and was still happening in my life thanks to Jesus. I was so excited to share this wonderful experience of God’s grace and I wanted them to experience it, too. At the end of dinner that night, they said, “Dave, what you’re telling us about God and Jesus are things we know. We’re already Christians.” I was so devastated by their statement I almost wept. I asked why they had never told me about Him. If they knew about God’s love, why didn’t you tell me?”

BHITC: What do you hope to gain by participating in Transform216?
Walters: I appreciate spending time with and learning from other leaders who are in similar places as I am, or who have been here previously. Our first Transform216 session for 2015 was held in January and it was a real blessing to meet with so many men from differing walks of life who are all seeking to follow God’s call in their lives.

To learn more about Crossroads, contact Dave Walters at 440.390.1340 or dave@crossroadslcms.com. Until renovations are completed on their building, Crossroads worships on Sundays at 10:30 am at the Travelodge Hotel at 16161 Brookpark Road. Stop by for a visit some Sunday!
BHITC lays out the ‘welcome mat’ in West Park

New Refugee Hope Center Offers Much in the Way of Welcoming

By Alexandra Komp, BHITC Volunteer

In February, BHITC opened The Hope Center, its first official satellite hub to serve refugees, in Cleveland’s West Park neighborhood. The reason for doing so was simple, says BHITC’s Eileen Wilson, Director of Refugee Resettlement Services. “We want to provide an ‘open door’ – a welcoming place where refugees and immigrants feel comfortable stopping in on their own to receive assistance.”

The notion of creating a “second home” for newcomers that invites them to drop-in for assistance or simply as a means of connecting with others has been a dream years in the making, says Wilson. “Rather than being a place solely for operating programs, The Hope Center will give refugees and immigrants a place they can belong.”

It also represents an important new partnership between BHITC, Gateway West Church, which will host The Hope Center on its new campus, and the Christian Missionary Alliance (CMA) Central District, which will provide staff and volunteer support.

“Gateway West Church is excited about the partnership with The Hope Center, not only because we share its building space, but also for the opportunity it brings to develop relationships with the people living in our community with such unique backgrounds and worldviews,” says Dan Ghramm, lead pastor of Gateway West Church. “We are praying God will use this ministry to share the love of Jesus in a special way for God’s glory,” he adds.

Todd Sovine, Director of Church Planting for the CMA Central District says, “Today, the Lord is opening new doors of opportunity to share His love by bringing the world to our region. As a result of our partnership with The Hope Center, we anticipate lives, communities and cultures will be transformed by Jesus.”

Open Mondays and Wednesdays from 10 am to 6 pm, The Hope Center offers citizenship preparation, English classes and practice, Bureau of Immigration Appeal services and referrals, as well as assistance with school registration, mail inquiries, tutoring and practical life questions. However, the heart of The Hope Center is the Café, which feature a newly painted world map mural and welcomes visitors to enjoy coffee and conversation.
BHITC’s other partners in ministry are already planning to make use of The Hope Center, as well. *Asian Services in Action, Inc.*, an advocacy organization for the Asian community, and *US Together*, one of Cleveland’s three refugee resettlement agencies, will offer classes and volunteers. *Economic Community Development Institute*, a nonprofit micro-lending and business training organization, will visit The Hope Center regularly to offer free consulting and assistance to visitors who have ideas for starting small businesses.

Volunteers are needed for the ongoing success of The Hope Center, too! Contact BHITC at 216.281.4673 to learn more about how you can get involved. Opportunities include driving refugees to and from The Hope Center, conversational style English practice, citizenship class teachers, café volunteers, receptionists, craft instructors, special events planners, childcare workers and tutors for children.

**The Hope Center Photo Gallery**

Refugees can stop in The Hope Center for assistance and connection.

A world map was painted by artist, Randy Oldrieve, on the main wall of The Hope Center’s new café – a place where a love for coffee and tea can be shared across cultures. The café includes plenty of couches and casual seating for practicing English.
MISSION: Cleveland 2015!

