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THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF HOPE LINK

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Join us at Hopelink’s largest and most popular event of the year!

Our luncheon keynoter this year is Dr. Tererai Trent. Described by Oprah Winfrey as one of the most inspirational people she has interviewed, Tererai is an activist and a dreamer, educator and author, scholar and humanitarian.

Tererai believes in the strength of community and in giving back, and her personal story mirrors that of Hopelink’s clients. In the words of Oprah Winfrey, her story will bring you to tears, then make you cheer.

For more information, email rsvp@hopelink.org, or call 425.897.3703.

Living in poverty means living on the edge of stability; a paycheck away from stability, an illness away from losing a job, a crisis away from hunger. In our region, despite a burgeoning economy and a dramatic drop in the unemployment rate, both poverty and homelessness continue to grow.

And as this area grapples with challenges and growing pains that disproportionately affect those living in poverty – access to a living wage, access to housing, access to food – real solutions require a comprehensive approach that addresses need on a continuum; from food, shelter and heat, to transportation, adult education and help finding a job.

Food on the table isn’t stability if you can’t afford to turn on the heat. A roof over your head isn’t a new start if you don’t earn enough to pay the rent. The only sustainable approach addresses each of these barriers in tandem. This is the Hopelink approach … and the Hopelink difference.

In this issue of Reaching Out, you will meet a family who turned to Hopelink when they were desperate for a new beginning. They will tell you the services they received were instrumental in rebuilding their lives, and that meeting one-on-one with a Hopelink staffer helped ensure that their specific needs were met. For this family, the journey initially included help with food and housing, and then support in finding work. Along the way, they will tell you they found hope. That is the Hopelink difference.

On October 15, our special Reaching Out Luncheon guest will be Dr. Tererai Trent. Growing up in a war-torn Zimbabwean village – where boys were allowed to go to school and girls were expected to marry and start families – Tererai chose a different path; ultimately earning her Ph.D.

Along the way, she found support in community; from food and housing, to education and encouragement. Today, Tererai says that she “stands on the shoulders of giants;” people who believed in her, and helped her find her way. That’s what Hopelink does.

Hopelink is on a mission to end poverty. We know that is an ambitious goal. We also know that the only real, lasting path to that goal is one that addresses a variety of issues and needs; one that meets people where they are when they turn to us for help, and helps them chart a path to where they want to go. And that, too, is the Hopelink difference.

Laura L. Thomas
Hopelink CEO

Donate online at hopelink.org
Hopelink reached its latest and largest capital campaign milestone on August 3 with the official grand opening of Hopelink Redmond. The event brought together more than 400 local community members, elected officials, businesses and the media for an official ribbon cutting and celebration of the new flagship facility.

Special guest speakers at the opening included Lieutenant Governor Cyrus Habib, 1st District Congresswoman Suzan DelBene, King County Executive Dow Constantine and Redmond Mayor John Marchione.

The new center at 8990 154th Ave. NE in Redmond unites Hopelink’s administrative staff and the Redmond client services team. It is the most ambitious project funded by Hopelink’s Campaign for Lasting Change and promises to serve 5,000 local residents every year by 2020.

In addition to an expanded food bank, Hopelink Redmond offers energy and financial assistance, adult education and employment help, financial literacy and family development services; all of which will help families and individuals in the Redmond community gain stability and the tools to exit poverty.

For information about Hopelink’s Campaign for Lasting Change, contact Barbara Hagel at bhagel@hopelink.org or 425.897.3706.

**HOPELINK REDMOND WILL SERVE 5,000 LOCAL RESIDENTS EVERY YEAR BY 2020.**
audited, “someone had to be sacrificed.” And if they thought you were going to expose the corruption, you were at risk. “People were being killed,” Andrew said. “There would be a chain of people, and the middle guy would be killed. But no one would ever know where they were in that line. One day, when I had just come home from doing business in China, I was abducted, along with the driver of the car.” The driver was killed.

Then the men broke into their house. The family tried to flee – moving to Juliet’s mother’s house in another town – but the men kept following them; sending messages and calling. “We changed phone lines, but they would still track us down,” Juliet said. “We didn’t know where to go. We knew we needed to leave the country … to save our lives … to save our family. I didn’t know what would happen to us, or to my career, but our safety was the most important thing.”

Andrew got his visa first, in 2015, and came to the United States; staying with a friend in the Midwest. For a while, fear kept him from sharing what was really going on in his home country, and that his wife and children were in grave danger.

When he relocated to the Seattle area, Andrew found a job as a caregiver; working 24-hour shifts, seven days a week. He lived out of a suitcase and earned $100 for each overnight shift.

Meanwhile, Juliet started getting anonymous messages. They said they were looking for Andrew, and they threatened her. And they threatened their two children. The couple’s baby was only six weeks old, and Juliet began to worry whether she would ever see her husband again.

