

*We are nothing without our neighbors! We love and respect our community members and want to remain as transparent as possible about the planned Berthoud Life Center in downtown Berthoud.*

*We often talk about what makes a downtown thrive. While it certainly includes the beloved downtown businesses, it's more than retail or restaurants – it's about being a true community hub, a place where people gather, connect and find what they need to live well.*

*Berthoud has the chance to lead with compassion and vision. By bringing services and people into the heart of town, the Life Center helps us create a downtown that is both economically vibrant and deeply human. This is an investment not just in those in need, but every one of us who calls Berthoud home.*

### **1). Why the Life Center model vs. just offering HNS basic need service?**

The Life Center model isn't just an idea—it's a proven, effective approach. At HNS, we hold two missions: our own mission of providing food, clothing, and basic resources that stabilize families in crisis, and the broader Life Center mission of creating a hub where many nonprofits come together under one roof. This "one-stop" model means a family may arrive for groceries or clothing but also gain immediate access to counseling, youth programs, transportation, mental health services, and more. It's a holistic approach that helps people not only through crisis but forward into stability and possibility.

Funders recognize the power of this model. Today's grantors are drawn to collaboration, shared resources, and true community solutions. They want to invest where towns and nonprofits are working together, and the Life Center offers exactly that. It multiplies impact and outcomes because multiple organizations are partnering in one place. It's also cost-effective and efficient: nonprofits share resources, exchange ideas in close proximity, and solve problems together. This is why we're focusing on the Life Center—it's the model that not only stabilizes families today but also builds a legacy of solutions for tomorrow.

### **2). Why will HNS only pay \$.50/sq. ft. in rent while other non-profits will lease from HNS at \$14/sq.ft.?**

HNS is receiving the space at a very low rate because we are taking on the largest financial lift. We are responsible for raising and investing about \$3.5 million to renovate not only our own space but also all of the partner spaces. Beyond that, we will cover the ongoing costs of operating the entire Life Center—hiring staff, security, installing cameras, paying utilities, phones, internet, cleaning, and maintenance. We will also contribute 50% of the parking lot costs. Altogether, this adds up to over \$100,000 a year in expenses that HNS alone will carry.

Because of this heavy investment and oversight, it makes sense for HNS to have a lower base rent. Our partners, on the other hand, pay a reasonable rate that helps offset a portion of these costs but still remains far below market value for office space. This structure keeps the Life Center sustainable while ensuring that all partners can afford to be part of it.

### **3.) Will this plan attract those who are homeless to our community?**

Ninety-nine percent of what we do in Berthoud is focused on serving housed families and individuals—neighbors who are struggling to make ends meet, working hard but needing help with food, clothing, or other resources. Our mission is anchored in preventing homelessness by stabilizing people before they lose their housing.

At the same time, we will always serve our most vulnerable neighbors. If someone in Berthoud is unhoused—whether that means couch surfing, living temporarily in a car, or staying in someone’s basement—they are treated with dignity and can come once or twice a month for food and clothing. This limited support helps relieve the burden on host families and gives the individual some stability while they work toward solutions.

We are not bringing homeless programs from Loveland into Berthoud, nor are we operating a shelter or day center here. Those in need of shelter or more intensive services are redirected to Fort Collins and Loveland, where those resources exist. The Life Center is about serving the wider community, providing immediate help with compassion, and connecting people to the right next step—so Berthoud families can thrive and remain strong.

#### **4). How can we be assured that this will not turn into a homeless shelter in the future?**

The bottom line is that we want to build confidence and earn the community’s trust. While it is not our intent to ever operate a shelter or day center in Berthoud, the clearest way to ensure that trust is through a legal contract. By putting this commitment in writing, we can give trustees and the community the assurance that the Life Center will remain true to its original purpose for the long term.

