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# Speak Out!




# The Impact of Generous Faith

A DEEP DIVE INTO THE PEOPLE & MINISTRIES IMPACTED BY HERE FOR GOOD.



When Jesus is asked what the most important commandment is, He answers by tying together two commands: love of God and love of neighbor (Mark 12:28-34). Like a coin with two sides, these two guidelines are really just two sides of the same law of love.

The commandment to love God seems fairly easy to grasp. Jesus draws upon the celebrated shema of Deuteronomy 6, an identity marker for the Jewish people in which they are called to worship and adhere to God alone. This one God stands at the center of their faith but also every aspect of their lives.

The second half of Jesus' words comes from the often-neglected book of Leviticus. Amid instructions about rituals, guidelines about festivals, and lists of different sorts, we read these powerful words: *"Love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD"* (Leviticus 19:18). Just before this declaration, we encounter various real-life situations where loving others is challenging, such as stealing, lying, partiality in justice, slander, seeking revenge, or making life difficult for the weak. God calls His people to work out the ideal of neighbor-love in every social arena. How we love others matters to God and is, in a sense, the interrelated flip side of how we love God.

In Luke's Gospel, after Jesus names the greatest commandment, a law expert asks: *"And who is my neighbor?"* (Luke 10:29). To answer this question, Jesus tells a memorable story about a Jewish man who is beaten and left to die on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho. Religious experts pass by the injured man with various excuses, but a Samaritan—one of the sworn enemies of Jews—comes along and provides life-sustaining help. Jesus concludes the story with a piercing question: *"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"* (10:36). The answer is obvious: the Samaritan who was merciful to the man in need was the real neighbor. So, Jesus says, *"Go and do likewise"* (10:37).

Clearly, it is important to understand Jesus' view of a neighbor. But understanding Jesus' view of the neighbor is not the same as actually being a neighbor to others. Right thinking should lead to right living, but what we need is the power of God steadily at work within us to form us into the sort of people Jesus is talking about.

In this issue of *Speak Out* we explore what it means for our faith to overflow in goodness toward our neighbor. As we read through this issue, I hope we are inspired to let our love grow both upward and outward.

Matt Erickson
Senior Pastor, Eastbrook Church

Eastbrook is a church with impact. Our ministry and presence throughout our neighborhood, city and world makes a difference, and we have the data to prove as much --if you haven't already, visit *eastbrook.org/giving* to find those statistics in our most recent Annual Report. Time and again, we see that we *"can do all things through Christ who strengthens [us]"* (Philippians 4:13). What would it mean for, as Pastor Matt mentioned above, our faith to overflow in even more goodness toward our neighbor? The stories in this issue explore the significance of that responsibility, and imagine what else is possible moving forward.

This is something we're contemplating as a church family, too, through our **Here for Good** initiative. To learn more about the vision for this project (and see how each of the ministries highlighted in this issue would be impacted), visit *eastbrook.org/hereforgood.*




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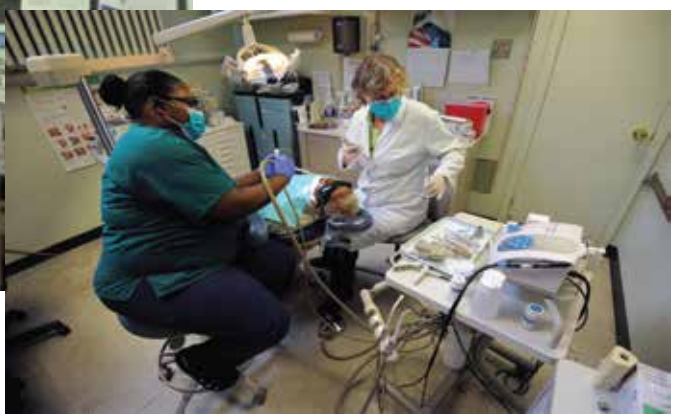
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# 5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT BREAD OF HEALING CLINIC (THAT YOU DIDN'T ALREADY KNOW!)

Did you know? The Eastbrook Church Clinic Site Coordinator is longtime Eastbrook member Jewel Mattke (below, left)!





