



OPEN M

A Ministry of Faith, Health and Hope

JANUARY 2012

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A child's Christmas miracle



OPEN M had the the opportunity to host Christmas for the Love of Children again in 2011. Through the program, we ask for people, groups, and teams to sponsor children. The sponsors are asked to provide each child with gifts equaling around \$50. In addition, the family gets a food box or food gift card. This year we are proud to say we had an outpouring of help. We were able to give 902 children a Christmas they will not soon forget. This included providing 305 families with gifts and food.

What a miracle this was to be able to help so many families in need. On December 15, we distributed the gifts and food to the families. We heard so many stories of true need. You could see the desperation and hopefulness in the receivers' eyes as they were greeted and shown how many wonderful gifts they were going to receive. On top of the gifts their sponsors gave them, we had such a fantastic response to our hats, gloves, scarves and toy drives. We were able to give each family enough toys for stocking stuffers and winter weather gear. It was an amazing sight to see people so excited about the items they were given.

OPEN M would like to thank all the sponsors that made Christmas for the Love of Children possible! We would also like to thank the Stow Munroe Falls Basketball team and Summa Health System for helping distribute the gifts to the families. In addition, a huge thank you to all the great volunteers who gave their time to keep the program organized and running smoothly.

Furthermore, we would like to extend a thank you to all the churches, organizations and individuals who collected items for our food baskets. Each basket included close to 100 pounds of food for each family. This included turkey, beef, canned items, boxed goods and so much more!



It truly is the community coming together as a whole to help those in need. We are blessed to have so many supporters and angels watching over us.



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OPEN M is located at,
941 Princeton Street in Akron, Ohio.
(330) 434-0110 FAX: (330) 434-6661
www.openm.org

A warm welcome to Lamont Graves



Lamont Graves is the newest addition to the OPEN M family. Taking on the roll of Operations Manager, he will have his hands full but is excited to be a part of our team. Lamont attends Christ Community Chapel, Highland Square Campus, where he first heard of OPEN M. Like an answer to a prayer, Lamont was referred to OPEN M through Pastor Marshall Brandon in a conversation that Dottie had with Pastor Marshall over a lunch.

Lamont brings a diverse background to OPEN M. He completed a bachelor's degree at the University of Akron in secondary school education, with a major in English and history. From there he attended the College of Arts and Sciences and completed a bachelor's degree in sociology.

Lamont worked for E.C. Morris Corporation for over 22 years and retired as vice-president. Along with Lamont's business experience, he brings spiritual experience as well. Lamont began as a youth pastor and then became the head teacher in a singles ministry. This led him to go into administration roles for Logos Bible Institute and Emmaus Bible School, and he is currently functioning as the head of the Renaissance Leadership Institute at its Cleveland Heights and Canton campuses.

Lamont has been married 35 years to his wife Ave and has two children and three grandchildren. In his spare time, he enjoys reading with his favorite book, the Bible. We asked Lamont to tell us what he wants people to know about him and he said, "I have spent the majority of my life as a born again sinner, saved by God's grace. Of those years, the Lord has put me in a position of service to others. Although I am very task-oriented, I do not desire to see people neglected in the process." This statement really shows how Lamont will be a great addition to our team. OPEN M prides itself on treating others with dignity and respect, and these beliefs carry over to the employees' personal philosophies.

"I am excited to be a part of a ministry that has a heart for helping those who are impoverished or less fortunate than the average American," he said. "I have always sought to help the underdog or the one who is frequently overlooked or neglected by society. I can now be intimately involved in an organization that gives opportunity to the disadvantaged. I want to help build-up and encourage the staff at OPEN M to give its best at all times so that we can be examples to the community and the body of Christ."

We are very excited to have Lamont as part of our OPEN M family. If you are in the neighborhood, please stop in and meet Lamont.

A need and a supply from a caring company

It is so nice to see our community come together in times of excess and need. There are a lot of times in life especially around the holidays where we end up having a little extra, and you're not sure where it should go or how it should be used. It is so great when we can take extra and put it towards meeting a need in the community. In December, we got the opportunity to witness the supply and demand opportunity first hand.



December is a very busy time for catering companies that provide services for business holiday parties and family gatherings. Robert J. Events & Catering is

one of the leading caterers in Northeast Ohio. We are fortunate to have a great relationship with this wonderful company. They cater events from 50 to over 400 and sometimes they end up with extra food.

