



**OPEN HOUSE
MINISTRIES**

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*"Surely God
is my help;
the Lord is
the one who
sustains me."*

Psalm 54:4

Connections

March 2020

Look Inside!

Hard work and grace are giving Carrie a second chance in life

Carrie came from a good family. A life of drugs, stealing and being without a home was not the life carved out for her or one she would need to overcome. But a series of bad choices, including rebelling against the people who loved her, had disastrous consequences.

"I was in and out of jail. I got evicted. I always asked, 'Why did I do this to my life? To my kids?'" Her son, seeing the contrast between Carrie and the other adults in his life would say to her, "What kind of person would do this?" Her self-worth was gone.

"Not having a home and having nothing but a backpack on my back, and coming from the family I did, it was so hard," Carrie says. "I did not know how to get help without my family doing it."

What did being homeless look like to her? "While I never 'slept' on the streets, I'd be outside walking around," Carrie explained. "I knew a lot of people in Vancouver, so I'd walk around looking for someone to stay with." Then Carrie would wear out her welcome, she said. "Eventually, it was, 'Strap on your bags and leave.'"

Her two children stayed with grandparents during these wandering years, she tells. Then, a final round of jail sobered her up. At the end of time served for stealing trinkets and

avoiding a warrant, a guard in the jail re-entry program referred a change-seeking Carrie to Open House Ministries.

"I was so done," she says. Carrie was more than ready to work hard and get her life and family back.

"I got out of jail in the morning and by the end of the day, I had a room and a fancy bunk bed and they (Open House Ministries) even let me get clothes at the thrift shop," Carrie recalls. "That was it. I haven't looked back since."

RENEWAL AND REUNIFICATION

That was in 2016. Today, Carrie is 43, sober and a graduate of Open House

Ministries' program. She left residency at the shelter and now keeps a home of her own with one of her children in a housing unit overseen by Open House Ministries. She has renewed relationships with some family members and reunification hopes with others. It has been and continues to be a long road. Restoring trust takes time.

After working for a year-plus at Panera Bread, she now enjoys employment at Secondhand Solutions Thrift Store. Amanda Goforth, manager of Secondhand Solutions, says, "Carrie adds a lot to the thrift store, but



*Carrie and one of her sons are
in a home of their own.*

Regaining perspective

Chaplain's Corner / By Mark Roskam, OHM chaplain

"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 ESV)

In the hard times of my life, both God and His friends have spoken deep truths to me. In the early 1990s, my late wife Audrey and I were visited often by our pastor, and these times were always when we were in great trouble with her health. Faithfully, he reminded us to "give thanks in all circumstances." What I learned then, I sometimes struggle to continue today — to rejoice, pray and give thanks. Always.

Unbeknownst to me, I so often continue to manage "my world" according to what I think is best. Gratefully, God reminds me that this life is not about me and my hopes, dreams and aspirations. It is about His glory in my lifetime. Recently, Gini, my wife of 23 years, has been struggling with protracted health problems. I am again given the opportunity to rejoice, pray and give thanks in this time of struggle. However, it requires my willingness to allow His glory to shine, rather than to stew in my frustrations.

Jim Elliot, one of five missionaries killed while serving

in Operation Auca, an attempt to evangelize the Huaorani people of Ecuador, once said, "Wherever you are, be all there." Sadly, it is sometimes easier for me to be busy and elsewhere than to be quiet and available. For example, I have been building a model airplane with my grandson, Hunter, for the past month. But I need to be wholly present when we are together. Just days ago, I again confessed my penchant for running ahead of God and missing the people right in front of me. This yielding to His higher plan keeps me in the moment, rather than running ahead into my plan for something or someone else just ahead on the road of life.

One of my life quotes is from Oswald Chambers, who stated, "What we call the process, God calls the end." God is most concerned about the here and now of the journey — today. It is in our *today's* that people seek our attention, touch and listening ear. And so I pray, "God, let me, let us be wholly present and open-

hearted right where you have us, particularly when the road is tough."

Thank you for listening to my heart.

Mark Roskam



Gini and Mark Roskam enjoying botanical gardens in Kauai.

Donors' support can continue, grow

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. And because gifts grow through the years, virtually any amount could have a magnified impact on our ability to continue to carry out our mission.

You can create a lasting legacy through planned giving. After providing for family, friends and others, many individuals also choose to remember charitable organizations that are important to them. If you believe in the mission of Open House Ministries, this is a significant and lasting way for you to help ensure we

have a strong financial future.

Planned gifts can provide many benefits and we would be delighted to discuss the various options that might be

***"For we brought nothing into the world,
and we can take nothing out of it."***

1 Timothy 6:7

best for you. We have expertise that will help you decide the most beneficial way for you to make a planned gift and assist in helping you get your financial affairs in order. ♥

Please contact us at 360-737-0300 or email ross.merritt@sheltered.org.



