




**OPEN HOUSE
MINISTRIES**

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

*Filling God-shaped
holes at Open House* 1

Chaplain's Corner 2

Tax-wise Giving 2

Giving is contagious 3

*Donor Relations
Officer sought* 4

*Thrift shop
volunteers needed!* 4

Tours & Talks 4

*2019 Community
Block Party* 4

Shelter Needs 4

*In every thing
give thanks:
for this is the
will of God in
Christ Jesus
concerning you.*

1 Thess. 5:18

Connections

November 2019



Filling God-shaped holes at Open House

Life was anything but picture perfect for Melissa as a teenager and young woman. The Portland native was in and out of treatment for heroin addiction since she was 16 years old.

Last year, the 29-year-old successfully completed treatment at an in-patient treatment center in Portland. Afterward, Melissa found herself homeless and miserable, living in desperation.

"I didn't understand why I felt sad, lonely and empty. I thought that when I was clean and sober everything would be OK. At the time, I felt emotionally bankrupt," she concedes.

Melissa didn't know the next step in her recovery.

"I was not doing drugs, but I still had character defects that I was acting on and needed to change," she says.

Melissa applied for and received a spot at Open House Ministries. She and her young daughter moved in. Immediately, she met Pastor Mark Roskam. He knew exactly how she felt.

"There was a hole in my heart and I didn't know how to fill it. Mark said the hole was meant for Jesus. It just took my breath away," recalls Melissa of the aha moment.

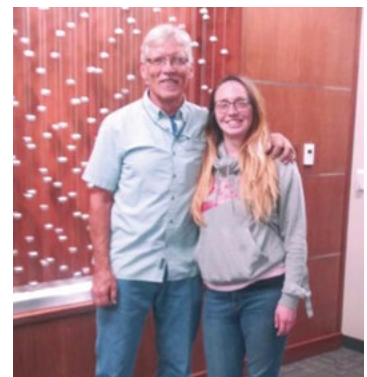
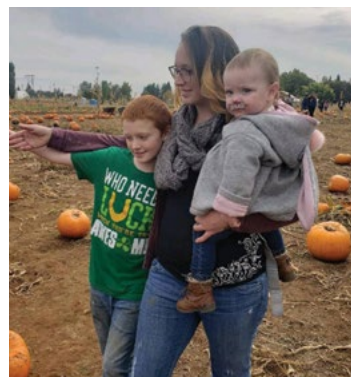
She adds, "I quickly realized what was lacking in my recovery was the absence of a relationship with God."

Through Bible study and prayer, Melissa started moving forward, continuing her journey of sobriety and whole healing. And for the last eight months, Open House has been able to provide Melissa with stability and peace of mind, in addition to a safe home, job-skill opportunities, finance classes and parenting support.

When talking about fellow residents and staff at Open House, Melissa says, "I have a family who loves and cares for me and my soul — and my daughter. They understand what I have been going through."

Today, Melissa is 18 months clean and sober and working on reunification with her two older sons who live with her mother nearby. She visits them frequently and enjoys having fun and laughing with them. Melissa is also working full-time at a local restaurant as a server and grill cook. She's on the waitlist for Open House's transitional housing unit.

"With God in my recovery, I feel full. I feel like I can do this!" exclaims Melissa. ❤️



God's perfect view

Mark Roskam, Chaplain

Editor's note: Thank you for your prayers, concern and support of "Route 66: Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness." While on a cross-country bicycling trip raising funds and awareness for Open House Ministries and homeless families, Mark and Mike Roskam were involved in an unfortunate accident on Sept. 22. They had already completed about 1,000 miles of their 2,448-mile ride before this happened. And they had raised \$27,000 of their \$66,000 goal. This is a letter from Mark, our chaplain, about that experience.

The accident scene in Clinton, Oklahoma, was strewn with debris. Through human eyes, it was chaotic. Bicycles lay along a two-lane highway, with one man knelt alongside a stricken brother. A damaged pickup truck sat crossways on the road, as on-lookers rushed to the scene. The unhurt cyclist cradled his brother, crying, "Jesus, help us!" and, "Mike, stay with me ... Mike ... help is on its way." Nearby, the distraught 73-year-old pickup truck driver, repeats, "Oh God, forgive me. What do I do, what do I do ...?"

Only moments before, my brother and I were riding in line, along the edge of Route 66, eager to arrive in Texas by the end of the day. Routinely, we would watch our rear view mirrors calling out vehicle locations. A calm, "Truck, back," was replaced with, "Mike!!!" as I saw the oncoming truck was coming into us. I screamed, only to see the truck slam into my brother, engulfing his bike and throwing him onto the truck's hood. As the vehicle braked, Mike was thrown forward, skidding down the road headfirst. I believed that I witnessed the death of my brother.

Yet God was in control. Against human odds, Mike had injuries limited to a concussion, facial wounds, road rash and whole body pain. Perhaps, as a friend said, we were only inches away from being a double fatality. But God was not a passive observer, rather an omnipotent and omniscient King, allowing limited harm for a greater good. Ultimately, He made it clear to us to cancel the Route 66 fundraising ride to create time and space to process, pray and heal.

"But You, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high," says Psalm 3:3. It was God's goodness not only to protect us, but to lead us in understanding His ways.

In the weeks since the accident, I know that this trial is about God and His glory, and not about me. At Open House Ministries, God routinely allows brokenness to achieve His greatest in lives. But then He "lifts our heads" to see Him clearly through these same losses.

