

Sharing HOPE

HOPE NETWORK FOR SINGLE MOTHERS | DECEMBER 2023



Help Us Meet the Challenge

The holiday giving season is upon us. It is also a great time to reflect on blessings, plans for the future, and stewardship. It is often hard to put together words about why we feel so strongly about HOPE Network, our mission, and what makes us work so hard and believe in this organization. When we think of our members, we think of the setbacks they encounter and how we can help them to overcome. We also think about ways we can help to get them over the hurdles they are facing and give them the strength to move forward. We hear so many stories at HOPE, and those stories give us the fuel to fight harder. Thank you for helping us in this movement.

Each one of our member moms has challenges and needs that can seem overwhelming at times. Your donation will help mothers who are parenting alone to build self-reliance and strong families by:

- Fostering a child's strong start by helping provide portable cribs, baby supplies and safe sleep education. We have plans to host Safe Sleep training for more than 50 new members in early 2024.
- Paving a path toward financial independence, with scholarships for tuition or childcare during a mother's secondary schooling.
- Promoting family togetherness, with free tickets to museums, sporting events and other activities.
- Helping mothers through their parenting journey, with free diapers, gently used children's clothing, and community resources.

Thank you for your continued support. We wish you and your family all the magic and blessings of the holiday season.

Looking Back, Moving Forward

During our 2022/2023 fiscal year, HOPE added 131 new members. Our typical member is 34 years old, with two children. The majority of our members reside in the Milwaukee zip codes 53209 and 53218.



Single Mothers
Served

252



Scholarships &
Assistance

\$6000



Portable
Cribs

37



Layette
Bags

37



Diapers
Provided

150 cases

"I didn't set out to be a single mom. I set out to be the best mom I could be... and that hasn't changed."

-Anonymous

"Raising a family is difficult enough. But it's even more difficult for single parents struggling to make ends meet. They don't need more obstacles ... they need more opportunities."

-Bill Richardson



HOPE Network for Single Mothers

Helping Single Moms in Need

Life Turned Upside Down



This is Angela, who lost the love of her life to addiction in spring of 2023. To say that her life was turned upside down is an understatement. She is working hard as a single mom to navigate through this new normal. She has become a HOPE Network member and is one of our Scholarship Awardees for 2023.

When you donate to HOPE Network for Single Mothers, you are helping women who have difficult life stories, like Angela. Those of us who have worked with Angela know just what a strong woman she is, and how dedicated she is to her children. Angela is not unlike the other HOPE moms we serve through your generous contributions to our mission.

Angela is eager to share her story with everyone. Please watch for her story on our website.



Meet Our Generous Donors

HOPE Network survives on the donations from our generous supporters, like you! We are so grateful for the continued support we receive.

The most recent donor list includes January 2023 through September 2023 and is posted on our website at hopenetworkinc.org. This list includes also includes the monetary donations to Time of HOPE fundraiser. If we have inadvertently omitted your name, please forgive us, and give us a call so we can correct our records.

Thank You, Debbie Block

Thank you to Debbie Block for all your loving work as executive director for HOPE Network. We send prayers and best wishes for health for your whole family.



Pregnancy & Prenatal Care



Parenting



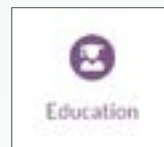
Childcare



Legal



Health & Wellness



Education



Home Ownership & Energy Assistance



Fun & Free (Or Cheap)

24/7 access to these resources can be found on our website at hopenetworkinc.org/resources/

Sharing HOPE is a publication of
HOPE NETWORK FOR SINGLE MOTHERS

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THIS HOLIDAY SEASON Prioritize Self Care

The holiday season is typically seen as a time of joy—of family and friends gathering and celebrating together. However, this season can bring stress and challenges to many, including single mothers. Here are a few ways to create self-care activities to help carry us through the season.

Know Your Limits, and Respect Them

Events, obligations, and preparations for the holidays can be fun and exciting—or they can be emotionally exhausting and overwhelming. It is important for you to know your limits and enjoy small, successful outings rather than over-extending yourself both financially and emotionally.

Consider investing your time and energy in the things and relationships which are most important to you.

Set Reasonable Expectations

It's natural to have high expectations of the holiday season. However, it's equally important to do a personal check-in with ourselves about managing expectations and our hope for the “perfect” holiday.

Setting unrealistic expectations for people and events can lead to disappointment. Having no expectations is equally unrealistic. An honest review of your holiday experiences and how people in your life have treated you in the past may help to predict how they will treat you in the future.

Avoid Known Triggers

If you find yourself triggered into a reminder of unhappy memories by certain activities or interactions, do your best to replace them with emotionally fulfilling ones. If certain movies, relatives, acquaintances, or holiday events are emotionally challenging for you,

consider if you really need to “go” there. Or, consider a brief check-in or drop by rather than attending the full event.

Small Acts of Kindness Help You, Too

Helping others out and giving back around the holidays is an excellent way to make a positive contribution and provide a sense of purpose and meaning. Even when faced with your own financial and time challenges, small acts of kindness can boost feelings of confidence, being in control, happiness, and optimism. Kindness isn't expensive.

- Compliment the first three people you talk to today.
- Send a positive text message to five different people right now.
- While you're out, compliment a parent on how well-behaved their child is.
- Let someone go in front of you in line who only has a few items.
- Encounter someone in customer service who is especially kind? Take an extra five minutes to tell their manager.
- Write a gratitude list in the morning and again in the evening
- Write a kind message on your mirror with a dry erase marker for yourself, your significant other or a family member.
- Smile at five strangers.
- Know parents who could use a night out? Offer to babysit for free.

Be Extra Giving To Yourself

While the holidays are an excellent opportunity to look outward and appreciate the people in your life, don't forget to appreciate yourself. Write yourself a letter to thank yourself and to list everything you are grateful for. All of us at HOPE Network wish and your family peace and happiness during the upcoming holiday season.



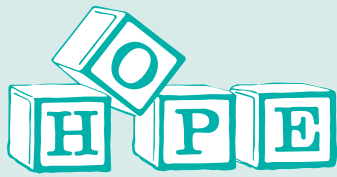
Merry Christmas

Happy Hanukkah

Happy Kwanzaa

Happy New Year

Adapted from an article found at <https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/December-2021/How-to-Prioritize-Self-Care-During-the-Holidays>



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Tips for Making the Holidays Kid-Friendly

1. Be open to change.

Talk with your kids about your traditions — which ones they love and which you might evolve to make them more fun or memorable for everyone.

2. Be realistic.

Factoring in kids' limitations when you make plans will reduce stress on everyone. Not overestimating your kids' patience and ability to focus will help you enjoy yourself more, too.

3. Prep kids for changes in routine.

Holidays represent a change in a family's normal schedule, and for some kids that's unsettling. Preparing them for changes in their routines — what to expect and what you expect of them—will help head off meltdowns. Amidst the chaos, make sure you maintain some routine or quiet one-on-one time like reading before bed.

4. Give yourself a break.

Don't stretch yourself too thin trying to create the "perfect" holiday season. Decide what is important, prioritize, and say "no" to what you can't handle.

5. Be sure to laugh.

Kids pick up their parents' stress and tension, so they're more likely to be irritable if you are. Have a sense of humor, enjoy your kids for who they are, and keep in mind that what you'll all remember when it's over is likely to be the unexpected moment when everybody was relaxed, not the brilliantly choreographed party, dinner, or outing.

Adapted from an article from
<https://childmind.org/article/how-to-take-the-stress-out-of-the-holidays/>