Several months later, Juliet and her young son and daughter were able to join Andrew in the United States; crowding into a small room they rented for $900 a month. They were safe, and they were together. But they were still desperate, in many ways. They remembered everything they had back home in Meru; rewarding careers, the house and the cars. Andrew talks about how they would be so hungry during those dark days; remembering all of the food they used to throw away.

SAVING OUR LIVES

The words were chilling. “We know where you are. You cannot run away from us. We will find you.” It was not the first time Juliet and Andrew had feared for their lives, and it would not be the last.

Living in the Kenyan town of Meru, the young family had worked hard to build a stable, happy life. Juliet was a physician at a county hospital, and Andrew worked as an electrical engineer with an oil drilling company; later starting his own business selling electrical supplies and services. “We had everything we needed,” Andrew said. “We had a house, two cars, plenty of food.” Life was good, and the future looked bright.

Everything changed the night a group of men forced their way into the family’s home, threatening Juliet and Andrew, and frightening their 5-year-old son. Juliet – who was pregnant with the couple’s daughter – was pushed to the floor. “They wanted money,” Andrew said. “They called it ‘taxes,’ but it was much more than that. They wanted to scare us … they wanted us to be afraid of what they might do next.”

The men succeeded. That night, the ambitious journey that had brought stability and success came to a terrifying halt.

Andrew’s business had been doing well; serving Nairobi and many other cities. But when the company began working with government agencies, things started to change. They had more business, but that business came at a price.

“The government was corrupt,” Andrew said. “They would manipulate the numbers; they would inflate bids. One time, I was notified that I had won a bid I knew nothing about. If someone knew too much, they would give them money to stay quiet.” Sometimes, even that wasn’t enough. Andrew said that when the government was
own. And when they began meeting with their employment specialist, “things moved really fast,” Andrew said.

“She started working on our resumes immediately,” he said. “I had found some people online to help with my resume and to help me find a job … and I even worked with a mentor. But (Hopelink Employment Specialist) Rhonda offered even more support. Her assistance was more specific and more complex.

“I remember thinking, ‘if I were an employer, that’s what I would look for.’ I had applied for so many jobs with my other resume, and I would never get an interview … and then I worked with Rhonda. She polished my resume, and she gave me interviewing tips. And when I was a finalist with an electrical installation business, she even told me the salary range I should ask for.”

Andrew got the job, and at the salary he requested. Today, he is a project engineer for the company; a position very similar to the one he held in Kenya.

“Believing that something good is going to happen to you … sometimes that’s all you need. We found that at Hopelink.”

Juliet is poised to take her medical board exams, and – with a passion for obstetrics and gynecology – is looking forward to securing her residency.

The couple’s son and daughter are now three and nine, and adapting well to their new life. For the family, the relief of knowing they are safe helps ease the pain of missing friends and loved ones back home, but the change hasn’t come easily.

It was never the couple’s plan to leave the security and promise of life in Meru; starting over isn’t something you think about when you are safe and life is going well. But when fear for their lives shattered all they had built – and their peace of mind – everything changed.

In some ways, the family has come full circle; from a stable life with a bright future in Kenya, to stability and a path toward success in their new home. In between, they lost everything, and they found Hopelink.

Juliet says the guidance and support they received at Hopelink helped the family get back on track toward their dreams. But equally important was the sense of hope they found in everyone who helped them on their journey.

“We have met so many good people, and we are so thankful,” Juliet said. Everyone we have worked with has given us hope … hope that we can do this, and that we will be OK. Believing that something good is going to happen to you … sometimes that’s all you need. We found that at Hopelink.”

You can read more Hopelink success stories at hopelink.org/success-stories
Students at Kenmore Elementary School collected $2,076 to help ensure that kids on summer break have enough to eat. The school’s principal, Melissa Riley, challenged students to raise more than $1,000 and said that in return, she would agree to be “slimed” at the end-of-year assembly, in front of the entire school. The kids were so excited by the chance to slime the principal that they more than doubled the principal’s challenge.

NWMLS held a tremendously successful back-to-school drive for Hopelink’s Kids Need School Supplies campaign. The local real estate group divided into teams, created a point system for the types of items donated and offered a free PTO day to the first-place winning team. Second-places finishers enjoyed a catered lunch. Altogether, our friends at NWMLS collected more than 9,000 school supply items and 300 backpacks!

Molbak’s Home + Garden is in the 10th year of their annual Share Your Harvest program. This program invites home gardeners to bring their surplus homegrown produce to donate to Hopelink’s Redmond Food Bank. Since the program began in 2009, more than 10,000 pounds of fresh, nutrient-packed produce have been donated by Molbak’s customers. In 2017, the program brought in more than 1,300 pounds. The 2018 campaign ends September 23, and this year’s total is expected to top that amount.

