OPEN HOUSE MINISTRIES
We're a family shelter

Connections
November 2026

THANK YOU BLESSINGS

Hearts Filled with Gratitude

One of the most meaningful blessings at Open House Ministries is hearing from the residents in our program. Learning first-hand how spending time in our family shelter is impacting their families and their lives.

Our hope for each one in our program at any age is to feel loved and accepted. We hope their experience at Open House Ministries gives them the insight they need that a better, brighter future is possible. And to feel supported as they work through the program and practice new life skills that can change their lives. We also invite each person to experience a new life in Christ, restored, with counseling and encouragement to walk in faith.



As Thanksgiving approaches, we wanted to share some of the words of gratitude expressed by our residents with you. They are living proof that your prayers and support are reaching families in our community as they recover from homelessness and find hope.

"Because of OHM, my family now gets to be together and properly build our foundation. We thank God and all the staff at OHM."

"Because of OHM, my family now gets to be together every day, have a roof over our heads, and live happily."

"Because of OHM, my family now gets to be who we are and be loved."

"Because of OHM, my family now gets to sleep in beds with warm blankets, eat three hot meals at a dinner table, and shower with running water. Most of all, we get to be together in a safe environment."



"Because of OHM, my family now gets to breathe easier, dream bigger, and be present. We have the security of knowing we are covered, healthy, and supported. We get to spend time together without moving from one place to another."

"Because of OHM, my family now gets to have a good, whole life with new values and a better outlook on life. It has been fun."



Please know how deeply grateful we are for you. And for sharing in the work of this ministry as we reach more families struggling with homelessness in Vancouver. We hope this Thanksgiving you feel the blessings of hope and love as we celebrate together. •

CHRISTMAS IS COMING!



JOIN US FOR THE

REVIVAL HOUSE THRIFT STORE

Three Days of Christmas Sale

THURSDAY AND FRIDAY
November 12th & 13th: 8 am - 5 pm

SATURDAY
November 14th: 10 am - 5 pm



The Christmas Sale Has Moved!

Great deals on holiday decorations and gifts will be located at:

OHM West
1216 Jefferson Street • Vancouver

THE HOUSE COFFEE SHOP

Experience tasty seasonal drinks and treats that will make your holiday shopping that much sweeter!

WHEEL HOUSE BICYCLE SHOP

Choose from a great selection of bicycles for that special someone on your Christmas list!

You won't want to miss it!

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Change Is Not Hard. Growth Is.

We say change is hard, as if it were a universal law. But that is only half true. Not all change is hard. Some change happens with no effort at all. Leave ice on the counter, and it changes from solid to liquid with no attention required. Graze through the holidays, and you change from slim to round without much effort.

I never expected life's problems to fix themselves. But some days, I would have settled for things just staying the same for a little longer. Let me enjoy the kids like this before they're all grown up. Let me get caught up at work before more piles on. And could my coffee survive one interruption without becoming lukewarm?

We begin to love the God we once resisted and resist the sin we once loved. Growth is still hard, but the Spirit is at work in us, restoring what sin has unraveled.

Even staying the same turns out to be asking something. Physics gives us a picture of this in entropy, a principle expressed in the Second Law of Thermodynamics. Energy tends to move from concentrated to scattered, becoming less available to do useful work. Or, to picture it more simply, things left to themselves tend to unravel. The universe is tilted and runs downhill.

Some changes cost us more than cold coffee. Nobody sets out to become the bitter person everyone avoids. We nurse an old injury, rehearse what we should have said, and discover we've spent twenty years feeding something that is now eating us. The resentment grows while we're busy with other things.

Yet sin is no law of nature, and we cannot blame our choices on physics. God did not make us for this. Sin ruins something good. We are not a sweater poorly knit. We are one that got snagged on a branch and began to unravel.

Surely, then, we ought to pull ourselves together. Make a plan. Develop some discipline. Stop making excuses. But that assumes our problem is something harder work can fix. We imagine ourselves standing at the bottom of a hill, needing to try harder to climb. Paul puts us in a grave: "You were dead in your sins" (Ephesians 2:1). You cannot discipline yourself into resurrection. Someone has to give you the life you cannot give yourself.

That is what Christ does. Crucified for our sins and risen from the dead, he makes us alive by his Spirit. The Spirit enters the very place we cannot repair. He reaches into the depths of our hearts and gives us a new heart with new desires. The same power that raised Jesus from the grave now works in those who belong to him (Romans 8:11). And that power does more than slow the slide. We begin to love the God we once resisted and resist the sin we once loved. Growth is still hard, but the Spirit is at work in us, restoring what sin has unraveled.

At Open House Ministries, we help families do the hard work of rebuilding their lives. But our hope reaches beyond what hard work can accomplish. We depend on Christ to give the life that makes growth possible.

• *Chaplain Jon Nichols*

CHRISTMAS ANNOUNCEMENT

Adopt a Family for Christmas

Christmas time is quickly approaching at Open House Ministries, and we invite you to celebrate by adopting one of our families.

If you would like to participate, the following guidelines will be helpful.

Gift Guidelines and Ideas

- **Toys and clothing items from the family's wish list, wrapped and delivered by Friday, December 18th.**
- **Gift cards such as Target, Fred Meyer, WINCO foods or a gas card.**

To adopt a family for Christmas, please contact Claudia Merritt at 360-737-0300 or email Claudia.Merritt@sheltered.org and she will give you the details needed for your family adoption.

Last day to drop off gifts will be Friday, December 18th.

MINISTRY BLESSINGS



Big thanks to Hillcrest Nazarene Church, Upward Sports, and everyone who donated during the Crazy Sock fundraiser. We appreciate your support!

SHELTER NEEDS

Bottled water
8.5 x 11 Copy paper
Pull ups in 4T & 5T for boys and girls
Household items
One-pound packages of hamburger

TOURS & TALKS

Want to see Open House Ministries up close?

Join us for a First Friday Tour!
Noon to 1 pm

To sign up for our next available tour, contact us at events@sheltered.org
Thank you!

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360-737-0300 • **www.sheltered.org**