



OPEN HOUSE  
MINISTRIES  
*We're a family shelter*

# Connections

November 2020

## SHELTER UPDATE: GRATITUDE

### *A Season of Thankfulness*

Every year we give thanks, just as our forefathers did those many years ago. But being thankful isn't just for the Thanksgiving holiday or a momentary act. Scripture tells us to practice thankfulness everyday and be "thankful in everything, in all circumstances." *1 Thessalonians 5:18*

When we begin to respond with thankfulness and joy for what we have – or reflect on things fortunately *not* given – our lives change.

Our staff and residents share some of their thoughts on thankfulness surrounding living and working at Open House Ministries.



"I first came to Open House as a resident in 2013 and they gave me my life back! Now as a staff member, I am thankful everyday to be able to be a part of something that changes the lives of our residents and impacts our community in such an amazing way. I am finally able to do something that has true meaning. I get to see God work in not only my own life, but in the lives of residents, staff, and volunteers. I have been able to watch so many relationships with Christ be formed and restored. Open House is much more than a job to me - Open House is my family!"

Amanda Goforth  
*Thrift Store Manager and former resident*

"I am thankful I took a chance on Open House ... and that they took a chance on me. It's a great place to change your life if you are willing to follow God and trust in the process. I am thankful for the staff who love and care for you as a whole person."

Savannah Gutierrez, *current resident for 8 months*

"God gave me a second chance at life after a severe motorcycle accident due to my relapse with alcohol. I was in a coma for nearly two months, had bleeding in my brain and suffered a traumatic brain injury. My heart even stopped three times while I was in the hospital! Four surgeries later, I am thankful to be alive, clean and raising my daughter at Open House. I focus on the Lord and owe him my life."

Andy Bartholomew, *current resident for 4 months*



"When my family and I moved from California to Clark County five years ago, I prayed that God would open doors for me to serve in the community. God answered those prayers by leading me to Open House. I'm thankful for my position on staff believing it's His calling. It's an honor to serve with other believers to further the Kingdom of Christ by serving homeless families."

Claudia Merritt  
*Operations Manager*



"I am thankful Open House Ministries gave me an opportunity to turn my life around and be witness to God's miracles daily. I am thankful to be the mom that I am today, and my relationship with Jesus was restored."

Reneé Stevens  
*Executive Director*

"I truly believe this is where God wants and needs me, and I absolutely love what I do here. Although what we do every day shouldn't be taken lightly, it is hard to call this work in the traditional sense. I am blessed and honored that God trusts me enough to work with His families here."

Tina Collins  
*Case Manager*

"My life drastically had changed for the better the day I arrived at Open House. I was a drug addicted single father of twins. When I entered the building, I instantly felt some close connection and felt accepted despite the mess that I was in. The staff loved me more than I loved myself, and that made me see value where I thought I had lost it. They helped guide and direct me into a better vision of my life. To be able to be a part of this ministry is such an incredible blessing because it gives me the chance to help someone that may or may not be as lost as I was."

JT Meadows  
*Thrift Store Staff and former resident*



## SHELTER UPDATE: GRATITUDE



"I have been so blessed working here. I love watching lives transform in such a noticeable and tangible way. I am grateful that God saw fit to open the doors for me to be able to share in what He is doing, and I get to share it with others."

Leslie Cook  
Development Coordinator

"I am so grateful that Open House leadership recognized qualities in me that I didn't necessarily see in myself and hired me. I thank God that He called me to serve the residents and our community with this amazing team of Christ followers. Looking back, I can clearly see I'm exactly where I'm supposed to be."

Melissa Sponsler  
Job Coach

"I work at Open House because there is no place on earth that I would rather be! God knew what He was doing when he made me a case manager."

Katie Fessel  
Case Manager

"I am thankful for all the prosperity I have experienced since coming to Open House. I accepted the Lord into my heart and He gave me so many blessings. I got my kids back and live in a nice apartment. But most importantly, I was prosperous inside my head and in my heart. Every day, I wake up and ask God to take away my desire to drink or use, and I let him control my life for the day. I give all the glory to God."

Shad Thomas, current resident for 2 months



"We are more than just a place to work - we are a family on a mission to share Jesus with people and help them have a new life in Christ. The miracles I have seen in people's lives have inspired me to want to go even deeper in my own walk with Christ. If I had to describe Open House in one word I would say 'Love.' - love people where they are at, and inspire them to love God and themselves."

Melody Peck  
Case Manager

## CHRISTMAS 2020

### Christmas 2020 Adopt A Family Program

Christmas time is quickly approaching at Open House Ministries and we invite you to celebrate by adopting a family this year with a few adjustments for COVID safety. If you would like to participate, we have set up the following guidelines to help gift giving run smoothly for everyone. Last day to drop off gifts will be December 21st.



#### Gift Guidelines and Ideas

- One Toy (\$30 limit) and One Outfit/Clothing Item (no limit) Per Family Member, Wrapped and Delivered by December 21st OR
- Gift Cards: Target, Fred Meyer, WINCO Foods or Gas Card (no \$ limit)
- Unwrapped Toys and Gift Cards are also welcome

To adopt a family for Christmas, please contact Claudia Merritt at 360-737-0300 or email [claudia.merritt@sheltered.org](mailto:claudia.merritt@sheltered.org) and she will give you the details you will need for your family. *Thank You!*



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

900 W. 12th St. | P.O. Box 242  
Vancouver, WA 98666-0242  
360-737-0300 [www.sheltered.org](http://www.sheltered.org)

## TAX-WISE GIVING



### Thanks in Giving

When considering your year-end gift to Open House Ministries (OHM), know that it is more than a tax deduction. You are giving to help homeless families receive a second chance at life-changing, Christ-centered support that can make a total change in direction of their lives, not only now but for eternity!

As you consider your giving know that there are other ways to make a gift besides writing a check or using your credit card. More and more of our donors are making a gift to OHM through their Donor Advised Fund. Many years ago my wife and I opened a Donor Advised Fund through the use of appreciated stock (actually a mutual fund) and it was one of the best decisions we ever made. It enabled us to have a "giving fund" that could be accessed at any time in the future to support ministries that we loved, and it took advantage of locking in realized gains. You can open up an account like this at most brokerage firms.

Another way to give is by transferring a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from your IRA directly to OHM thus avoiding the tax that would be due on it. We can be very thankful for our giving options.

Your year-end giving is vital for OHM. We rely on private donations, rather than government dollars, to maintain and continue support for our local homeless families. If you have any questions about these or other giving options please contact Ross at the shelter, 360-737-0300, or email [ross.merritt@sheltered.org](mailto:ross.merritt@sheltered.org).

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

## JOB OPENINGS

**OHM Little World Preschool**  
is in search of 2 child care workers,  
full-time and part-time.  
If interested, please contact  
[careers@sheltered.org](mailto:careers@sheltered.org)  
for an application.

## SHELTER NEEDS

- Clorox wipes and hand soap
- Lysol disinfecting spray
- Canned and boxed non-perishable foods
- Hats, gloves, hand warmers
- Socks and underwear for men, women, and children

*Thank You!*