

# The Bridge 2023 Recap

by Neomi Nicoline \* Program Director  
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## Provider

As I thought about this letter, I had a hard time figuring out how to start. I prayed and was led to open my bible and read. God led me to the passage where Jesus rebukes a worried heart. Luke 13: 22, 23, and 27

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes."  
"Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these." There is so much I want for The Bridge. We could use more games, leaders, volunteers, money, space, and the list goes on, but God reminded me that I don't need to worry about these things. A few verses later, Jesus says, "Seek the Father's kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well." My job isn't to worry about how it can be better, but to focus on the Father's kingdom and everything that I need to succeed will be given to me. In all honesty, The Bridge is going great but it is so easy to want more and to think more is better. Thankfully God led me to this passage to refocus my purpose. At The Bridge, we strive to show the kingdom of God by example and in word. We purposely serve the students like Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. We speak truth like Jesus did in the sermon on the mount. We spend time outside of The Bridge hours building up our students like Jesus did with his disciples. We encourage them to love people like Jesus loved us on the cross. We are not perfect, but if our eyes are focused on the kingdom of God, we are going in the right direction.



## Past and Present Successes

We have served Community Dinners every Thursday that we were open in 2023. After two years I have finally made an official schedule for dinners. I have had a lot of help in the last two years and now I'm recognizing that organizing a schedule will free me up to work on different areas of The Bridge; not to mention less of a mess in my kitchen! Another thing we were focusing on last year was our Tent Mission. Our goal was to connect with more students, and now we have newer students who consistently

come by, we have meaningful conversations, and silly ones too. In 2022 we were able to help two families move and we got the opportunity again in 2023 to help two more families from outside our congregation move. As stated in our last recap letter, we were hoping to have a fundraiser and it happened! We raised over \$1700! The fundraiser took place at our Summer-Kickoff. We saw new faces and old students. The food was amazing! The games were a blast! Thank you to everyone who helped in any way and gave donations.





## Present Goals

One of our goals, and the reason we are named The Bridge, is to connect with other organizations and ministries helping students in the Lake County area. Before COVID, we had begun to build a rapport with other organizations, but like many other places, we have been rebuilding. Now that we have had about two years of rebuilding our hearts desire to connect our students with other facets. We are not alone in Lake County. There are many God-fearing ministries

and non-religious organizations that desire to help students build healthy strong futures. One organization we are reconnecting with is Frontline Street Intervention. Their mission is to "Prevent gang involvement, provide gang intervention, and promote social, spiritual and life skills development." We joined their open gym called G-life, God's love for everyone. It was a blast! Jeff and I were able to bring our kids along to watch God work in the student's lives. We hope to get connected with other ministries soon.



these students. Please be praying for us. When we have conversations with the students we want to give them God's wisdom. We desire to follow where God leads and we need the courage and strength he gives. Please pray that our students will have open ears, hearts, and eyes to God. We have been blessed and we are grateful to give back. Thank you for reading!

## Patiently Proactive & Purposeful

(A word from our Executive Director - Pastor Marcus Johnson)

Since our inception in 2015, we have proactively reached out and built up relationships with students as they walk by after school, handing out refreshments and hanging out with them at our Tent Mission & WiFi Café. We enjoy community dinners, play recreational sports, welcome students into our homes, teach God's word at youth group, and engage in service projects together throughout the year. We do so patiently, taking time to build trust with students while we wait on the Lord to work in their lives (and ours). By God's grace, through the commitment of our core students, the hard work of Neomi & Jeff, and the support of parents, volunteers, donors and Lake Region Bible Church, we are journeying forward by faith in our God-given purpose of enriching, empowering and equipping youth & young adults in Round Lake. Thanks for your support!



## Prayers

2023 came and left so fast! Is that what happens as you get older!? The Bridge mainly consists of Pastor Marcus Johnson, Jeffrey (my husband), and myself, Neomi. Pastor Marcus has helped with his godly wisdom, shepherding heart, and encouraging words. Let us not forget that the students love hanging out in his office, looking at all the books and talking about life, and church and asking questions. Jeffrey is our hands-on guy. He plays all the sports, and games and his heart is to serve others. My desire and prayer is that I am a safe place for

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