

Faces of HOPE: Beau Field



When Beau Field walked into the [HOPE 4 Youth Drop-In Center](#), he was already homeless and nearly empty-handed.

“I had all my belongings with me,” said Beau. “Everything I owned was in that one bag.”

As bleak as that sounds, Beau had survived worse.

When he was 3, Beau and his older sister and brother were abandoned by their birth parents in the Philippines and ended up in an orphanage. They were later adopted by an American family in Mississippi, but Beau says it was not a good life.

“The woman who adopted me was aggressive when I did something wrong,” said Beau. “She also didn’t allow me to associate with people of color or to or express my Christian faith.”

When he was 18, Beau left Mississippi behind and came to Minnesota. He moved in with his sister and her husband, but his bad luck didn’t change. He and his brother-in-law didn’t get along. It was an unhealthy situation that quickly reached a breaking point and sent Beau into a deep depression.

“I had thoughts of suicide,” Beau remembers. “I was in a really bad place.”

During that same period, Beau became ill and was diagnosed with chronic kidney disease. While he was still in the hospital recuperating, Beau found out he wasn’t welcome back at his sister’s.

“That’s where my journey with homelessness began,” he said.

With just the belongings he could carry, Beau headed for Stepping Stone Emergency Housing Shelter in Anoka. That’s where staff suggested he also check out HOPE 4 Youth.

A turning point



Beau Field

In those early days of homelessness, Beau spent nights at the shelter and visited the HOPE 4 Youth Drop-In Center during the day. He used the center's shower and laundry facilities, stocked up on grab-and-go foods, clothing and hygiene items, and joined volunteers and other young people for evening meals.

Beau says he knew the drop-in center was a place where he could build a better life.

"I could tell they cared," he said. "They didn't judge me and what I looked like. They just wanted to help."

While at the drop-in center, Beau learned about HOPE 4 Youth's new transitional housing facility called [HOPE Place](#) and wondered if it might be right for him.

"Young people like Beau are exactly who our leaders had in mind when they came up with the idea for HOPE Place," said Manager Mica Whiteley. "The goal was to create a safe, temporary home for young people charting the next chapters of their lives."

HOPE Place would be more than just a roof over a young person's head. Inside, staff and community partners would offer on-site case management, including education and employment guidance, aimed at promoting self-sufficiency and long-term success. Local 18- to 24-year-olds who are at risk for homelessness and willing to complete a goals plan would be eligible to apply to live in one of 12 units in the building.

Resident No. 1

In 2016, Beau became the first resident of HOPE Place. He lived there for two years while gaining the tools needed to thrive in independent, market-rate housing.

"Beau didn't have a diploma, so caseworkers focused on that first," said Whiteley. "Beau studied and passed the tests needed to graduate Anoka-Hennepin Technical High School."

That high school diploma made Beau eligible for more jobs, and he eventually got one working as a paraprofessional at Hamilton Elementary in Coon Rapids. HOPE 4 Youth helped him learn how to handle his new income.

"I worked with one of the case managers on understanding and creating a budget," Beau explained.



Beau and his friend Kathy at A Night 4 HOPE

While at HOPE Place, Beau also began focusing on improving his physical and mental health. He used the facility's workout gear nearly every day and shed more than 90 pounds. He also got to know several HOPE 4 Youth volunteers who introduced him to the Chain of Lakes Church where he says he's gained a huge extended family who loves him.

"HOPE Place was where things really came together for me," he said. "I became healthier and started to get happier, and I made friends."

The next goal

After a few years with a steady job and his own apartment, and with a growing network of supportive friends, Beau feels like he's ready to take the next step in his education. He will start classes this fall at Anoka-Ramsey Community College to earn a degree in education. Until then, he's working part-time at Hamilton Elementary and at a different after-school program to earn money for college expenses.

A long way from an orphanage in the Philippines, beyond a difficult childhood in Mississippi, Beau has finally received the gift of hope. Today, he's a healthy, optimistic and thankful young man whose path to better days started at the front door of HOPE 4 Youth.

"They really care for young people who are lost," he said. "I knew right away they were going to help me, I just didn't realize how much."

The help we provide Beau and others like him is made possible, in part, by generous donors who make monthly gifts of HOPE. This sustained giving ensures we can meet needs promptly, no matter the situation or the season. To become a monthly giver, click the "monthly donation" option before entering your gift total on [our donation page](#).