

## ROAD CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

### Bicyclists are enjoying the new path next to Open House Ministries on Jefferson Street

After months of trenching and replacing the water system under Jefferson Street, layers of asphalt and finish work are defining the new road next to our campus. Residents, staff, and volunteers are grateful to be done navigating the gravel and dirt surfaces between the main shelter and OHM West.



Cyclists are out, taking advantage of the beautiful weather, fresh streets, and the new bike path to the waterfront. New curbs and sidewalks are redefining the shape of Jefferson Street bordering the campus, and we are looking forward to having new trees line the street. Contractors are filling in spaces on our street corners with decorative pavers, creating uplifting details at the intersections.

“The city has been working for weeks, moving power lines and reshaping the intersection at West 13th Street and Jefferson,” said Executive Director Reneé Stevens. “We’re excited to see the details being put into place next to the shelter.”



*Kurt Marttila of TMC Contractors working on the brickwork at Jefferson Street and West 12th*

Changes on West 13th Street at Kauffman Avenue and Jefferson Street are also redefining the parking lot next to the



family resource center and multipurpose gym. The new parking lot will increase the number of parking spaces and help ease the navigation around the building. “The new parking lot will be a great asset for the ministry,” said Reneé. “We’ve needed more parking for a long time and this will be a real game changer for visitors and staff.”

We are grateful to everyone for their patience while road construction has disrupted the flow of traffic in and out of our area. Please continue to drop off your donations and enjoy our new thrift store, bicycle shop, and coffee shop. ●

## GRACIOUS GIVING

### A Lasting Legacy

Making a planned gift to Open House Ministries isn’t just for the wealthy or for those trying to minimize taxes. It’s a wonderful way to leave a legacy and continue a lifetime of support for an organization you believe in. There are many ways to do this through the use of non-cash assets such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds, IRAs, and real estate. These can enable you to both avoid income and capital gains taxes and even provide a lifetime income.

After providing for family, friends, and others, many individuals also choose to remember charitable organizations that are important to them by including them in their will or trust. If you believe in the mission of Open House Ministries, this can be a significant and lasting way for you to help ensure we have a strong financial future and continue to provide families with life-changing assistance.

Planned gifts can provide many benefits and we would be delighted to discuss the various options that might be best for you. We have the expertise and information that will help you decide if this might be a way for you to make a gift and assist in getting your financial affairs in order. Please contact Jean LaCrosse at 360-737-0300 or email [ross.merritt@sheltered.org](mailto:ross.merritt@sheltered.org) for more information.

Please consider Open House Ministries in your estate or tax plans. *Thank you!* ●

# Who Is This For?

A young boy's birthday is coming up. He's wild about dinosaurs—draws them constantly, dreams of fossils, roars more than he talks. It couldn't be clearer what he wants.

His mom loves him deeply. But when it's time to plan the party, she puts together the kind she would've loved growing up—basketball nets strung with team flags, matching jerseys for all the kids, even a scoreboard-shaped cake. No dinosaurs.

She meant well. But you can imagine how the boy feels.

It raises a deeper question: Who was the party really for?

That question is at the heart of worship. Here at Open House Ministries, it shapes more than just what happens in morning devotions or chapel.

It guides how we serve, pray, disciple, counsel, and order daily life in community.

We ask it often—Who is this for?—because that question changes everything.

At one level, yes—our work is for our residents. We care deeply about them. But we're not building a ministry around their preferences—or ours. Our guiding question runs deeper. As theologians have long described it, we serve *coram Deo*—a Latin phrase meaning “before the face of God.” It reminds us that everything we do is seen and shaped by His presence. We don't aim for what merely looks good—we aim for what is faithful in His sight.

If worship is about honoring God, then our role isn't to pick what feels meaningful—it's to listen for what pleases Him.

That same heartbeat runs through everything at Open House

Ministries. We don't speak vaguely of “faith.” We speak of Christ. We don't chase trends. We're rooted in something deeper. We walk with people from all kinds of backgrounds—each with their own stories, questions, and wounds. And we walk with them not by offering a buffet of beliefs, but by welcoming them into a shared life shaped by God's truth—one that reshapes us all.

Recently, one of our residents told me, “I thought following God meant adding Him to my life. But it's really about giving Him my life.”

It was a beautiful moment. You could see something shift.

Every time we gather—whether in chapel, one-on-one, or around a dinner table—we remind ourselves: we're not hosting God. We're being welcomed into His presence, His

purpose, His story.

That matters—because the people we serve aren't just looking for peace; they're looking for solid ground. Many arrive with years of confusion and spiritual drift. What they need isn't a God who simply echoes their feelings, but a God who anchors their lives.

And honestly? So do we.

This isn't just a ministry principle—it's a life posture. Whether in your work, your family, your church, or your quiet moments of prayer, the question still matters: Who is this for? Is this being shaped around what's comfortable, or around what's faithful?

Because this isn't our party.

It's not even our story.

It's God's world—His kingdom, His glory.

By grace, we get to share this good news with the world.

• *Chaplain Jon Nichols*

**If worship is about honoring God, then our role isn't to pick what feels meaningful—it's to listen for what pleases Him.**

# Getting ready for school!



You can help support our kids with new clothes and shoes for school.

**Now through August 19th**

To adopt a student contact **Vikkilyn** at [vikkilyn.rolfs@sheltered.org](mailto:vikkilyn.rolfs@sheltered.org)

## Christmas in July FOOD DRIVE

Open House Ministries is teaming up with Positive Life Radio and local churches for a food and shelter needs drive.

You can help! For fundraiser details and drop-off locations go to [www.plr.org](http://www.plr.org)

Together we can raise awareness and strengthen families in our community.



### SHELTER NEEDS TOURS & TALKS

Diapers sizes 4, 5 & 6  
Hair conditioner  
Clorox wipes  
Paper towels  
8.5 x 11 Copy paper  
Bottled water  
Canned meat  
One-pound packages of hamburger

Want to see Open House Ministries up close?  
Join us for a First Friday Tour!  
Noon to 1 pm  
To sign up, contact us at [events@sheltered.org](mailto:events@sheltered.org)



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