



**OPEN HOUSE
MINISTRIES**

www.sheltered.org

P.O. Box 242
Vancouver, WA 98666
(360) 737-0300

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I have set my rainbow
in the clouds, and it will
be the sign of the
covenant between me
and the earth.
Gen 9:13 (NIV)

Connections

March, 2018

Look Inside!

The Potter's Prize

CHARLEYN AND HER FAMILY

In my eight years of serving at Open House, I am struck by a simple metaphor: God is a Master Potter, forming and reforming lives, taking our failures and recasting them into a beautiful redeemed life.

The Master Potter readies his wheel for the unformed clay, wets his hands, and spins the wheel. Broad hands apply gentle pressure, gradually coaxing the formless mud into a somewhat rounder shape. Slowly spinning, the hands begin to interrupt formlessness — pressing firmly, stretching carefully, forming the clay into more than could be imagined by everyone - except the Master. And so it was for Charleyn.

Today when you walk into the Wheel Deals Bike Shop at Open House, it will be Charleyn who will greet you. Her eyes sparkle as she tells you about her family. Her two boys, Angel and Gabriel, are young handsome men in high school, while her two daughters, Precious and Celestine, are beautiful middle-schoolers.



Having successfully qualified to participate in the Job Coaching program, she has future hope of working at Wheel Deals Bicycles, finding



an apartment and financially supporting her young family.

***A homeless single parent addict
with four children, she was
at the end of her options.***

Yet less than three years ago, you would have found this young, single mother spinning badly out of control. Lurking underneath being homeless, aimless and lonely was her well-hidden addiction to methamphetamine; she was caught in a vicious cycle of masking the real issues behind her broken life. She was at the end of her options. In desperation, Charleyn reached out to a local pastor who referred her into Open House Ministries.

Once she arrived at Open House, Charleyn isolated in her room. She was not willing to admit that she had a drug addiction. Sad and depressed, she remained distant and aloof. Her time at the Shelter was awkward and she was very resistant to all help,

(Continued on page 2)

Our Prodigal God

Chaplain's Corner - March, 2018

The casket, hewn from pine planks by prison inmates, seizes the attention of each attendee. Yet, this memorial was not about the death of Billy Graham as much as the life of his Savior, Jesus. Tens of millions watch the memorial service, with each of the Graham children sharing their vantage point of life as the "Pastor's kid." Ruth, the third of the five children, however, shares an unexpected story of betrayal, a collapsed marriage, and a rebound marriage with a second divorce. Just how would her father respond?

Ruth recalls the day that she drove home, her car halted at the top of the driveway, and her dad was waiting there for her - smiling, with arms wide open, simply stating, "Welcome home, Ruth!" That gracious embrace washed away the accumulated fears of this day. Yet, Ruth tells how she was more warmed by the warm embers of her father's love and grace in her brokenness than by all the brilliant fires of her childhood.

Ruth's story recasts the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15). There, Jesus tells of another family - broken by both

a wayward younger son and an embittered older son. Unexpectedly, the father's love restores the younger son back after his journey through heartbreak. But this imaginary story is more about the character of the Father than of the sons. According to Pastor Tim Keller, it is the Father who is prodigal - defined as "*extravagantly wasteful*." This is our GOD, who continues to pour out His love in extravagantly wasteful ways today, through the Gift of His Son, Jesus.

Routinely, Open House Ministries shares the Father's love by welcoming people into our waiting arms. Each person is a treasure in the rough. Today, a young, badly broken and addicted family enters the shelter, greeted not with scorn and reproach, but with the *extravagantly wasteful love of Jesus*. "*We love because He loved us first*" (I John 4:19).

Thank you for the light of your love for this ministry, as we shine together in dark places.

Mark Roskam, Chaplain



The Potter's Prize (*Charleyn and her family - continued from page 1*)

culminating in a hasty departure from the Shelter one night with her girls. She quickly realized the foolishness of her choice, and asked for another chance. Grace prevailed and she finally began to work the program, remaining clean and sober for the rest of her time at Open House as she finished her program.

After leaving the shelter, nine months later, Charleyn relapsed. Her kids were suffering again under her bad choices, and

***Charleyn now sees that God
used those hardest times
to profoundly change her life.***

she knew that she was breaking her children's hearts. This time, though, it could not go on. She knew something had to change. Charleyn admitted that she was powerless over her addiction, and in great brokenness, began to pray to God as never before. She surrendered her life to God. And that is when the Potter began to start over with Charleyn.

Charleyn and her family returned to Open House late in

2017, with a new Case Management Action Plan to reunite the family, keep the kids in school and get the addiction recovery help the whole family needed. Most of all, with the solid base of faith, support from the entire staff and Open House community, today the family is thriving. Charleyn now sees that God used those hardest times to profoundly change her life. She states, "I am able to see how much I took my kids for granted. I am grateful to Open House and to GOD for not giving up on me. I am closer to Him than ever before."



