



2025-2026

ANNUAL REPORT

What does hope look like?

- ▶ Sometimes hope looks like a child returning safely home.
- ▶ Sometimes it looks like a foster family saying yes.
- ▶ Sometimes it looks like a parent finding recovery.
- ▶ Sometimes it looks like a mentor refusing to give up.
- ▶ Sometimes it looks like a church opening its doors, a volunteer showing up faithfully, a donor choosing to give, or a community partner standing beside a family during their most difficult season.
- ▶ Hope always looks like sharing the love and light of Jesus Christ.

At CityLinC, we believe every child deserves a safe place to belong. Every family deserves hope. Every person struggling to find their footing deserves someone willing to walk beside them.

That is why we exist...we are not simply providing services. We are intentionally creating opportunities for ministry, discipleship, prayer, encouragement, and Kingdom impact within every program we operate. While we celebrate outcomes, our ultimate desire is to faithfully serve wherever God places us and trust Him to produce the fruit.

Because of your support, **hope found a home** in countless lives this year.

Because of You...

53

Children & Family Members Served in our child welfare programs currently

7

Foster Homes in the process of being Licensed

14

Adoptions Finalized

15

Reunifications Supported

218

Churches, Businesses & Community Partners

Over

120

Community members served through our Second Wind Mentoring Substance Use Programs this year

These numbers represent more than services provided. They represent children who found safety. Families who found support. Individuals who found encouragement. Parents who found healing. Communities that came together to make a difference.

- ▶ **Hope found a home** in children who experienced stability, belonging, and care through our foster care and adoption services.
- ▶ **Hope found a home** in families working hard toward reunification and healing.
- ▶ **Hope found a home** in individuals overcoming addiction through mentoring, accountability, recovery support, and life-changing relationships built through our Second Wind Mentoring Program.
- ▶ **Hope found a home** through Angel Tree as children received gifts, encouragement, and reminders that they are seen, valued, and loved.
- ▶ **Hope found a home** through churches, schools, courts, businesses, volunteers, and community organizations that chose to partner with us in serving our neighbors.

One story that continues to stay with me is that of Joy (on page 9). Through the support of caring professionals, community partners, and people willing to walk alongside them, that family began to experience something they had not felt in a very long time—hope. Today, they are stronger, more connected, and



moving toward a brighter future. Their story is a reminder that transformation is possible when people refuse to give up on one another.

I also witnessed hope through our staff.

This year, our foster care and adoption program expanded into two case management teams for the first time in our organization's history, allowing us to serve more children and families while continuing to provide individualized care and support. I watched staff members go beyond job descriptions and caseloads to truly care for the people we serve. Whether supporting a foster parent, encouraging a young person, mentoring someone in recovery, or simply taking the time to listen, they demonstrated what servant leadership looks like in action.

And I witnessed hope through our community.

One of the most exciting milestones this year was the launch of CityLinC Ministries' and Youth Guidance Foster Care & Adoption's first-ever prevention-focused contract. Together with Calhoun County Child Protective Services, we launched the Family Safety Coach Program to help strengthen families. This innovative program allows us to walk alongside families before a crisis results in a child's removal from the home.

Through this collaborative work, we have the privilege of entering homes experiencing instability and providing support, guidance, and resources to biological parents, foster parents, kinship caregivers, and the children at the heart of these families. By strengthening family relationships, increasing caregiver capacity, and addressing challenges early, we are helping create safer, more stable environments where children can thrive.

This new initiative represents a significant step forward in our commitment to preserving families whenever safely possible and bringing hope, healing, and support to those touched by the child welfare system.

Through the Calhoun County Opioid Settlement Grant we were awarded through Calhoun County this year, we expanded support, program capacity, and recovery resources for individuals with addiction issues who are working to rebuild their lives. This ministry, led by Pastor Mike Howard, is at no cost to the recipients and community.

Through our commitment to strengthening faith-based collaboration across Calhoun County, **CityLinC launched CC LinC (Calhoun County Living in Christ)**—a growing network of churches, ministries, and faith-based leaders united by a shared desire to serve our community well. Together, we gather to pray, learn about one another's ministries, identify community needs, foster meaningful partnerships, and explore ways to increase our collective impact. CC LinC serves as a powerful reminder that lasting community transformation is never the work of a single organization. It happens when individuals, churches, and ministries come together around a common purpose. Like lights shining across a dark landscape, each organization brings unique

gifts and strengths—but together, our light shines brighter, reaches farther, and brings greater hope to the communities we serve.

One of the greatest lessons I have learned this year is that transformation happens through relationships. Programs matter. Funding matters. Policies matter. But lasting change occurs when people choose to walk alongside one another with love, dignity, and unwavering **hope**.

What Is God Calling Us Toward Next?

