



## **PROFILES OF HOPE: Meet Bill, an IOH advocate since the beginning!**

I was introduced to IOH shortly after I was laid off from Grumman Aircraft, back in the early 90's. A friend was on the IOH board and asked me to go with him to a meeting. Since I was networking to find another job, I went along. Isn't it funny how God leads you to certain things in your life? I knew I was hooked when a sweet little girl ran up and hugged my leg on the IOH playground. That touched me deeply, and I've been committed to IOH since.

I've served in many capacities, as the development director, a board member and the board chair. My wife, Barbara Schwendler, and I remain active donors to IOH and volunteer at several community service organizations.

The concept of IOH resonated strongly with me: a program to help people save money and acquire the skills to be financially independent. Maybe I'm old-fashioned, but I'm a firm believer in saving. Most people don't understand the power of saving, and how money in the bank and a sense of security can change everything.

One evening while I was speaking at life skills, a resident stood up and said, "I saved \$10,000 because of you." I knew it wasn't because of me, but because of his hard work and the IOH program. But I also knew that he now understood the power of saving.

There have been highs and the lows over the years. That first summer of 1992, it was nip and tuck. We were down to \$10k in the bank, with ten families relying on us, and I was sweating. But I also remember when the first homeowner returned to IOH right after her closing. She was literally beaming with joy, and all the residents had gathered to hear her story and congratulate her. That was powerful.

In many ways, I had it easy growing up. My parents were well-off and I attended boarding school, then Princeton University and Harvard Business School. I don't know what I've done to deserve these opportunities, or why I was so fortunate when many are not. I've witnessed folks at IOH struggle against enormous odds and succeed. How they survived, and even thrived, given the obstacles they faced is incredible. I'm not sure I could've done it in their shoes. Witnessing the courage and perseverance shown by the IOH families these past 25 years has made me a better person.