Give your youth group or adult group an experience like no other this summer!

Send me to the city...that I may rebuild it
- Nehemiah 2:5

BHITC can create a tailor-made mission trip experience for your group!
- Neighborhood events for children and families to support ongoing urban church planting efforts
- Relational ministry among immigrants and refugees
- Construction and rehab projects
- Service ministries of compassion for people in need
- Prayer walk services through urban neighborhoods

Why Cleveland?
A trip to Cleveland this summer can be used by Jesus to give your members important insights into mission, cultural differences, their personal giftedness for ministry and the unique “vibe” a major city offers. BHITC staff and missionaries can facilitate added service learning through devotions and teaching times, as well.

Contact Amy Mitchell to begin planning your summer experience at 216.281.4673 or amy@buildinghopeinthecity.org.
On November 9, 2014, 230+ of BHITC’s ministry partners gathered at The Westin Cleveland Downtown to Light Up CLE! and celebrate all God is doing in the city! Attendees enjoyed a Cleveland-themed silent auction, sit-down dinner by the Westin, music by The Mojo Trio, and of course, updates on all God is doing through BHITC’s ministries - the best part of all!

Thanks to generous sponsors and donors, BHITC raised more money than ever before from this event!

Light Up CLE! Photo Gallery
From the bright, twinkling lights to the gathering of loved ones and countless celebrations of Jesus’ birth, Christmas is truly a spectacular season. It’s also made beautiful by the generosity it compels, bringing hope and joy to so many in need.

BHITC, along with its many partners and volunteers, witnessed God’s generosity this past December during the second annual Christmas Store of Hope! As a result, 250+ urban parents and children shopped for each other and loved ones thanks to the charity of many, many generous BHITC supporters. That’s almost four times larger than last year’s pilot event!

“Three of the dads whose children attend tutoring were out of work for the holidays,” says Anita Morrison, BHITC’s Director of Urban Family Learning Centers. “They were overwhelmed and so grateful for the Christmas they could give their children due to the kindness of all those who contributed to the Christmas Store. God really used the Body of Christ to minister that day,” she says.

The 40+ volunteers would say they were equally blessed by the Christmas Store of Hope! “I loved meeting the families, hearing their stories and then seeing them so happy after they went Christmas shopping,” says Amy Brooks, a BHITC volunteer. “I felt so humbled and grateful for what I have as a result of this experience, and I want to give back and do more volunteering with families and teens.”

Thank you to everyone who donated your time, talents or dollars to make the event possible! For more information about how you can help with future events, contact Amy Mitchell at 216.281.4673 or amy@buildinghopeinthecity.org.

Christmas Store of Hope Photo Gallery
HOPE SPEAKS!

_BHITC Launches Speakers Bureau with Staff Members_

Founded more than 11 years ago, BHITC has grown into an organization strengthened by a staff as diverse as it is dynamic. Years of professional experience, certifications and degrees are combined with life experiences that have set people in motion to do new things and implement creative solutions to age-old questions.

That’s why we created the ‘Hope Speaks Speakers Bureau,’ where our staff will provide a message during your upcoming event, meeting or gathering.Outlined below are the staff members available to speak along with their topics of expertise.

**Brian Upton,** Executive Director
- Who Needs Who? Does the city need us, or do we need the city?
- Cleveland: City of Hope, City of God

**Amy Mitchell,** Director of Ministry Engagement
- Comfort or Connection: Stepping outside your comfort zone for deeper connection
- Becoming a Woman on Purpose: Unleashing your passions and gifts no matter what season of life you are in

**Eileen Wilson,** Director of Refugee Resettlement Ministries
- Single Women in Ministry: Embracing singleness and using it to serve God
- God’s Plans are Infinite for Women in Mission and Ministry
- Holding onto God through Life’s Storms

**Anita Morrison,** Director of Urban Family Learning Centers
- Teaching and Tutoring Within the Church
- Educating Elementary-Age Children
- Speaking and Praying God’s Word into the Hearts of Women
We are ‘Cleveland Proud!’

