

RESIDENT STORY

A Second Chance to Build a New Life

When you meet Samantha, you quickly become aware of the joy in her life. A joy that she is experiencing after years of cycling through addiction, detox, and loss.

Samantha and her husband, Justin, met in 2014 in recovery when Samantha's son, Hayden, was six. They married in 2016 and were excited to add their daughter, Bella, to the family. A year later, their son, Jaxtin, rounded out their family of five. A relapse when Jaxtin was six months old turned their lives into chaos.

"We lost everything really quick," said Samantha. "Hayden made the decision to move in with my brother's family. Then we lost the house and my family was in a position I never thought possible ... homeless with a one and three-year-old."

A friend told Samantha about Open House Ministries, and she felt God pulling her in that direction. It was a clear solution. Unfortunately, the grip fentanyl had on their lives proved difficult to overcome, and after a short stay at Open House Ministries, they were exited from the program.

The family lived in cars and stayed in hotels when they could. Samantha described how their addiction took hold of every move they made, creating a dark place for them mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Eventually, Bella and Jaxtin were removed from their care and placed with family. A wake-



Samantha, Bella, Justin and Jaxtin playing in the sand.

up call came when Justin's brother and wife wanted to adopt Bella and Jaxtin. "God woke me up," stated Samantha. "I knew Justin and I needed to get healthy, and we both went into detox and treatment."

Samantha recalls contacting Chaplain Jon Nichols and being put on the waitlist. "We were finally ready to do the work. We started building the foundation of our recovery and seeing our kids any chance we could."

Samantha and Justin moved back into Open House Ministries for the second time, and a month later, they were joined by Bella and Jaxtin. They went through the program, stating how Financial Peace, Grief and Loss, and Art of Faith classes helped them. Daily room checks also played a role, establishing healthy habits for their family.

"Open House Ministries is unlike any other place," said Samantha. "You can truly feel the Holy Spirit in everything that is done and taught there and through everyone you meet there. And Christmas was seriously our favorite part. It made the kids transitioning home so much easier. I'm so glad Reneé and Pastor Jon gave us another chance!"

Samantha shared how their family prays and talks to their kids about God. Today, Samantha is employed by Open House Ministries at Secondhand Solutions. We are so grateful for her and Justin, and pray God will continue to bless their family. ●



Christmas gathering at Open House Ministries

GRACIOUS GIVING

You can Help Open House Ministries with a Recurring Gift

Many of our Open House Ministries supporters take advantage of our automatic donation option—a way to simplify your giving to Open House Ministries on a monthly basis.

Recurring gifts are very helpful, allowing us to make even more strategic plans for providing homeless families with shelter, intervention, and Christ-based, life-saving programs. Your continued support through an automatic withdrawal from your checking account or credit/debit card helps provide Open House Ministries with a steady and dependable stream of income, creating a solid foundation of support for this ministry.

It's easy to set up. Just go to our website at www.sheltered.org and click on *Donations*. When filling out the form, choose a donation schedule option under *frequency* that works for you and complete the required information for ongoing donations. If you would like assistance, please contact us at 360-727-0300 and we can help set it up for you.

Please remember Open House Ministries in your planned giving or will. Thank you for your support. You are a blessing. ●

Planting Seeds East of Eden

The Bible opens in a garden, but doesn't stay there long. Only three chapters out of 1,189 are spent in Eden. The rest takes place after. East of Eden.

That's where the ground is hard and the path unclear. Where families fracture. Where choices carry weight. Where love is never cheap—and neither is change.

It's where people run. Where cities rise and fall. Where sin has teeth—and grace speaks.

It's also where motherhood begins. Eve didn't bear children in paradise. Her first cries of labor came east of Eden—in the ache, in the curse, in the dust. Family was born not in perfection, but in pain. Not in ease, but in exile.

And yet, as Augustine wrote, "God judged it better to bring good out of evil than to not permit any evil to exist." It's what later came to be called the *felix culpa*—the happy fault. That grace would not simply follow the Fall, but flood through it. Not by accident, but by sovereign design.

That's not a detour in the story. That is the story. Because it's exactly there—in the broken places—that God begins to heal.

We may long for Eden. And rightly so—because that's where the story ends: a garden restored, a city with no curse, a people at home with their God.

But for now, this is where we are.

East of Eden is where we find our families. It's where God meets us—not to leave us as we are, but to remake us in the very place we were broken.

Jesus didn't avoid this world. He entered it. All the way in. Thorns. Cross. Dust and death. And then He rose.

Before He left, He prayed: "I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one... They are not of the world... but I have sent them into it." (John 17:15-18)

At Open House Ministries, we take that prayer seriously. We walk alongside families as they learn to live with God in the real world—to choose what's true over what's easy, faithfulness over shortcuts, repentance over blame.

We don't pretend this place is the garden, but we are planting seeds. Even east of Eden, the ground still belongs to God.

And if Christ were to return tomorrow, we'd still plant today. Because a new creation doesn't start someday. It starts wherever resurrection takes root. • Chaplain Jon Nichols

East of Eden is where we find our families. It's where God meets us—not to leave us as we are, but to remake us in the very place we were broken.

LIGHT OF HOPE



Join us for a Benefit to Help
Restore Families at
Open House Ministries

Friday, May 16, 2025 Noon - 1pm
Doors will open at 11 am

Luncheon will be at the AC Hotel on the
Vancouver Waterfront

Tickets are going fast!
For Information contact
Joanie Curtis at 360-737-0300
Sheltered.org

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MOTHER'S DAY BLESSINGS

Happy Mother's Day from
Open House Ministries

*Every good and perfect gift is from above,
coming down from the Father of the
heavenly lights, who does not change like
shifting shadows. ~ James 1:17*



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SHELTER NEEDS

Diapers in sizes 4, 5 & 6
Hair conditioner
Clorox wipes • Paper towels
One-pound packages
of hamburger
Thank You!

TOURS & TALKS

Want to see Open House
Ministries up close?
Join us for a First Friday Tour!
Noon to 1 pm
To sign up, contact us at
events@sheltered.org