



COVENTRY SCHOOL & KIDS HOPE USA

First Church has enjoyed a partnership with Coventry Elementary school for nearly four years. In the past, we have provided mentoring programs, school supplies, winter clothing, eyeglasses, teacher appreciation lunches, summer activity bags and meal bags. We recently resumed the meal bag collection, and those bags will be picked up at the school by parents since children are learning remotely. Most other programs have been put on hold until face-to-face meetings are considered safe.

Faith Promise funds help with the purchase of programming for the mentoring program called Kids Hope. Kids Hope USA was started 25 years ago by Hope College in Holland, MI. It is a mentoring program to help support children who would benefit from a one on one relationship. The church recruits volunteers who are then trained on what to expect as well as given access to an online resource library of ideas to do with your student. In addition to giving the child some needed attention, the volunteers also help with any school work the teacher may send, as well as, reading together.

A Testimony from one of our mentors

I have been a mentor at Coventry School for 3 years. I began in 2016 when my mentee was in 3rd grade. Every week during the school year I would meet with him during his lunch hour. I still remember meeting him for the first time. He was a very caring boy who loved playing games and acting silly occasionally. During those 3 years with him I watched him grow from a young 3rd grader to young man at the end of his 5th grade year. Most weeks we would work on math problems or I would help him with a writing assignment, but he always made sure we had plenty of time to play games. His favorite game was Guess Who. I still remember when playing the game he found it funny when he would try to sneak and pick his favorite person for me to guess. When we played Connect Four, he would stick his finger in the hole of the game to keep me from dropping the winning chip in.

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Every week he arrived with a smile on his face and would have stories to tell me about what he did over the weekend. He loved to ride his scooter and go to the park with his mom.

During his 4th and 5th grade years we would spend time at the end of every meeting practicing multiplication facts. It was very rewarding to see him start to remember those facts the more we practiced. I remember during his 5th grade year a challenging time he was having with some kids who were bullying him. I just listened and then tried to ask him some questions to make him think about different ways of dealing with the situation. My hope for him is that this helped to him to navigate that challenge.

Being a mentor is not just about how you help a student, it also changes you as the mentor. It is definitely rewarding to see the impact that you can have in a young person's life, but more importantly for me, it has changed my heart in many ways. Every day as I prayed for him, I felt my heart changing, becoming more compassionate toward others. It has also changed how I view myself as a role model for young children. It's difficult to capture in words all of the ways being a mentor has changed me both spiritually and in my interactions with others. I show people a little more grace these days than I used to. I find I'm a little more patient as well.

When you give to Faith Promise, we pass along 100% of the funds that make stories like these possible.

THANKS!

To all who give to Faith Promise, thank you for your contribution. God is using your continued generosity to heal our community and world in Jesus' name.

GET INVOLVED

We recently resumed the meal bag collection, and those bags will be picked up at the school by parents since children are learning remotely. Keep an eye out in the First Church weekly eNews for a winter clothing drive benefitting families of Coventry school.

If you'd like to get involved as a mentor of Kids Hope USA for a rewarding experience of helping those in our community who need help, please call the church office and we'll connect you with Janet Hyser.

