

# Bridging the Gaps



DREXEL UNIVERSITY  
College of  
Medicine

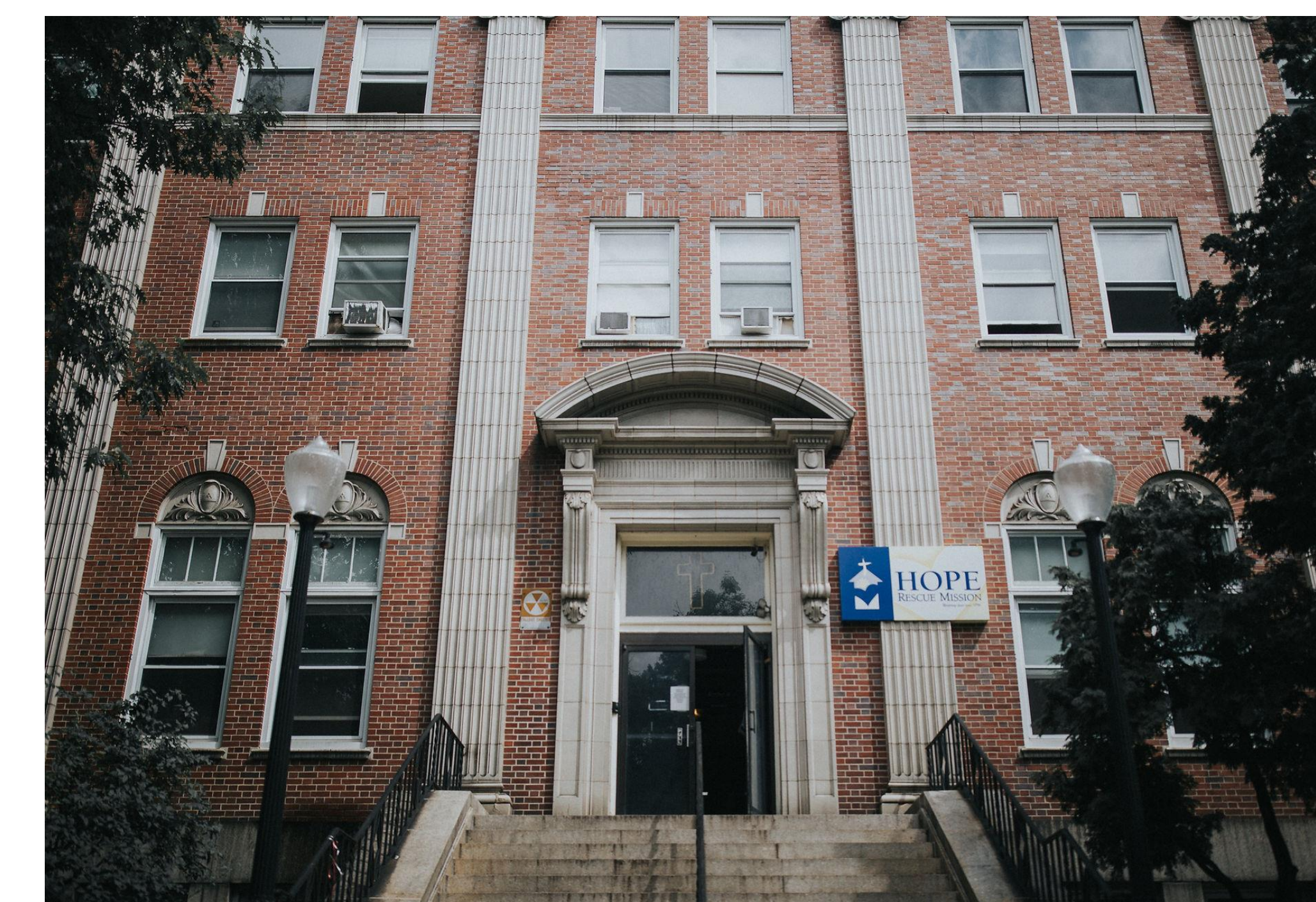
# Understanding Homelessness in Reading: A Personal Perspective

Student Intern: *Amanda Ross, Drexel University College of Medicine at Tower Health*  
Academic Preceptor: *Holly Metzgar, DO, FACOG, NCMP, Drexel University College of Medicine at Tower Health*  
Community Preceptors: *April McNally and Rob Turchi, Hope Rescue Mission*

## COMMUNITY PARTNER

Hope Rescue Mission has been a place of refuge for men experiencing homelessness in Reading, PA since 1894. The shelter provides food, shelter, and support services for its close to 200 residents. Through a series of graduating residential programs and vocational opportunities, they strive to help these men re-build their lives. The new Women and Children's Center opening in August contains 43 residential rooms, a medical clinic space, children's playroom, and individual bathrooms, also serving a critical need in the community.

[www.hopeforreading.org](http://www.hopeforreading.org)



## BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

- In an annual point in time count in 2022, there were 385 people in emergency shelter in Reading, 145 people in transitional housing, and 43 people living homeless.
- During the FY 2021, over 1,500 people used emergency shelter or transitional housing in Reading.
- 29.3% of people live below the poverty line.

## INTERN'S EXPERIENCE

The overall goal of the Bridging the Gaps student intern was to facilitate the re-establishment of a telemedicine program at Hope Rescue Mission and to address any medical concerns that arose. The intern worked closely with the Tower Health Street Medicine team to manage residents' medical care and follow up on any issues. Additionally, the BTG intern participated in several smaller projects throughout the course of the internship, such as assisting in wound care, monitoring blood pressures, organizing resident prescription medications, and assisting in case management work. Every other Tuesday, the intern partnered with a physician at a free clinic hosted at HRM.



## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CHALLENGES

### Accomplishments

- Re-established telemedicine program in partnership with Tower Health Street Medicine.
- Held smoking cessation workshops for 15 residents.

### Challenges

- Access to healthcare & health literacy
- Medication compliance

## REFLECTION

Every day, women call Hope Rescue Mission seeking shelter for their children and every day more men seek shelter here. Homelessness is increasing in Reading, and the shelter is experiencing one of their busiest summers. Hope Rescue Mission is filling a critical need in the community for shelter and support. From my experience at Hope Rescue, homelessness can have a variety of causes, including mental health issues, incarceration, unemployment, broken relationships, or often a combination of these issues at the same time. Working with and getting to know the residents at Hope Rescue Mission has given me a new and more personal perspective on homelessness in my community here in Reading.