

For Immediate Release:

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Charleston, Illinois: As a community bank, Peoples Bank & Trust recognizes the value of volunteerism in our communities. To recognize, commend and promote volunteerism, Peoples Bank & Trust has established a program to recognize outstanding community volunteers who personally exhibit outstanding volunteerism and promote the improvement of our communities.

Peoples Bank & Trust has chosen HOPE of East Central Illinois as it's Volunteer of the Quarter. HOPE's mission is to empower persons to live independent, non-violent lives through the provisions of Housing, Outreach, Prevention and Education.

In the 1970's a Charleston resident made a decision to leave her abusive partner. She recognized the pervasiveness of domestic violence in families around her and she envisioned a safe home that could provide safety and shelter to women in danger. Her name was Koralie Murad. Koralie worked hard for a facility to protect abused women in Coles County. In 1979, the Coles County Task Force Against Domestic Violence was formed. They later changed its name to Coalition Against Domestic Violence, or CADV, and became a non-profit organization.

The CADV program was initially comprised of a two-bedroom apartment. Unfortunately, demand from more victims quickly dictated the CADV grow their program. The shelter was subsequently moved to a four-bedroom house and in 1985 they acquired a permanent location. In 2001 the trend of homelessness among battered women was observed. Homeless services in Coles County were overwhelmed with victims and their children. In April 2001, CADV was expanded to provide transitional and prevention services and took on the name HOPE – Housing, Outreach, Prevention and Education.

Today HOPE maintains two housing programs: the domestic violence emergency shelter and 10 transitional housing through local apartments. The emergency shelter can house up to 24 women and children. HOPE generally sees between 500 and 700 clients per year, including children. During the COVID-19 pandemic, anyone needing services should call the crisis hotline at 888-345-3990. The hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year to provide support, intervention, information and referrals

HOPE has 21 paid staff members and appreciates and depends on its more than 100 volunteers who help out in many ways. Some volunteer opportunities include: holding a food, toiletry or used cell phone drive, donating goods, fundraising and assistance in organizing storage units, cleaning or yard work, painting and decorating rooms. There are also opportunities to serve on their 12 member Board and/or one of their three Advisory Committees.

Peoples Bank and Trust is honoring HOPE of East Central Illinois with a donation and have placed its name on a plaque which is displayed in the bank's lobby. Peoples Bank and Trust has honored area volunteers in Charleston for the past ten years and HOPE is the 41st volunteer group recognized by the Charleston Branch of Peoples Bank and Trust.

Peoples Bank & Trust is an independent Community Bank with ten offices located in Pana, Taylorville, Altamont, Charleston, Tower Hill, Springfield, Morrisonville, Palmyra, Waverly and White Hall. Peoples Bank & Trust is a full-service bank offering outstanding customer service to consumers, small businesses and farmers in Central Illinois. People First Bancshares, Inc., with corporate offices in Pana, Illinois, is the holding company for Peoples Bank & Trust.