



## **PUBLIC RELATIONS PLAN**

**February 2016**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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Hope House Detroit, a non-profit organization started in 2010, strives to exhibit God's real, radical love by dwelling in community within a two-to-three block radius of its house at 840 Marlborough on Detroit's East Side.

Gary and Becky Gentry founded Hope House after purchasing and renovating a house in a neighborhood located near their home church -- Hope Community Church. The Gentrys desired to serve the neighborhood, especially the younger generation, by meeting the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the community. Hope House operates under End of the Road Ministries, a nonprofit previously started by the Gentrys, which also serves in East Africa. Hope House Detroit is the DBA for End of the Road Ministries in Detroit.

Hope House Detroit is a home where children can go after school or on weekends to participate in community with each other, while being encouraged by positive Christian role models. The staff and volunteers at Hope House have created multiple programs and activities, including a reading program for elementary school children, weekly Bible studies

for middle school and high school kids, a computer club, and neighborhood-wide events for the entire community to enjoy.

As many in Detroit and the state of Michigan work to renovate and improve the once grand city of Detroit, Hope House is doing its part by investing in its neighborhood, specifically investing in youth. The organization is run by three couples who share the core responsibilities, such as programming, relational care, recruiting, maintenance and general leadership. Like most nonprofits, Hope House depends heavily on volunteers and interns to operate the weekly events, to spend one-on-one time with the children of the neighborhood, and to provide supervision for larger events, such as the daily summer programs and special events.

At the heart of Hope House Detroit's mission is a desire to form sincere, lasting relationships within the community it serves, which requires volunteers to commit themselves long-term to the organization. One of Hope House Detroit's greatest challenges has been in recruiting volunteers with both a passion for, and an ability to commit to, the organization. In order for Hope House to truly make an impact, an element of trust must be developed between volunteers and children. Relationships must be cultivated over time, and cannot be rushed. The children who attend the programs need to bond with the same people every week, in order to feel comfortable opening up and sharing with them.

Hope House Detroit also offers an internship program in collaboration with local colleges, including Rochester College, that allows interns to participate in urban ministry and missional living in the Detroit area. Hope House is intentionally expanding its internship program in 2016.

The Rochester College public relations team will use a variety of methods, including media relations, social media, website enhancement, print collateral, photography and videography, to increase awareness about Hope House and its mission; to increase the number of consistent volunteers and interns; to create a more diverse pool of volunteers, to strengthen partnerships with local churches, colleges and schools; and to help attract more financial supporters.

This PR campaign will give Hope House Detroit the tools it needs to accomplish these goals, and ultimately and more importantly, help it to continue showing real crazy love to the youth in the neighborhood.

## **PR ATTITUDE**

The RC PR team commits to an attitude in accord with Hope House Detroit's. We acknowledge that Christ has already been active in the Marlborough community since its creation. We will discover and appreciate what God has been doing there. Instead of an impersonal, product-focused ministry, we will help Hope House continue its "highly relational, process-focused ministry" for the restoration of all people. We will not have an attitude of superiority, and we "embrace our mutual brokenness." Our goal is to be "who God created us to be, people who glorify God." (Corbett, Steve. When Helping Hurts, 2014)

## **RESEARCH**

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### **HISTORY**

In 2009, Becky and Gary Gentry began attending Hope Community Church in Detroit. For one year, they made the one-hour commute from their home in Brighton because they wanted to be more connected with the city of Detroit. They had read different books on

urban ministry and were drawn to Detroit after seeing the challenges the city and its people were facing.

Then in 2010, they purchased a home on Marlborough Street, just down the street from Hope Community Church, to begin the journey of living in a neighborhood on the east side of the city. The Gentry's goal was simply to be good neighbors. As the Gentrys were renovating the house, young men from the community began to visit the house to offer their help, and these casual encounters eventually grew into an unofficial Saturday morning breakfast tradition that still meets today. The Gentrys then set up an NBA-regulation basketball hoop in the backyard, and their house became the "unintentional hangout" for area youth. Eventually, the young women became aware of the "guy's group" that met on Saturday mornings, and the young women asked for their own "girl's group," which the Gentrys happily agreed to.