TAX-WISE GIVING

(Continued from page 1)

the way she connects with our residents is just amazing!” Amanda continues, “She has a way about her that allows her to come alongside them and give them guidance by sharing her experience, strength and hope. She really leads by the way she lives. She is living proof that our program works if you give it all you got.”



Carrie couldn't agree more that going through the steps with Open House Ministries, giving it your all, can be life changing. Her message to current and prospective members is, “You gotta step out of your way and give this a chance and follow the rules. ... You can achieve so much! But you have to put the work in and be willing to go with the program. They know what they're doing,” Carrie says, convinced. “I got to come back to being the person I was taught to be — the person I was made to be. But I have to put in the work.”

While Carrie used to blame the state Department of Corrections and her family's tough love for her choice to do drugs to deal with life, she now takes responsibility for her past, present and future.

“And what about God in all this?” Carrie asks mid-interview. “I couldn't have done any of this without God!”

She continues, “He could have been helping me all along. He probably was helping me. I probably shouldn't be here today. But I am.”

Success has replaced the pack on the back of this hard-working woman. ❤️

Job training at Open House Ministries

Find the help you've been looking for here!

Since Open House Ministries is more than a shelter, our residents are given an opportunity to strengthen a variety of life skills while receiving housing and stability for their families. Part of the process includes equipping residents with current, marketable job skills. Then, when they graduate from the Open House Ministries' program that has been laid out for them, they have an easier time re-entering the workforce.

SUPPORTERS CAN HELP!

We're hoping to build a network of potential employers for hard-working Open House Ministries' graduates.

When asked what she has gained through job training at Open House Ministries, Helen, a current resident, says, “I have gained back my confidence, my self-worth and the realization that I can be an active member in the workforce.”

Rachelle, another resident taking part in our job coaching program, says the program has taught her humility. A dental assistant before her time at the shelter, Rashelle says her job training helped her see value in all types of work and she knows who you are is more important than what you do. She's grateful for the time she's had here to explore different modes

of work and thinks she has found another career path better suited to her.

THE RIGHT FIT IS KEY

Finding employment can be full-time work, even for people without gaps on their résumé or challenging backgrounds. Employers are often overwhelmed in this digital age, too. Even a one-time job posting can overwhelm a small business with applications from people who lack the skills they're looking for.

Melissa Sponsler, job coach at Open House Ministries, would like to get into the employment matchmaking business. After helping homeless individuals develop skills

they need to maintain successful work, she would love the opportunity to connect supporters with potential employees. They have a solid work ethic she has witnessed. ❤️



(Continued on page 4)

Tours & Talks

Tours are available for anyone interested in learning more about Open House Ministries and seeing the shelter in action. Please contact Leslie Cook, our development coordinator, at 360-737-0300 to sign up for an already available tour date or to create one that works better. You can also sign up on our website: www.sheltered.org/tours/.



We schedule our tours at lunch time. Please join us and we'll provide a light lunch for you to enjoy!



**OPEN HOUSE
MINISTRIES**

Save the Date

Hope in Motion!

2020 Fundraiser Luncheon

Thursday, June 4 • 12 pm to 1 pm

Warehouse '23

100 Columbia St., Vancouver, WA

Sponsorship opportunities are available!

For more information, please contact Leslie Cook at 360-737-0300 or email leslie.cook@sheltered.org



(Continued from page 3)

"Residents who receive job training here have a promising track record already. Case managers watch and determine, 'Do they make it on time to classes? Do they find day care?'" Melissa works on a variety of what she calls "soft skills" with residents. Sometimes they need to practice being more consistent and on time. Sometimes they need more practice problem-solving. "They need the things that make one successful anywhere they go," Melissa says.

Other times, residents here need hands-on training cashiering or they need computer proficiency. Our on-site retail shops give adults the opportunity to gain customer service, sales, merchandising and production skills, as well as delivery or bike-repair experience.

CHANGED LIVES

"I see so many people change their lives here," Melissa said. "I get to work directly with those people; That means a lot to me." She thinks it would mean a lot to some prospective employers in the community, too. Job-matching would allow supporters

more interaction with inspiring people who have transformed their lives.

Ideal offerings would include various entry-level positions in customer service, merchandising, sales, reception, janitorial work and delivery driving. Seasonal work is not ideal, as residents graduating from Open House Ministries need consistency and reliable paychecks to start new lives for their families outside of the shelter.



*It's mopping day
for a job trainee at
Secondhand Solutions.*

"We'd love it if employers reached out to us," Melissa said. "Sometimes we don't have a match, but often, we do."

When asked about what was in this for supporters, Melissa said, "People relying on staffing agencies should check here first. I know residents' strengths, and we wouldn't refer anyone who has not been successful here."

Melissa is proud of her trainees. "I feel so blessed to get to be a part of our residents' journeys in rebuilding their lives and watching the amazing transformation God does in their hearts and minds." ❤️

SHELTER NEEDS:

Blankets, hair conditioner, deodorant, razors and men's and children's clothing. Thank you!



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