BREAD OF HEALING CLINIC

When Eastbrook moved to its Green Bay Ave. campus, it gained the opportunity to dream about new ways to serve the surrounding community. One of those opportunities emerged through the Bread of Healing Clinic, which has become a vital source of care and support for our neighbors over the last two decades.

The Bread of Healing Clinic is a faith-based ministry that aims to reflect Jesus' own healing ministry. We come alongside individuals to address the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social aspects of health as a means of caring for the whole person.

You may already be aware that our church hosts this neighborhood-based clinic, but there is more to this ministry than meets the eye.

## 1. Ours isn't the only Bread of Healing Clinic

Eastbrook is home to one of four Bread of Healing sites across Milwaukee. The main site is located at Cross Lutheran near Marquette University; the others exist inside Traveler's Rest Ministries on Florist Ave., and at Unity Lutheran on Oklahoma Ave. All Bread of Healing Clinics are a medical home base for patients, not a walk-in clinic. There is a pathway for individuals to get established as patients, where they can be known and have their holistic needs met outside of emergency and surgical services.

## 2. Each clinic houses different specialties…

…based on the equipment and volunteer providers. For example, Eastbrook will hold ophthalmology appointments because we have the resources to do so. The clinic on Florist Avenue has a dental clinic, so established patients in need of routine cleanings and exams, as well as some basic dental procedures, get that care there. Of all BOH locations, Eastbrook hosts the most specialty provider volunteers.

## 3. Our Clinic has expanded vision care in response to growing need

Historically, Eastbrook has had the setup for ophthalmology exams, but we've recently acquired a volunteer team that provides vision screening and fits people with gently-used glasses. In an effort not to lose services within the city, occasionally when other clinics or resources move or close or become otherwise unavailable, we are part of a free and charitable clinic collaborative to support the safety net of resources for the underserved in our city.

## 4. Most patients get referred through word of mouth

Most of our patients find us by word of mouth, in the sense that we don't advertise to find patients. We are affiliated with one of the health systems in Milwaukee so that when a patient is either in the ER or admitted, and it's recognized that they don't have insurance, they will get referred to us for follow-up and to establish care.

## 5. The current Clinic shares a majority of its space

Right now, the Clinic operates across shared space in the lower level of the C-Wing (next to Fellowship Hall). There are two rooms designated solely for the Clinic: the Med Room and the "pod" of four exam rooms. This means significant setup and tear-down is required each time the Clinic opens its doors.

**Good news:** plans exist to create a dedicated home! The re-envisioned Clinic space will address two critical needs: it will provide double the number of clinic rooms to allow for confidential space for meaningful conversations around health and wellness, while also consolidating the overall footprint into a more efficient space. This will cordon off the space so that Fellowship Hall can be used during Clinic hours by Eastbrook Academy or other events in the congregation. For more information and to see details of the expanded Clinic space, visit *eastbrook.org/hereforgood.* ■

Will with his buddy Maria during VBS this past summer.



Eleanor with her buddy Hazel performing actions to one of the songs during Wednesday night worship.



Eli with his buddy Luciana in the sensory room courtyard.



*"Then the Lord said to him, "Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the Lord?"* (Exodus 4:11)

# BECOMING A MORE ACCESSIBLE CHURCH

By Jean Burroughs

**This article was written by Jean Burroughs, Eastbrook's Accessibility Coordinator in charge of the Buddy Ministry and Sensory Room programming. In preparation for this article, Jean spoke privately with several families involved in her ministry area for their sentiments on how we do Accessibility & Belonging in our church family. Their names have been omitted, but their thoughts and comments have been shared with their permission.**

## AN ACCESSIBLE CHURCH

We are a church known for diversity, inclusion, and hospitality. Celebrating diversity at Eastbrook is more than just recognizing different cultures and ethnicities (though that is something we're very good at!). It also means becoming a more accessible church—celebrating and including ***all*** of God's people regardless of their physical, cognitive, and emotional differences.

At Eastbrook we want to welcome all and provide opportunities for everyone to participate and hear the Gospel in a way that they can connect with. One of the goals of the Here for Good initiative is to help break down accessibility barriers and have a more inclusive environment for people of all abilities.

# CURRENT ACCESSIBILITY MINISTRY

Eastbrook's Accessibility & Belonging Ministry focuses on reminding our church that everyone has a seat at God's table. Families here look different in many ways, and we want to meet them where they are.

