




OPEN HOUSE
MINISTRIES

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CURRENT NEEDS:

This time of year we are always in need of gently used or new blankets, sleeping bags, hats, gloves and socks for our residents and our neighbors in need.

With a large number of infants and toddlers in house, we are also in need of diapers (size 4, 5 and 6.)

Connections

October, 2017



From a Tent to Back-on-Track

YOUR GIFT BECAME HER OPPORTUNITY

Can you imagine living in a tent for 36 months? It's what you do when your options run out. In 2014, a year clean and sober, Shari had a history of credit issues and evictions. Rents soared and her part-time paycheck didn't. She had no alternative for her and her three kids. They became homeless. She recalls, "The downtown core was rough. It just wasn't safe for women. They got beaten up, assaulted and got their things 'ripped off' by others." So Shari took up living in a tent near a lake in East County. That became "home" for the next three years.

But living in a tent came with its own set of consequences: the state intervened and placed all three of her children in foster care: one on the coast, one in Spokane and the third in Vancouver. Even with unsupervised visits allowed, of all the things she lost, the worst was "losing" her children. And in early 2017, without an address, apartment or home, she was at risk of all three being put up for adoption. That is when she persisted in her request to be accepted into Open House Ministries. In February she received the call and was accepted into the program.

One month later, with the help of her case manager, Shari was reunited with her youngest son who lives with her today. She credits Lori Richardson (former resident and now staff member) as being "a true inspiration" to her. And two special volunteers Samantha Crowningshield (who teaches "Bible 101") and Christina Foyt (who teaches GRIP - Getting Relationships in Perspective) have been amazing role models.

In recovery Shari discovered that a positive attitude and optimistic outlook beat the alternative of depression. No surprise, then,

that you can often see her helping others. Even when she was living in her tent, she volunteered with a local ministry, cooking and providing a meal of hot soup once a week to street homeless people living under the bridges. She continues today and is excited that the organizers are helping her coordinate with local food banks for ingredients, and even provide a larger soup cooker for her to use. She says simply, "I just want to help others who are in the same situation I have been. Even when we make bad choices, everyone deserves food."

In the first week of October, Shari and her son moved into their own apartment in transitional housing. Her eyes twinkle as she shares that she tested for and passed her Flagger Certification. And beyond that? One day she would like to



build "little houses" for the homeless. Shari sums up her gratitude to you: "Without this place, I would still be in a tent, my kids given up for adoption. What you gave me means *everything* to me. I want you to know how very blessed and thankful I am that you gave me this opportunity!"



Chaplain's Corner - October, 2017

“Site Preparation”

These are hearty days of construction on the Open House site: tons of wooden beams creating the three-story hub of the Family Resource Center. Workers and heavy equipment do Herculean tasks so easily. This much-anticipated construction site, with its freshly painted adjacent buildings, was once the site of an old tenement drug house.

Before construction could begin, deconstruction had to happen. Destruction. By the hand of GOD and the goodwill of our supporters, the decisions were made to “make room” for something better by multiples. That old house needed to come tumbling down. In graphic imagery, hordes of cockroaches tried to flee as their old haven came down.

In the Gospel of John, Jesus talks with the Jewish authorities about His upsetting presence among the reli-

gious and civic activities of that day. He states, “There is no place for you in my Word” (8:37 RSV). For Jesus to be even considered, there had to be room created in the strictures and structures of that day. Then, as today, there was often simply no room for Him.

At Open House Ministries, we worship the One who makes room in our lives for Him. All too often, it is via the deconstruction of broken lives where there becomes a new open work site for Jesus. GOD does His best work in cleared lives. We give witness to GOD’s remarkable work in lives that are “shovel ready” human hearts for His new work!

Thanking GOD Together with You,

Mark Roskam, Chaplain



A Legacy of Heartfelt Service

OCTOBER 1, 2017

Viki Landsverk recently retired after twenty years of faithful service at Open House Ministries. As a seven year old girl, she had expressed a calling and a heart for Home Missions, yet was urged to get into more “gainful” employment. Looking back on these decades, she now reflects on Open House as “my life and my heart.”

Deep loyalty characterizes Viki’s commitment to GOD and to others. There were times when families would leave prematurely, yet she would say, “This is not the end of the story!” She smiles as she remembers the hundreds of families who lived with us.



