



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

# Connections

May 2020

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### *At the Heart of Open House Ministries*

**G**reetings. I hope this message finds you and your family healthy and safe. Like many of you, we are feeling the effects from the COVID-19 outbreak and are adjusting to new regulations, focused on staying positive as we respond to the illness.

Healing at Open House Ministries is built on a strong history. Families who arrive here from difficult situations learn new life skills through Christ-centered programs and, in time, emerge out of poverty equipped to stand on their own.

As Mother's Day approaches we are grateful for everyone supporting our young families and giving so generously to Open House Ministries.

Our residents regularly express their gratitude for having a healthy, encouraging place for their families to stay. They're stepping up to help where they can, recognizing the need to work together so Open House Ministries can continue to be a safe place to heal.

While kids are out of school, creative projects and family time are helping to strengthen the bonds they have with their parents and we are so proud of them. Training procedures for classes have adjusted and residents are continuing to get the vital teaching and counseling necessary to graduate while practicing safe distancing.

Our pantry has been blessed with donations from caring volunteers, community partners, and donors who faithfully support Open House Ministries, knowing our residents are safer staying on campus while others do the shopping.

In the meantime, we make it our goal to stay hopeful as the benefits of trusting in God's plan draw us closer in spirit, knowing it won't be too long before our thrift store can reopen and our dedicated volunteers will be able to return.

We want to thank all of you for your prayers and continued support. Your love and faithfulness are at the heart of Open House Ministries.

Blessings,

*Reneé Stevens*

Reneé Stevens  
Executive Director



## Community Reimagined!

Within our community at Open House Ministries, we know there is more going on around us than what we imagine. In a favorite book, *The Face of the Deep*, Paul Pastor asserts, "Community, love and belonging are not aberrations, but the root nature of reality." By God's grace we see these foundations growing deeper, even in the midst of isolation and the *be safe, stay home* national directive.

Our families live in small apartments, each complemented by a six foot by six foot "balcony" in the common area. Shelter life is relegated to family activities within their "space," having several scheduled and staggered one-hour times per day to go outside. All classes, meetings, and chapel are held on each floor individually. Let's just say that there is much *togetherness*. In spite of these challenges, there is a vibrant pulse to our community.

Recently, one young mother realized the moral damage done to others through her poor moral choices of the past. In her quiet manner, she accepted Jesus and has embarked on asking the Word to change her heart and relationships. A young couple with several children in foster care, walk steadily in their faith, treasuring the few hours that they get by video chat with the kids, as they wait for their return home. A young mother, who is waiting for her kids to come home, now sees this time of isolation as an opportunity. She feels blessed to have focused time to better understand herself, find her faith, and deepen her trust in God.

In the Chinese language, the word for *crisis* translates to *opportunity* in English. As we lead a Christ-centered community through a crisis period, we are heartened by these God-given opportunities. God's heart is one of redemption and restoration through Jesus. Though most national headlines elicit fear and foreboding, we recognize God is at work in us, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. (Phil.2:13)

We pray the unusual pressures of a pandemic will also be a God-given opportunity for you, cleverly disguised as a crisis.

With love and fond affection,



Mark Roskam  
OHM Chaplain



## SHELTER NEEDS

- Clorox wipes and hand soap
  - Canned and boxed non-perishable foods
  - Razors • Diapers: Size 5 & 6
- Thank You!

## COVID-19 RELIEF

If you would like to help Open House Ministries with a special COVID-19 donation and help us bridge our financial gap during the virus outbreak, please go to [www.sheltered.org](http://www.sheltered.org) or call us at 360-737-0300

## TAX-WISE GIVING

When Pastor John MacArthur was invited to be on the Larry King show after 9/11 he was asked, "What is the take away from all this?" Pastor MacArthur answered, "we are all going to die and we don't know when." Maybe you are asking what the "take away" is from this current crisis in our county.

If it has been a while since you completed, updated or even have a will/trust in place, now might be the time to address one of the most important decisions for proper transfer of assets. Your homegoing will be made easier for those you love, and give you an opportunity to support ministries that are important to you.

Open House Ministries has a simple Inventory form and other information that we would be glad to give you to help in this matter.

Please contact us at:  
360-737-0300 or email  
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