Right now, Eastbrook's Accessibility Ministry has a focus on children and parents of children with disabilities. We offer a Special Needs Parent Bible Study, a community group called FAST (Foster/Adoption Support Group), a Buddy Ministry, and a Sensory Room.

## Special Needs Parent Bible Study

**What it is:** This is a Bible study that happens on the third Sunday of each month at 9:30 am in Room B225. The focus is on the Word of God. It's a way for parents of children with special needs to meet, learn from the Gospel, and encourage each other.

**What parents say:** Parents have reported that they love the Special Needs Parent Bible Study and they want others to learn about this group. They appreciate the focus on Jesus and discipleship as well as building connections with other families. One parent shared that this group, "allows us to spiritually connect with other people who are in a similar place,"

## Foster/Adoption Support Group (FAST)

**What it is:** FAST meets on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month at 9:30 am in Room B225. It is a support group focused on prayer, fellowship, and encouragement to parents who have fostered or adopted children. People who are thinking about fostering or adopting are also encouraged to attend.

## Buddy Ministry and Sensory Room

**What it is:** The Buddy Ministry exists to make NextGen Ministry (Eastbrook's children and student ministry) more accessible. It pairs a child 1:1 with a buddy who can help them as needed in their Sunday School classroom.

Eastbrook also offers a Sensory Room that serves as a place for children to go when they need a break. It is also home for alternative Sunday School programming for kids who otherwise would not get as much out of the traditional classroom.

**What parents say:** "I want parents to know that this opportunity exists for their kids—and for volunteers, I want them to know that they make such a difference for the family." Parents have said that this program helps them be able to attend church and allows them to worship without worrying about their children.

Having this as an option also allows their children to feel loved and accepted. Parents acknowledge that relationships that have been developed with the buddies are meaningful to them and their children.

Parents have reported that they have seen God's work through the Buddy Ministry. Those who have been here for years have seen the growth of the program. They feel blessed by the volunteers that have made a commitment to being part of their lives.

# MORE TO BE DONE, A CALLING TO CARE

This summer, as a church, we have been reading through the Gospel of John. John 9 is the story of Jesus healing the blind man. *"'Neither this man nor his parents sinned,' said Jesus, 'but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him'"* (John 9:3).

Jesus' healings didn't just restore sight, mobility, and health. They helped bring these individuals back into the community. The people He healed were no longer ostracized, but able to go to the temples, reconnect with their families, and become a more active member of society. His healings, His demonstration of care, and His acts of kindness were a way for outcasts to be welcome. As Christians, we are called to generous hospitality. It's time as a church to learn more and do more for our most vulnerable, and to help make the church more accessible for all.

The ministries that are currently being offered are a stepping stone in the right direction, but further development and support is still needed. There are children who are still kept at home because parents are not aware of the Sensory Room or the Buddy ministry.

Additionally, there is a high need for more volunteers as even without those new kids, not everyone who could benefit from a buddy has one. With children getting older, there is an increased need for another Sensory Room or alternative Sunday School for high schoolers or young adults with special needs. And there are places for the Accessibility ministry to grow in completely new ways.

With our church's focus on being Here for Good, it would be wonderful to see everyone using their skills and time in some way to help our greater church family. I will never forget when one parent told me, "Somebody's involvement [as a Buddy] might mean the difference between a family going to church and not."

We are all made in God's image. Let's continue to celebrate and welcome those differences by growing our Accessibility Ministry. We can be a church where the surrounding community knows that they are welcome and can find a home here regardless of ethnic or cultural background, physical or mental capabilities, socioeconomic status, etc.

**For more information about the Accessibility Ministry or to volunteer, contact Jean Burroughs: jburroughs@eastbrook.org. For more information about the ways that Here for Good (and future phases of campus improvements) will impact our Accessibility ministry, visit eastbrook.org/hereforgood.**

# The Fun and Games (and Discipleship) of Student Ministry

By Megan Littel







Student Ministry is a vital component of Eastbrook Church. Our church is made up from the multigenerational, multiethnic, multilingual, multinational body of believers who call Eastbrook Church home, and that includes our teenagers and pre-teens.