From that beginning, Hope House has grown into a dynamic, community building organization that offers year-round programs for neighborhood kids of all ages.

## **STAFF**

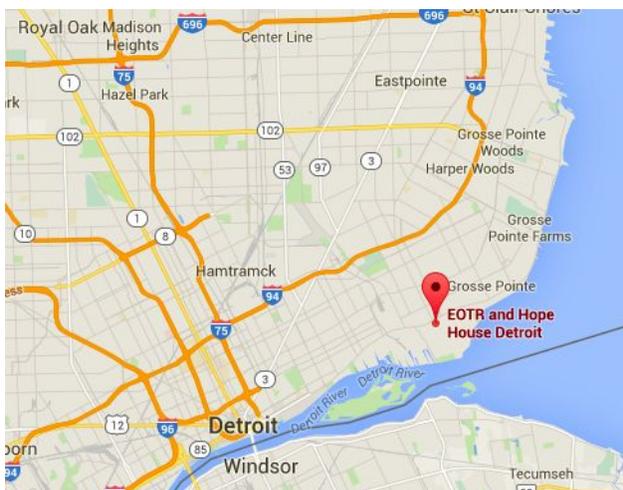
Gary and Becky Gentry are the founders and directors of Hope House Detroit. Jessica Brown, a 2013 graduate of Rochester College, serves as an assistant director. She oversees programming. She and her husband, Matt, who also attended RC, live in the Hope Hospitality House, which is four houses down the street from Hope House. They host the visiting groups that come from outside the city to stay at Hope House, and coordinate with Hope Community Church and other ministries in the city to develop service opportunities and community projects for these groups. Jessica also coordinates the High School Girls' Bible Study.

Riley Chowning, a 2008 graduate of Rochester College, serves as an assistant director. He oversees student care for Hope House and as youth pastor at Hope Community Church. Riley and his wife, Rae, add their urban missions experience to the team's efforts to meet the emotional and spiritual needs of the young people in the neighborhood.

Karen Gomez, a 2013 graduate of RC, serves as leader of "Thank God It's Girls Club." She lives at Hope House and currently serves as interim house director. Taylor Mihalovich, a former Rochester College student, resides at Hope House and serves as the senior intern. She provides support to the middle school girls group "Thank God It's Girls' Club."

Candace Cain, dean of students at Rochester College, is the coordinator of "Read Around the Block," the weekly reading program for elementary school children. Becky Gentry started this group, and she continues to assist and evaluate the reading levels of the children.

## LOCATION



Hope House Detroit is located at 840 Marlborough St, Detroit, MI 48215 in the Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood, which is on the border of Detroit and Grosse Pointe.

## **NEIGHBORHOOD DEMOGRAPHICS**

The majority of the community lives below the poverty level with a median income of \$20,000. Families in this neighborhood consist mostly of single parent homes, or children living with their grandparents. The percentage of two-parent households in this neighborhood is less than 10 percent, and 30 percent are single mother households. Approximately one-third of the population in the Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood did not graduate from high school.

Hope House serves a three-block neighborhood around its house, which is home to children who attend Carstens Elementary-Middle School and Merit Charter Elementary School. An estimated 53 percent of students in the Detroit Public School System are not able to read at grade level.

## **FACILITIES**

A nicely renovated century-old house serves as the main facility for the programming of events. It has a main living space, a large dining room and an office on the main floor. Upstairs are rooms for the female interns and for the Gentrys. The male interns live in the basement. The yard at Hope House features an inground NBA-regulation basketball hoop and half-court, which is a huge draw for the neighborhood. Near the court is an open green space for games and other activities. Two lots behind Hope House have been purchased and renovated. One fenced lot contains a full playscape; the other is being developed into a park area with benches and picnic areas.

Hope Hospitality House, four houses down from the original Hope House, hosts volunteer groups. With a main living area, kitchen, dining room and large rooms, it houses up to 20 people.

