



After being kicked out by her mother, 16-year-old Molly had to navigate the streets with her toddler son. All she wanted was to give him safety and stability. Instead, they had no home, no food, and no idea what the next day would bring.

## No Past Is Too Dark: Love Lit the Way for Molly

Molly Bates was only 4 years old when she was first sexually abused. For years after, she experienced horrors no child should ever have to face — and at the hands of adults she should have been able to trust.

When Molly was 16, another monster took advantage of her. This time it was her mother's boyfriend. When her mom found out, she blamed Molly and kicked her out of the house.

With her father in jail, Molly had no one to help her and no place to go. Even more frightening, she had her young son with her.

Molly was forced to navigate the dangers of living on the streets all while trying to keep her toddler safe. She never knew when their next meal would be or where they would sleep each night.

All she knew was that she had to find a safe place for her son.

One day, she saw a group of kids around her age hanging out outside of a building. Above them was a sign with a blue dove that read "Covenant House." Uncertain but desperate for any help she could get, Molly held her son's hand a little tighter and walked through our front door.

**"When I arrived, I could feel the love — that is what drew me in, and that is what made me stay."**

**— Molly**

From that point on, Covenant House poured love and care into Molly and her son. Our staff gave her the support she never received from her own family, teaching her how to budget and save, cook and clean, and even how to drive.

"Home was Covenant House — where I could feel their hearts, where they put love into me," Molly shares. "Even the cooks warmed my



The youth we serve are resilient and incredibly capable. In this newsletter we offer you stories about young people who have overcome homelessness

through their own hard work and the resources provided by our supporter community.

Individuals, families, places of worship, and companies contribute about 68% of the funds needed to operate our housing costs and supportive services. Without private supporters, we could not sustain this work. But did you know that public funding also plays an important role in our ability to reach and serve young people?

About 32% of our U.S. sites' programmatic work is funded by federal, state, and local government grants and contracts. Our data sets regarding youth homelessness are some of the most trusted source materials and help governments better understand the scope and scale of the problems you are helping address.

Throughout our history, public funding has grown and diminished. What has remained constant is you: the generous and devoted people who invest in our mission and prioritize the needs of our nation's most vulnerable young people. We know our commitment to homeless youth will never waver because you are with us.

William "Bill" Bedrossian  
President and CEO

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke.



Molly used all the love and learning given by the Covenant House community to turn her life around. Now, she is using her story to help other women on their own healing journeys.

*Molly's story cont.*

## Transformed by Love

heart as much as filled my stomach. I knew I wanted to take this love that was instilled in me and bring it to others."

Today, Molly is a mother of three. She used her story to author a book called "Mourning Glory: No Past Is Too Dark For God's Glory," in which she writes about the darkness of her childhood, how Covenant House helped light the way, and how she found faith and a brighter path forward. Molly hopes her experiences can be a light to other women who have faced abuse and homelessness in their lives.

"I have dedicated my life to helping women heal and become better versions of themselves," Molly says.

**"I've found that whatever life brings, learn from it, master it, and then teach others. It takes time; you need patience in life. It is not easy, but keep pushing, keep being positive, and look at the fruits of your efforts."**



# There for Our Youth On and Off the Court

At Covenant House Alaska, you'll always find a group of youth who are up for a game of basketball. And often, Jack Hoen will be on the court with them.

Although Jack has a full schedule working and applying for medical school, he makes time to volunteer in our gym and music room. Each time he sets foot on our site, he brings with him his love for athleticism and his passion to make a positive impact in his community.

Jack recognizes the importance that moments of play and recreation make on a young person's journey, and is committed to investing his time, energy, and resources into seeing our young people win.

"I like helping them be active and challenge themselves, and this motivates me to keep involved," he says. "I can see how happy it makes them, and it is such a good habit to form."

For youth who have experienced homelessness and struggle, playing sports gives them a chance to just be kids again. Recreation activities also hone teamwork skills and promote healthy habits.

Jack is dedicated to helping our youth develop these wellness habits that will set them up for success. Whether on or off the court, Jack is there to help our youth win!



Despite the circumstances that may have brought them to Covenant House, our youth get the chance to have fun, play sports, and build community thanks to Jack's help.

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT

### A Gift and a Tribute



Margaret's support of Covenant House began when she received a Christmas card from a friend. Inside the card were her friend's holiday greetings, but when she turned the card over, she saw that it had been made by us.

There, she also read our mission statement promising unconditional love and absolute respect to every homeless young person. That was all Margaret needed to know.

You see, Margaret's late husband, Ted, experienced homelessness as a child. From the stories he told her, Margaret knows what it means to be young and alone without a home.

When Margaret saw that card from Covenant House, she felt that it was a program that would have benefited her husband had we been around all those years ago.

But while she can't change the past, Margaret knows she can change a young person's future today. She started with a monthly donation, and her support eventually grew. Now she is proud to have Covenant House in her will.

"I'm happy I could give to Covenant House and honor my late husband," Margaret says.



## “A Mile in Our Sneakers”: CH Youth Invite You to Step Into Their World

It's been said that you cannot truly understand another person's experience until you've “walked a mile in their shoes.”

Our youth at Covenant House Michigan took that phrase to heart while creating a special art piece called “A Mile in Our Sneakers.” The visual and interactive display is an invitation to step into their world and experience the complexities of youth homelessness.

The art piece was an entry in ArtPrize, a competition and festival in Grand Rapids where artists from all over the globe share their work. Each year, ArtPrize welcomes over 800,000 visitors, which made this a big opportunity for our youth to share their stories through their moving designs.

This mixed media installation was created using pencils, markers, and paint, with a pair of Keds sneakers as the canvas. Our young artists painted or drew designs on the sneakers that reflected their journey — and their hearts.

The sneakers adorned a tree, which signified growth, shelter, and protection. Accompanying the installation were QR codes containing video messages and personal reflections from the artists themselves.

Like one from 19-year-old A'Toree, whose sneaker was dedicated to the people who have stood by her and given her hope. “Overcoming homelessness is not easy,” A'Toree says. “People are actually here to care and help you.” On her shoe, A'Toree wrote the names of the Covenant House staff who have made a difference in her life.

“A Mile in Our Sneakers” was a collaborative effort by youth artists in Detroit and Grand Rapids experiencing housing insecurity. Their thoughtful designs told stories of resilience, love, and hope, and were meant to evoke empathy and understanding while connecting viewers to Covenant House's mission of eradicating youth homelessness.

We are proud of the work our youth put in to bring this artwork to life!



## More Ways You Can Make a Difference

### Donor-Advised Fund (DAF)

A DAF is like a charitable savings account set up to support the causes you care about most. Find out how you can get started at [covenanthouse.org/DAF](https://covenanthouse.org/DAF).

### August Is National Make-A-Will Month

By including Covenant House in your estate plan, you will make a lasting impact on the lives of young people today, tomorrow, and into the future. Embrace your willpower this August at [covenanthouse.myplannedgift.org](https://covenanthouse.myplannedgift.org).



Covenant House builds a bridge to hope for young people facing homelessness and survivors of trafficking through unconditional love, absolute respect, and relentless support. Our doors are open 24/7 in 34 cities across five countries, and our high-quality programs are designed to empower young people to rise and overcome adversity, today and in the future.

[www.covenanthouse.org](https://www.covenanthouse.org)

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