OPEN M is honored to be one of the charities that receive the leftover food. In the month of December, the company donated multiple pans full of chicken, beef, mash potatoes and more! We use this food to feed those in the community and to provide food to our wonderful volunteers who work during the day and evening to help OPEN M. If you are interested in seeing some of the services Robert J. Events and Catering offers, you can visit their website at www.robertjevents.com. You never know, we might benefit from food left over at your event if you book with this great business.



The gift of giving

Below are three short stories that show why the gift of giving is the best gift of all. In addition, each one shows the wonderful people OPEN M gets the privilege to work with.

The Christmas Angel

At this time of the year, we here at OPEN M have many Christmas angels. But for the last few years we have had one special angel with a very big heart that has come forward without hesitation to help us meet our need in filling our Christmas food boxes. Without this angel's help, we would not be able to complete our boxes for those that look to us for help during this special time of the year. This same Christmas angel preformed another miracle by donating enough money to buy gifts for everyone on the OPEN M Christmas for the Love of Children wait list. Christmas has come early here at OPEN M, and our prayers have been answered. With the wait list being sponsored by our Christmas angel, we were able to give 902 kids a Christmas and 305 families food to last them through the holiday season. All of us here at OPEN M would like to thank these angels for all that they do with a special thanks going to our Christmas angel.

The comfort of giving back through food

In our December newsletter, we told a story of our Getting Ahead class and their generosity with food and cooking. As this news traveled around OPEN M, our education coordinator, Felicia Bronner, asked if this group would be willing to cook for some OPEN M events, like a Christmas party for our Diamond Ladies. Sure enough, this group of Getting Ahead graduates came together, planned an entire meal for 20 people, cooked, served, and donated all of the food. In a time of challenging finances and tightening budgets, this group of graduates continues to give back to OPEN M. Thank you Getting Ahead class for your incredible generosity and beyond-delicious food!

A patient's thoughtfulness to give back

by Kristina Holwerda

In my time at OPEN M, I've learned many humbling lessons from the OPEN M clinic patients. During this joyful and sometimes painful Christmas season, it was no different. It was a typical clinic evening when a long-time patient pulled me aside. She secretly handed me \$100 in cash while she said to me, "I rarely ever get to do this, but when I come up with some extra money, I always want to give it to you, the clinic. I don't know

where I would be without you, more than likely I would be dead, and I could never thank you enough." I blinked back tears as I accepted the generous donation and thanked the patient for her selfless giving.

This patient's noble act of generosity pricked my heart for days. It drew me to the story of the widow's offering in Luke 21. In this story, Jesus first watches the rich put a lot of money into the temple treasury, and then he sees a poor widow put in only

two very small copper coins. He says to his disciples, *"Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."* Our OPEN M Clinic patient, out of her poverty, put in all she had. As I continue to reflect on the giving by this patient, I am humbled by the huge acts of generosity exhibited by those in poverty, and hope to someday exhibit the same selflessness out of gratitude to our Lord.

Assisting our clients – we need your help

Many of our clients are not fortunate enough to have a computer at home. Can you imagine working on your resume, your child's homework, or an email to your sister and not having a computer to save it on?

Darrel recently graduated from Getting Ahead and is working on his resume. Sitting in the library for a few hours perfecting it, he printed ten copies to hand out with his applications. This week, he stopped by OPEN M for us to make a few more copies as he applies for jobs all over Akron. "Do you have an electronic copy of this on the computer we can pull up?" our staff asked him. "No, I don't have any computer to save these things on," he said.

Thankfully, technology has given us an answer to this. Jump drives, also often called flash drives or USB drives, are small

portable storage devices individuals can place on their key chain and carry around with them. With one of these, Darrel can save his resume and make changes to it, as he needs. In addition, when he turns in his resume it will not look like a photocopy, but a nice fresh original.

If your church, small group, or family is looking for something to collect and donate to OPEN M, we are in need of these flash drives. New or used, our clients would greatly appreciate this gift. If possible, we would prefer one that can be put on a key chain ring.

Thanks for your support as we move our clients towards stability and out of poverty! If you have any questions, please contact Hannah at family@openm.org.

In-Kind Donations

OPEN M is blessed to have so many supporters in the community. We appreciate you thinking of us for your donations for our clinic, food and other departments. It is because of your donations we are able to help so many of our clients with a variety of items. In-kind donations are a true blessing to us however; we cannot take all the donations that are given to us due to space and liability. We ask that you please call OPEN M before bringing down any in-kind donations to make sure they are accepted and to give us a forewarning of what to expect. Here are the extensions of staff members to call to see if your donation can be accepted.

