OPEN HOUSE MINISTRIES
We're a family shelter

Connections

April 2026

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Walking in the Newness of Life

Most people assume that changing your life is mostly a matter of deciding to do better. If that were true, places like Open House Ministries would not need to exist. The truth is that learning to live well requires a community willing to tell the truth about our lives.

That kind of truth is not always comfortable. It means learning new habits. It means accepting guidance from others. It means discovering that the stories we have been telling ourselves about our lives are sometimes incomplete or simply untrue.

That kind of community is not always easy to live in. It has expectations. It asks people to take responsibility for their choices. It creates rhythms and boundaries that make it possible to rebuild a life that has come apart.

At Open House Ministries, residents enter that kind of community for a season. The goal is not simply to provide shelter. Our aim is to create a place where people can begin learning new habits. Habits of responsibility, honesty, work, and faith.

Life here has a way of bringing the truth about our lives into the open. When you live among people who know your story, it becomes harder to pretend that nothing needs to change. A different life cannot remain an idea. It has to begin to take shape in how people speak, work, and live alongside one another.

Every once in a while, the long work of change takes visible form. This past month,

eight residents stepped forward to be baptized. They stood before a room full of people who already knew their stories. Staff. Friends. Other residents who understood what it cost to stand there.

Baptism is a strangely public act. Baptism leaves little room for hiding. To step forward is to stand before others and acknowledge that the life you have been living cannot continue as it was. It is a way of standing before others and confessing that your life now belongs to Jesus Christ.

Now, when the celebration was over, and all that remained was water splashed across the gym floor and towels scattered on the ground, the cleanup began. The same people who had just heard those confessions were stacking chairs and dragging out a hose to drain the baptismal. Those who stood in the water moments earlier were now alongside them, helping return the gym to ordinary life.

The Apostle Paul writes, "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). That newness of life does not lead away from life together but deeper into it. The truth spoken in the water did not set anyone above the rest. It joined them more fully to the same life of grace and service, made real by Christ and sustained by His life among us.

● *Chaplain Jon Nichols*

GRACIOUS GIVING

Making Great Things Happen

It is important to have an up-to-date Will or Trust. In addition to documenting how your property will bless your loved ones, your Will or Trust can be a meaningful and effective way to support Open House Ministries and our work to provide life-changing help to local families.

There are many benefits to planning a gift in your Will or Trust.

- Assurance. You have provided for others in the way you intend.
- Flexibility. Your gift can be changed during your lifetime if your needs or goals change.
- Impact. Support the work you care about most.
- Influence. Shape your personal legacy and set an example for others.

Your Will or Trust needs to be drafted in accordance with the laws in our state. We can refer you to attorneys who specialize in estate planning and there are even suitable on-line programs if you have a fairly simple estate. Please contact Jean LaCrosse at Open House Ministries or email jean.lacrosse@sheltered.org if you would like more information. *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

RESIDENT STORY

Putting the Pieces Back Together

Finding what you need to start a new life is challenging. For Wendie and Aaron, a place to stay was only the beginning. Both were struggling from the impact of drugs and addiction in their lives. Wendie had just been released from prison, and Aaron was on the brink of being evicted from his apartment when they were introduced to Open House Ministries.

Connections to the ministry helped to facilitate an emergency move-in, and soon the couple had a space to stay in the shelter, away from harmful influences that were keeping them from living stable lives.

They recalled how their lives changed when they were able to spend time learning about God, and how they found a way to let go of guilt and shame. "When I came to Open House, I was lost, scared, and my family was broken and separated," said Wendie.

The couple found new direction and healing through the classes at Open House Ministries, and shared their gratitude for learning new skills vital to rebuilding their lives. "Living at Open House Ministries gave me the opportunity and the means to heal and grow," said Aaron. "I was able to deal with what was holding me back from a life I deserve and have a family and team to walk me through it."

> **"The only places I had to go were unsafe due to the active use of drugs," shared Wendie. "Open House Ministries saved my life!"**

Starting over in a positive and safe environment made all the difference for this couple. Wendie spoke about how her options after leaving prison could have led to a completely different outcome. "The only places I had to go were unsafe due to the active use of drugs," shared Wendie. "Open House Ministries saved my life!"

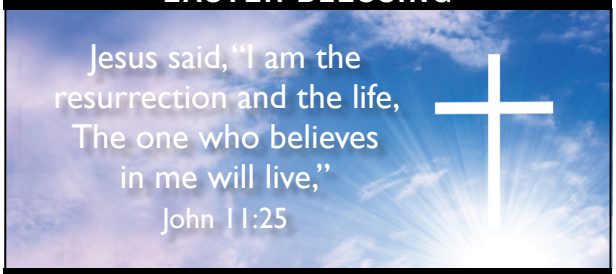
Both Wendie and Aaron found a solid path to learn new skills and found the support they needed to start over. They touched on the joy they experienced during Christmas time while they were here and how living in a family environment helped them throughout their journey to recovery.

Wendie and Aaron expressed their appreciation for the richness of the program at Open House Ministries and shared their gratitude for the opportunity to establish a new relationship with God and grow. "Open House is so much more than a shelter," said Wendie. "It is a safe place to rebuild your life. All the classes are in-depth. The guidance and support of the staff is second to none. They helped us learn that with God as our foundation, anything is possible."

Aaron shared how he couldn't imagine what his life would be like today without Open House Ministries stating that God definitely had a hand in his time here. They both expressed the blessings they experienced from everyone in the ministry. "The staff truly cares," said Aaron. "From the program director to the front desk, I know I have a forever family with Open House."

We are grateful for Wendie and Aaron, and their commitment to rebuild their lives at Open House Ministries. Please pray for them as they continue to grow in their relationship with their family and Christ. ●

EASTER BLESSING



ANNUAL HOPE CELEBRATION

40 Years of Hope

Tickets are on sale now for our Annual Hope Fundraiser Celebration

Thursday, May 14, 2026

Noon to 1:30 pm Check in at 11am

Waterfront AC Hotel in Vancouver

For more information contact Joanie Curtis at events@sheltered.org or visit our website at www.sheltered.org

OPEN HOUSE MINISTRIES HOPE FUNDRAISER

MINISTRY BLESSINGS

Families were blessed in chapel on March 18 by Franck Geuder and Beverly Hohman. They have been sharing words of encouragement and beautiful quilts at Open House Ministries for many years. We are so grateful for their kindness and blessings.

SHELTER NEEDS

Blankets • Bottled water
Paper towels • Toilet paper
8.5 x 11 Copy paper
Household Items
Kid's shampoo
One-pound packages of hamburger

JOB OPENING

Volunteer Coordinator Position

Please Inquire at careers @sheltered.org

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