As we look ahead, we believe God is calling CityLinC to even greater ministry impact and Kingdom fruit throughout our community. While we celebrate what God has already accomplished, we know there are still more children needing safe homes, more families needing support, more individuals seeking recovery, and more opportunities to partner with churches and community organizations to bring hope where it is needed most.

We see opportunities to reach more children and families, strengthen foster and kinship homes, expand recovery and mentoring services, deepen partnerships with churches and community organizations, and continue pursuing our vision of bringing our ministries together under one roof.

The dream of **"Under One Roof"** is about far more than a building. It is about creating a place where foster families find support, children find belonging, individuals find recovery, churches find opportunities to serve, and community members find hope. It is about creating a home for ministry, collaboration, and transformation.

To fully answer this calling, we need partners who believe in the vision and are willing to invest in its future. Financial support allows us to expand services, equip and support foster families, strengthen recovery programs, create new opportunities for children and families, and pursue a permanent ministry home where lives can be transformed for generations to come. Every gift entrusted to CityLinC becomes an investment in hope—a hope that helps children find permanency, families find stability, individuals find recovery, and communities find healing.

Please join us in praying for God's direction and provision as we pursue the resources, partnerships, and future home needed to continue growing the impact of this ministry. Together, we can help ensure that hope continues to find a home throughout Calhoun County and beyond.

Most importantly, we remain committed to seeking God's agenda rather than our own. We hold our plans with open hands, trusting Him to guide our steps and produce fruit that extends far beyond what we can measure in a report. Some of that fruit we have already seen, some of it is still growing, and some of it may not be fully revealed until eternity.

The work of CityLinC has never belonged to one person, one program, or one organization. It belongs to a community of people who believe that lives can change, families can heal, and hope can be restored.

With gratitude,
Cheri DeBree
Executive Director
CityLinC Ministries

- ▶ Thank you for being part of that story.
- ▶ Thank you for believing in this mission.
- ▶ Thank you for helping hope find a home.

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As I reflect on this past year at CityLinC Ministries, I am filled with gratitude for God's faithfulness, appreciation for the people who make this work possible, and excitement for what lies ahead.

This year reminded me of something that has always been true: CityLinC's greatest strength is not found in a program, a building, or an event. It is found in people—people who are united by a shared commitment to serve Christ, love their neighbors, and help others discover hope, purpose, and community.

Throughout the year, I have had the honor of witnessing the impact of that commitment firsthand. Behind every number in this report is a story. A story of a life encouraged, a family strengthened, a relationship restored, or an individual taking meaningful steps toward a brighter future. These stories are the true measure of our success and the reason CityLinC continues to matter in the communities we serve.

Like many organizations, we have navigated challenges and changing needs. Yet time and again, we have seen God provide through the generosity of supporters, the dedication of volunteers, the leadership of our staff, and the strength of our partnerships. Because of this collective effort, CityLinC has continued to grow its impact while remaining faithful to its mission of connecting people to Christ, community, and purpose.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who has invested in this ministry. Whether you gave financially, volunteered your time, partnered with us, prayed for our work, or participated in our programs, you have played an important role in the lives being transformed through CityLinC. Your support is not simply sustaining an organization—it is helping create opportunities for lasting change and eternal impact.

The Board remains committed to stewarding this ministry with integrity, accountability, and vision. We recognize that the trust placed in us is both a privilege and a responsibility. As we look to the future, we are focused on ensuring that CityLinC remains strong, innovative, and positioned to meet emerging needs while staying firmly grounded in the values and mission that have guided us from the beginning.

What encourages me most is the opportunity before us. The needs in our communities are significant, but so is the potential for transformation. We believe the years ahead will bring new opportunities to deepen relationships, expand partnerships, and reach even more individuals and families with the hope and love of Christ.

Thank you for believing in this mission. Thank you for walking alongside us. And thank you for helping CityLinC continue to be a catalyst for transformation in the lives of those we serve.

Together, we are building stronger communities, changing lives, and advancing a mission that extends far beyond any one person, program, or year.

With gratitude and hope,
Ralph Moore III
Board Chair
CityLinC Ministries





Behind Every Number by Trisha Elliot

Annual reports are filled with numbers.

Children served. Families strengthened. Foster homes licensed. Adoptions finalized. Volunteer hours given. Resources distributed.

These numbers matter. They help tell the story of our work and demonstrate the impact made possible through the generosity, partnership, and support of our community.

But numbers alone cannot capture the full story.

Behind every number is a person.

Behind every child served is a young life seeking safety, stability, and hope.

Behind every foster family is a household that opened its heart and home to someone in need.

Behind every adoption finalized is a family celebrating a long-awaited beginning.

Behind every volunteer hour is someone who chose to invest their time in the life of another.

Behind every donation is a person who believed that hope is worth sharing.

