



**OPEN HOUSE
MINISTRIES**

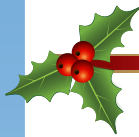
www.sheltered.org

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Connections

December, 2017



Look Inside!



Christmas Miracles, Then and Now

"YOU GAVE ME THE CONFIDENCE TO TRY HARDER."

Do you remember where you were four years ago today? Katie remembers December of 2013 vividly, and it was bleak. She was in prison, estranged from family. It had been over a year since she had contact with her five-year-old daughter and one-year old son. Alone. Isolated. She will tell you today, "It was one of the saddest, loneliest times of my life." Yet today, Katie is proof that miracles do happen.

"Growing up I went to church and thought I knew God." A series of bad choices involving drug use and related activity resulted in Katie's incarceration in Gig Harbor. "I had lost God in my addiction and often called on Him in addiction.



God wanted me to go here." She wrote a letter to the shelter and to her surprise, she received a letter back, accepted as a single woman working on reunifying with her children. Even then she was convinced that God put it on Mark and Renee's heart to bring her to Open House. In February 2014, Katie got on a train and was met at the station by her Case Manager Renee.

Katie immersed herself in addiction recovery, counseling, classes, volunteering and working in the thrift store. She reflects, "I believe that every bad choice, every turn in the road led me to this point in time. For so long it was such a struggle to be clean and sober. You gave me the confidence to try harder."

After six months, her husband Jesse joined her. They received counseling from Chaplain Mark, were married and worked diligently to earn their children back to their care. "Little Jackson didn't really know me, and Alivia barely remembered me. They were cared for by an amazing foster family and to this day are very close with them." In March 2015 baby Max was born. One month later, Katie and Jesse receive a Family Reunification Voucher, Alivia and Jackson came back to their care and they all transitioned to Section 8 housing.

Today? The family of five is thriving. Jesse,

(Continued on page 3)



But I found God in prison." There she prayed and became a regular at Bible Study.

When it came time to be released in early 2014, she actively explored options throughout the state. Although she had lived in Vancouver, she had never heard of Open House. "I had no idea what Open House was, but I felt God was calling me to reach out to them. I just knew in my heart that



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*For unto us
a child is born!*





Chaplain's Corner - Christmas, 2017

"The Language of Heaven"

The first moments of our day often put a skew on the attitude of our hearts. Breaking news... protests... rumors... politics... terrorism... suffering... death. So easily, our surroundings can alter our inner language. Yet, there is Hope.

While culture descends to a new sub-normal, Jesus urges us to live and speak the "language of heaven," where praise replaces protest, where light dispels darkness, where hope defeats despair, and where a living and loving GOD approaches human hearts. The Good News is meant for times just like these. But to live and speak in a new way, we are not meant to simply mimic the words of another, even Jesus.

Once in a while, people ask me, "How do you do what you do?" It helps me to imagine Jesus walking through our

hard neighborhood, smiling and engaging freely, yet seemingly steering into the "brokenhearted and crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34). But what brings this home for me is to remember the day when I laid in a pool of tears in an apartment in Denver, worn, broken and crushed, and recall Jesus reaching down to me.

The language of heaven is blessing and encouragement. When Jesus spoke, "the people marveled at the gracious words that came from His mouth" (Luke 4:22). This Christmas, let's mend and tend to broken lives with the salve of blessing and hope.

On the Journey Together,

Mark Roskam, Chaplain



Did you know that every year an independent organization called Independent Sector calculates the monetary worth of a volunteer hour across the USA? The state of Washington is among the highest in the nation valued at \$30.04 per volunteer hour (compared to

the national average of \$24.14).

If you volunteer, you are one of 425 others who stepped up this year at Open House. You contributed 20,876 hours of volunteer service in the last twelve months! That translated to over \$627,000 value for Open House Ministries! Because of you we can serve more and make every dollar stretch further.

Maybe you greeted visitors at the front desk, or helped in the sorting room. Or dedicated time in the bike shop or thrift store. Were you part of the team stuffing newsletters or mailings each month? Or helping with our annual fund raiser? Did you volunteer on a committee, organize a giving drive, adopt a room, teach a class or hold an event to benefit our residents? Whether your tools were hammer and nail, computers and computer programs, specialty software, pencil and paper, crayons and coloring books,

a class curriculum, a musical instrument, a sewing machine, years of experience in specialized fields, a listening ear, a comforting shoulder or a smile for someone who needed it, [the list goes on and on], what you gave DID make a differ-

ence. As the saying goes, "The whole is greater than the sum of its parts".



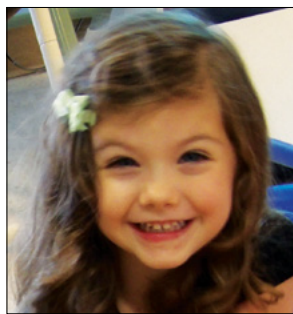
***This year,
425 Open House
volunteers contributed
hours equivalent to
\$627,000 in savings to
the shelter.***

So, the next time you are thinking about sharing a talent or a skill, please know how important your help is to Open House. As we grow, we will have continued need of your most valuable time and talent, not just for the savings it brings to the shelter, but for the gift of your experience, and unique talents that

you generously share with our community. And please know that when a child, a resident or a staff member at Open House says, "Thank You", we really mean "THANK YOU!!!" We count every minute of your time as a blessing.

