

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

A Shelter Christmas Story

For the families at Open House Ministries, Christmas time brings an extra blessing thanks to the Portland Wholesale Lumber Association (PWLA) members. For years, this dedicated organization from the Portland area has filled our family resource center gym with Christmas decorations, dinner, musical entertainment, fun activities, and, of course, a visit from Santa Claus.

The tradition started 24 years ago with Sherry Talley. Sherry worked for Apartment Finder magazine, helping Open House Ministries' graduate residents find housing. Moved by families struggling to make ends meet, Sherry



wanted to make Christmas a time of joy and celebration for the children in the shelter.

Knowing a Christmas party for all of the families would require more than their business could provide, Sherry enlisted her husband, Jim, to help. Jim was president of the Portland Hoo Hoo Club and was employed by Blasen & Blasen Lumber Company at the time. Together, they launched the original Christmas party held at the World Forestry Center near the Portland Zoo in 2000.

They went to work generating support from area lumber companies who donated funds to provide everything for the event and gathered a team of volunteers who sprang into action. Buses transported families to and from the venue at the Zoo, and each child received a gift purchased through the collected donations.

Sherry recalled one of the events at the Forestry Center, highlighting participation from the Sheriff's Department and the Volunteer Fire Department. "They brought their antique fire truck, ablaze with holiday lights, offering free rides to all," she said. "Sharing giggles and smiles was a heart-warming experience for all involved."



Jim Talley served as the Open House Ministries Christmas Party Chairman, leading the program from 2000 to 2012. The current chairman, Jim Adams, stepped forward to serve in 2013 and shared how organizing the Christmas party has touched his heart. "I hear my volunteers say that this is an event they don't want to miss—many bring their own kids to help out," said Jim. "They really enjoy meeting families who have overcome their challenges and see the joy and promise on their faces and in their voices."

Open House Ministries has been blessed beyond measure by the Portland Wholesale Lumber Association. The Christmas event brings families and the community together for a night of celebration and joy that stays with families long after they leave Open House Ministries. "The Christmas party has been a pivotal event for the families at Open House Ministries for years," said Case Manager Melody Peck. "It brings light and hope to the shelter. Christmas wouldn't be the same without it."

We look forward to celebrating Christmas with our PWLA friends again this year on December 12th. Their financial support along with their time, talent, and friendship is a priceless Christmas blessing to everyone at Open House Ministries. ●



MINISTRY NEWS

We Are Open!

Secondhand Solutions thrift store and Wheel Deals Bicycle Shop reopened their doors in their new location on Tuesday, November 5th.



"It's great to be open again. We missed our customers and can't wait to share the new store with our neighbors and friends."

~ Secondhand Solutions
Manager Tina Murphy



"The bike shop is a place of miracles for people needing basic transportation to get around. The new location is a lot more visible and we're excited to serve more people in this bigger space."

~ Wheel Deals Manager
Ang Fosburg

Both stores are conveniently located on the ground floor of the new OHM West building on Jefferson next to our campus on 12th street. Stay tuned for our Grand Opening Celebration! ●

TOURS & TALKS

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

GENEROUS GIVING



Christmas Giving Perspectives

This special time of year seems to change our perspective and helps put us in the mood for giving and doing more for others. We seem to think less about our own needs and desires and consider others, which helps to make it a wonderful time of the year. You, as our faithful supporters of Open House Ministries, are doing this for our residents and staff through your generous support of time, talent, and treasure. Thank you!

Christmas is a time for giving, and Open House Ministries seems to be at the top of your list for generous gifts. You have been so faithful, and we cannot thank you enough for being so supportive in helping homeless families have a place to call home and helping them to realize there is a new and better direction they can take. They hear the message that God gave us the greatest gift of all because He “so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16).

As a volunteer in the development office, I have had the pleasure of talking to many of you and hearing how much you love supporting the mission of Open House Ministries. Many have told me they wish they could do even more, which gives me the opportunity to discuss how they can by remembering to include OHM in their will/trust or with beneficiary designations. Also, transferring RMD's directly to OHM may positively impact your tax obligations.

If you would like to discuss opportunities to give in more detail, please contact Jean LaCrosse at (360) 737-0300 or email Ross Merritt at ross.merritt@sheltered.org. Have a blessed holiday. •



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OHM WEST RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY

A Dream Realized



L to R: Cody Ritter, Riverview Bank; Jim Sheppard, R&O Construction; Michael Lynch; Renee Stevens, OHM Executive Director; Richard James, OHM Board President; Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle; and Matt Olson, R&O Construction



On October 28th friends and community supporters joined to celebrate the ribbon cutting ceremony for OHM West. The family resource center gym was filled with guests who heard from project leaders. Their shared stories were heart-felt and joyful as this housing complex next to our campus prepares to house resident graduates. This will be home for 30 families graduating from our family shelter program and will be the new location for vocational training in our thrift store, bicycle shop, and new coffee shop.

Thank you for your prayers and support for our ministry throughout the past several years. We are forever grateful to everyone who worked tirelessly to see OHM West become a dream realized.

If you haven't seen OHM West, we invite you to visit soon. You will be blessed by this exciting addition to our ministry, helping to end homelessness in our community. •

MINISTRY BLESSINGS



L to R: Robert Turner, WA Trust Bank, CRA Officer; Dani Reyes, WA Trust Bank, Branch Manager; Jean LaCrosse, OHM Donor Relations Officer; Renee Stevens, OHM Executive Director; Bryan Dent, WA Trust Bank, VP Relationship Manager; Erik Selden, WA Trust Bank, SVP Team Leader

Open House Ministries is grateful for two grants received through a Member Impact Fund from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Des Moines. The 3 for 1 match was met by the Washington Trust Bank and Riverview Bank. We are blessed!

SHELTER NEEDS

Toilet paper Paper towels
Disposable razors
Hand warmers
Clorox wipes
Hair conditioner
Bottled water
Canned soups and chili
One pound packages of hamburger
Thank you!

VOLUNTEER!

Visit our website at www.sheltered.org and find out how you can make a difference at OHM

JOB OPENINGS

Case Manager
Full-time position
Day Care Staff
Part time position
Please inquire at careers@sheltered.org