




OPEN HOUSE MINISTRIES

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*Happy
New Year
2019*

*Therefore if any man
be in Christ, he is a new
creature: old things are
passed away; behold, all
things are become new.
2 Cor 5:17*

Connections

January, 2019



Michelle's Story

A social media post from Michelle Ochaeta says it all.

May 2017: "Five years ago today, I was stuck in my addiction. I was at a house on 25th with NO lights, NO running water, and pregnant with a needle in my arm! Tomorrow is a milestone for me and I owe it all to God and my recovery."

The 35-year-old was born and raised in the Rosemere section of Vancouver. Life spiraled downward. Dropping out of school before graduating was quickly followed by drugs and alcohol.

Open House Ministries gave me security knowing that whatever I put my mind to, I can do and achieve my high goals.

Three years ago, Michelle and her three children ended up at Open House Ministries looking to get off the street and make a fresh start.

"The staff was very loving and caring. Whenever we wanted, they were willing



to take a second and talk to us, and show us that we were needed and wanted and loved," states Michelle.

Open House helped shift Michelle's mental and physical approach to life through curriculum classes and Bible studies.

She adds, "I'm just one of those testimonies that anybody that goes into that place always comes out with positive, motivated, determined mindsets. They made us feel like we could achieve anything if we put our minds to it."

Michelle lived at Open House for six months followed by an apartment in the organization's transitional housing program and now a beautiful 3-bedroom home in Cougar Homes, a permanent housing establishment.

With the grace of God and her consistent dedication, Michelle has been clean and sober from meth and alcohol for more than 6 ½ years.

"I'm an amazing mother in my children's lives today. And, I love the Lord with all my heart," states Michelle.

Currently, Michelle is enrolled at Clark College earning her GED. She has been employed full-time at Pacific Crest Cabinets for the last five years and remains active in her recovery community mentoring in the local jails and treatment centers.

"No matter the situation, there's always hope. All you need is a little bit of faith and God does the rest," says Michelle.

(Continued on page 2)

Chaplain's Corner

January, 2019 - Contributing Author, Mindy Chumbley



My family spent the morning putting away Christmas decorations. As I wrapped up ornaments, a few gave me pause... a frayed and faded bear hand-stitched by my grandmother, the stained glass angel we were given at hospice, and the tiny handprints of my

children when their were newly born.

It's a ton of work. It can be a tad depressing. I love Christmas. January not so much. But putting away Christmas is part of what allows room for what's next. If we didn't take down the nativity, there would be no room on the mantel for the Easter scene. If the Christmas festivities didn't stop, our schedules would never have room for what God wants to do next.

Packing away these annual treasures is a beautiful reminder not to let our daily lives become managed by the past. Isaiah 43:19 says ***"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See I am doing a new thing!"***

I don't think God meant us to brush away pain haphazardly. Putting away our Christmas decorations takes time and care. In the same way God calls us all to do the

hard work of forgiving, healing, letting go and then expectantly asking what is next.

The truth is what's next is exciting. God is a creator. He specializes in renewal and life and restoration.

At Open House the work people do to rebuild their lives is deep. If you talk to residents it doesn't take long to hear stories of loss and hardship. But my favorite part of those conversations is to see the glimmer of hope. The spark of God's grace. The joy of the new thing.

Jesus didn't come at Christmas so we'd be stuck in eternal darkness. He came to give us life. Would you consider today what you need to let go of to be able to embrace what God has next?



"So Brothers and Sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:13-14

Mindy Chumbley writes and speaks through her platform *Quirky Faith*. You can find her at www.quirkyfaith.com or on YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See I am doing a new thing!"
Isaiah 43:19

Michelle's Story (Continued from page 1)



Today, the future looks bright for Michelle and her children — 18 year-old Anthony, 14 year-old Adahlia, and 6 year-old Mandy. The family is expanding, as Michelle is pregnant with her fourth child and will deliver in June. The glowing mom-to-be is especially smitten about the delightful new nursery the baby will call home.

There's just something about Open House that just opens your heart.
You know that you are loved.
No matter where I go on to live, they're always there with open arms.
I will always have a family at Open House.



*Working Together To
Help The Homeless*



Together
IN SERVICE

OUR MISSION

Open House Ministries is a faith-based community organization helping homeless families, by providing shelter and intervention through Christ-centered, life changing programs.

OUR VISION

We envision a community where God's love and grace has restored lives and ended homelessness.

Together
FACING THE NEED

According to a February 2018 report, almost 60,000 families with children (57,971) are homeless on any given night in the United States, according to the 2017 federal Point-in-Time count. Nationally, that means 7.4 out of every 10,000 families are homeless. In the state of Washington, 11.1 families out of every 10,000 are homeless, well above the national average.¹

The Council for the Homeless Point in Time in Clark County for 2018 reports that 60 homeless families with children are in shelter or transitional housing, and 44 families remain unsheltered. At the same time the homeless population of unsheltered individuals has increased by 50% in 2018 over 2017.²

The State of Washington Superintendent of Public Instruction reported that during the 2016-2017 school year, the Vancouver School District had 1,013 homeless students, while the Evergreen District reported 1,042 homeless students among its population. The Districts also announced a rise of 20% of homeless students in 2018.

Children who experience homelessness are also often exposed to other adverse childhood experiences such as physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or witnessing domestic violence or drug or alcohol addiction in their primary caregiver(s). They are more likely to fall behind in school, demonstrate behavior and learning problems and develop long-term, life-threatening diseases.

¹National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2017 Annual Homelessness Report to Congress, Pt.1.

²Council for the Homeless, 2018 Point in Time

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***"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me."***

**Matthew 25:35-36**



# Christmas Blessings!

The birth of Christ celebrated at Christmas means a lot of different things – Christmas carols, making memories with family and friends, special treats, gift giving, and tree trimming. Each year at Open House Ministries, it also means how deeply and profoundly the surrounding community shows God's love towards our residents.

*"We were overwhelmed with the generosity we experienced during December. All the effort made the holidays very special for all of our families. It was a magical time for everyone – especially our youngsters!"* says Jodi Baxter, Open House Ministries Case Manager.

She adds, *"It's fun to see our parents off-campus interacting with their kids doing special things that can sometimes be financially prohibitive."*

***Thank you! A huge thank you to the numerous organizations and individuals who donated their time and resources to help create a festive atmosphere and memorable holiday season!***

Toys abounded thanks to toy drives headed up by **The Grape-Ful Women** and **Roadmaster's Kruze for Kids** – just to name a few! **Blasen and Blasen Lumber** hosted the *Hoo Hoo Holiday* for residents at the **World Forestry Center** near the Oregon Zoo. Families were provided transportation and enjoyed balloon animals, face painting, gifts and a visit from Santa. Our children's pictures with Santa were furnished free of charge to all parents!



The **Clark County Saddle Club** provided transportation to and from the **Clark County Fairgrounds** where residents enjoyed lunch and a wide array of activities including horseback riding, decorating cookies and making crafts. Each child went home with a free coat, gloves and hat, as well as a picture with Santa!



Santa rolled up on his Christmas train thanks to the **Frito Lay** organization and handed out individual presents to each and every child. **Battle Ground's Regal Cinemas** opened their theaters so Open House families could watch one of three movies while redeeming coupons for free popcorn and sodas.

In addition, several Clark County residents donated individual gifts and toys to our residents. The Open House conference room was filled to the brim!



## SHELTER NEEDS:

Laundry detergent, small dish detergent, size 3 diapers, hand warmers, coats, blankets, and day bus passes.