



## RESIDENT STORY

### Forever grateful and returning to serve

**T**ough choices came at a high price for Alexis. Leaning into drugs to keep up with a fast-paced life led to addiction for her and her husband and created chaos for their young family. They were evicted from their home and after moving in with family, they were evicted again when her mother suddenly passed away. They continued to struggle with addiction, losing custody of their young daughter. Alexis soon found herself sleeping in her car and eventually living in a tent down the street from Open House Ministries.

Time passed and when Alexis found herself pregnant, she knew she was going to lose her new baby if she didn't make a change. She first found help at Lifeline Connections, a community-based behavioral health organization that specializes in providing care to people experiencing a substance use and/or mental health conditions. After treatment, she stayed with her husband in an Oxford House. And two weeks before her son was born, Alexis found room at New Beginnings Maternity Home, thanking God for the perfect timing.



*Alexis with her husband, Mark*

Alexis remembers looking for a safe place for her family when she reached out to Open House Ministries. They had been homeless for over a year. "The wait-list was long," she said, "but I was hopeful this would be the fresh start my family desperately needed."

When space opened up in the shelter, it was a real milestone for the family, marking the first time all four of them would live in the same place. Alexis recalls how she



*Alexis and her son, Mace*

finally felt safe and secure. Her young son learned to crawl and took his first steps at Open House Ministries. And after months of attending classes and learning about God's love, Alexis made a decision for Christ and was baptized by Pastor Mark Roskam.

"During the worst of my addiction, there were talks of possible adoption for my daughter," said Alexis. "That was beyond devastating to me. My entire life turned around at OHM. For the first time in a long time I had hope and was excited for the future."

Alexis remembers how she needed the accountability and structure of the program. How her life in addiction was chaotic, causing her to become a jaded and toxic person. She shared how important it was to have a safe place to learn how to become a healthy person, mother, and wife. "I was shown compassion and given grace," she recalls. "And I started to see the importance of those attributes."

Alexis shared how life-changing the program at Open House Ministries is if you are willing to put in the work. And that living here will help guide you to become a better person. She experienced an opportunity to build a relationship with God in a place that is more than a shelter. And even after completing the program and eventually moving into her own place, she remembers how the shelter truly became a *home* for her family. "They were willing to *(continued)*

## GRACIOUS GIVING

### Year End Giving

**A**s a supporter of Open House Ministries, your gift throughout the year have enabled us to help change our residents' lives in so many ways. By providing a stable living environment for families, continuing education, and most importantly, regular Bible-based encouragement, you make that happen through your generosity.

Many of you have decided to make gifts directly from your IRA to maximize your gifts and avoid unnecessary taxes. Another way we have received numerous gifts is from your Donor Advised Fund (sometimes known as a Giving Fund or similar names). These funds can be set up in numerous ways, but one of the best ways is transferring appreciated stock to avoid capital gains taxes. This makes larger year-end gifts possible and gives you the flexibility to delay making a large gift, such as to our new capital campaign, yet provides you with a current year tax deduction. This can allow you to take time to prayerfully consider where, when and how much to give and plan a more comprehensive giving strategy.

Giving appreciated assets can make you a more cheerful giver because these assets are almost like a gift from God. Thanks to His leading, you have enjoyed a blessing that acknowledges the fact that He is the rightful owner of all that we have, and we are just trying to be a good steward of what He has entrusted to us.

If you have any questions about how to give through funds like this or would like to discuss other unique ways to make a generous year-end gift, please contact Ross, or Jean 360-737-0300 or email [ross.merritt@sheltered.org](mailto:ross.merritt@sheltered.org).

Thank you for your continued support for Open House Ministries. Please remember us in your will or estate plan. ●

## Love in Action

**W**e live in a world that says, 'Don't judge.' I mean, who are we to judge anyway? We know we have made our own mistakes, so we stay quiet. Sometimes as an expression of mercy. But I'm afraid more often, it's because of fear of being labeled as judgmental.

But judgment isn't the problem; Judgment is the outworking of wisdom and discernment. Judgment is about seeing clearly and setting things right. The real question isn't whether to judge but how to judge rightly.

This is where Jesus shows us the way. He called out sin and hypocrisy. He challenged the faithless and confronted the selfish. But why don't we see Him as judgmental? Because Jesus never pointed fingers and walked away.

He judged, yes—but He stood in solidarity with the very people He called out. He named them sinners, but then He died to save them.

That's the difference. Judgment itself isn't the problem. The question is whether we care enough to help the people we judge find healing. Do we dive in like bombers, drop critical comments, and then pull up and fly away? Or do we stay, as Jesus did, standing with people and working to help them find freedom?

Some approaches today are labeled compassion but often stop at affirmation, leaving people stuck where they are. True compassion goes further; it doesn't settle for seeing someone remain in their struggle.

At Open House Ministries, we care enough to show up and walk alongside families who've hit hard times—whether due to their own choices or the challenges life has thrown at them. Either way, we are here. We help redirect harmful behaviors and support real change. We don't just affirm; we invest. We're in the trenches, working for transformation.

Judgment, for us, isn't about tearing down; it's about building up. It's about saying, 'This isn't right, and this isn't working, but I'm here to help you make it right and find a new way forward.' That's love in action. If we truly care, we speak the truth and walk alongside, just like Jesus does with us.

That's our calling. We're not just here to observe—we're here to make a difference and offer hope. If we really care about someone, we will be honest about what's harming them. But we can't stop there. We must walk with them, just as Jesus walks with us.

● *Chaplain Jon Nichols*

## Adopt a Family for Christmas

Christmas time is quickly approaching at Open House Ministries, and we invite you to celebrate by adopting one of our families this year. If you would like to participate, the following guidelines will be helpful.

**Last day to drop off gifts will be Wednesday, December 18th.**

### Gift Guidelines and Ideas

- Toys and clothing items from the family's wish list, wrapped and delivered by Wednesday, December 18th.
- Gift cards such as Target, Fred Meyer, WINCO foods or a gas card. 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 needed for your family adoption. *Thank you!*

### RESIDENT STORY CONT.

meet me where I was, walk alongside me in my journey, and help me build a beautiful life," she said. "It wasn't until I got here that I started to build a relationship with God. I know I can handle life today because I have Jesus. I am forever grateful for this place."

Now Alexis and her husband, Mark, are breaking generational addiction and building on a family that has been restored. Alexis feels blessed to wake up every day with her family, to pack school lunches and drive her kids to school. "My children got their parents back," she said. "Not only that, but they have healthy parents that show up and will always be there for them."

Alexis has been employed in several places over the past few years, but recently, when an opening at Open House Ministries was brought to her attention, she jumped at the opportunity. "I wanted to be part of the program that changed my life," she said. "It's been an amazing experience to be able to witness people's transformations. I've gotten the chance to find Jesus in everyday life."

We are excited to welcome Alexis to our staff. Her service and compassion for our residents is a true blessing for Open House Ministries. ●

### JOB OPENINGS

- Case Manager**  
Full-time position
- Day Care Staff**  
Part time position
- Please inquire at [careers@sheltered.org](mailto:careers@sheltered.org)

### SHELTER NEEDS

- Toilet paper Paper towels
- Disposable razors
- Hand warmers
- Clorox wipes
- Hair conditioner
- Bottled water
- Canned soups and chili
- One pound packages of hamburger

### TOURS & TALKS

- Want to see Open House Ministries up close?
- Join us for a **First Friday Tour!**  
Noon to 1 pm
- To sign up, contact us at [events@sheltered.org](mailto:events@sheltered.org)



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