

Missions Update -- Open Door Community Center

Open Door Community Center, has long been a ministry close to the hearts of the people at St. Paul. Open Door is committed to long-term solutions and not just “quick fixes” that do nothing to address systemic change. In striving to impact the systems and cycles of poverty, there are several ministries in place under the umbrella of Open Door. One of those ministries is *Circles* ministry. *Circles* in Columbus is an 18-week program that is part of a city-wide initiative to create thriving families and thriving communities free of poverty. During this program participants are helped to create a personal plan to move out of poverty. They then are matched with 2-3 allies (volunteers from the community) who serve as their connections for resource building, motivators and friends. As a *Circles Community*, a “Big View” (systemic issue that often keeps people in poverty) topic is chosen to address. In 2017, 147 people were served through the Circles Program. Open Door also offers a transitional housing program, providing supportive services and moving assistance to 134 women and children experiencing homelessness in 2017.

Open Door sponsors a showering program for the homeless. The participants in the showering program may receive a hot shower, hygiene items, breakfast, haircut, access to mental health treatment and job training opportunities. Participants may also wash and dry their clothes while in the program. Last year 350 people were served through this outlet. There are many other areas of ministry at Open Door such as the Matthews Promise Academy, the afterschool programs for children, the Summer day camps and Summer meals provided for these same children, the children’s music program, the “Sharing Christmas” program, as well as programs for the “young at heart” such as The Golden Agers program for senior citizens in the area. Through these ministries, over 900 people were served in our community this past year! This list of ministries of Open Door is just the “tip of the iceberg” of all they do for our community!

How does St. Paul help Open Door? In every way imaginable! We provide financial support through our missions’ budget, volunteer support, as well as material support through the collection of items needed for the showering program and the Golden Agers group. We also participate in *The Walk Classic*, a fundraiser each spring. Our confirmation class volunteers on many Monday afternoons to help minister to the little ones in the afterschool program, In fact, our confirmation class was even awarded the volunteer of the year award a few years back for all of their efforts to help the children served through Open Door! Though, truth be told, it was the children at Open Door that ministered to our children in even mightier ways as the seeds of compassion and charity were planted in those little 6th Grade hearts! Want to know more? Email Tammy Reynolds at tjreynolds3@gmail.com or call the church office.