If you are interested in sharing your talent to help homeless families and our mission, please visit our website at www.sheltered.org, or contact our Volunteer Coordinator Claudia Merritt at claudia@sheltered.org, 360-737-0300.





Throughout 2017... WE HAVE BEEN BLESSED BY YOU!

If ever you doubt that your contributions can make an impact, think again. Everything counts. This month we are counting our blessings for your time, your talent, your treasure, your prayers and support. Here are some of the ways you have made a difference to homeless families at Open House this year.

- ♥ Because of you, in the last year, 125 families received shelter, intervention and Christ-based, life-saving programs.
- ♥ Every night, on average, you gave 100 homeless people shelter, 50-60% of whom were children under the age of 17.
- ♥ Every day, for 365 days, families bonded over meals prepared and shared in the privacy of their own private apartment.
- ♥ Because of you, 54 school age children received school clothes and supplies.
- ♥ 50 children – infants, toddlers and waddlers – played, prayed and stayed in the Open House Daycare.
- ♥ You gave little ones 520 cozy naps.
- ♥ 125 families received ongoing case management service, with over 500 hours of professional mental health and/or addiction counseling services.
- ♥ Your help gave 4 mothers a fresh start through the Jail Re-Entry Program, to be reunited with their children.
- ♥ With your help, 100 adults received legal, domestic and counseling services.
- ♥ You provided 10 adults with 1,200 hours of GED Classes towards their High School diploma.

- ♥ School age students received 144 hours of tutoring in the HOPE program.
- ♥ For every individual on staff, 11 more of you – our most valued volunteers – lent a helping hand in the shelter, in our stores, for our fund raisers, in the Day Care, for projects and on committees throughout the year.
- ♥ Your kindness provided 179 adults with spiritual counseling with the Chaplain every week.
- ♥ Our families attended
 - 52 chapel services
 - 300 Bible classes
 - And witnessed 17 baptisms
- ♥ 28 adults graduated from the Financial Peace University course.
- ♥ Every adult had the opportunity for job training, career coaching and job preparedness.
- ♥ Because of you, throughout the year, hundreds of street homeless souls received a warm cup of coffee, a blanket, a kind word, a loaf of bread and a prayer on our campus, at our Bike Shop or Thrift Store, or at the main shelter.

During this holy Christmas Season, we are counting our blessings, and most of all, YOU.

Renee Stevens

KATIE'S STORY (Continued from page 1)

employed for over three years, has supported the family. Katie thoroughly loved being a homemaker for her family, yet she felt that God was calling her once again. When she learned that there was an entry position open for the Case Management team at Open House, she sent a letter of interest. In September she was hired on at Open House Ministries as the newest member of the Case Management team. She admits she is still a bit amazed, and believes "God doesn't call the qualified. He qualifies the called."

Katie will tell you she is blessed. "This Christmas is AWE-SOME! I have my kids! I am reunited with my family, I have a

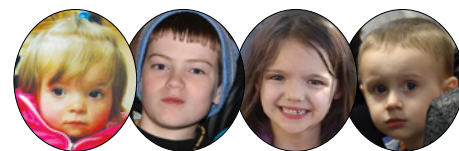
relationship with my parents again. I have a job I love where I use my life experience every day. And I get to come home to my husband and kids, to my family I love. You taught me that God really does have a plan and it's all about faith and hope. I can give now to others what you so freely gave to me." And as for miracles? Katie sees them daily, thanks to you.





Helping Them Helps You

CHARITABLE YEAR-END BENEFITS



The IRA charitable qualified distribution is back and it's a simple, easy and convenient way to use your individual retirement account to help families at Open House Ministries.

ADVANTAGES FOR YOU

- If initiated and completed before December 31, 2017 your gift will qualify for your 2017 IRA required minimum distribution.
- Your gift will qualify as a tax-free rollover, so you will not have to pay federal income tax on the amount you have given (up to \$100,000).
- The transaction is easily made directly with your wealth management account advisor.

HOW YOU CAN QUALIFY

- You must be at least 70 ½ years old when you make the gift.
- The transfer must go directly from your IRA to Open House Ministries.
- The transaction must be completed by December 31st.
- The gift must be outright.



**OPEN HOUSE
MINISTRIES**
We're a family shelter

To make your IRA charitable distribution, simply contact your personal wealth advisor.

This information is offered as a courtesy for general information and educational purposes. Please consult with your personal tax advisor for questions about your own situation.

Open House Ministries is a charitable 501 (c) 3 organization with Federal Tax I.D.# 94-3028685

*Wishing you and your loved ones
a Christmas filled with the Peace,
Love and Blessings of the newborn
Christ Child.*



CURRENT NEEDS AT THE SHELTER:

- Gloves
- Warm socks and hats
- Blankets
- Baby food

CURRENT NEEDS FOR OUR RETAIL SHOPS ON 13TH STREET:

Second Hand Solutions Thrift Store

- Men's clothing
- Men's jeans, office casual pants and slacks
- Men's shirts, sweaters, sweat shirts
- Men's jackets, outerwear, gloves and hats

Wheel Deals Bicycles

- Used bicycles and parts

The Open House Ministries Retail Shops on 13th Street

915 West 13th Street, Vancouver, WA 98660
Open Tuesday through Saturday 10am-5pm,
Wednesday 11am-5pm.

*100% of the proceeds from your purchases
at any of our shops benefit homeless families.*