



OPEN HOUSE
MINISTRIES

We're a family shelter

Connections

October 2021

RESIDENT STORY

A Bright New Life for Myrisha

Life has never been easy-going for Myrisha. The 30-year-old grew up with an alcoholic father, moving from Michigan to Tennessee and then to Missouri in an “icky, old truck”. She had no mother figure in her life back then. Her father eventually became sober, settling in Portland and married. “My dad built a life based on money and his new sobriety. He left me in his wife’s care, thinking I was being well taken care of,” recalls Myrisha. “Life was chaotic.” Bullying at school, and emotional and physical abuse at home took its toll.

Myrisha’s father then divorced and remarried an Apostolic Pentecostal woman with children. The blended family was dedicated to the church. They served in Sunday School and sang in the choir. “My life as a teenager was not like other kids. I had uncut hair, wore no makeup or jewelry and my skirt lengths were all the way to the ground. I was a very modest young woman living a Pentecostal life,” recalls Myrisha. Longing for change, Myrisha moved out at 18.

Myrisha’s journey with no parental direction was filled with curiosity and temptation. A string of failed relationships and difficult living situations ensued. Excessive drinking and smoking marijuana quickly led to a crystal meth addiction. “In a short period of time, I lost my job, my child, home, and car. In return, I adopted skills to live on the street - in tents - among fellow addicts. I stole, manipulated,



Myrisha enjoying the day with her children

rationalized. I cried almost every day,” laments Myrisha.

With three kids, one CPS case, and addiction on her plate, Myrisha hit rock bottom within a year and realized she needed to detox. At a residential treatment facility, Myrisha began to thrive. She researched and secured a spot at Open House Ministries. Drawn to a place that brings families together, she believes the faith-based program is what God had planned for her and her children. Living in an apartment, having an attentive case manager, and hearing God’s message from a caring chaplain, has helped Myrisha learn usable parenting and financial skills. “They have everything that really gets us ready for re-entry back into society,” she says. *(continued)*

GRACIOUS GIVING

Your Legacy

Living generously for today, and not just for the future, demonstrates your faith and teaches the next generation about stewardship. As Ron Blue says, “Do your giving while you’re living so you’re knowing where it’s going.”

Revisiting your estate plan and considering reframing it is a good way to think about your legacy and the resources God has entrusted to you. You don’t have to decide between giving to your charity or your family, your plan can include both. My wife and I have three children and we have decided to add a fourth child, charitable causes, such as Open House Ministries (OHM), which we have supported for many years. This has given us the opportunity to have a discussion with our children about our priorities and stewardship responsibilities.

While I am not an estate planning attorney, I have spoken with a lot of people about this topic. I would encourage you to have this conversation with your children and I would be delighted to have this discussion with you also.

Please feel free to contact me at 360-737-0300 or email me at ross.merritt@sheltered.org ●

**Please consider including
Open House Ministries
in your will. Thank you!**



A Closer Look at Responsibility

There is a story that is often told about a small Jewish community that would always run short on wine for their great yearly festival. The leaders of the community called the people together to discuss what could be done. Together they decided that if each adult contributed a cup of wine into a barrel in the courtyard once a week, they would have enough for everyone when it was time for the festival.

One man thought to himself, "No one can see what I'm pouring into the barrel, and with all that wine, no one will even notice if I gave a cup of water instead of the wine." And so, every week when the man came to pour his wine, he instead poured water into the barrel.

When the time for the festival came, the community discovered, to its horror and shame, that the barrel was filled not with wine but with water. Moreover, this reality was not the result of some wine-in-to-water miracle. It was because everyone turned out to have the same idea.

I've thought quite a lot about this story and what might have happened next. I can imagine the fear and shame of each person being quickly masked by anger as they disintegrate into a hunt to who or what was to blame. A situation where neighbor turns against their neighbor and brother against their brother. I can imagine people asking, "Why would God allow this?"

I can imagine this because this temptation to play the victim resides in my heart too. The temptation to justify myself, see myself as the exception to the rule, and to judge myself by my motives, not my actions, is as real in me as it is in any other. The temptation to set aside personal responsibility with the expectation that others will handle it is never beyond reach. I can imagine being so hurt by the failures of others that I become blind to my own. In fact, most of these don't require imagination. They simply require memory.

I can also imagine a better ending. I hope you can too. It is an ending that takes the shape of the Kingdom of God. It is a story where shame does not leave one crushed or become twisted into the desire to crush others. It is one where the neglect of personal responsibility leads to conviction, repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. I can imagine people lamenting, "it was not God who allowed this, it was me."

In the end though, I don't know what happens next in the story. As much as I can hope for the best ending, the only choices I can control are my own. Thus, I've had to remind myself that the proper and fitting conclusion is not to hope that others will take personal responsibility for *their* actions ... it is that *I* will. ●

Chaplain Jon Nichols



Myrisha taking a moment to relax in the sun

Many staffers have made an impact on Myrisha. "Miss Lori conducts room checks each morning. I started with little to no care for my personal space - no routine, no organization. Now, I have my own dust mop and cubes for organizing. Plus, she has patience with us residents and leaves notes on what we can work on. As a woman and mother, role models like Miss Lori are so important. We are learning a new way of life after a traumatic one," says Myrisha.

After four months at Open House Ministries, the young mom of three admits the why of some things still isn't all that clear. "But it doesn't need to be," she adds. "Time always tells. I have given my will and fully submitted to what God has planned for me. My walk with God has been good because I am surrounded by like-minded people," says Myrisha. "The staff displays examples of how a Christian should be, so walking with God isn't as challenging as one would think."

"I wouldn't have anything today if Jesus and Open House hadn't given me the chance," concludes Myrisha. "I want to stay on fire in my recovery using the things Open House taught me as kindling for that fire!" ●

SHELTER NEEDS

- Boxed and non-perishable foods
- Toiletries and laundry items
 - Men's gloves
- Copier paper: 8 1/2 x 11
- Bottled water

JOB OPENINGS

- Swing Shift Security Position
- Part-time Childcare Worker

For more information
please email:
careers@sheltered.org



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