***Viki wrote the checks
for Open House, but she
knew that it was GOD
who paid the bills.***

Yet when asked about one particular single mother of three children, now Executive Director Renee Stevens, Viki exclaims, “I am

so proud that I am busting my buttons!”

Viki wrote the checks for Open House, but she knew that it was GOD who paid the bills. There were times when she had no idea from where the money would come. She would say, “GOD owns the cattle on a thousand hills, we need Him to sell another cow!” To her, the funding of the Family Resource Center highlights GOD’s faithfulness once again.

Postscript: On August 10, 2017, Viki and her husband Martin bought their retirement home in northern Washington. On August 16th, Martin died suddenly. Since she left Open House and ultimately Vancouver, she still marvels at GOD’s faithful provision for her and her family: surrounded by her kids, grandkids and a legacy of love reaching many, many people. Well done, good and faithful servant!

Mark Roskam, Chaplain



Renee and her girls in 1999.

attention and services. The sheer numbers of families and individuals facing homelessness and poverty remain staggering.

That is why having a multi-purpose building that will better serve our shelter and community is more important than ever. True, our families today need a place to recreate, our children need a safe place to play and engage in physical recreation that their



be “just kids”, separate from the residential shelter building next door.

But beyond that, the new building provides Open House Ministries the opportunity to extend the outreach to our local community with new and expanded youth programs,

Dear Friends,

I want to share with you how exciting it is to watch the new McClaskey Family Resource Center going up.

What was a dream only a few years ago is becoming a reality. Every day we are surrounded with the reminder that homelessness is still an issue in our community that demands

and bringing in more community partners to help us do so. In the last 18 months we have stepped up our involvement with local community service programs, and the new building will provide the means to do even more.

When I was a resident at Open House seventeen years ago, I received all the ben-



peers in school have in their neighborhoods. This building will make the neighborhood safer for our children.

It gives the shelter children a place to

better job for our youth and this new building is a huge step in the right direction to expand our children’s and youth programs, with more emphasis on the ENTIRE family.

I invite you to join me and the staff with your support and prayers as we make our next year the Year of the Family. My door is open, and I welcome your ideas and suggestions in the months to come.

Blessings,

*Renee Stevens,
Executive Director*



efits of the program to turn my life around. Little did I realize then that my children, too, needed special programs to support their journey from homelessness back into a mainstream life of a child. Years later they have reminded me how painful that was for them. That is something I want to change. We have to do a



ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (“ACEs”) HARM CHILDREN’S BRAINS

ACEs are serious childhood traumas such as emotional, physical, sexual abuse, neglect, household violence, incarceration of a family member, or homelessness. ACEs result in toxic stress that can harm a child’s brain and prevent the child from learning, appropriate socialization, and can also result in long-term health problems. Exposure to childhood ACEs increases the risk of teenage pregnancy, substance abuse, depression, suicide attempts, heart and liver disease and more.

Source ~ 2017, Spokane Regional Health District Community and Family Services Division



OPEN HOUSE
MINISTRIES

*You're Invited To Our
Christmas Preview Event*

Winter Wonderland!

Monday, October 30, 2017

4:00-7:00 p.m.

*At Second Hand Solutions
Thrift Store & Coffee Shop*

915 West 13th Street, Vancouver, WA 98660 • (360) 735-5943

A fun evening of Christmas shopping,
door prizes, hot cider, coffee and cookies.
You'll find special savings throughout the store!

100% of all proceeds go to help homeless families in Vancouver!



Did You Know?

With holiday shopping right around the corner, you can help donate to Open House Ministries when you shop with Fred Meyer or Amazon Smile. Remember to link your Fred Meyer Rewards account and Amazon Smile account to Open House Ministries. Both companies donate a portion of their profits to Open House Ministries when you choose us in your account profile. Remember to renew your designation annually!



**GIVE
MORE
24!**

*Powered by the
Community Foundation*



Thank you!

We were very blessed by your donations to provide our fifty-two children at Open House with shelter this fall. Thanks to you, funds to provide 1,400 "bed-nights" were raised during this year's fall Give More 24! September event.

Our children and families thank you!