#### **5). Will HNS eventually purchase their portion of the building?**

Yes, HNS is likely to purchase the building. There are two main reasons. First, it is far less complicated for the Town if HNS takes ownership and responsibility for the property, ensuring smooth operations long-term. Second, from our side, ownership is the optimal way to secure the funding we need. We must raise roughly \$3.5 million to finish the space, and donors and foundations have made it clear that they will not invest in a lease controlled by the Town. They want the assurance that their dollars are going into a project HNS owns and stewards directly.

In fact, some funders have flat-out said they will not contribute if the space remains Town-owned. Just as we are working to build trust with the community, funders also need to trust that their investment is secure and sustainable. Purchasing the building is the optimal way to unlock the funding needed to bring the Life Center to completion and ensure its mission can thrive long into the future.

#### **6). Will the Town lose money if HNS purchases the space, since it will be worth \$2.5 million after improvements but HNS is only paying \$215,000?**

That assumption is incorrect, because it overlooks who is paying for the improvements.

If the Town wanted to realize a \$2.5 million “value” on that 19,000 sq. ft. space, the Town itself would have to invest an additional \$3–3.5 million of taxpayer funds to renovate and finish it. At

best, they would break even — putting millions in and potentially selling it for about the same amount.

Instead, HNS is stepping in to raise and invest those \$3–3.5 million renovation dollars through private fundraising and grants — not taxpayer money. On top of that, HNS will pay the Town \$215,000 for the purchase. The Town not only avoids millions in expenses but also receives direct payment, while keeping the revenue-generating restaurant and community spaces at the front of the building.

So the reality is this: with HNS purchasing, the Town saves taxpayer dollars, receives \$215,000, and gains a long-term partner that will serve Berthoud families in need. There is no “loss” — it’s actually a financial win and a community win.

#### **7). Will this have a negative economic impact as nonprofits do not pay taxes?**

While non-profits do not generate property tax revenue, they create measurable economic and social returns. Here is a link to an overview of how the Berthoud Life Center will bring vitality to downtown, including projections on increased foot traffic and community events. [See: \*Bringing Vitality to Downtown Berthoud\*](#)

#### **8). Will the Town have oversight after the sale?**

No, the Town will not have direct oversight after the sale. That separation is intentional and appropriate. As a 501(c)(3), HNS operates under its own mission, bylaws, and board of directors, which ensures accountability and allows us to fulfill our charitable purpose. It would not be workable for the Town to oversee individual nonprofits, just as nonprofits could not function well under Town direction.

That said, HNS cares deeply about the Berthoud community and the Town trustees, and we will always work in partnership to make sure we are serving in the way this community wants and needs. Our focus is not on our own self-directed goals, but on listening to and responding to what neighbors are asking for and needing most. When HNS and the Town work in tandem, that partnership creates synergy and solutions far greater than what either of us could accomplish alone.

#### **9). Will Berthoud tax dollars be used for HNS/Life Center renovations?**

That is a common misconception. The Town of Berthoud has committed to cover up to 60% of the design costs for our construction documents only, because HNS had already invested significant money and resources into those plans from our original building project. The Town graciously agreed to help us to bring those design documents to the prior status.

However, the interior renovations for our 19,000 sq. ft. portion—estimated at \$3–3.5 million—are entirely the responsibility of HNS. We are carrying that load through private fundraising, grants, and community support. We’ve already hired a fundraising consultant team, begun raising funds, and secured several grants. State, county, and other towns are enthusiastic about this project because it is innovative, resourceful, and provides a model for smaller communities to bring critical services together under one roof.

Taxpayers are not funding these renovations—HNS is. The community's investment is in trust, while our investment is in raising the dollars and doing the hard work to make the Life Center a reality.

Because the Town, rightfully, wanted to have creative control over the design of the building exterior, and to simplify the bidding/contracting portion of the renovation of the outer shell, they retained the responsibility and cost of this piece.

**10). Does the Town have approval of which nonprofits move into the Life Center, and can for-profit agencies lease space?**

The Life Center is designed to be a collaborative hub, and we value open conversations with the Town and the community about which partners best serve Berthoud. We welcome dialogue and even community input to help shape the right mix of services. At the same time, as the nonprofit stewarding this project, HNS must retain final authority over tenant selection because we carry the insurance, liability, and responsibility for day-to-day operations. That's the standard structure for nonprofit-led centers—town governments don't oversee which agencies lease space.