## **PROGRAMS**

Hope House Detroit currently runs these programs:

- Thank God It's Girls' Club is a group for junior high girls that meets every Tuesday after school for snacks, activities and discussion of topics related to being a young woman with godly character. Currently, six girls are regulars at this program with other girls dropping in occasionally.
- The High School Girls' Bible Study for high school girls meets every Tuesday at the Hospitality House to study scripture and fellowship together. This is the newest program and currently has a handful of participants.
- Read Around the Block is designed to improve the reading skills of elementary aged children in the neighborhood. Approximately 10-12 elementary students meet every Thursday to read in groups and one-on-one with Hope House volunteers.
- Computer Club is a group of school-aged children that meets weekly to work one-on-one with volunteers to learn Microsoft Word, Excel, typing and computer skills on Mac and Windows laptops.
- Guys' Group is a group of young men from the neighborhood who meets every Saturday morning for breakfast, fellowship, and basketball and other games.
- The mentorship program (Teen Council?) partners with Hope Community Church and encourages participants to use their gifts and talents for the common good. This program has a GPA requirement, and participants must go through an interview process in order to participate.
- During the summer, youth from around the area gather at Hope House on a daily basis to hang out, play soccer and basketball, visit and be safe. Volunteers, staff and

interns hang out with the kids on these days and work on developing relationships with them.

- Hope House hosts monthly special events for the neighborhood. These events draw between 100-125 people.

## **PARTNERS**

### **HOPE COMMUNITY CHURCH**

Hope Community Church is located at 14456 East Jefferson Ave., just down the block from Hope House. Hope Community Church's mission statement "is to reconcile all people to God and to one another in Jesus Christ." The church hosts Sunday worship services at 10 a.m. until noon. Programs include Alcoholics for Christ, Adult Bible Study, Senior High School Youth Group, Women's Bible Study, and Food Pantry and Clothes Closet. The church and Hope House collaborate in several capacities.

### **HOPE COMMUNITY OUTREACH DEVELOPMENT**

Hope Community Church's non-profit organization partners with businesses, educational institutions and churches to improve the lives of individuals and families in this region. HCOD focuses primarily on meeting the needs of health, safety, education and employment. The executive director of HCOD is Monique Holliday.

### **ROCHESTER COLLEGE**

A connection was first made with Rochester College when the Gentrys began renovating 840 Marlborough. They were praying for someone who could live in the house during renovation, and found Ralph Fluker, a 2011 RC graduate, who was attending Hope Community Church. Soon, Fluker made the residence his home and became Hope House's first intern. Becky Gentry said that since Fluker, about 50 percent of the interns have been from Rochester College. In addition to sending interns to Hope House, the college has sent an annual

mission group over Spring Break to do volunteer work in the community. Known as Urban Plunge, this ministry introduces college students to urban ministry.

Hope House has a Leadership Team, which is a group of 15 people who help plan, pray and commit to the working out of the vision on the ground. Two-thirds of the 15 members of the team have affiliation with RC. The team meets three-to-four per year to talk through issues, decide how to do tasks, and then help do them.

### **MERIT CHARTER & CARSTENS ELEMENTARY**

Hope House Detroit has a relationship with two local schools, Merit Charter Academy and Carstens Elementary-Middle School, to offer support to the students. Merit Charter Academy is the more successful academically, scoring higher in student literacy, math and science than Carsten Elementary. Both schools have a primarily African-American population; 85-90 percent of the students at both schools take advantage of free or reduced lunch, which is almost double the national average. The most obvious need of the students at both schools is a lack of developed reading and writing skills, which is the main issue Hope House Detroit is attempting to combat with its "Read Around the Block" program.

As part of its purpose, Merit teachers focus on respect, integrity and compassion. Moral focus lessons are integrated into every school day. Students are taught the importance of making good choices and doing the right thing in life. Merit provides before-and-after school care for students. It is approximately one-half mile from Hope House. The principal is Sandra Terry-Martin.

Carstens is part of Detroit Public Schools and it enrolls around 500 students. Just over 20 percent of the students are considered proficient in math and/or reading. Donna Thornton is the principal; the Hope House contact is Mrs. Phelps.

