

Meet Connie Cooper, Executive Director at Hope For All

Jim Ries: Hello, and welcome to Java with Jim. I'm Jim Ries, director of business development at Offit Kurman. Joined here today with Connie Cooper, executive director at Hope For All. Connie, how are you today?

Connie Cooper: I'm doing great. How about you, Jim?

Jim Ries: Excellent. So Connie, tell us about Hope For All.

What do you do there, and how do you serve the community around you?

Connie Cooper: Okay. Well, Hope For All's a Christian ministry that assists families that don't have the financial means to provide for their basic needs of furniture, housewares, linens, and clothing. We try to offer them stability in their home and hope for the future. So we do this by accepting donations from the community, and we meet with the family, find out exactly what they need, and then pack it up from our warehouse and deliver it to them.

We help families that are coming out of homelessness or just struggling to provide for their basic needs. And we also have two other programs that help folks with clothing, [00:01:00] and one works with our Anne Arundel County School System, and the other one is working with folks that are still in crisis, those that are homeless, those that are coming out of incarceration.

And so we have a number of partners. We have over 70 partners that refer families and individuals to us that are in need, and that's how we take care of our community and love on them.

Jim Ries: Yeah. Thank you. And Connie, tell us a little about where your facility is located, and I think in our prior conversation you mentioned something like a yard sale that maybe you had on a regular basis.

Can you tell us a little more about that?

Connie Cooper: Sure. We are located in Glen Burnie, Maryland which is in Anne Arundel County, and we serve all, but we serve all of Anne Arundel County. So we'll go down all the way to Lothian, and we'll go up to Brooklyn. We also serve the lower part of Baltimore City that borders Anne Arundel County.

And in order to fund our ministry, one of the things that we do is to hold a yard sale. So we ask folks to donate everything that you would normally donate to a nonprofit like Goodwill, and we pull [00:02:00] off the essentials for the family. So we're pulling off the furniture. We're pulling off the pots and pans, the dishes everything that you would think of that you would need to start a home.

And then the other items, they're non-essential, the knick-knacks, the purses, the jewelry, we sell these in a yard sale.

Jim Ries: Excellent, great. So Connie, when it comes to Hope For All, what are you most proud of?

Connie Cooper: The amount of lives that we get to change. Last year, we touched close to 2,700 lives, and this year it's gonna, I think, reach 3,000.

But these are folks that didn't have a bed to sleep on. They didn't have a table to eat at. And so we have hopefully give the, given them a foundation to build on, to be able to nourish their kids, to be able to- Get up and go to work and get up and maybe go to school and feel good about themselves and feel good about where they're heading.

And hopefully that's towards self-sufficiency.

Jim Ries: Yeah, that's a lot of people you're helping. What will you and Hope For All be focused on in the next six months?

Connie Cooper: So we are [00:03:00] actually currently in the middle of a construction. We had 14,000 square feet, and we have added two additional pieces, one 2,600, another 2,800.

So we are expanding the amount of space that's dedicated to serving our clients. And so we're excited about that. We're excited about what that's gonna mean for our efficiency and the amount of families that we can just touch their life. So that is what I'm most focused on.

Jim Ries: Yeah, I can't wait to see how many families you help by the end of 2027-

Connie Cooper: Yeah

Jim Ries: with the new space.

Connie Cooper: Mm-hmm.

Jim Ries: Connie, here's the fun question, what do most people watching this video not know about you?

Connie Cooper: About me?

Jim Ries: Yeah.

Connie Cooper: If they knew my former life. My former life was I owned my own interior decorating business. I had a business partner. And so for 12 years we served clients that way.

So now I get to create homes but just in a different way. And so, over 15 years ago, I walked into Hope For All and said, "What can I do to help?" And this is where I landed.

Jim Ries: And here you are now. That's a [00:04:00] great story, and they're lucky to have you with that special skill, that special decorating skill.

Connie Cooper: Yeah, I feel like I've always wanted to nurture and always have done that through environment, and that is what Hope does. It nurtures the environment.

Jim Ries: Yeah. You found your calling. Well, Connie, thank you for meeting with us today. We really appreciate it. And thank you for sharing your story with the audience here.

And I know I'll be seeing you soon.

Connie Cooper: Okay, great. Take care.

Jim Ries: All right, take care. All right, bye.