




**OPEN HOUSE
MINISTRIES**

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**"For I know the
plans I have for
you, plans to prosper
you and not to
harm you, plans
to give you hope
and a future."**

Jeremiah 29:11

Connections

March, 2019



Alexis' Story

Three years ago, Alexis had it all – the house, new cars and a beautiful daughter. Her husband, Mark, had an excellent job, and she was a stay-at-home mom and a member of the school's PTO.

Then, the couple lost everything.

"I was really tired – keeping up the perfect house, participating in every school event. I started hanging out with the wrong people and using drugs with neighbors. I even introduced my husband to drugs," says Alexis of both of their addictions.

Alexis became pregnant despite her marriage crumbling. She moved into a drug house and her daughter was taken into CPS custody. Eventually, Alexis was living in a tent down the street from Open House Ministries.

"I was so hungry and living with a stranger. My daughter was in foster care, and I knew my unborn son would be taken away too. I was absolutely heartbroken and at rock bottom," states Alexis.

***"Bottom line, they taught me how
to be a successful adult again."***

Committed to getting clean, Alexis set out to repair her marriage and get her family back. She started visiting Open House Ministries and requesting space.

"Ultimately, I was assigned to Room 312. It was the same numbers as my birthday—March

12th. I just knew it was meant to be," exclaims Alexis happily on her Open House placement.

Tough work ensued over the next six months – outpatient addiction classes, Bible studies, chapel, work, and counseling sessions.

Alexis and Mark worked tirelessly with Open House's Case Management to comply with CPS and get their daughter back.

"At first, I thought it was crazy to have to be accountable for every minute – signing in and out, morning checks, and classes.

They literally restructured my entire life, but I eventually realized that everything they ask you to do was for a reason. Bottom line, they taught me how to be a successful adult again," says Alexis.



Today, the family is thriving. The couple is clean and together working on their marriage daily while 11-year-old daughter, Trinity, and one-year-old son, Mace, love living at Open House and have made lots of friends. Mark is gainfully employed in

(Continued on page 2)



First Love

Chaplain's Corner - March, 2019

In 1997, I was a widowed father of two precious girls. I loved a young widow, Gini, and her two-year old daughter, though she was in Pennsylvania and I was in Colorado. Though we had never met face-to-face, we grew a deep love, via letters, phone calls and nightly prayers alone. Finally, I asked my girls for permission to send flowers to Gini for Valentine's Day, to which they promptly said, "no." However, when I asked to send a plant instead, they gave their blessing! So, I immediately sent an \$85 "mother of all" plants, which the delivery man struggled to even carry to her doorway. *Now that was love!*

Yet, "We love because He loved us first" (I John 4:19). In his classic book, "In the Name of Jesus," Henri Nouwen speaks of Jesus' love as our "First Love." It is the perfect love of Jesus that runs so amazingly deep, that "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Ultimately, this is a counter-cultural love that can fundamentally change our human patterns of pursuing lesser loves. Rather than a life dominated by these "second" loves, Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount,

shows us a world where this First Love transforms our damaged love lives into a new way of loving.

Though Gini and I were both deeply wounded by regrets of the past and by death itself, as we married, we promised to love with "no regrets." But none of us can simply wish that to be true. It is only when the love of Jesus begins to transform us, that our history of living in "lesser loves" learns a "new way to be human." Rather than living in regret as "damaged goods," all of us finally have an opportunity for the "Real Thing."

Open House Ministries is a Christ-centered ministry, which is founded on the love of Jesus. Pray with us that His Love would transform a Community of people greatly influenced in the past by lesser loves. Walk with us on the Journey of being radically changed by the love of Jesus. And know that we love you and thank you for your tangible support of this thriving ministry and Community.

*With Love & Fond Affection,
Mark Roskam, Chaplain*



Alexis' Story (continued from page 1)



construction and Alexis is working part-time at Second Hand Solutions Thrift Store, one of Open House's job skills program. They are researching apartments to move into later this year.

"Before I lost everything, I would see a homeless person standing on the street corner and might think 'go get a job.' But going through what I went through—becoming addicted and homeless—I have much more compassion for people. I never thought

I'd go from tent city to living at Open House and becoming clean and sober, but I did," says Alexis of her newfound perspective.

Alexis attributes much of her success to the support and stability that Open House Ministries and its staff provided.

"I never would have made it without Open House. It's amazing to have people who care about you and what is going on in your life. If you have something on your chest, you can vent," says Alexis.





