

# HOPE HOUSE

*A safe, sober and structured community in Casper, Wyoming offering solidarity and support to formerly incarcerated men and men who are recovery minded seeking sober living.*



## Hope House

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## *Our Mission*

Hope House is more than just a building. We are a resident-centered, alcohol- and drug-free community for previously incarcerated men (“Hope House Residents” or “Residents”). We are guided by our board of directors and by our house policy. Through community partnerships we connect Residents. The purpose of Hope House is to provide a safe and healthy living environment to initiate and sustain recovery and improvement in one’s physical, mental, spiritual, and social wellbeing. Individuals build resources while living in a recovery residence that will continue to support their recovery as they transition to living independently and productively in the community.

## *Our Vision*

A registered 501(c)(3), Hope House is a recovery-first community where our Residents have access to the recovery support and resources needed for their transition to happy, healthy, community-centered lives. Hope House will develop social enterprises that provide its residents the opportunity to learn social and employment skills and provide for their financial support while learning to adjust to their new life and thus reducing the chance of recidivism.

## *Our Founding*

Hope House was founded by Vicki Orcutt, a Casper businesswoman who began taking courses in addictionology after becoming concerned about the cycle of drug use and incarceration in Wyoming. While taking courses at Casper College, Vicki met a man named Christopher who had spent most of his life in prison and was about to be released. Christopher had no idea how to navigate life on the outside.

After doing further advocacy on Christopher’s behalf, Vicki created a community of support for Christopher. Today, Christopher owns his own home, has a management-level career, and has custody of his two children. Walking alongside Christopher inspired Vicki to create Hope House out of the belief that recovery requires connection to community.

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## *Our Board & Director*

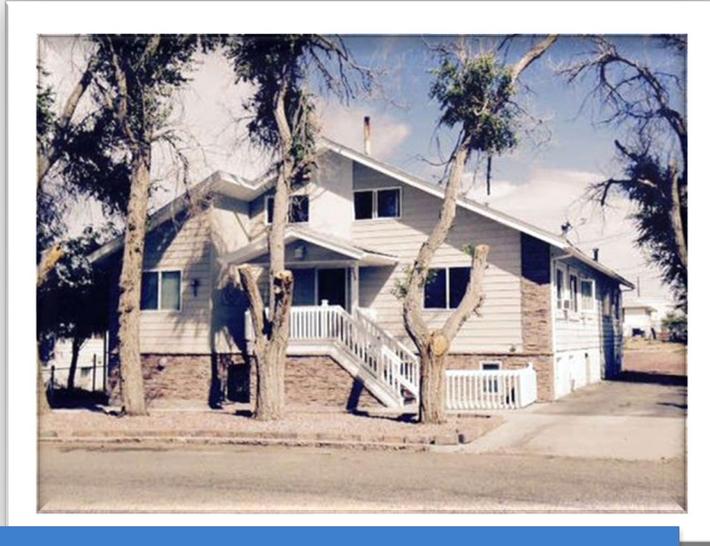
Our board consists of nine members, representing a diverse cross-section of the Casper community. Current board members include Wyoming Department of Correction Officer, law enforcement, a Licensed Addiction Therapist, a certified public accountant and community members at large. Our board also always consists of at least one formerly incarcerated individual, who assists our board in understanding the challenges faced by Residents as they re-enter the Casper community.

Additionally, Hope House employs a director/mentor on a part-time basis. Our current Director also is the Director of Programs and the Wyoming Rescue Mission.

## *Our Facility*

Hope House consists of seven, two-bedroom apartments, a community common area, and a one-bedroom apartment for our volunteer, on-site manager. Residents share two-bedroom apartments including a bathroom, living space, and kitchen. Each Member has their own bedroom and pays rent each month. The building has a community room with a TV, a computer lab, a weight area, a large kitchen, and a meeting room. Hope House also contains on-site laundry facilities, outdoor BBQ and meeting space and a small community garden.

