



Mary and Doug Liechty Caskey
The Welcome Home Campaign



We're not exactly sure when we first became aware of the work of Center for Healing and Hope, but we know it was sometime when CHH operated out of the church at the intersection of Main, Plymouth and Sixth Streets. We know this because that's essentially our "backyard." For the past 27 years we've lived on South Seventh and the back end of our property is adjacent to the large parking lot connected to the Plymouth United Church of Christ.

We started contributing financially to the work of CHH during the time that Laura Lerch Horst served as Development and Communications Director. Laura and her husband Randy have been friends of ours since our college days in the late 70's. At one point Laura gave us a tour of the Plymouth church facilities and while we noted the generosity of the congregation that provided office and clinical space for CHH, it was quite clear that this was borrowed space and not ideal for the important work of the clinicians, staff and volunteers that offered much needed services to the folks of Elkhart County falling through the cracks in our local health care system. We committed to making sure CHH was on our list of annual contributions.

Career-wise we are both teachers (Doug a retired college theater professor, Mary a soon-to-be retired 4th grade teacher). But before becoming a second-career teacher, Mary worked as a medical social worker here in Elkhart County, Wood County (OH) and Fresno County (CA). We also have siblings on both sides and a daughter-in-law who work in various aspects of the healthcare field. In addition, due to our participation in Goshen College's SST program we each spent a semester in Honduras back in our college days. Ever since those experiences we have been keenly aware of the increasing needs of our immigrant communities around the U.S. Elkhart County is no exception. We also know that growing up as middle class Midwesterners we are prone to take easy access to quality healthcare for granted.



Cars snaking through the parking lot at Plymouth United Church of Christ would become a spectacle of sorts for neighbors of the property. Mary's sister, Nancy Liechty Loewen, can be seen processing samples inside the mobile unit.

Fast forward to 2020 and the outbreak of the COVID19 pandemic. Center for Healing and Hope made it a priority to serve as a desperately needed testing site. Very suddenly, while our teaching jobs required us to work remotely out of our home, we saw long lines of cars winding through the parking lot behind us as the occupants were safely greeted by volunteers and staff offering free COVID tests. Once again, and on a more grand scale, CHH as an organization had determined a need in the community and figured out a way to fill that niche. We also took note from our literal sideline view that the CHH volunteer team expanded and now included members of our extended family

and our church family at Eighth Street Mennonite. While we did not choose to volunteer ourselves, we did determine that the pandemic was an important time for us to increase our financial giving to CHH.

We started to hear inklings of the eventual capital campaign soon after Center for Healing and Hope began leasing space in their current medical facility on Lincoln Avenue. At some point, Daniel Tackett and Missy Schrock approached us about participating more robustly in the campaign. When the opportunity arose for the organization to secure a permanent home by purchasing the leased facility, we knew it was time for us to join with other donors to help CHH secure a permanent home with easier access to clients in need of their services. To that end we not only pledged a larger gift as part of the campaign, but we eagerly joined with our sister Nancy Liechty Loewen to work with Daniel organizing one of the CHH “Facts and Snacks” awareness-raising events at Goshen Brewing Company last March 2023.



Pictured is one of several groups who met in the beerhall of Goshen Brewing Company for a Facts & Snacks event. Doug and Mary were integral in bringing one of these groups together to learn more about the mission of Center for Healing & Hope and the Welcome Home Campaign.

We greatly appreciate the way that CHH takes a big picture view of community health needs and wisely collaborates with other providers in Elkhart County to help ensure that gaps in our established health care system are being filled for those who would otherwise fall through the cracks. We are thrilled there is now an increased sense of “home” and “hope” in the

new location on Lincoln Avenue and we trust the clients, staff and volunteers are bolstered in spirit and in health by this more permanent set-up. It's clear that Center for Healing and Hope is NOT made up of bricks and mortar, but by the people who make it all happen.

Truth be told, while we have made financial contributions for years now, we haven't volunteered in the routine work of CHH as so many others have. Maybe we should say . . . haven't volunteered YET!

Tune in next month for another story!

CENTER FOR
HEALING
& HOPE



Welcome Home