

REMEMBERING FOUNDER JOANNE KENDALL

Honoring God's Calling to Build a Ministry

When you learn the origin story of Open House Ministries, you discover the connection to God's blessing over decades of time began with a small nucleus of friends; no one more dedicated than Joanne Kendall. She would be quick to tell you that God has done this work through the countless hours of many like-minded people and the financial gifts of hundreds of friends who believe in the mission to restore families and share the gospel of Jesus Christ. And while that statement is true, the deep passion and long-term active involvement in this ministry places the life of Joanne Kendall front and center.



Joanne Kendall, OHM Founder

Joanne was born in 1934 and raised near Hillsboro, Oregon. Her curiosity to see the world and travel motivated Joanne to become an airline attendant as a young adult. She later married Robert Kendall, and a business opportunity brought them from Seattle to Vancouver. After a successful career and raising their two daughters, Leslie and Kristin, Joanne found herself with more time and a need to start a new chapter in her life.

While attending a small Bible study, Joanne and Bob became friends with Shirley and Randy Radtke. Together, they were made aware of families living in desperate circumstances. Mothers and children were taking refuge in railroad cars in Fruit Valley and trying to survive out of their cars at Esther Short Park. As the group became more familiar with these families in

need, God started a fire in their hearts to act.

In a 1996 recounting of Open House Ministries titled *A Journey*, Joanne describes the early days of the ministry. How she personally reached out in faith, deeply seeking God's direction for her life. As the plight of local homeless families in the mid-1980s became a focal point, others in the Bible study group were hearing the same call to help. "We met mothers with children and some individuals who said if they *just* had a place to be still and warm for a moment, then they could make plans for the future," Joanne states. "As we prayed, this

was the group we felt God wanted us to help."

The Kendalls and the Radtkes then began gathering friends, asking for God's guidance and for courage. They agreed the homeless shelter project would need to include more than food and a place to stay. They wanted to provide a place where people could hear about God and the hope offered through Jesus Christ.

What followed was a grass-roots effort to officially establish Open House Ministries as a non-profit organization and find a strategic location for the shelter. They knew it would take a broad base of support, realizing no *one* group or church could manage. They contacted everyone they knew with connections to social services and experience in serving people in need. *(Continued)*



Joanne with Pat Neal, an early and gifted administrator



Speaking at the groundbreaking for the current family shelter



Plans for the new shelter serve as a backdrop while Joanne chats with guests



OHM's first executive director, John Greholver with Joanne

REMEMBERING FOUNDER JOANNE KENDALL CONTINUED

Their leap of faith continued as they searched for a place in the community for the first shelter building. And God was faithful. A large, ten-room boarding house on West 12th Street in Vancouver became a choice location, and the hard work of securing the property began. Several years of sharing the project with local church leaders, business owners, legislators, and compassionate individuals fueled the mission



to restore homeless families in the Vancouver area. As knowledge of the project spread, a clear path was established, and the original family shelter opened in January of 1989.

There were many setbacks and growing pains along the way. The staff was predominately volunteer-based and Joanne recalled the need for trusting God and waiting on His timing. "We were a peculiar people of God," Joanne states. "We prayed, we were weak, but hadn't He always used such people to do His work! Throughout this adventure, we were blessed to see His handiwork and miracles unfold, sometimes at the 11th hour, sometimes before we ever dreamed of it."

Joanne served as board president of Open House Ministries for the first ten years, helping to establish everything from OHM policies to house rules and the development of the faith-based program vital to helping families learn about the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Joanne continued to play an active



Executive Director Renee Stevens lends support to Joanne during a block party



Steve Oliva, Officer Chavers, and Mayor McEnerny-Ogle with Joanne at the family resource center ribbon cutting ceremony



Joanne at a Clark County Prayer Breakfast with Chaplain Jon Nichols



Joanne at the OHM West groundbreaking with Renee Stevens and the OHM Board of Directors

role throughout the years. She witnessed the growth of the thrift store and bike shop as they evolved into vocational training facilities for residents needing job skills. She helped plan the current 34-unit shelter on West 12th Street and the expansion of the family resource center next door on West 13th Street. And while she will not see the completion of OHM West, a truly affordable apartment housing complex on Jefferson, she was here to witness its beginning.

Joanne's passion to seek God's will at a turning point in her life has blossomed into the ministry serving Vancouver today. Her willingness to help was evident even in her late years as she attended board meetings and events on campus. And the call to share the gospel sparked in the original small group of believers? That has manifested, too, as former residents have joined the same churches Joanne reached out to in the early years.

Joanne went to be with the Lord on December 3, 2023. She was an amazing woman of God, and Open House Ministries will continue to be blessed through her work and her steadfast faith. She remains forever in our hearts. ●

MINISTRY BLESSINGS

WE ARE DEEPLY GRATEFUL TO EVERYONE FOR ALL THE GENEROUS GIFTS AND DONATIONS TO OHM DURING THE CHRISTMAS SEASON. YOU ARE A BLESSING!

SHELTER NEEDS

- Toilet paper
-
- Paper towels
-
- Baby wipes
-
- Lysol spray
-
- Boys and girls pull ups - size 4/5t
- Thank you!

TOURS & TALKS

First Friday tours are back!
Noon to 1 pm

Contact us for a tour at
events@sheltered.org

JOB OPENINGS

Part-time Child Care Position
Development Position
Please inquire at
careers@sheltered.org



OPEN HOUSE MINISTRIES

We're a family shelter

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