## **POSSIBLE GROUPS TO PARTNER WITH**

### **AREA CHURCHES**

Hope Community Church is the main partner of Hope House Detroit. Other churches in the area for possible partnership include Jordan Baptist Church, Faith Lutheran Church, St. Ambrose, Victory Fellowship Baptist Church, Original Primitive Baptist Church, Jefferson Avenue Church, and Spirit-Excellence Church. These churches are all five to 15 minutes away from Hope House and should be targeted first.

### **DETROIT CRU**

Detroit Cru is a spiritual resource for college students at campuses across Metro Detroit, including Wayne State University and Oakland University. Cru consists of students seeking to grow in their relationship with Jesus individually and collectively through small group discussions, large group gatherings, mentoring, retreats and parties. Cru is consistently looking to get involved with the community, and Hope House Detroit could be the perfect opportunity for that.

### **YWAM DETROIT**

Youth With a Mission is a global missions organization started in 1960 with the intention of helping young people across the world. Since then, it has grown exponentially to having more than 1,100 locations and a volunteer staff of more than 18,000 people. Typically, young adults will move to a YWAM base for six months to complete a Discipleship Training School where they will have three months of lectures on Christianity and then three months of outreach at a different YWAM base, and often in a different country.

YWAM recently started a new base in Detroit, where six volunteer staff members live. They have all completed a DTS at a different YWAM base and moved into the community in September 2015. They have moved here from places such as California, North Carolina and Switzerland, and will start their own DTS in late 2016.

Much like Hope House Detroit, they would love to start a reading program for children in their community. They have already conducted outreach events and started building community in a neighborhood on the northwest side of Detroit, but desire to do more. The staff is very interested in helping with the "Read Around the Block" program with Hope House Detroit.

### **DETROIT POLICE**

Neighborhood Policing Officer Shawnee Robbins no longer patrols area number 4 of the 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct of the Detroit Police Department. Three other Neighborhood Policing Officers are willing to make their presence known in the community surrounding Hope House: P.O. Deborah Gaines, P.O. Audrey Curtis and P.O. Herman King. Both police officers Gaines and King are willing to cooperate with Hope House and whatever needs they may have when it comes to speaking to the children, familiarizing them with police, and growing comfort with officer presence.

- 5<sup>th</sup> Precinct Neighborhood Policing Officer (313)596-5510
- Area #4 (Previously Shawnee Robins) N/A
- Area #1 Deborah Gaines (313)643-0202
- Area #3 Herman King (313)643-0689

## SWOT ANALYSIS

SWOT	Helpful	Harmful
<p><b>Internal</b></p>	<p><b>Strengths</b>            Selfless and humbling serving those around them through intentional relationships.</p> <p>Committed to the neighborhood            Passion and love for mission -- they want to be there.</p> <p>The Gentrys and the other married couples helping run the ministry</p> <p>Facilities</p> <p>Volunteers come from a wide geographical area (WSU, MSU, RC, etc)</p> <p>Many college students identify with the Hope House mission</p> <p>Solid programs and events</p> <p>Connection with RC -- interns, volunteers, and staff members</p> <p>Relationship with Hope Community Church</p> <p>Small loyal group of donors; support from Pillar Technologies</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b>            No time to tell own story</p> <p>Mistakes on website and calendar</p> <p>Don't have time to focus on social media, marketing and PR.</p> <p>Need consistent volunteers to run programs</p> <p>Minimal diversity of volunteers</p> <p>Being able to communicate living by faith without seeming "undecided."</p>
<p><b>External</b></p>	<p><b>Opportunities</b>            Strengthen the connection and relationship with RC--urban ministry degree, presentations, internship program, etc.</p> <p>Continue building upon relationship with community</p> <p>Current community trend of "Rebuilding Detroit."</p> <p>Rebounding economy in Detroit region</p> <p>Millennials are committed to social justice</p> <p>Other churches &amp; organizations committed to the common good of Detroit</p>	<p><b>Threats</b>            Transient population of youth/families served</p> <p>Parents drop kids off without being engaged</p> <p>Security/Safety concerns</p> <p>33% of donations must come from outside of Pillar Technologies</p> <p>Must always recruit and maintain volunteer staff</p> <p>Maintenance</p> <p>RC's second Urban Plunge experience in Chicago</p>