We at Eastbrook Church are blessed to have a thriving Student Ministry. Student Ministries serves our middle (grades 5-8) and high school students (grades 9-12) and flows from our Children's Ministry. These students gather Wednesday nights on the Eastbrook campus in various locations, including the Worship Hall and utilizing Eastbrook Academy classrooms. They also participate in many off-campus activities such as the Wilderness Trip [see photos above], retreats, summer camps, family hikes, meeting at local parks for cookouts, and more.

Pastor Joran Weitzer, Middle School and Student Worship Coordinator, explains how developmentally important it is for students to have adults in their lives that see them in multiple contexts.

***According to studies, kids and students who have several adults that cross categories of their lives are more likely to stay in the church long term.***

In the adolescent years, students are figuring out who they are, and are defining themselves by their peers rather than solely by their parents. Being a part of youth group helps students experience biblical community as they begin figuring out who God made them to be.

Pastor Joran says this idea is the building block to how student ministries create opportunities for community to happen off Eastbrook's campus. Being off-site can grab students' attention more, allowing for freedom in conversations that sometimes a traditionally-structured church building may hinder.

Pastor Nic Fridenmaker, Director of Student Ministries, reminds us of this truth: "Our relationship with Christ is not defined by space," it transcends it. Our faith can grow in all the spaces we occupy—from church, to home, to work, to the great outdoors. Student ministry in our church has excelled and thrived in creating community in spaces off of Eastbrook's campus.

Being in a new environment, like at a retreat or backpacking through the wilderness, can help students engage in conversations they might not feel as comfortable having in their typical weekly spaces. Being in a more relaxed setting, like out in nature, can help students feel more comfortable sharing.

Leaders as well as students can often be more present in a new atmosphere, where the logistics and normal ministry schedule gets paused. A lot of community building, strengthening of relationships, and deep conversations about faith happen in these off-site places.

***As important as these additional spaces are for the thriving of Student Ministries, a designated space communicates an essential message for adolescents: You Belong.***

Adolescents are adept at knowing where they belong. They have the uncanny ability to read a space and a room quickly, figuring out if they belong or not, and responding accordingly. For many, the Worship Hall feels too large for the Wednesday night groups. The space is not nearly as full as we might experience it on a Sunday morning and this emptiness can feel intimidating—especially for those who aren't familiar with Eastbrook.

Many of the adolescents who attend Wednesday night youth group do attend Eastbrook with their families on Sundays as well. There are other students who might get invited by their peers, and being unfamiliar with the space, a wide open church sanctuary might not be the most welcoming or warm space for them. Having their own space would allow Student Ministries to serve beyond the families of Eastbrook to a wider net of teens (via those personal one-on-one invitations from other students).

Many of the middle and high school small groups split up and use some of the Academy classrooms. Eastbrook has always been great at having multipurpose spaces and using the space we have. However, it can be hard to cultivate intimate faith and life conversations and a welcoming atmosphere in a classroom with fluorescent lighting at 8 pm.

Additionally, school desks and chairs do not make the most comfortable seating. Having a designated space for the youth would allow for cozy seating, like couches, and softer lighting that feel more welcoming. "A space people can settle in for a good conversation", as Sarah Targgart says. Sarah volunteers as a leader with the middle school ministry and is passionate about creating more spaces for Eastbrook's youth, of all ages, to occupy.

There are other logistical considerations

to the current space as it is utilized by student ministries. There are kids across grade levels who use walkers or wheelchairs. Sometimes on a Wednesday night, as they navigate from the large group worship portion of the evening, they may have to go outside to get to their small group locations. In the winter, with the ice and snow, it becomes especially perilous to those who regularly use a walker or wheelchair. Consider also the students who experience injuries throughout the school year and may be on crutches during recovery. Having a one stop spot for Student Ministries to call their own would create a more welcoming and accessible space for all kids to participate.

Having their own space would also allow the staff and volunteers to more easily seize the moment when deep conversations occur. Instead of having to pause the conversation to find a less chaotic space to talk and walk from the Worship Hall to a classroom, a designated space that is designed for conversation and the specific needs of student ministries in mind would be a game-changer according to several volunteers and staff.

