



OPEN HOUSE
MINISTRIES

We're a family shelter



Connections

December 2021

RESIDENT STORY



Anthony and Teigan Daddy and Daughter Duo

The Open House Ministries campus is always a flurry of activity – residents coming and going, shoppers purchasing thrift store finds and kids playing in the childcare center. One such tiny blur is a smiley, sassy resident named Teigan. “Teigan is now starting to run and climb up on things. I really think she is part monkey,” says Anthony of his toddler. The 20-year-old dad and his daughter have been living at Open House Ministries for the past six months. But this is not Anthony’s first time calling the organization home.

When Anthony was young, his parents struggled with drug addiction. His grandparents stepped in, moving Anthony and his three siblings to Montana. Five years later, Anthony returned to Vancouver and his family spent time rebuilding at Open House Ministries. Anthony remembers being a freshman in high school when he lived here with his mom and siblings.

Fast forward to 2020. Anthony’s new life now included Teigan. After struggling without Teigan’s mother, Anthony and his case manager looked for a place where Anthony and Teigan could build their own family. They found an opening at Open House Ministries. “I knew instantly it was the place for us,” recalls Anthony remembering the program and its impact. “For the first time in my life, I was living on my own. Initially, I struggled, but the staff and residents are like family. They know exactly what I am working through.”

To date, Anthony is looking for a job and has graduated three of

the Open House Ministries classes. *Financial Peace* has taught him how to spend, save and live on a budget while the parenting class has helped him become a more capable, competent, and confident parent. Anthony has also enjoyed *Open Forum*, a bonding venue to build on daily victories instead of focusing on daily struggles.

“My favorite thing to attend is chapel where we sing worship songs. Teigan loves the music too! She puts her hands in the air, claps and sings,” says Anthony who had never been much of a spiritual person. “I didn’t grow up in a church family, but it’s amazing to see my relationship with Jesus begin and grow. And, to see Teigan’s love for God at such a young age is also pretty cool,” claims Anthony.

We are so grateful Anthony is getting the support he needs and is building a strong relationship with God. The future for this duo is going in a great direction. We pray God will continue to bless them as they grow stronger together. ●

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Blessed by God's Great Gift



Christmas time is so special to everyone in our ministry as community friends reach out and share with the families at the shelter. Relationships built across 35 years continue to bless the work we do, especially during the holidays, helping to heal families in our community. And Christmas is my favorite time to celebrate the blessings we receive from so many of you throughout the year.

This is also an amazing time to reflect on Jesus, God’s greatest gift to us. As my walk with Jesus grows each year, I am blessed, knowing God’s plans are perfect in every way. The growth we’ve made through this



difficult pandemic has brought us closer to God and to each other. He has been faithful to guide us and bless this ministry as we have placed our trust in him. Scripture says the gift of Jesus makes it possible for us to live in close relationship with God, so we celebrate this time of year together. *Romans 6:23*

As this year comes to a close, I hope you and your family have been healthy. I also pray your walk with God is deeper and your faith has been strengthened. While the road ahead is never clear, the relationship we have with Jesus means we will never walk alone. He is our priceless gift.

I hope you will remember Open House Ministries in your year-end giving plans. We appreciate your support for the families at the shelter who are working to restore relationships and become whole again.

Thank you for praying for the staff, volunteers, and residents at Open House Ministries. Please stay safe while we celebrate the holiday season.

Blessings,

Renee Stevens

Renee Stevens, Executive Director

Life Choices for the New Year

As we approach the start of a new year, I reflect upon this story. ...

A man of great wealth was nearing completion of his new estate and felt something missing. His home was massive and impressive by every measure and standard. That is, except for the dining hall. It was nothing more than two large barren concrete walls that extended 75ft like empty canvases.

It was with this observation that the man decided how he was going to solve this dilemma. He would hold an art contest. He would invite artists from around the world to apply. The top two would be given room and board on his estate for one year and whatever materials they needed to bring life and beauty to those barren walls.