## ACTION AND PLANNING

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### OBJECTIVES

#### General

- To increase awareness about Hope House's existence, purposes and services to the neighborhood, to local churches and other partner organizations, and to prospective donors and volunteers
- To strengthen partnerships with local churches, colleges and schools
- To write a concise and clear mission statement
- To increase radius by a block all around whereby Hope House attracts youth
- To obtain coverage in Detroit Metro media with specific emphasis on reporters who cover community services, African American media, religious media and targeted bloggers
- To create partnerships with local organizations for support of Hope House
  - CRU
  - YWAM
  - Other campus ministries
  - Local churches
  - African American churches
- To double the number of summer interns for summer 2016 to six
- To enhance and build internship program, especially for the summer months
  - Social work majors
  - Education majors
  - Ministry majors
  - Social entrepreneurship majors

#### Volunteers

- To increase the number of volunteers by 20 percent
- To build loyalty, which will create more consistent volunteers
- As we recruit volunteers, Hope House needs to maintain its identity as a Christian organization that is highly relational. Thus, volunteers need to be recruited who are appropriate for the mission.
- To create a more diverse pool of volunteers
- To recruit a volunteer coordinator
- To create different categories of volunteers and to set expectations for all
  - 25 special events/on call volunteers
  - 15 volunteers for Read Around the Block and to establish reading programs at Merit Charter Academy and Carstens Elementary
  - Reaching out and encouraging guardians to volunteer
- To create roles to entice specific categories of volunteers
  - Social work majors
  - Education majors
  - Ministry majors
  - Social entrepreneurship

## **Donors**

- To begin building relationships with a larger number of donors
- To increase the number of actual donations to Hope House by 20 percent
- To create specific projects to entice donations
  - Donations for reading program
  - Donations for facilities
  - Donations for internships

## **TARGET AUDIENCES**

- Current volunteers
- Prospective volunteers
- Churches within 15-minute radius
- Churches with strong youth groups interested in short-term missions
- Churches of all denominations who are seeking volunteer opportunities
- College ministries, students interested in service opportunities, youth mission organizations
- Prospective interns
- Current donors
- Prospective donors
- Neighborhood youth and guardians
- Staff and students at Merit Charter Academy and Carstens Elementary

## **KEY MESSAGES**

- Hope House strives to know the young people of its community as they share lives and faith, giving and receiving real, crazy love.
- Hope House intends to be a good neighbor: faithfully serving and joining with the community in providing servant leadership.
- Hope House offers recreational opportunities to local youth, such as basketball, park and special events, to be in relationship with them and to serve them
- Hope House offers Read Around the Block to develop literacy for area youth.
- Hope House encourages kids to stay in school and find a path toward living out a godly life.
- Hope House meets with the Guys Group each Saturday to promote friendship and accountability for young men.
- Hope House reaches out to middle school and high school girls through weekly meetings of the Thank God It's Girls' Club and High School Girls Bible Study.
- Hope House has volunteer opportunities year round to serve the community of Detroit.
- Hope House needs consistent and faithful volunteers to help them serve the community
- Hope House actively seeks college interns to serve in its various projects.
- Hope House works with groups from churches, colleges and other organizations to provide opportunities for short-term and long-term mission work.
- Hope Hospitality House, an extension of Hope House Detroit, is designed for hosting groups involved in short-term missions to Detroit.

## **TIMETABLE**

Implementation will begin Monday, May 2. Lora Hutson will initiate the work and then hand over duties to Jessica Brown.