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## *Our Application Process*

In order to apply for membership, incarcerated Applicants must begin their application process while incarcerated. Prospective Residents must first be referred to Hope House by the facility that is currently incarcerating them. Next, prospective Residents submit an application that includes a recommendation from their case manager or counselor and their pre-sentence investigation report. Finally, a prospective Applicant will undergo a panel interview. **We rigorously vet applicants to Hope House, as the house is not just a place to live—it's a place to change.**

## *Our Values*

From its inception in June 2017, Hope House was founded to transform hearts and minds by modeling the love and life of Jesus in our actions, words and deeds, therefore we value:

**HOPE:** We strive for an optimistic attitude of mind that is based on the expectation of that everyone deserves positive, healthy, and happy lives. WE embrace the challenge to stay connected. We know that if we hold on, the pain will end.

**IMPECCABLE HONESTY:** We speak truth at all times. We live and love with a true intent.

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**RESPECT:** We treat others the way we want to be treated. We conduct ourselves in a manner of true care and concern.

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** We are willing to be challenged on what we say and do. We are willing to challenge others on our journey to self-betterment. We need each other. Anyone who sees a problem in themselves or others owns the problem and is required to own it, confront it and report it.

**SPIRITUALITY:** We strive to stop resisting the positive, productive directions where we are being led. We are intentional about seeking a power higher than ourselves

**GIVING BACK:** For what we take out of this world, giving back is our duty. We are good neighbors, courteous, offer helping hands, and give back to the planet so we protect it for future generations. These are all responsibilities that we take seriously.

**INTEGRITY:** We do the right thing in words and in actions even when no one is looking.

**CONNECTION:** Human beings are wired for connection and relationships give us purpose and meaning to our lives. Bad choices have brought us to disconnect. Community is the antidote to personal alienation.

## The Problem

Over the past two decades, criminal justice reform has focused on evidence-based interventions to prevent arrests and incarceration and to facilitate community reintegration. Hope House is one such initiative.

In Wyoming, it costs \$239 a day to incarcerate one individual. It costs \$17 a day for a Member of Hope House to receive safe, sober housing and access to coordinated care including mentors, employment, healthcare services, transportation, and counseling. Hope House breaks cycles of addiction *and* incarceration.

**The Problem of Addiction.** Wyoming faces unique challenges regarding drug and alcohol addiction, and current “solutions” aren’t working. Wyoming’s drug arrest rate is the second-highest in the U.S. and has increased considerably in recent years. In 2010, less than one-fifth of people in Wyoming state prisons were serving time for drug crimes. By 2016, that number had grown to one-quarter.

**Hope House’s Approach to Addiction.** Research supports the effectiveness of recovery residences. Unlike traditional housing, recovery residences promote recovery from

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alcohol and drug use by providing formerly incarcerated individuals with a community of accountability and peer support. Moreover, Hope House provides the structure that Residents need to bridge the gap between incarceration and life on the outside.

**The Problem of Recidivism.** Nationally, at least 44% of prisoners were re-arrested within one year of their release from prison. Housing problems are often an underlying factor for people’s involvement with the criminal justice system. Housing interventions help lessen criminal justice involvement.

**Hope House’s Approach to Recidivism.** Exiting jail is a major risk factor to housing stability. There is a large overlap in populations experiencing homelessness and prior involvement in the criminal justice system. Formerly incarcerated people are 10 times more likely than the general public to become homeless. This revolving door of incarceration is perpetuated when people are not connected to the housing and services they need after release.

When people are stably housed, they have fewer recorded non-violent offenses. For example, people commit fewer survival crimes (offenses like theft, robbery, trespassing, and loitering), which are chief reasons people with low-level offenses are re-incarcerated.

## *Dream-Our Future Funding Need*

Currently, the greatest barrier faced by our Residents involves seeking gainful employment that is compatible with recovery and a sober lifestyle. Employment for formerly incarcerated individuals—and particularly felons—is hard to come by. And many of the jobs that are readily available, such as construction jobs, transportation jobs, and jobs affiliated with the energy sector, distract Residents from their recovery and sobriety. This puts Residents – and Hope House as a whole—in a lose-lose situation where gainful employment and the ability to pay rent is pitted against sobriety and recovery.

To combat these employment challenges, Hope House seeks to develop a social enterprise model to provide residents with employment skills in an environment that puts their recovery first. Moreover, recovery residences that have followed a social enterprise model—such as The Other Side Academy in Colorado —have become completely self-sufficient in that the revenue from the social enterprise arm is able to fully fund the residential and case management component. Our future desire is self-sustainability