With the two finalists selected, the man welcomed the artists into his home. He stood with them under the towering presence of those concrete walls and said to them, "In one year I will judge your work, and the winner will be rewarded with immeasurable wealth and fame."

Immediately, the first artist pulled out his notebooks and began sketching ideas furiously onto the pages. By the end of the first week, he had settled on a design and started penciling it onto his wall.

The second artist took a seat and stared at his wall. He would continue to do this every day.

As days turned into months, the first artist worked hard manifesting his genius

upon his wall. Nothing changed for the second artist. Each day he would sit and stare with a look as blank as his wall.

With the year drawing to a close the first artist put the finishing touches on his wall. Proud of what he had created he signed his name and left, walking past the second artist whose wall was still barren.

The next morning the two were called to the dining hall to present their work. The first artist presented his work, and the man was nearly moved to tears it was so beautiful. He then turned to view the second artist's wall, and to his great surprise, he saw the same image. Line for line. What had happened? Reaching out in shock the man felt the cold hard presence of glass. Crippled by insecurity and the fear of failure, the second artist had simply installed mirrors.

The new year before each of us is a blank canvas. We can make of it what we want. Will we try and live boldly and courageously, developing the good and beautiful gifts God has given us? Or, like the second artist, will we put up mirrors trying to reflect what others want and miss out on God's plans? My prayer for each of us in 2022 is to choose a life fully lived before God. ●

Chaplain Jon Nichols

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. ~Ephesians 2:10

COMMUNITY BLESSING

Every Smile is Priceless

Smiles like Isaiah's are the inspiration behind dental hygienist Lorelei Steuben's work. She is educating children on the importance of good dental care. One way Lorelei is reaching her goal is through a matching program with America's ToothFairy, raising money for toothbrushes and dental necessities.

We are excited to be one of the charities Lorelei is helping through this important program. The families at Open House Ministries will benefit through good dental training and we appreciate Lorelei's dedication.



Lorelei Steuben with Isaiah and Renee

Thank you, Lorelei for sharing your work with the families at Open House Ministries. A beautiful smile is a great way to brighten everyone's day. You are a blessing! ●

Appreciated Gifts

As a supporter of Open House Ministries, your gifts throughout the year have enabled us to help change the lives of our residents in so many ways. From providing a stable living environment for families, continuing education, and most importantly regular Bible-based encouragement. You helped make that happen through your generosity.

We appreciate the creativity in giving by many of you who decided to make gifts directly from your IRA accounts, maximizing your gifts and avoiding unnecessary taxes. As we mentioned in last month's article, this is a great way to increase giving.

Another way we received numerous gifts is from donor advised funds (sometimes known as giving funds or similar names). These are funds that can be set up in numerous ways. One of the best ways is transferring appreciated stock or mutual funds in order to avoid capital gains taxes. This makes larger year-end gifts possible and gives you the flexibility to delay making a large gift while providing you with a current-year tax deduction. This can allow you to take time to prayerfully consider where, when and how much to give and plan a more comprehensive giving strategy. Of course, you can also transfer these assets directly to Open House Ministries for us to sell, which also allows you to bypass the tax.

Giving appreciated assets can make you a more cheerful giver because these assets are like a gift from God. Thanks to His leading, you have enjoyed a blessing that acknowledges the fact that He is the rightful owner of all that we have, and we are just trying to be good stewards of what He has entrusted to us.

If you have any questions about how to give through funds like this or would like to discuss other unique ways to make a generous year-end gift, please contact Ross at Open House Ministries, 360-737-0300 or email ross.merriitt@sheltered.org ●

Please consider including Open House Ministries in your will or estate plan. Thank you!

JOB OPENINGS

Bicycle Shop Staff
Full-time position available

Child Care Worker
Part-time position available

If interested, please contact
careers@sheltered.org
for an application.

SHELTER NEEDS

- Clorox wipes and Lysol disinfecting spray
- Hats and gloves of all sizes
- Toiletries and laundry items
- Underwear of all sizes
- Bottled water
- Copier paper: 8 1/2 x 11

Thank You!



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