Touching Residents' Lives In Many Ways

Vikkilyn Rolfs – Director of Daycare, Zumba Instructor



There are so many wonderful things that happen in the lives of our residents here at Open House in the name of Jesus. We offer a holistic approach which touches every aspect of their lives, both spiritual and emotional. I've always said that if you are here at OHM for any reason, you have an appointment with Jesus. We offer chapel and courses in spiritual formation, GED classes, life skills, recovery classes, mental health counseling, conflict resolution, and we even offer physical education classes



to get bodies moving. We also have **Music and Movement** for our pre-school aged children. A wonderful volunteer named Aspen Tufares, from **Dance Evolution Studios** in Camas,

comes every week and takes our kiddos to our new building for stretching, tumbling, and dance movement. They love it! On Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:00-5:00 p.m. I teach Zumba classes. It is so fulfilling to me to see these ladies dancing and smiling. I had one gal tell me that when she first got to Open House she was diagnosed with clinical depression but since being involved in the Zumba class, she feels the depression lifting. Another gal wouldn't even look up at me when I talked to her, but then she finally realized that if she came to class, I'd quit bugging her about it. She fell in love with it! She wanted to show people how it changed her life so we did a Flash Mob at her wedding reception.



Here are a couple of our residents' testimonies.

My name is Jami. I was a resident at Open House Ministries, which is a homeless shelter in Vancouver, WA. I came in a whole different person than when I left. In the beginning Vikkilyn was my inspiration. She would say "You coming to Zumba tonight, right?" and I would reply "I'll try." At first classes were hard but then I loved it. I have not only lost weight, gained muscle but I have also gained confidence, self-esteem and self worth. Now I do not miss a class unless I have to. I had a blast being able to attend three Master Classes thanks to the generosity of Kim Witherspoon. When she hosts a class any women from Open House who want to attend, can for free. These Zumba instructors are the most energetic, friendly and confident women (plus one guy) I have ever met. I want to give a special thank you to Open House Ministries, Vikkilyn Rolfs (instructor at Open House) and visiting instructors.



How Zumba makes me feel - by Tina

Zumba makes me feel alive! I feel young, exciting, and new. I feel joyful and happy. I feel blessed to be a part of something. I feel God's love fill the room. I feel grateful for being provided with Zumba clothes and shoes. I feel very thankful Open House Ministries gives us the opportunity to do Zumba here. "Girls just want to have fun!" and Vikkilyn makes that possible for me, with learning different Zumba moves to fun music. All Glory to God the Father!



We've Remodeled!

We've completed the remodel of our
Second Hand Solutions Thrift Store
and **Common Grounds Coffee Shop!**

The store is one of our job skills training programs.

100% of the proceeds benefit
Open House Ministries and its residents.

Stop by and see what's new!

<https://www.sheltered.org/second-hand-solutions-thrift-store/>

<https://www.facebook.com/secondhandsolutionsohm/>



Publishing With A Heart

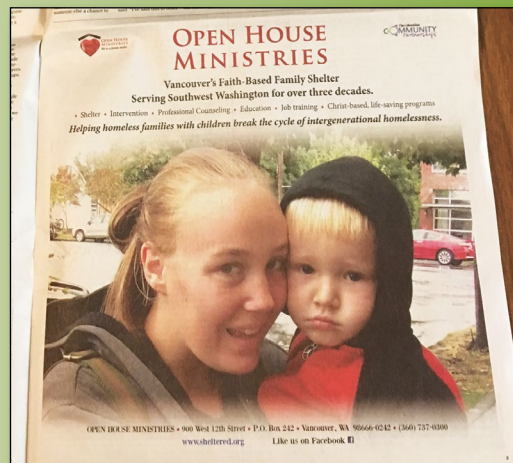
A HUGE thank you to *The Columbian* newspaper and
Columbian Publishing Company.

Periodically, they generously run free ads for Open House
as well as other amazing non-profits in the area.

Thank you, *Columbian*, for helping us to get the word out!



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



Paper, Paper, And More Paper!

Recently, *Waddell & Reed Financial Advisors* hosted a shredding event in their parking lot for clients to shred documents free of charge. Clients were asked to bring an item to donate to Open House residents. *Waddell & Reed* also graciously shredded all of our documents – 23 boxes – saving us hundreds of dollars. Thank you, *Waddell & Reed* and clients, for your generosity, thoughtfulness and creative giving.



SHELTER NEEDS:

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



**Please consider Open House
Ministries in your will or trust.**