



We have seen God's provision on this journey this past year and throughout the seasons of Hand in Hand!

THIS IS OUR  
*Timeline of Grace!*



## *December 2021...*

Two visionary families approached the leadership team of Hand In Hand (HIH) after the Elementary Christmas Program. They expressed a desire to see HIH grow and put down deep roots in the Westside. They wanted a home-school academy for their children! It was the start of something amazing and a new idea, one I hadn't thought about before... a permanent, full-fledged Christian Montessori on the West side of town, only one year after opening. (It had taken me 20 years to reach this conclusion previously with our first campus)!

## *Moving forward on this prompting with those committed parents....*

During the spring of 2022, we casually discussed some properties and the possibilities of moving our school to a larger, more accommodating space. During that spring and throughout the summer, we toured four properties, determining what could be a possibility for our school.

The urgency of a new location heightened as our lease rates in our current space escalated along with our capacity. We knew we needed to find a new space in 2023 as we reached our max-capacity.

A few days before the HIH Annual Gala in April and what seemed to be out of nowhere, we were told about the Blake Highcroft Property on Peavy Road from our broker (also current Hand In Hand parent). We were intrigued by its perfect location, beautiful architecture, and historical connection to Mrs. Lee, who taught Kindergarten for two-years in this location, as her first teaching position after college graduation. We took our first walk-through, shook hands with seller, and determined in our hearts to give our best effort towards purchasing it, Lord willing.

We were in awe when a lead donor/family stepped up and donated the seed money to start the pursuit of a permanent campus.

The next step was to find a lender.

This was not easy nor expedient. This process is lengthy and although we approached several banks - many were hesitant. But one said yes and it only takes one.

The summer was spent in negotiations and finally, in July, three months after our first viewing of Highcroft, we were able to confidently sign a Letter of Intent, which need to have a bank term sheet accompany it.

The vetting continued as a pro-forma and projections, fundraising pledges and promises became the daily activities for the leadership team of Hand In Hand. This was also a time when the seller asked for confidentiality and no public discussion of the sale until the purchase agreement was signed.

It was such an accomplishment when we finally signed a PA on August 15th to buy the Highcroft building, requiring a 25% down payment and financing the remainder. This started our 60-day window to raise \$750K cash and \$750K in pledges. We had multiple mailings and two exposure events - the Guided Tour, the Pancake Breakfast and Grandparent's Day.

Through these efforts an amazing amount of \$255K came in cash - \$100K in pledges in a short time! How grateful we were (and still are) for those families who had faith to give generously and cheerfully - demonstrating their commitment to their children and Christian Montessori!

Praise God for faithful donors, parents, prayers and encouragement during the 60-day window!

Realizing our best efforts fell short of the lender's goal, we had the hard conversation with the seller that we would need to let the PA dissolve on October 15th. We didn't feel it was good stewardship to lose the earnest money. This was a hard day to let go of the hopes we had for Highcroft.

However, to our surprise and relief, the seller graciously decided to give us more time and a creative solution. During the months of October and November we worked with the seller to re-establish a new structure to the deal. We were able to renegotiate and come up with an approved seller-financed bridge loan. On November 17th (same day as our HIH Fall Board Meeting), we received word that the Executive Board of Blake had approved of this short-term loan.

After this good news, we prepared for closing on December 15th. Everything seemed to be a go.

Just a week ago, after several weeks of confirming the proforma and projections, the lender delivered the disappointing news that they no longer could support the terms of the new deal. Due to the increase in interest rates, the debt to value ratio, and the lack of pledges and cash, we would now be required to bring an additional \$650K to the closing along with money we already had in hand.

This was a setback and a surprise for both Hand In Hand and Blake.

Again, we asked the seller for an additional window of time to explore our options. After a hard conversation with legal, brokers, and school leadership, we were granted an extension until the end of the year to regroup and send the request out to our community, and ask God for a miracle.

*We have seen God's hand move six times in this journey:*

1. touring Highcroft Campus perfectly-suited for HIH's move/growth
2. securing a lead donor/visionary parent who believed in the project
3. building a relationship with a willing lender
4. finding favor with the seller on several occasions
5. receiving the generosity of many families from all three campuses
6. connecting with a Wayzata Influencer who believes in the mission

**So, this December of 2022, we are believing and praying for a seventh time of grace! This is where we stand today...we desire to raise an additional \$350,000 for the Blake Highcroft Property, by year-end. If our donor base doubles - we will be able to meet this next, important, incremental goal.**

We are asking every family at **WEST** to **PRAY** and to **THANK GOD** for all the money that has been raised!

Pray for the continued relationships in Wayzata. On December 7<sup>th</sup> there was an important meeting in Wayzata with our Director of Advancement and an influential and well-connected person in Wayzata. This gentleman is willing to connect us with resources as he has a heart for what we are doing at Hand In Hand - bringing the Kingdom through Christian Montessori.

Pray for the several foundations we have identified as educational-focused and favorable to our mission. Some have given to us in the past - pray they would be able to do so again!

Pray that the HIH Board and Leaders have a discerning heart to know what the next best step is as we move forward.

Pray that those who want to give year-end gifts - their best gifts - would do so - that more first-time givers would emerge Pray that the percentage of givers would double.

In closing, we unwaveringly believe that Christian Montessori is an ideal education method and there is good work prepared for us to do in the future in the West side of town.

With hope and joy,  
*Michelle Lee Thompson*  
Founder and Head of School