## **COMMUNICATION**

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### **STRATEGIES AND TACTICS**

#### **PRINT & DIGITAL COLLATERAL**

- Develop new general brochure for Hope House
- Develop brochure targeted at short term mission groups
- Develop volunteer brochure
- Create new branding package
- Use Email blasts to recruit and connect with volunteers
- Gather named testimonials for website and for use in other materials
- Write article about RCers at Hope House in North Star
- Write content for Hope House to be used across several mediums
- Write blog posts
- Create tags and keywords for search engine optimization
- Develop template and content for quarterly newsletter
  - Donors/Volunteers/Prospects
  - Guardians/Kids
    - How to connect with your kids
    - How to help your kids
    - Instructional
- Produce collateral material about summer internship programs

#### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

- Create a monthly social media calendar with suggested posts
- Use Hootsuite to schedule posts for both Facebook and Instagram on Mondays of each week
- Post daily (or at least four times a week) on both FB and Instagram
- Create special social media programs to boost internship program
- Enhance Facebook Page
  - Change from church to nonprofit
  - Join nonprofits on Facebook
  - Use "Donate Now" button
- Drop Twitter

#### **WEBSITE**

- Make content more specific, clear and concise.
- Develop content that is more appealing for different target audiences

- Remove “Just another WordPress site” from listing in Google search
- Rewrite meta description that appears in Google search to make more specific
- Improve navigation (move staff to about us section)
- Get involved section
  - interns
  - volunteer
  - donors
- Volunteer form
- Email blast
- Levels of donors form
- Make accessible to volunteers and donors
- Better/bigger placement of connect to us social media buttons
- Clear up sign up tab

## **VIDEO & PHOTO**

- Make a better, shorter “who we are” video. More appealing, informative, effective, entertaining video
- Create an informative how to get involved video
- Create a short video of Becky talking about “safety concerns”
- Make a behind the scenes video
- Crayon video: Draw my life Hope House
- Recruiting video, a day in the life
- Incorporate Detroit video
- Lipsync video with the kids
- Prospective group video
  - What we do
  - What it’s like

## **MEDIA RELATIONS**

- Compile a press kit which will include history, mission, programs, events, testimonials, photos, etc.
- Reach out to major Detroit media for coverage about Hope House
- Set up interviews with Becky on smaller radio programs
- Create a targeted media list with section for mainstream metro Detroit media, religious media, African American media, local college/university student publications, local bloggers
- Send pitch email to specific media to invite reporters to attend a special event or summer day hangout
- Pitch feature on the Gentrys to Freep; then News
- Write PSAs

## **OTHER**

- Create speaking opportunities for Becky or other staffers every other month--area civic groups, nonprofits, colleges, etc.
- Develop volunteer appreciation program
- Create a list of area nonprofit, volunteers, service groups to partner with
- Reach out to groups who are looking for volunteer opportunities, such as YWAM
- Create an ‘Ask’ email to introduce Hope House and measure interest

- Add internships to job postings at area colleges/universities
- Set up volunteer “tracks”
- Find a “volunteer coordinator”
- Coordinate a volunteer open house or volunteer test run
- Seek partnership with local businesses/institutions to increase awareness
- Recruit college groups, such as fraternities and sororities, for volunteer work
- Specify volunteer expectations ... binder, contracts, commitment time,
- Involve 412 Ministries, RC’s small groups, to recruit them to help as a group.
- Creating a mailing list of different target audiences
- Make T-shirts for Hope House with their logo and “Real Crazy Love” on them and then sell as a fundraiser

## EVALUATION

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- *Increase volunteers by 20 percent within one year.*  
Measurable: Hope House will develop a list of current volunteers in May 2016 and compare it to the number of volunteers in May 2017.
- *Increase interns within one year.*  
Measurable: Hope House will double its summer interns from three in 2015 to six per summer by 2017.
- *Increase individual donations by 10 percent within one year.*  
Measurable: Hope House will develop a donor list in May 2016 and will monitor the new relationships built with new donors by May 2017.
- *Increase brand awareness with target audience by 20 percent within one year.*  
Measurable: Hope House will track website traffic using Google Analytics to measure the annual increase. Hope House will also measure the increase in Facebook page likes and in Instagram followers.
- *Increase local awareness of Hope House with media coverage.*  
Measurable: Hope House will keep track of articles, clips, interviews, blog posts by outside media and citizens.
- *Increase partnerships with local churches, college groups and civic organizations.*  
Measurable: Hope House will track the new contacts made in this area from May 2016-May 2017.