The true impact of CityLinC cannot be measured solely in reports, charts, or statistics. It is found in the quiet moments that rarely make headlines: a child feeling secure for the first time, a family discovering support during a difficult season, a parent finding encouragement, or a community coming together to care for its neighbors.

Each number in this report represents a story. A story of resilience. A story of compassion. A story of people choosing to show up, serve, and make a difference.

As you read through these pages, we invite you to look beyond the numbers and remember the lives they represent. Because every number has a name, every name has a story, and every story matters.

Thank you for being part of the story.



RESULTS

DRUG COURT PARTICIPANTS SERVED

Over **120** participants served annually

SWM GED COMPLETIONS

100% of participants in SWM Drug Court program that needed to obtain their GED have done so by graduation from the program

SWM EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

100% of participants in the Drug Court program that needed to gain employment have done so by graduation from the program

SWMP MENTORING PROGRAM

Since tracking began, only two participants have been unable to complete the mentoring program due to re-incarceration, reflecting the program's strong engagement and participant commitment. **98%** of program participants did not experience reincarceration during participation in the program.

DRUG SCREENINGS

98.78% negative screening rate for participants in the Drug Court program

SWM NALOXONE DISTRIBUTION

In the 6 months since the Calhoun County Opioid grant start date, we have distributed over 85 Naloxone kits to persons in our program and community members that support a person with opioid addiction. We have offered Naloxone kits to **97.56%** of all participants in the program.

Churches/businesses partnered with **218**

Donations from this year **\$71,129**

Angel Tree Prison Fellowship children provided with Christmas gifts **140**

Foster and Adoptive children through our program provided with Christmas gifts **80**

Stuff-A-Bus back packs with school supplies distributed **820**

Financial Stewardship Update

At CityLinC Ministries, we recognize that every dollar entrusted to us represents a sacrifice and an investment in life transformation. This past year, we have made significant improvements to strengthen our financial stewardship and operational effectiveness.

We have upgraded our technology infrastructure, implemented enhanced accounting systems, and streamlined financial processes to improve accuracy, accountability, and reporting capabilities. These investments help ensure that resources are managed responsibly, financial information is more readily available for decision-making, and administrative efficiencies allow us to focus more of our efforts on fulfilling our mission.

Our commitment remains to operate with integrity, transparency, and excellence as faithful stewards of the resources God has provided. We are grateful for the generosity of our supporters and remain dedicated to maximizing the impact of every contribution in service to the individuals, families, and communities we serve.

Thank you for your continued partnership in transforming lives and advancing the mission of CityLinC Ministries.

2026 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

■ COMMUNITY DONATIONS

\$71,990

■ MENTOR PROGRAM GRANTS & DONATIONS

\$54,035

■ MAJOR INVESTMENTS

- Technology upgrades
- Parent transportation
- Recovery program resources

■ NEW FUNDING

- Calhoun County Opioid Settlement Grant
- Family Safety Coach Contract

Hope and Resilience

by Pastor Mike Howard

The goal of the 2nd Wind Ministry is to inspire hope and resilience. This results in the kind of transformation that invites permanent change, growth, and maturity. The task of recovery is difficult, but success in recovery is more effective when a relationship is established first. We become friends, and then over time, trust is built and support is offered. Friends support each other.

We have many diverse life skills teaching that help people relate their recovery to a lifestyle. A veteran finds sobriety through a network of support, a brotherhood. A former athlete is in recovery to find a better way of pain management. After abandoning her heroin habit, a mother reunites with her kids. After years of alcoholism, a father is rebuilding trust with his wife and kids. The list goes on.

When we think about people with substance abuse problems, our minds often jump to extremes. We usually picture the person whose life has completely unraveled, rather than the person who stays home and binges on weekends and holidays. There are many common hurdles however, and eventually even the “functional” substance abuser lands on the wrong side of the law. There usually comes a point in time when he or she moves from social activity to total dependence.

Once a person becomes dependent on drugs or alcohol, shame and guilt invade their way of thinking. What we do at 2nd Wind is try and dispel the myth of shame and lessen the guilt. These are valid feelings, but we try to help them understand that what happened in the past does not define the whole person. At 2nd Wind we offer opportunities to reflect on the past, resolve to do better today, and move forward towards a brighter future.

Rachel is a recent graduate of Drug Court. At one time she was a hard-core, homeless meth addict. She had lost her kids, husband, home, and job. She was living on the streets, sores all over her body, and utterly destitute. She was raped. She was beaten within an inch of her life. She was suicidal.

Now, after 3 years in drug court, with counseling, treatment, structure, accountability, and support, Rachel has regained her kids, her husband, her job, her driver's license, and her self-respect. Rachel is adamant that she will never go back to using again. Her long-term goal is to stay in the recovery field and help other people who are struggling with addiction.