Thank you for your prayers and loving support for us. Thank you even more for your support of the redemptive mission of Open House Ministries. I love you. ❤️



Endowments provide like artesian wells

An artesian well is a deep well, in which the water flows to the surface naturally and continuously provides. Endowments are like artesian wells. When people set up endowments, they are able to benefit charities such as Open House on an ongoing basis, forever.

The reason that happens is because the principal is never used, only the earnings are used or a set percentage from the gifted amount that has been allocated. The idea is the gift will always be available to be used since only a small amount

of the gift will ever be spent on a regular basis. This is an attractive idea for those who wish to make a larger gift to their favorite cause from their will or trust, appreciated stocks or real estate.

Open House has guidance available and a policy on the administration and setting up of endowments. If you would like further explanation or a brochure, please contact us at Open House. Call 360-737-0300 or email ross.merritt@sheltered.org. ❤️

Giving is contagious: Open House donors, volunteers, residents all catch the bug

“What impressed me — almost immediately — was the generosity of one resident to another,” says Samantha Crowning-shield, one of the many volunteers here at Open House Ministries. “Watching others give freely just blessed me. I knew this was where I belonged.”

Belonged she did. It is hard to imagine Open House without Samantha’s smile and laughter at the front desk. That’s where she is often planted during her hours spent at the shelter. There, she makes sure various donations we’re entrusted with go to the right place, answers phones and helps residents navigate their days. And she watches generosity in action, over and over again, she says.

Samantha first became familiar with Open House’s approach to caring for homeless families in 2015. A friend suggested they volunteer at the shelter, the two took a tour and within a few days, Open House asked Samantha to volunteer at the front desk. Samantha was not excited, she recalls. She wanted to be doing something else but agreed to fill the position sought because the need was there.

“Then I learned that the front desk was the place to be!” she shares. “You get to know all the residents and donors. It was awesome.” Eventually, Samantha began to teach Bible classes at Open House, so she now helps at the shelter two days a week.

She says she has a front-row seat watching residents live



life in community. She sees babies being passed around, held by everyone. “Resident kids at Open House are growing up with all these aunts and uncles. A bunch of caring adults,” she says. “One day, a resident ran in and got a bus pass for a stranger who needed one. If someone here needs a sandwich, a sandwich is given.”

All the generosity and caring she was witnessing prompted her and her husband Doug to change their trust to include Open House. “God put it on my heart,” Samantha tells. And Doug, not then a Christian himself, was totally on board with the idea. “My husband saw what Open House did for me. He said, ‘You need this place as much as they need you.’”

Years of volunteer hours later and the death of her sweet Doug, who died this year of cancer at age 72, and the decision to include Open House remains. “I’ve decided to feed what feeds me. I’m fed here and at church,” Samantha says. “Open House has changed me.”

“My husband saw what Open House did for me. He said, ‘You need this place as much as they need you.’”

Even more, Samantha wanted to be a part of something big. “Even when I’m gone, I want to continue to be a part of this place moving forward,” she says. She calls the work of Open House “kingdom work,” and it excites her to get to be a part of God’s work in Vancouver. When sharing her heart, she starts to recite song lyrics from Casting Crowns:

“I don’t want to leave a legacy, I don’t care if they remember me, only Jesus.”

Explaining her desire, Samantha says, “The premise of Open House is to stay government-funding free so it can continue telling about Jesus. I want to help with that.” She adds, “I want to make a significant gift, because Open House has made a significant impact on me.”

Well, we’ve watched this woman volunteer and connect with our residents over the years. Significant gifts take many forms with Samantha. ❤️



DONOR RELATIONS OFFICER SOUGHT

Interested in making a real difference in the lives of homeless children? We seek a full-time Donor Relations Officer responsible for developing, implementing and maintaining donor relationships, donor engagement and fundraising strategies to enhance and grow revenue of current and prospective donors. Please email careers@sheltered.org for a complete job announcement and application.

THRIFT SHOP VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

We need volunteers to help us run our thriving thrift shop. If interested in some retail time at Open House Ministries or have skills to share, please call or email Claudia Merritt. She can be reached at 360-737-0300 or claudia.merritt@sheltered.org.



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 co-



ordinator, 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/.

Join us! Scheduled tours happen at lunch time and come with a brown bag lunch.

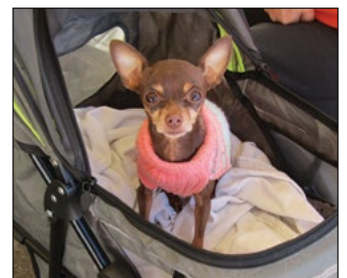
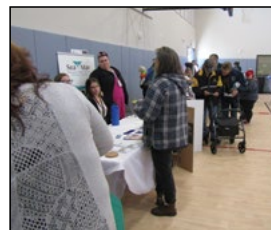
2019 COMMUNITY BLOCK PARTY



This annual event, which we hosted Oct. 10, 2019, helps connect homeless and low-income people to community resources they need. It also gives staff members and residents of Open House an opportunity to hear individuals' thoughts and challenges.

A barbecue helps attract participants, and free pet care provided by Banfield Pet Hospital is always popular. There were personal care kits handed out and counseling referrals given. Information was supplied about food, financial and court assistance available in our community.

Homeless people are spread out across the city and not just located in the downtown core. It reminded us of the many different needs in Clark County. We're grateful to our community partners and the amazing, caring volunteers who help us pull this off.



SHELTER NEEDS:

Blankets, winter clothing — all sizes, new or gently used coats, baby wipes, hair conditioner.

Thank you!



Please consider Open House Ministries in your will or trust.