



OPEN HOUSE  
MINISTRIES  
*We're a family shelter*

# Connections

February 2021

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Seeking God's Will in 2021

Greetings from Open House Ministries. I hope your holidays were blessed and you were able to connect with your family and friends for Christmas. The struggle to stay safe during the pandemic has given us a new appreciation for those we love and placed a higher value on our most vulnerable family members.

As we start a new year at Open House Ministries, our search for a Chaplain is one of our top priorities. We know God has just the right person set aside to guide our ministry spiritually, and we would appreciate your prayers for wisdom while we seek God's direction. We are confident and looking forward to filling this important position, knowing God's work at Open House Ministries is helping to change the lives of the families who pass through our doors.

Programs and plans are also moving forward for 2021 as our staff and residents continue to work and make necessary adjustments to pandemic restrictions. The months of adapting the ministry to COVID changes have blessed Open House Ministries with new skills to fulfill our mission and vision. We ask for your continued prayers for our ministry while finding renewed strength in God and trust in His timing.

We were continually encouraged by our community partners and friends with gifts and support through the many challenges of the past year. Your love for Open House Ministries has inspired our staff and residents with fresh energy to continue the life-changing work God has blessed us with.

Thank you for standing with us through the months of waiting for the pandemic to lift. We pray you and your families are doing well as we move into 2021 together.

Blessings,

Renee Stevens  
Executive Director

*"Look to the Lord and his strength;  
seek his face always. Remember the  
wonders he has done, his miracles,  
and the judgments he pronounced, ..."*  
~1 Chronicles 16:11-12



## STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Claudia Merritt, Operations Manager

Claudia Merritt is no stranger to Open House Ministries. With four years of employment under her belt, her smile is a mainstay at the organization. As a part-time Volunteer Coordinator and Assistant to the Executive Director, she has worked alongside every single staff member and seen hundreds of residents live, work, and go through this one-of-a-kind program.

Claudia grew up in the Central Valley of California and moved to the Pacific Northwest in 2016.

"We relocated in order to join our middle child up here because we just love the Pacific Northwest, and my husband was ready to retire. Our two other adult children and two grandchildren also moved up to this area at the same time, and we are blessed to all be together and in much closer proximity," says the doting grandmother. *(continued)*

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT



*Claudia receiving gifts from Elks Lodge #823 members*

With a background as a legal assistant and in Human Resources at a Christian university, Claudia brings a beneficial and interesting skill set to the table.

"I consider myself the 'go-to' person on campus, knowing that if I don't have the answer, I can get it. Being mentored by Renee for these four years has taught me so much about Open House's history, culture, mission, and vision moving forward," states Claudia proudly.

In addition to being the Executive Director's assistant, Claudia recently added Operations Manager to her moniker. Her new duties include risk management, campus-wide logistics, overseeing facilities and bike and thrift stores, and ensuring all departments are working seamlessly together to be good stewards of the ministry's finances.



*Becky Bartles, Volunteer Coordinator*

She adds, "It's a privilege, and I hope to live up to these expectations." In addition, Claudia will also supervise the organization's internship program. In order to take on these additional responsibilities, Open House Ministries hired a new Volunteer Coordinator. "Becky Bartles is full of energy and love for our ministry. She is very much looking forward to her important role working with our volunteers," says Claudia.

When asked about God's role at Open House Ministries with its staff, residents, and volunteers, Claudia replied, "God is faithful in answering our prayers and equipping His saints to fill in where there may be a need. I am blessed to be a part of Open House Ministries as we strive to bring families to Christ and to help restore what once was lost." ●

Soon after Claudia joined the shelter, Renee Stevens became the Executive Director.

"I was blessed with the added responsibility of being her assistant, or as she fondly calls me her 'person,'" laughs Claudia.

With a background as a legal assistant and in

## TAX-WISE GIVING

# Automatic Giving

If you would like a simple way to support Open House Ministries, consider setting up a monthly donation through your credit card or checking account. Many of our generous donors support Open House Ministries by having their bank or credit card company automatically send a designated amount. Thus they save the time and effort of either mailing or electronically sending in a gift. The benefit to Open House Ministries is that this assures us of knowing that we can depend on a known amount each month. And the benefit to you is knowing that you are regularly supporting the ministry of providing Christ-centered help to families that might otherwise not be able to provide for themselves.

It is easy to set up an account like this. Either you can email [jean.lacrosse@sheltered.org](mailto:jean.lacrosse@sheltered.org) or call the office at 360-737-0300 and ask for Leslie.

Another option is to log on to our web page, [www.sheltered.org](http://www.sheltered.org), and go to the donation page and fill out the required information. If you ever want to modify your automatic donations, that is easy too. Just call us.

If you would like information on planned giving, contact Ross at [ross.merritt@sheltered.org](mailto:ross.merritt@sheltered.org)

Thank You

## JOB OPENINGS

**OHM Chaplain**  
Full time position

**OHM Little World Daycare**  
Two child care workers

If interested, please contact  
[careers@sheltered.org](mailto:careers@sheltered.org)  
for an application

## SHELTER NEEDS

- Clorox wipes and hand soap
- Lysol disinfecting spray
- Canned and boxed non-perishable foods
- Baby wipes

*Thank You!*



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