Because of you, the Charleyn's family was able to have more time for the Master Potter to reform and reshape them — both figuratively and literally.

***"Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay,
and you are our Potter" (Is.64:8).***

By Mark Roskam, Chaplain

When They Are in Your Care - Part III

Going to School - Reflections from Vikkilyn Rolfs, Director of Day Care and Preschool



How do you prepare a child to go from homelessness into a mainstream school and do well? It's not that easy. Imagine that you are five years old and about to enter kindergarten for the first time. All the other boys and girls are nervously lined up in their new clothes, backpacks, new haircut, a blanket and money for snacks. But imagine how you would feel if you are homeless, living in a car. You didn't get a bath last night and you can't remember the last time you had a haircut. Not only are there no new clothes, but your clothes actually smell really bad. No backpack, no school supplies, you stand out. You are the homeless kid.



But that is only the beginning of the pain. When the school tests you for basic communication or cognitive levels, you fail miserably. Using correct sentence structure? What's that? Math and numbers? Too confusing. And when other kids pick on you, you erupt into a rage and strike out. In the classroom, you are in a hole as it is "three strikes and you're out," and you quickly fail at communication, math and social skills. What is more, the downward spiral continues because each time you move or change schools, which happens routinely in your life, you fall another 3-6 months behind your peers.

Beginning school can be a nightmare for children who have been homeless. Children who are victims of Adverse Childhood Experiences (or ACEs) start at a disadvantage, grossly unprepared for basic WA state standards and guidelines or early

childhood development. When chronic conditions of domestic violence, substance abuse, emotional or physical neglect or violence, homelessness, incarceration of a parent, or depression in a caregiver are part of life, the child enters school at a cognitive disadvantage with long reaching implications impacting their learning and their health. For example, it has been proven that repeated exposure to ACEs impairs cognitive processes on a physiological level. And that is the tip of the iceberg.

And so the child arrives at Open House. Though adults often see homelessness through the eyes of other adults, these experiences are so very turbulent for the kids – and often they lack the mental, emotional and spiritual resources to get through it

all. At Open House Ministries, we are grateful for your support that provides a "soft and safe place to land" for our kids. We are so thankful that Jesus loves our children in a special way and that "GOD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit" (Ps.34:18). Every day, you



can see God's work in the broken hearts of our kids, particularly as they battle through the "stacked deck" of ACEs. Praise be to God for His faithful care for His kids!



(To be continued in the next edition of "Open House Connections".)

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES ("ACEs") HARM CHILDREN'S BRAINS

ACEs are serious childhood traumas such as emotional, physical, sexual abuse, neglect, household violence, incarceration of a family member, or homelessness. ACEs result in toxic stress that can harm a child's brain and prevent the child from learning, appropriate socialization, and can also result in long-term health problems. Exposure to childhood ACEs increases child's the risk of teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, depression, suicide attempts, heart and liver disease and more.

Source ~ 2017, Spokane Regional Health District Community and Family Services Division



*The Open House Ministries
Board Of Directors
cordially invites you to*



Thursday, May 10, 2018 • 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
Warehouse 23, 100 Columbia Street #102, • Vancouver, WA 98660

A fundraising event to benefit families at Open House Ministries

Early Bird Pricing available through March 31, 2018

Single Admission \$55. Sponsored Table of 10: \$500
(After April 1: Single Admission \$65, Table of 10 \$600)

Order on line NOW at www.sheltered.org or call our Development Office at 360-356-3770.

Thank You For Nominating Us!

*Thank you for your support in this year!
Please remember Open House Ministries and our Retail
Shops on 13th when you are voting this month:*



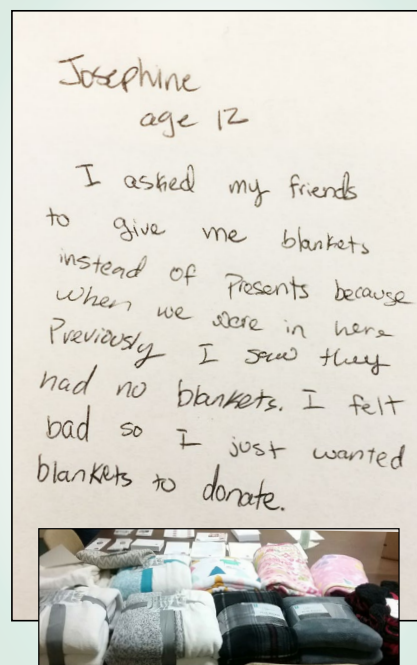
Open House Ministries ... Category: Best Non-Profit

Wheel Deals Bicycles ... Category: Best Bike Store/Bicycle Shop

Second Hand Solutions Thrift Store ... Category: Best Thrift Store

Voting is open March 18-April 1 on line at www.bestofclarkcounty.com.

Thanks for your compassion, Josephine!



CURRENT SHELTER NEEDS:

Deodorant, razors, shaving cream
men's boxers or briefs (sizes 32-38),
men's undershirts, size (M- XXL), toilet paper.