2nd Wind is making a difference.



One mother was on the verge of losing everything again

by Trisha Elliot

After fighting hard to reunify with her children, she finally had her babies back home where they belonged. Then, shortly afterward, she experienced a setback and tested positive during recovery. Many believed the children should immediately be removed again.

But instead of giving up on her, a team of people chose to surround her with support.

“What was beautiful to me was that people’s natural tendency can sometimes be to assume the worst and immediately remove the children,” shared Joy Hendrix, Program Director at CityLinC Ministries. “But in this case, people saw who she truly was. They believed in her and chose to surround her with support instead.”

One of those people was a foster care specialist, who voluntarily committed to visiting the home two to three times per week—far beyond what was required.

“This house wasn’t close either,” Joy explained. “She volunteered. No one told her to do that.”

Rather than focusing only on barriers, the team focused on the mother’s strengths, her progress, and her deep love for her children. They provided accountability, encouragement, practical support, and consistency.

“Without someone believing in them, they don’t have that chance,” Joy said. “Society often judges parents when children are removed, whether intentionally or not, as people who can’t, won’t, or shouldn’t be parents. A lot of times, it doesn’t have to do with that. They were put in a bad spot and just need time to learn, grow, and change.”

The impact on the children was profound.

“The kids benefited hugely because they love their mom and wanted to be with her,” Joy shared. “Being able to stay home with her was honestly like a Christmas wish come true. They’re little, but they’re old enough to remember that Christmas with their mom.”

Instead of enduring more disruption, uncertainty, and separation, the children were able to move forward with stability and normalcy.

“Being in the system can be really stressful and overwhelming for kids,” Joy said. “This allowed them to move forward, get settled again, and return to normal childhood activities. The little girl was able to continue dance, and they were able to just be kids again.”

Today, the case is successfully closed. The mother remains sober, the children remain home, and the family continues moving forward together.

“This represents CityLinC’s mission by seeing the mom as valuable and as a mom who loves her babies,” Joy reflected. “She was given hope, and she found a better future and is continuing on that path.”



Joy Hendrix



UPCOMING EVENTS

There are plenty of opportunities to connect, give back, and have fun with CityLinC this summer! These events are a great way to support local families, connect with the community, and help further the work being done every day through CityLinC Ministries. We hope to see you there!



BACK-TO-SCHOOL DRIVE



Please drop-off donations to our office by 8/7/26

(269) 969-9181
 info@citylinc.org
 70 Calhoun St., Battle Creek

MAKE THEIR Christmas EXTRA SPECIAL!



HELP BRING JOY TO FOSTER & ADOPTIVE KIDS IN OUR CARE

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP:



1. SIGN UP
Let us know you'd like to participate and we'll match you with a child or family.



2. SHOP
Purchase gifts from the child's wish list with love in mind.



3. DELIVER
Return unwrapped gifts by the deadline so we can prepare for Christmas!



4. MAKE AN IMPACT
Your kindness creates memories that last a lifetime.

EVERY GIFT. EVERY CHILD. EVERY HEART MATTERS. 

TO SIGN UP OR LEARN MORE, CONTACT US TODAY!

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US SHARE HOPE, LOVE & JOY!



ANGEL TREE

CITYLINC IS PARTICIPATING IN ANGEL TREE AGAIN THIS CHRISTMAS!





ANGEL TREE BRINGS JOY TO CHILDREN OF PRISONERS

Together, we can show these children they are remembered and loved.





CHOOSE AN ANGEL
Pick an angel tag from our tree.



BUY GIFTS
Shop for the child listed on the tag.



RETURN GIFTS
Return unwrapped gifts by the deadline.



LET'S MAKE CHRISTMAS EXTRA SPECIAL TOGETHER!



MORE DETAILS COMING SOON!

CITYLINC FUNDRAISER

NIGHT AT THE BATTLE JACKS

July 26th

Reserve [TICKET LINK](#)

Gates: 4:05pm | First Pitch: 5:05pm

SUMMER FUN

Summer Fun Fundraising Night is here!

Join us for a great night out supporting CityLinc while enjoying baseball, community, and fun. A portion of proceeds will go back to the program.

GET YOUR TICKETS HERE:



Questions? Contact Us at (269) 962-0735 or sophie@battlejacksbaseball.com



CityLinC Ministries
70 Calhoun St.
Battle Creek, MI 49017

OUR MISSION: CityLinC connects children and youth to loving families, families to secure futures, individuals to caring community, and community to personal faith. We do this through our foster care and adoption program, our mentor program for parolees, and our community connections events and services, which help build positive relationships in our community.

Be part of what God is doing through
CityLinC Ministries.

Your support helps bring hope to
children, families, and individuals
throughout our community.

Partner With Us Today

DONATE