When students feel welcomed and comfortable, this provides the opportunity for deeper engagement. Not only with other students and the leaders who volunteer with Student Ministries, but also can lead to deeper engagement with other adults in the church by feeling more a part of the body at Eastbrook.

***We all probably know of young adults who don't return to church for a long while after they graduate. How can we bridge this gap? An essential way is adults pouring into our students. Relationships are key.***

If Student Ministries had its own designated space, more time would be freed up for this, the most valuable aspect of any ministry. Since Student Ministry does not have a space of their own, the set-up and clean-up after each Wednesday night youth group takes up precious time—time that could be spent in relationship. Pastors Nic and Joran and their volunteers often miss out on extended time connecting with students and families. Middle school ministry volunteer Zac Lee says, "We make it work because we care. Student Ministries is not space dependent. It is people dependent".

People and relationships are the most important aspect of any ministry. And we are invited to acknowledge how physical space plays an important part in creating a welcoming space.

***The spaces we occupy can aid the flourishing of our ministries, opening us up to be more of the people-first mindset.***

A great example of the result of this kind of discipleship that happens for students is Juliann Roedl (née Lau). Juliann grew up attending Eastbrook and the time she spent in Student Ministries was impactful.

Youth group on Wednesdays provided her with a social circle, a space to grow, and most notably, adult leaders who helped Juliann grow as a person. The lasting impact Student Ministries had on her faith and who she is made it feel natural for her to give back in this way. Juliann, along with her husband Nate, co-lead a small group for high schoolers on Wednesday nights. She also is actively involved in the annual Wilderness Trips, both behind the scenes and as a leader on the trips. Her involvement now can be traced back to her time as a student. The relationships we pour into matter deeply.

Not only does Juliann's story reflect the full-circle experience in her own life, but it is also reflected in the next generation: her children. Her kids participate in Eastbrook's NextGen Ministry, and some of the high school students she works with on Wednesday nights have been leaders at the church's summer camps, which her kids attend. As Juliann pours into Eastbrook's high schoolers, in turn they are pouring into the younger kids at Eastbrook. What a beautiful full circle of ministry!

Building relationships and discipling Eastbrook's adolescents is so important to helping them feel that they belong. Another way for students to feel they belong in the body of Eastbrook could be having their own space. Feeling secure, in a space that says you belong, and in relationships with adults who care about them holistically, leads to deeper engagements. If our students feel more deeply like they belong at Eastbrook, perhaps this will aid in them feeling like they belong at Eastbrook as they transition into adulthood.

Creating a space for students is good for them and it's good for Eastbrook. Kids and adolescents are our future and they are also our present.

***As Eastbrook, we want to be Here for Good and that includes all the generations represented at Eastbrook, including our teens and preteens.***

A new space or a building means nothing if we don't have adults investing in students. On behalf of Student Ministries, if you have any interest in serving with Eastbrook's middle and high schoolers please do so! If God is putting Student Ministries on your heart and you want to volunteer, go for it!

There are many ways to get involved and serve in ways that meet your capacity, availability, and interests: to cook or provide food, to lead a small group at the middle of high school level, to be on the worship team, and more. Reach out to either Pastor Nic or Pastor Joran to learn how you can be involved in the discipleship and community building. Come join them and figure out how you can invest in these Eastbrookers.

Pastor Gabriel Douglas wants to remind us that Student Ministry is not just fun and games (although it is fun and they do play lots of games!) Student Ministry is discipleship. Our students are also Eastbrookers. They are on the discipleship journey, too. Let's find ways we as a church can support them in their creative endeavors to explore community and spiritual growth in spaces outside of Eastbrook's campus. Let us also consider how a designated physical space for them would serve our church as a whole. We are a body after all, and we need our students and Student Ministry in order to be a flourishing church committed to proclaiming and embodying the love of Jesus.

# GET TO KNOW AN EASTBROOKER: Josiah

**At Eastbrook, our mission is to proclaim and embody the love of Jesus Christ in the city and in the world. The man you're about to meet is doing both at the same time, in a fun and unique way.**

**Josiah is Eastbrook's newest Ministry Resident. Like all residents, he is spending the ministry year here in Milwaukee, working on our campus and within our city ministries to develop his calling, character, and competency through contribution to the Church. Unlike most of his contemporaries, Josiah already has experience out in the field–he grew up abroad, the child of Eastbrook-supported field workers with decades of service under their belts. He came back stateside to discern where God is leading him next, even if that destination is "back home."**

**Let's meet Josiah and get to know how we can pray for him on his walk with God.**

### Some people may already know you–but for those who don't please introduce yourself!

My name is Josiah from the [Last name*] clan! Eastbrookers may know my family, we've been part of the church for more than two decades. We have been missionaries overseas, so the majority of those two decades we haven't been here!

