



**FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

## Preparing to Open the Doors at OHM West

**H**ow do you measure a miracle? As I look across our campus at OHM West, I think back to early conversations with friends and community leaders who learned how hard it has been for families finishing our program to find truly affordable housing, how costs of rentals in Clark County have been out of reach for so many and for so long. It's been heartbreaking.

For years, we have helped graduating residents try to stay close to their work and support groups. We have watched them struggle to find space and make the most of what the housing market has to offer. So when an opportunity to stretch our boundaries came along, we knew it was time to act. We reached out in faith and trusted God to help us take the next step in helping families find solid ground for their futures.

If we were going to help, we would have to adjust our strategy. Years of planning started in 2018. Long meetings, careful consideration of our mission, and lots of prayer went into the early years of OHM West. And God has been faithful.

The quiet phase of fundraising for the project soon began. We reached out to our donors, faith community, businesses, and foundations, who knew our ministry and the strength of our program. We were blessed by companies who wanted to help with construction and a community excited to support a genuinely affordable housing project.

We broke ground in March of 2023, and the steady sound of heavy construction could be heard around our neighborhood. The project management team from Robertson & Olson Construction took up residence on our campus and shared how they witnessed families in our program make progress.

We watched as excavation equipment removed soil for the full basement. It was exciting to see the footprint for the new building take shape and see how the project would expand our campus's boundaries.

Space for our thrift store and bicycle shop began to take shape, and it was exciting to



visualize the new locations where residents would receive vocational training. Wheel Deals Bicycle Shop will finally have the visibility needed to serve our community with more capacity.

Thrift store shopping at Secondhand Solutions will be a new experience, with an added coffee shop. Residents will now have a third opportunity at Open House Ministries for job-skills training.

Construction continued through the winter on the three floors of apartments, exterior and roof. The three floors of apartments combined will provide 30 new homes for graduate residents with truly affordable apartments for their families and open up space in our family shelter, which is vital to reaching our community with resources to restore and rebuild lives.

Miracles are sometimes hard to measure. But when I consider those early conversations and the people in our community who have stepped up and are excited to share in this project to help families succeed, it's easy. The miracle of OHM West is measured through the changed lives of people who have passed through our doors and the lasting impact our ministry has had on our community.

I invite you to visit our campus soon and see OHM West. It represents everyone who shares the vision to heal our community, one family at a time.

Blessings,

Renee Stevens  
*Executive Director*

**GRACIOUS GIVING**

## Making Great Things Happen

**I**t is important to have an up-to-date Will or Trust. In addition to documenting how your property will bless your loved ones, your Will or Trust can be a meaningful and effective way to support Open House Ministries and our work to provide life-changing help to local families.

There are many benefits to planning a gift in your Will or Trust.

- **Assurance.** You have provided for others in the way you intend.
- **Flexibility.** Your gift can be changed during your lifetime if your needs or goals change.
- **Impact.** Support the work you care about most.
- **Influence.** Shape your personal legacy and set an example for others.

Your Will or Trust needs to be drafted in accordance with the laws in our state. We can refer you to attorneys who specialize in estate planning and there are even suitable online programs if you have a fairly simple estate.

Please contact Jean LaCrosse at Open House Ministries or email [ross.merritt@sheltered.org](mailto:ross.merritt@sheltered.org) if you would like to discuss ideas or would like more information. *Thank you!* ●

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

**H**oly friends, let's call it like it is—this world feels like it's on fire. We're facing crises on all sides. Here at Open House Ministries, we're in the trenches. Addiction is stealing lives, economic pressures are squeezing families, isolation and loneliness are on the rise, and social division is pulling at the threads of our communities. It's easy to feel like we're fighting an uphill battle—even as we get ready to celebrate the opening of Open House West!

This incredible expansion is a testament to God's provision and your generosity. But new buildings and fresh starts don't mean the work gets easier. The challenges keep coming, and some days, it feels like we're just moving from one battle to the next.

Therefore, it's tempting to think we need a new strategy, a new method, or even a new message. Wisdom might suggest the answer must be something fresh, something we haven't tried before. Yet, while the challenges may be new, the Gospel remains the same. It needs no update. The same message that saves is the message that sustains.

The Gospel that transformed lives on the day of Pentecost is the same Gospel that ignited the Great Awakening and brought hope when Open House Ministries opened 36 years ago. It's the same powerful truth that continues to change lives today. We don't need something new because the gospel isn't just history—it's the power of God for salvation.

Sure, the world is shifting all around us, but the message of God's grace does not need an update. The Gospel isn't a strategy; it's salvation. It's the good news that sets captives free, heals the broken, and restores every life. The challenges might look different, but our answer remains the same.

So, let's keep our eyes on the unchanging truth of the Gospel. We don't need a new message—because the one we have is more than enough. And with it, we'll keep seeing lives transformed, hope renewed, and victories won, one day at a time.

● *Chaplain Jon Nichols*



**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)

## CHRISTMAS ANNOUNCEMENT

# 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 Friday,  
December 20th.**

### Gift Guidelines and Ideas

- Toys and clothing items from the family's wish list, wrapped and delivered by Friday, December 20th.
  - 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!*

## SECONDHAND SOLUTIONS

DON'T MISS THE  
CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

*Jesus is  
the Reason  
for the Season*

Monday, November 4th  
3 pm ~ 7 pm

Located in the  
Family Resource Center Gym

Enjoy great holiday shopping,  
festive cookies, and  
holiday themed drinks!

Come early and enter to win  
our door prizes!

## SHELTER NEEDS

Toilet paper Paper towels  
Disposable razors Clorox wipes  
Hair conditioner  
Bottled water Canned goods  
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)