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When we show up for students during their hardest days, that's when real change starts.

Hannah Edgerly, Education Director

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At Escape Ministries, our heart is to help youth rise above obstacles and discover their God-given potential. We exist to empower, offer hope, and create belonging through academic support, meaningful work opportunities, and caring mentorship. This is the work your partnership makes possible every day.



TRANSFORMING LIVES AND EMPOWERING THE HEROES OF TOMORROW



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, KEVIN VAN DEN BOSCH

Dear Friends and Partners,

Throughout this newsletter, you will read stories that reflect Escape's forward movement — intentional, strategic, and rooted in God's grace. Each story is a reminder of what happens when a community invests in young people and believes in their potential.

Through our new Independent Living Program, we are equipping young people with the practical skills, confidence, and support they need to thrive beyond our doors. Our expanding Youth Employment Initiative is creating meaningful opportunities that provide structure, responsibility, and real-world workplace exposure — helping students believe in themselves and in a brighter future.

At Escape's upcoming annual Hero in Me event, we will celebrate character, resilience, and community through the inspiring stories of three remarkable heroes. This event does more than recognize achievement it reinforces hope, inspires excellence, and fuels support for our shared mission. This event reminds us that when hope is nurtured and potential is recognized, lives are changed.

Across every initiative, our focus remains clear: intentional growth, measurable impact, and long-term sustainability. We are strengthening partnerships, diversifying funding, and building systems that ensure accountability and excellence. Above all, we remain grounded in our belief that every student we serve is a Child of the King — our highest priority.



April

30 Hero In Me | Maranatha Church

May

09 ESCAPE at the Tulip Time Parade

13 Community Impact Day

September

22 Annual Banquet | Baker Lofts



2026 ANNUAL REPORT

Scan the QR code to explore our annual report and see the difference your support makes.



EXCITING NEWS: INDEPENDENT LIVING IS HERE!



Housing is a basic need, but the hospitality, coaching, and structure offered by the independent living program gives this initiative the ingredients for transformation.

- AJ WESTENDORP
ESCAPE PROGRAM DIRECTOR

We are thrilled to share exciting news—Escape Ministries has launched our new **Independent Living Program!** With strong support and enthusiasm from our Board and staff, this life-changing initiative is designed to walk alongside youth aging out of the foster care system as they step into adulthood. Through mentorship, life-skills development, education, and employment support, we are creating meaningful pathways toward stability, confidence, and long-term success.

As part of this growth, we are currently conducting a search for a **Youth Independent Living Manager** who will bring valuable foster care expertise to lead and strengthen the program. This role will play a critical part in equipping youth with the tools, accountability, and encouragement they need to thrive independently... ensuring each young adult receives personalized guidance and consistent support.

We are also seeking **compassionate individuals and families to serve as Host Homes**, providing a safe and supportive environment where young adults can continue building skills and confidence. To learn more about becoming a Host Home partner, visit escape-out.org/programs/homes/ or scan the QR code below and help us create lasting impact for youth in our community!



BECOME A HOST HOME

INQUIRE TODAY!

CAREER CONNECTIONS: HIRE A HERO THIS SUMMER

It's that time of year again! Career Connections is gearing up for another season of youth stepping into leadership, responsibility, and real-world work.

Each summer, our youth show up ready to work, ready to learn, and ready to prove what they are capable of. Through hands-on projects across the community, they build job skills, confidence, and a vision for their future within a culture of belonging, transformation, and delight.

We invite you to be part of the impact.

Career Connections thrives because of community partners who open doors for young people. Whether you have a small project our youth teams can help with, want to make an impact by donating to Escape Ministries to support the program, or are interested in supporting the next generation of workers by getting involved with our pop can initiative "We Can", **your involvement makes a lasting difference.**

Every way you engage helps equip the next generation with skills, confidence, and a vision for their future. Together, we can provide youth with the tools and opportunities necessary for them to confidently embrace what lies ahead.



Your next project has the potential to transform lives.



escape-out.org/hire

616-396-4481 x210

escape-out.org/give

Hire 3, insured, youth workers + an adult team leader!

EMPOWER THE NEXT GENERATION: BECOME A SPONSOR



Each year, the Hero in Me Celebration and Annual Banquet reminds us that every young person carries potential waiting to be discovered. It is an evening where powerful stories of perseverance, growth, and courage come to life and where our community gathers to celebrate the impact that hope, guidance, and opportunity can have on a young person's future.

For many of the students we serve, the journey has not always been easy. Yet with mentorship, encouragement, and the right opportunities, we see remarkable transformation. Our yearly celebrations highlight these journeys while honoring individuals who embody character, resilience, and leadership. Their stories inspire us all and remind us that when young people are surrounded by support, they can accomplish extraordinary things.

Sponsors play a vital role in making these celebrations possible and in sustaining the programs that make these stories possible. Your partnership helps provide mentorship, employment opportunities, life skills training, and faith-centered support for the youth who walk through our doors each day.

When you become a sponsor, you are not simply supporting an event. You are investing in hope, strengthening a community that believes in its youth, and helping young people discover the hero within themselves.

We warmly invite you to become a sponsor and partner in our mission as we honor the stories, growth, and promising futures that lie ahead. Thank you for considering this opportunity to make a meaningful impact.

To inquire today, reach out to Executive Director, Kevin Van Den Bosch, at kevin@escape-out.org or scan the QR Code today!