- Kristina Holwerda- Ext. 406 or Patrice Fox- Ext. 414
 - Donations regarding the clinic, medical supplies, medication, etc.
- Bobbie Boyer- Ext. 416
 - Food donations
- Colleen McMahon- Ext. 428
 - Food Drives
- Felicia Bronner- Ext. 410
 - Education supplies, books, kid items, etc.
- Hannah Nitz- Ext. 403
 - Donations for family development, jump drives, etc.
- Lamont Graves- Ext. 409
 - Any other donations

Kudos Corner

We owe our thanks to the following people:

- Everyone who donated turkeys and food for Thanksgiving and Christmas.
- Fairlawn Area Chamber of Commerce for donating six boxes of bags to our food pantry.
- Robert J Events & Catering for donating food to OPEN M.
- All the wonderful volunteers who gave their time to help make Christmas for the Love of Children possible.
- Wayne Homes for seeing our need on our website and collecting 875 pounds of food for our pantry.
- Thank you to all of our Covenant Churches, schools and businesses that helped fill our Christmas food boxes and stock our pantry shelves for the coming year. In addition, many thanks to all of the volunteers who helped pack the food boxes for Christmas.
- Food pantry volunteers for all that they do through the year. Know that your kindness will be rewarded.
- Fairlawn Area Chamber of Commerce for choosing OPEN M as the recipient of a portion of the money raised from the Annual Holiday Auction. Many wonderful toys and 115 pounds of food was donated to our agency by the members and guests of the chamber.
- St. Paul Catholic School of Akron for putting together a hats, gloves and scarves donation tree to benefit OPEN M.
- K-Mart, Tallmadge, for their cooperation with shopping excursions for our Christmas for the Love of Children program.
- Stow-Munroe Falls High School Basketball Team for helping with Christmas distribution day.
- Jonathan Polhamus from Cycles for Christ, Hudson Presbyterian Church, for donating 40 bikes for our Christmas program.
- Donation of Christmas decorations from the Holiday Tree Festival, Chairperson Heather Jalbert.
- Joan Schoenheit, for her Christmas decoration recommendation for our lobby.
- Tom Shoemaker for the donation of a camera.
- Dr. Robert Barson, Dr. David Barson and Dr. Michael Stephan.
- Heart of Gold Foundation.
- Schlabig Certified Public Accountants for donating five used computers, computer mouse and keyboards to accommodate our new staff.
- TRY Ministries for helping us move furniture and prepare for our Christmas food boxes.
- Giant Eagle #4031, Barberton – Continuous donation of new plastic grocery bags and Pat Coons for contacting Giant Eagle in Barberton for the donation.
- First UMC Cuyahoga Falls collecting frozen turkeys for Christmas boxes.
- A BIG thank you to our food collection donations this month: Akron Board of Trade collected 21 lbs of food, Hoban High School collected 3,577 lbs of food, Info Line collected 130 lbs of food, Resnick Community Learning Center in Akron collected 1,951 lbs of food, Connecting Touch for donating 443 pounds of food for our food pantry.
- A Christmas Angel that helped buy toys for all the children on the OPEN M waiting list.
- All the Christmas Sponsors that adopted out children or volunteered their time to help organize and execute the Christmas for the Love of Children Program.
- Angel Favaro for all her hard work with putting together the whole Christmas for the Love of Children program.
- John Davis from Akron Commercial Color Lab for donating his time to come and take pictures of the OPEN M staff and our staff Christmas picture.
- St. Sebastian for donating multiple large bags full of toys for Christmas.
- Summa Health System for sending volunteers to help with Christmas.
- The following volunteering for helping during the Christmas season multiple days: Christina Crum, Lisa Becker, Mary Rinaldi, Barb Kraynack, Pat Coon, Libby Benkovich, and Ted Iler.



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

OPEN M Donor List November 16th through December 22nd

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Anne and Glen Williams
by
Mr. & Mrs. Ray Auman

In Honor Of
Susan Clements
by
Mr. Wayne Baker

In Honor Of
Nancy Brennan and
Granddaughters - Ann & Maggie
Drude
by
Mr. & Mrs. David Brennan

In Honor Of
Ruth Hinkle
Betty Oren
by
Esther Circle Family of Faith UMC
Church

In Honor Of
Ann Brennan
Alice Bergstrom
Janet Das Varma
Sandra Dawson
Robbin Harvey
Froncie Repetti
Sylvia Yankey
by
Ms.. Jean Foust
In Honor Of
Jan and Ray Auman
by
Grandview United Methodist Church

In Honor Of
Laura Robinson
by
Nancy Gromen

In Honor Of
Ann Brennan
Alice Bergstrom
Jean Foust
Janet Das Varma
Sandra Dawson
Frances Repetti
Sylvia Yankey
by
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Harvey