In addition, only nonprofits can lease space here. The reason is that our facility will be supported by grants from foundations and possibly state and federal sources. These grants require that we serve vulnerable populations and community needs. If for-profits were to lease space, it could jeopardize that funding and create tax liabilities, which would undermine our ability to provide the affordable lease rates we offer to nonprofits and the accessible rental rates for community spaces like our 100-person meeting room or our boardroom.

In short: HNS will lead with collaboration and honor, listening to community needs, while also ensuring the Life Center remains true to its mission, its funding requirements, and its role as a trusted resource for Berthoud.

**11). How will this impact the safety and economic vitality of downtown Berthoud?**

First, on safety: We understand that homelessness in a community naturally raises concerns. If the goal is to prevent homelessness from growing in Berthoud, the only effective path is through prevention and stability—and that's exactly what HNS provides. For over 60 years, we've served vulnerable neighbors with systems in place to keep services safe and effective. At the Life Center, we will have security cameras, trained staff, and established partnerships that allow us to redirect individuals to appropriate resources, such as shelters in Loveland or Fort Collins, if that level of care is needed. We are already working in tandem with Sheriff Sergeant Williamson, both at our current Grace Place location and as we prepare for the new Life Center, ensuring we remain closely aligned with local law enforcement. Our staff and volunteers lead with compassion while being fully equipped to manage situations appropriately. This is how you create the kind of community you want to see—safe, caring, and proactive.

Second, on economic vitality: The Life Center will bring a new flow of people into downtown who would not normally come. Beyond clients, there will be multiple nonprofit staff, volunteers, and donors regularly using the building. Each agency has its own team of

volunteers, and HNS alone welcomes hundreds of donors and service clubs each year bringing food and clothing donations. Instead of stopping at Grace Place, they will now be coming into the heart of Berthoud. This creates a convergence of people downtown—shopping, eating, and enjoying local businesses—adding vitality, visibility, and activity that benefits the entire community.

**12). Will there be a senior center or youth center in the Life Center?**

HNS offered leased space, and assistance in finding funding, to the Berthoud Golden Links. Much has changed over the past year and, this group stated they would prefer to stay in their current arrangement with Cornerstone Café and New Freedom Outreach, with the option to use the Town’s Community Room for larger events. To our knowledge, the Town—through Chris Kirk—has already committed to the senior community that they will have access to the community space located at the front of the building, near the restaurants. That said, we value seniors deeply, including Golden Links and all of Berthoud’s older residents, and we would always welcome conversations with them about using rental space as needed for programs or gatherings.

We do plan to create a youth space within the Life Center. Our role will be to find nonprofit partners to utilize that space with their programs. For example, HNS already runs an after-school tutoring program that would be a natural fit. Counseling agencies may use it as well, and Youth Resources has expressed interest in offering possibilities there. We may also invite UCHHealth—already a partner in our Loveland Life Center—to provide youth-focused health or educational programs in Berthoud. These partnerships will be further determined once the contract is finalized, but the vision is clear: a vibrant youth space that strengthens opportunities for Berthoud’s next generation.

**13). Will leased space be limited to religious nonprofits?**

At its heart, the Life Center is about unity and collaboration—neighbors helping neighbors. No one will be excluded based on faith; all are welcomed with dignity, respect, and compassion.

Religious nonprofits may be among the partners at the Life Center, alongside many other types of nonprofits, because our focus is always on meeting the needs of the Berthoud community. The Life Center is not a church—it is a nonprofit hub bringing together organizations that strengthen families and provide critical services.

House of Neighborly Service is a Christian nonprofit. While our board affirms that faith commitment, our staff, volunteers, and clients are not asked their personal beliefs. We follow all legal hiring practices, do not discriminate, and welcome people of every background, religion, and walk of life. Both those who serve and those we serve represent a wide diversity of beliefs.