Show off your “mad Cleveland love” by buying one of our brand new, limited-edition CLE T-shirts, designed and printed exclusively for BHITC! Special thanks to Meredith Pangrace for the snazzy design and On Point Promos for their generous donation towards printing. Hurry, because they won’t last long!

$20

Sizes: Small, Medium, Large, XL and XXL. Available in teal or dark grey!

*Note: XXL is not available in teal.

Call or order online today!

The back of the t-shirts include BHITC’s logo and vision: Vibrant City Neighborhoods, New and Renewed Churches, Passionate Followers of Jesus

Dana Carlisle, Fundraising and Communications Manager

• Understanding Your Audience
• Developing a Heart for Service through Heart Change

Nadia Abuamsha, Missionary to Cleveland’s Arabic Community

• Ministering to Arabic Women
• Finding Hope and Courage in Jesus

Schedule Your Next Speaker Today

BHITC’s staff looks forward to sharing these messages with you soon as part of the ‘Hope Speaks Speakers Bureau’! To schedule one (or several) of these speakers, call 216. 281.4673. Multiple speakers are available for a panel discussion at your upcoming retreat, seminar or event.
“I feel as though God hand-picked my table members for me,” says Connie Doss, one of Cleveland’s first Sisters to benefit from Open Table. “In every situation, they show me that God is bigger,” she adds.

Before Open Table, God had already begun transforming her life significantly. Years before, Doss found herself using drugs and alcohol, which eventually led to her spending time in a penitentiary. She then went to Laura’s Home Women’s Crisis Center for 10 months, and that’s where she says God got a deeper hold on her life.

Doss began attending Gateway West Church, a church partner for Laura’s Home, where she grew in her relationship with God. Soon afterward, she was baptized, started working on her GED, and began serving as a volunteer in the church’s ministry. Last year, Gateway West Church recommended her for one of the first Open Table ministries to launch in Cleveland.

“When Pastor Dan (Ghramm, lead pastor of Gateway West Church), told me I’d be a good candidate for Open Table, I cried and thanked him,” says Doss. “I cried because I’m used to always receiving bad news, and at first, I thought I wasn’t worthy of something like this,” she added.

Her Table, led by members of Cuyahoga Valley Church, along with others from her own congregation, began meeting last summer. Since then, Table members have noticed significant changes in her life. “When we first started meeting as a table, Connie would keep her head down and was very reserved,” says Joe Haddad, Table Director for Doss’ Table. “She has really opened up, her faith in God has really grown, and that shows in her increased confidence and positive attitude.”
Table member, Joan Carlson-Miller, echoes the same, and says, “Since we began meeting seven months ago, I have seen greater confidence in Connie. She is more focused on exactly what she needs from us and is very open to suggestions by the table members.”

Doss admits it has been hard, at times, to keep making changes in her life. “There were times I wanted to quit, but the Holy Spirit wouldn’t let me. I feel Him so strong through the prayers and friendship of my Table members.”

Her Table members have helped her with everything from her finances, to preparing to take her GED test, to encouraging her to maintain her vegetarian diet and healthy eating habits, to even collecting letters of support to attempt to have her record expunged. When asked what has been the most helpful thing her Table members have done for her, Doss simply responded, “I could probably give you 100 answers to that question.”

God has certainly been at work through this experience, both in her life and those of her Table members. “When I first joined the Table, I had my own judgments about people who would be considered ‘poor’ or different from me,” says Haddad. “Many of my assumptions about those in need have changed because of this experience. I realize how wrong I was by the assumptions I made about those less fortunate.”

Carlson-Miller agrees and says, “I now have a greater understanding of the difficulties someone in poverty is working through. Open Table could be one of the most meaningful experiences of my life.”

BHITC introduced Open Table, a national ministry model for transforming the lives of people in poverty through the power of relationships, to Northeast Ohio area churches, organizations and agencies in 2014. The Tables, consisting of 6 to 10 volunteers each, meet weekly and act as a team of life specialists, encouragers and advocates for people in poverty (referred to as “Brothers” or “Sisters” on the Table).