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Andrew & Cheryl Maimona
by
Hudson Kiwanis Foundation

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Nancy Lyberger
by
Dottie & Richard Marsh
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by
Tim, Colleen, Katy and Connor
McMahon

In Honor Of
Parry Keller
Ruth & Wendell White
Jo & George Honig
by
Mrs. Patricia Neely

In Honor of
Hank Hudson's 80th Birthday
by
OPEN M Staff

In Honor of
Norma Wernowsky
by
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In Honor Of
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Robbin Harvey
Janet Das Varma
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In Honor Of
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Jean Schwabe
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Roger Hoover
by
Akron Fire Ladies Auxiliary

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Jean Foust
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Carol Simpson

In Memory Of
JoAnn McClaskey
by
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Lance Wernowsky
Connie Wernowsky
by
Mrs. Norma Wernowsky

In Memory Of
Dr. John C. Kyle
by
Mr. and Mrs. John Fulcher

Hot Lunch Headlines

February

Mon., Feb. 13 Hudson UMC	Mon., Feb. 20 The Chapel	Mon., Feb.27 High Street
Tues., Feb. 14 OPEN DATE	Tues., Feb. 21 OPEN DATE	Christian
Wed., Feb. 15 Church of Our Saviour	Wed., Feb. 22 Sigma Theta Tau	Tues., Feb. 28 Christ Church
Thurs., Feb. 16 Twin Falls UMC	Thurs., Feb. 23 1 st UMC Falls	Wed., Feb. 29 1 st Congregational Church, Husdon
Fri., Feb. 17 Macedonia UMC	Fri., Feb. 24 OPEN DATE	

Meet a Diamond Lady, Taraya Johnson

My name is Taraya Johnson and I am 15 years old. I attend Archbishop Hoban High School, and I am in the music program. Many of my hobbies consist of music and community services.

I have been in the Diamond Ladies program for two years, and it has really been a blessing in my life. I joined the program so that I could spend my time constructively and wisely in a positive environment. I believe I bring a positive attitude and a sound mind to the program. I am also receiving tools on how to become a better person and how to make good decisions from diamond ladies. I would like to see us participate in more workshops and have more opportunities for career shadowing, so that we can learn from each other and see our paradigms of life."

We welcome Steve Reynolds

OPEN M would like to welcome Steve Reynolds to our staff. Steve is now in charge of our YME+ male mentoring program. Steve attended the University of Cincinnati and transferred to Youngstown State University where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. Reynolds is an ex-football player and owns his own business, MKU Athletics, working with kids 6-25 years old with building character, a "can do" attitude and giving kids a purpose.

Steve heard about OPEN M through Felicia Bronner, our education coordinator, during summer camp. A couple months ago, OPEN M had the privilege to have Steve be a guest speaker for our YME+ program. The young men really enjoyed hearing Steve speak, and we believe he is a great addition to the program. He will be able to interact with the kids through sports, leadership and mentoring.

In Steve's spare time, his hobbies are playing video games and watching movies. He is a newlywed who loves to attend Struthers Church of Christ with his wife Kelly and his children, Jordan, 10, and Kiara, 6. Steve has many exciting things going on in his life and is expecting his third child in May.

After being around Steve for more than a couple minutes, you can tell he is very passionate about working with kids. "I love what I do and wouldn't trade it for the world," he said. When asked what he is most looking forward to in his role at OPEN M, he said, "Working with the young men and seeing the impact and change that will happen in their lives. Seeing the program grow and getting to be able to work with the staff to help people in a positive way."



OPEN M
941 Princeton Street
Akron, OH 44311

Return Service Requested

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IMPORTANT DATES

January 2012

No Monthly Membership Meeting

Monday, January 16, 2012

Office Closed

Friday, January 20, 2012, 9 a.m.

Mountain of Food

Saturday, February 11, 2012, 9 a.m.

ANNUAL Membership Meeting

Thursday, February 9, 2012, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

All day Bridges workshop at OPEN M

Giving Thanks

by Bobbie Boyer

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This time of the year, we have many things to be thankful for. I have a special thank you that I would like to extend to two very special families. They are the Fischietto and Foschia families from St. Barnabas of Northfield. For the last 10 years, these two families have come to OPEN M the Wednesday morning before Thanksgiving to boil and mash the potatoes for our Thanksgiving Dinner. They made this a family affair. Faithfully we could always depend on them for their wonderful service. Everyone in both families truly enjoyed and looked forward to coming to OPEN M every year to give back.

Thank you for your continued support!