I'm here now because I'm the new Missions Resident this year. I just started in late summer, so still finding my place, my strengths and weaknesses. I'm hoping to gain as much wisdom as I can, to grow as much as possible, and to get connected with more people during this year to see what the Lord has planned for me, my wife Liz, and our daughter Maggie.

### What drew you to the residency program?

I moved to the States to get married. It was a clear open door from the Lord for my wife and me, but also a leap of faith. After that, I got a job and a place to stay on the very same day—again, very clear open doors! I was working in construction elsewhere in the Midwest for about five years and praying to see another open door. We had also been trying to find a church home where we lived but never really found any community.

One of the Eastbrook teams had been visiting my family back home, so they started speaking into our lives, just putting an idea out there: "Have you thought about going to Wisconsin, to Eastbrook?" Eventually, that led me to reach out to [Missions Pastor] Dan Ryan and I learned about the residency program, and applied…the door was creeping open! Liz and I both felt like God was putting it in front of us to move here, so we did—and then I found out I would officially become a resident, and the door was wide open!

Liz and I both feel the direction of the Lord's calling to us, ultimately, is to end up back overseas somewhere. That's where we feel led as of now.

### What does it mean to you that you're here (in Wisconsin, at Eastbrook, in this role) right now?

As a missionary kid, you can grow up in a country that technically isn't your own and still feel like you belong there. When I grew up I knew why we were there, there was always a sense of purpose. So being here, I do feel a bit like a visitor—but I have tried to always be following wherever the Lord calls me, to be present wherever I am. I'm here because this is where God wants me, and wherever He calls me next, that's where I'll go. It's a leap of faith!

### What do you hope to get out of your time as a resident, and here at Eastbrook?

I pray that I'll be able to soak up as much wisdom and make as many connections as possible while I'm here—at least for the next year. Then, who knows? We might be here for another year, or we might be moving overseas, we don't know. I have very little expectation, just keeping my eyes and ears open for the Lord's calling.

I always want to be able to go through any door that He opens for me, I don't ever want to ignore or miss anything like that. So the more practical questions that I would have are, what sorts of skills am I going to be able to bring back home? Will teaching English at the ICC be one? My wife is working as a nurse, so skill-wise she will continue learning about medicine and healing, which is invaluable overseas. It will be whatever God wills. He knows what He's equipping me for!

### It's still early in your residency, but how do you anticipate joining in the life of the church while you're here?

So far, I've been serving at the International Community Center a few times each week. I'm really enjoying it there, where there is so much potential for connections. I've also been serving in the Food Pantry, and helping a bit with the Middle and High School students in their weekly gatherings. I'm hoping to also get involved with our outreach and ministry to folks within the prison system.

### In what ways do you find God pouring into you right now as you're starting this?

Everyone here is so friendly! I feel like at Eastbrook, people have more of a willingness to get to know you beyond a surface level, who care deeply about you as an individual and want to feed into you and disciple you in your life and walk with God. I feel like the Lord is using Eastbrook and its ministries and the people He's appointed here in unique ways through deep relationship, and I'm benefitting from that.

### How can we be praying for you this year?

Please pray for continued guidance and discernment, that I could keep looking for those open doors. Pray for wisdom in how my wife and I approach things as a family.

**While Eastbrook continues its work here in Milwaukee, God has now brought us into the next generation of missionaries and leaders in places where we have had deeply rooted relationships. Similar to Josiah, all these "new" field workers flow out of decades-long relationships at Eastbrook. To read more about this, as well as details of the new relationships and opportunities God is bringing us into, visit eastbrook.org/hereforgood. To learn more about the residency program or to apply, visit eastbrook.org/residency.** ■

*Josiah's last name has been redacted from this profile to protect the privacy of his family, who are currently serving overseas.