

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

God's Unchanging Love

Greetings from Open House Ministries. May is a month of great promise as spring and warmer days bring so much beauty to the Pacific Northwest. I'm amazed each year when our trees turn green and are covered with blooms. We see God's workmanship come to life in a special way, reminding us that He is here, right in front of us, blessing us with what we need. And I wonder how much we take God's blessings for granted.

Watching spring arrive also fills me with hope, knowing even though seasons change, we can be assured God doesn't change. His presence remains even when winter days are long and our skies are gray. And just as the beauty of God is here for everyone to enjoy, God's love is available to everyone who reaches out to Him.

This Mother's Day, as we recognize God's great gift of life through our own families, we can trust in His faithful promises of love for us as His children. Scripture says nothing can separate us from God's love and that same great love is lavished on us as we are called children of God. (1 John 3:1) What could be greater than knowing the God who created such beauty also sees us as His children and His love for us will never change?

May also brings our Annual Hope Fund-raiser for the families at Open House Ministries. This year we will be celebrating the rich history of our ministry with stories from past residents, volunteers, and staff. I hope you will join us for *35 Years of Hope* online at www.sheltered.org. Our May 19th event will be a virtual celebration looking back on what God has done through Open House Ministries and



where He is guiding us to help families find stable housing for the future. I know you will be blessed.

Thank you for your prayers and support for our ministry. Together we share in the beautiful blessings of God, helping to restore families who need God's healing and love, and creating a stronger community for His glory.

Blessings,

Renee Stevens

Renee Stevens
Executive Director



MAY BLESSINGS

*This is my wish for you:
Comfort on difficult days,
smiles when sadness
intrudes, rainbows
to follow the clouds,
laughter to kiss your lips,
sunsets to warm your
heart, hugs when spirits
sag, beauty for your eyes
to see, friendships to
brighten your being, faith
that you can believe,
confidence for when you
doubt, courage to know
yourself, patience to
accept the truth, Love to
complete your life.*

*Ralph Waldo Emerson
(1803-1882)*

*Every good and perfect
gift is from above, coming
down from the Father of
the heavenly lights, who
does not change like
shifting shadows.*

~ James 1:17

*Rejoice in the Lord
always. I will say it
again: Rejoice! Let your
gentleness be evident to
all. The Lord is near.*

~ Philippians 4:4-5

Mysterious and Miraculous

There are a number of powerful stories about women in the Bible. Women, led by the Spirit of God, spoke boldly and acted with great courage. Women like Ruth, Deborah, Miriam, Queen Esther, Hannah, Elizabeth, and Mary, the mother of Jesus. Each of them has much to teach us about walking with God. None of these women were perfect, and there is incredible grace in that truth. The trap of comparison and the condemning lie of shame that says "you are not good enough, smart enough, or strong enough" erodes the goodness of the gospel, which declares that God calls imperfect people, saves imperfect people (despite their imperfections), and He entrusted His words, His plans, His work into the hands of imperfect people.

We celebrate the reality that God calls and saves sinners. Yet, it has been my observation that we tend to scratch our heads that God entrusts sinners with his work. Why would God do this? I wonder this every time I reflect on the incarnation of Jesus. God the Father entrusted Jesus—God the Son—to an imperfect human mother. Oh, how amazing is the grace of God. We are not only saved by grace; we live, serve, and walk by grace.

Womanhood and motherhood are many things. Many of which I can't even begin to understand and whole-heartedly put in the category of mysterious and miraculous. When I asked our residents what motherhood means to them, this is how the women responded:

“Being a mother is not an easy job, but it's my job. It is the job God has blessed me with even on days when I question, 'How am I a mother, God?' It's a blessing to have the responsibility to teach them about God so that one day they will step into their full potential for what God has for them.”



“Being a mother means the world. It's having a beautiful innocent piece of myself that I get to help shape, teach, nurture and protect. I'm so grateful that I'm getting to be a part of those everyday little moments. So many unforgettable memories. Some frustrating, some cute and special. Some are just genuinely funny. It's the most real thing I've ever done, and at times it's so hard, but I wouldn't exchange it for anything.”

“Being a mom means being a role model, hug-giver, cheek-kisser, boo-boo fixer, advice-giver, and miracle worker.”

“Being a mother means no matter how you're feeling—some days even like giving up—the Lord Jesus holds your hand and gives you strength to carry on.”

“Being a mother means guiding them to be Christ-like.”

As I listened to these reflections, one word came to mind; ministry. Motherhood is ministry. It's a calling and a holy one. One that God, in His grace, has entrusted to women.

I'm grateful for the women and mothers in my life. I'm thankful for their many sacrifices and their influence on me. To all the women and mothers, thank you! ●
Chaplain Jon Nichols

Artesian Well

An artesian well is known as a well that never runs dry. Endowments are like those kinds of wells since they never run dry. When people set up endowments they are able to benefit charities like Open House Ministries forever. That is because the principal is never used, only the earnings or a set percentage (for example 5%) from the gifted amount. The idea is the gift will always be available to be used since only a percentage of the endowment will be spent on a regular basis. This is an attractive idea for those who wish to make a larger gift, for example a gift from your will/trust, appreciated stocks or real estate.

Open House Ministries has a policy on the administration and setting up of endowments and we would be glad to share that information with you. If you would like a further explanation or brochure please contact Jean LaCrosse at Open House Ministries, 360-737-0300 or email: ross.merritt@sheltered.org Thank you for giving to Open House Ministries. ●

Please consider including Open House Ministries in your will or estate plan.

JOB OPENINGS

Facilities Staff
Full-time position available

Children's Program Coordinator
Full-time position available

Bicycle Shop Staff
Full-time position available

Child Care Worker
Two Part-time positions available

Contact careers@sheltered.org for an application

SHELTER NEEDS

- Paper towels
- Industrial size powerwasher
- Men's gloves
- 8.5 x 11 Copier Paper
- Pull ups of all sizes



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

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