Want to learn more about the Open Table ministry?

Come to a FREE, one-day exploration!

Who should come?
The exploration is for potential volunteers, church partners and social agencies. If you’re seeking a new and deeper volunteer opportunity in 2015, please consider attending the Exploration!

Register online at www.buildinghopeintheecity.org.
For more than four years, the Samdan Nepali Church worshiped in apartments on the near west side of Cleveland. The church, comprised entirely of Nepali refugees, has experienced so much growth, it needed to find a facility large enough to host them on Sunday mornings! After much, much prayer and hard work by BHITC volunteers, staff and Samdan church members over the past year, Mount Calvary Lutheran Church (12826 Lorain Avenue) in Cleveland graciously offered space to them for Sunday morning worship.

“We thank God for use of this new building,” says Rev. Ganga Diyali, a refugee from Nepal and a pastor at Samdan Nepali Church. “We also thank Mount Calvary’s pastor and members for their generous hearts,” he adds. Samdan (meaning “Lampstand”) Nepali Church began worshipping at Mount Calvary on November 16, 2014, and great things have been happening to members of both churches ever since.

“I have seen God open the eyes of some long-time members of Mount Calvary,” says Rob Plain, Pastor at Mount Calvary. “The Nepali Christians are definitely ‘on fire’ for Jesus.
This newsletter was produced at a very low cost to BHITC, thanks to the generosity of RE May, which donates printing expenses.

The result is a newsletter publication that looks far nicer than BHITC could afford otherwise. To learn more about this organization www.remay.com.

Witnessing that sort passion is something our members – and any Christian for that matter – have been encouraged by in their own walk with Jesus.”

The new building has been a perfect fit for the Nepalis; in fact, they’re seeing more people in their community come to visit Samdan as a result. “The building is a perfect match for the Nepali population,” says Rev. Diyali. “Some of our members can even walk to service and we are seeing more new souls for God’s Kingdom.”

Pastor Rob encourages everyone to come to one of the Nepali services, even if it’s only for a few minutes. He says, “I go upstairs into the sanctuary after our service, and even though I cannot understand the words that are being sung, it doesn’t matter because I can feel God’s Spirit as they sing His praises.”

BHITC thanks God for this huge blessing and Mount Calvary for opening their hearts and doors! Feel free to stop by and enjoy the service on Sunday mornings at 11:30 am. All are welcome - though it will be in Nepalese!

Tee Up for HOPE
Ryder Cup Golf Outing & Steak Roast

Check our website soon for registration details!
Mar 14
Understanding Poverty Seminar
Bay Presbyterian Church, Bay Village
9:00 am – 2:30 pm (Registration 8:30 am)
$10 Registration Fee
(Lunch provided for a suggested offering of $5)
RSVPs Required

Mar 15
Tutoring Ministry Bowl-A-Thon
Help us strike out poor grades and illiteracy!
2:30 – 5:00 pm
Freeway Lanes, 12859 Brookpark Road, Cleveland
$11.50 Per Person

Mar 18
Building Hope: 101 Class
Building Hope in the City
Come learn about current volunteer opportunities
5:30 - 6:30 pm

Mar 28
Refugee Mentor Training
Building Hope in the City
Learn how you can welcome a newly arriving refugee family!
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Apr 12
Volunteer Appreciation Event
Save the Date! More details to come!

Apr 14
Building Hope: 101 Class
Building Hope in the City
5:30 – 6:30 pm

May 2
CitySERVE

May 9
Understanding Poverty Seminar
Building Hope in the City / Trinity Lutheran Church
9:00 am – 2:30 pm (Registration 8:30 am)
$10 Registration Fee
(Lunch provided for a suggested offering of $5)
RSVPs Required

For more information or to register for any of the above, contact Lesa Hess at 216.281.4673 or lesa@buildinghopeinthecity.org or visit www.buildinghopeinthecity.org.