Employees at Icertis worked in teams to collect an incredible 3,011 pounds of food for Hopelink’s Bellevue food bank. The volume of donations required three trips to the food bank in Hopelink’s community engagement van just to transport the donations!

Students from Bellevue’s Enatai Elementary School demonstrated true community spirit – and helped fellow students – by collecting $2,895 in their annual End Summer Hunger coin drive.

Carillon Point Movie Nights returned this summer with proceeds benefitting Hopelink. Our staff and volunteers helped out at four movie nights throughout July and August. This year’s movies were Despicable Me 3, The Wedding Singer, Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle and Star Wars: The Last Jedi.

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Darol and Sandra Reynolds

Darol and Sandra spent their recent 51st wedding anniversary the same way they have spent many days together over the past decade: volunteering at Hopelink’s Shoreline food bank. It wasn’t just force of habit; the couple will tell you that “working together on something that is meaningful and useful” is one of the secrets to their successful marriage.

In more than five decades together, the Reynolds have found meaning in helping others in a number of settings – including the Nature Conservancy, schools and their church – but it is their work at Hopelink that never seems to take a break.

During times when the food bank is closed to clients, Darol and Sandra still go in every day; moving pallets stacked with cases of food, sorting, organizing, cleaning.

“It’s a necessary thing for any community – to have people willing to step up and volunteer,” Darol said.

The Reynolds first met when Darol’s younger sister just happened to be matched as Sandra’s roommate during her first year in college. When Darol came home on leave from the Navy, his sister introduced the couple. They’ve been together ever since.

Both went on to teaching careers; Darol as a special education teacher and Special Olympics coach in a number of Seattle schools and Sandra in junior and senior high schools in Seattle and Elma.

In their spare time, they enjoy musical theatre and gardening; growing flowers and produce. Darol has the green thumb, and Sandra says she does the cooking.

They are longtime members of Ronald United Methodist Church – part of the Ronald Commons partnership that also includes Hopelink and Compass Housing in Shoreline. It was at the church where they first learned about Hopelink.

Several years ago, Sandra served on the coalition that helped create the Ronald Commons partnership, but long before anyone had even started talking about the project, she had a vision of what could be.

“I had a dream about 40 years ago,” Sandra said. “In the dream, I had come to the church, and there was housing on the property. I sat up in bed … I never remember my dreams, but this one stuck with me.”

When she attended the Ronald Commons grand opening in February 2017, she cried.

“IT was so touching to see this finally come together,” Sandra said. “It is such a unique partnership.”

Sandra and Darol know a bit about partnerships. And the value in working together to serve their community.

Ray Krueger

Ray moved to Seattle to access its more walkable neighborhoods and strong transit services and to prepare for the day when he will turn over his car keys to his family. In January 2016, Ray began volunteering with Hopelink’s travel programs, where he conducts transportation outreach and education to older adults and people with disabilities. His time as been mutually beneficial as his own knowledge of the region’s transportation options continues to grow while teaching others and answering questions.

Ray focuses on delivering transportation guidance twice a week at two Seattle senior centers during their meal programs. Since he began volunteering with Hopelink, Ray has given more than 150 hours of his time and attended more than 115 events. He also serves on the King County Mobility Coalition, which is staffed by Hopelink Mobility.

VOLUNTEER WITH HOPELINK

For volunteer opportunities, please contact: Volunteer Program 425.869.6066 volunteerwithus@hopelink.org

Donate online at hopelink.org
Hopelink’s mission is to promote self-sufficiency for all members of our community; we help people make lasting change.

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DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO NEEDS HELP?

Below is an overview of Hopelink’s programs and a list of our service centers. If you know anyone that may need our help, please share this information and encourage them to contact us at their nearest center.

FOOD ASSISTANCE
Contact your nearest center

HOUSING
2-1-1

ENERGY ASSISTANCE
425.658.2592

EMERGENCY FINANCIAL HELP
Contact your nearest center

TRANSPORTATION
425.943.6789

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
425.250.3030

ADULT EDUCATION
English for Work: 425.250.3007
GED Classes: 425.457.9685

FINANCIAL CAPABILITIES
425.250.3003

FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
425.883.4755

HOPELINK CENTERS

BELLEVUE
14812 Main St.
Bellevue, WA 98007
425.943.7555

KIRKLAND/NORTHSHORE
11011 120th Avenue NE
Kirkland, WA 98033
425.889.7880

REDMOND
8990 154th Ave NE
Redmond, WA 98052
425.869.6000

SNO-VALLEY
31957 E Commercial St.
Carnation, WA 98014
425.333.4163

SHORELINE
17837 Aurora Avenue N
Shoreline, WA 98133
206.440.7300

Please visit Hopelink.org for full center hours and list of services at each location.
For more than 47 years, your support has helped Hopelink expand its critical social services to at-risk families and individuals in our region. Our approach—providing stability and the skills needed to exit poverty—continues to move tens of thousands of people from vulnerability and crisis toward independence.