



NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
FURTHER INFORMATION:

Monday, November 25, 2024
Kate Munzinger (585) 750-4345

OPEN DOOR MISSION FACES UNPRECEDENTED CAPACITY AHEAD OF THE WINTER SEASON

CEO unveils winter plan and calls on community for assistance

The numbers in Open Door Mission's emergency shelters are the highest they have ever been in its almost 75 year history. The increase is the result of many factors including: an increase in individuals battling addiction; untreated mental illness; the adverse effects of New York State's changing laws; decreased supply of independent, safe affordable housing; and decreased funding for emergency beds.

Open Door Mission has two crisis shelters – Samaritan House located at 210 West Main Street and the recently opened Selah House located at 156 North Plymouth Avenue. Samaritan House has 52 beds but with the addition of cots and sleeping chairs can accommodate approximately 95 nightly. Selah House currently has 20 beds. Historically, Open Door Mission's emergency shelter numbers increase by 50% during winter months.

Open Door Mission's 2024 winter plan includes three steps: relocation of anyone currently staying in ODM shelters to other shelters or warming centers when possible; partnership with a local hotel to place individuals and families who are unable to stay in ODM shelter; and the transition of space at 156 North Plymouth to create an additional 32 emergency beds.

Valeria added "The second and third parts of our plan are projects we did not budget for this year. However, we believe that we must meet this growing and critical need, because it is what the Lord has called this ministry to do. He has provided for the Open Door Mission through the incredible support of this community for almost 75 years, and He will continue to provide now when we need it the most."

Over the last week we have seen an increase in our shelter numbers. This weekend, we slept approximately 115 people each night. In the last few weeks, we've seen a spike in significant incidents that include broken windows, fights, and assault with a deadly weapon against our staff. We are seeing people dropped at our doorstep from the healthcare system, and people being denied shelter through other services. This doesn't stop our work, we still provide The Gospel, love and hope to the people we serve despite the adversity. As we continue to press forward, we need the communities help so we can continue to give hope to the hopeless.

Kaylin Schlonski, Vice President of Programs, added "In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus says to His disciples: "If you had 100 sheep, and lost one of them, wouldn't you leave the 99 and go after the one that was lost?" This is who we are as an agency, we go after the 1. The people that we serve are someone's child, someone's loved one. There isn't one person in this community that is not struggling with a loved one who is lost to addiction, mental health, or homelessness. Help us go after the one. By supporting us this winter we are able to help those that are lost find their way by giving them a warm bed, food, and a road back home!"

Open Door Mission is a Christian based rescue organization that has been addressing the needs of homelessness, emergency food and addiction recovery in the Rochester community since 1952. ODM provides shelter, food, guidance and a path forward to men and women when they are at their most vulnerable. Open Door Mission operates a men's residential addiction recovery program, emergency shelter, a food and clothing program, transitional housing for women and their children and 24 supportive housing units for formerly homeless individuals.

For more information, please contact Kate Munzinger at kmunzinger@opendoormission.com.