



# OPEN M

A Ministry of Faith, Health and Hope

AUGUST 2011

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## 15 years of determination and success!

Written by: Dottie Achmoody



Dottie Achmoody

OPEN M has been helping people in poverty for more than 43 years. More specifically, since 1990 we have been working with individuals in poverty directing them on a road to self-sufficiency. Blanche Nobles was one of the many people who benefitted from the Family Development program, Moving Families Out of Poverty (MFOP), and counseling sessions back in the early 90's.

Blanche was a single mother supporting three little girls and her mother, who had a heart condition, when she agreed to participate in the MFOP program. She came to us disheartened, displaced and on patient assistance (PA). The positive in her life was her faith and desire to survive. I smiled at Blanche when she first walked in my office; even as she smiled back at me, I could see the sadness in her eyes.

As I interviewed her, I learned she came from an abusive relationship. Hearing her speak, I realized quickly she was a survivor. Even though she has experienced much heartache, she expressed she was not ready to give up! We felt an immediate connection. She had a passion to thrive, and I had a passion to help her succeed.

The agreement was, I would give counsel, support, and be an advocate for her in the community. Her end of the bargain was to follow through by accomplishing weekly goals and meeting with me on a regular basis. With no daycare, transportation or formal education, we had our work cut out for us. It was fortunate we both had a lot of tenacity. I found Blanche to be disciplined and motivated and before long, I saw hope and determination in her eyes as sadness dissipated.

She was so appreciative! We were able to obtain transportation and a safe place for her and her family to live. She worked part time while attending college. She joyfully worked her way off PA. Before long, she graduated from the University of Akron with a degree in business administration and obtained a certificate as a computer specialist. To date Blanche and her daughters now have their own day care center called "Praise Day Care Center." She plans to expand her services to Cuyahoga Falls.

After 15 years, it was great meeting with Blanche again. The best news was learning the impact the MFOP program had on her life and family. It enabled her to move off PA and never to return. She gives OPEN M the credit and is thankful we gave her support and a hand-up at the lowest point in her life

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www.openm.org  
Newsletter designed by  
The Murphy Agency

when she felt entrapped by poverty.

Blanche passed down the many lessons of life to her three daughters, especially the importance of attending college. All three are either enrolled or graduated from the University of Akron. Blanch now carries her head high and enjoys being a businesswoman. She agreed to come back to OPEN M to share her success story with the new Bridges out of Poverty graduates.

When asked what piece of advice she had for others working their way out of poverty, she said, *"It's important to learn from your mistakes, turn away from them and not allow them to become a lifetime barrier."* She also advised people to get a support system like OPEN M for guidance and direction. To this day, she is thankful to OPEN M for being with her crossing every barrier. She knows in her heart, she did not have the resources or energy to do it on her own.

*"I will always be grateful to OPEN M for being there for me, my three girls, and my mother," she said. "It frightens me to think where I might have ended up without you and OPEN M. Thank you!"*

## Getting Ahead, moving on and celebrating accomplishments!

Kathleen came to OPEN M after hearing about our Getting Ahead program from Sister Catherine, a Catholic Worker who runs safe houses on Princeton Street for homeless women and families. Kathleen was staying in the Catholic Worker home after she found herself homeless due to a strong alcohol addiction. Kathleen described herself as sitting at rock bottom with no plan, motivation, or way out.

Kathleen started OPEN M's Getting Ahead program in January 2011, and hasn't stopped moving since. Graduating from the Getting Ahead group in March, Kathleen now has a full time job with benefits, got her driver's license back after not having it for 11 years, bought a car, and is celebrating 15 months of sobriety. When you talk to Kathleen, her joy and confidence spills into every word.

*"Getting Ahead motivated me", Kathleen said. "Instead of living day to day, I have learned to plan ahead. I do not just react to what happens around me but I set out with a plan. That helped me realize what I really wanted to do and get ahead."*

Kathleen also described her fight to move out of poverty and into the middle class. "I am slowly making the transition. I went from nothing at all to having all the things I do now. I'm learning how to interact with people from the middle class and have learned the hidden rules to interact with professionals. Without Getting Ahead, I could not have done that."

Kathleen is already counting down the days until March 2012, when she will hit one year at her place of employment and get a week of vacation time, something she never thought she would have. In the meantime, Sister Catherine offered her an opportunity to work with the Catholic Workers and open a house on Princeton for pregnant and homeless women.

Kathleen is not only getting ahead, she is radically changing everything about her life. She has been relying on God for strength each day, and has not stopped talking about OPEN M and the Getting Ahead program. "I think you all should be on the

radio talking about this program. It has changed my life; I wish everyone could go through it." Kathleen, we are so proud of all you have accomplished and are excited to watch you move out of poverty!

## Fall Fest-Fall into Starlit Fashions



Join us for our Annual OPEN M Fall Fest, luncheon, silent/oral auction, movie star fashions at Todaro's Party Center on Saturday, October 22, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. This year's 'Fall into Starlit Fashions' will be a sensational afternoon filled with delicious food, exciting auctions, breathtaking movie star fashions, and lots of star-studded surprises.

We'll spotlight a dramatic display of authentic costumes worn by some of the biggest legends in Hollywood. The glitz and glam will be the talk of the town. Bring your friends, dress the part, and walk the red carpet like a star! Proceeds go to support the overall mission of OPEN M.

**Price: \$35**

**\*We will offer an early bird special! If you buy your tickets before September 18, you will get \$5 off each ticket purchased! Get your tickets soon!**

**Ways to get involved: \*Donate a NEW silent auction item**

**\*Corporate Sponsorships are available**

**\*Attend the Event**

**\*Dress up like a famous movie star between 1930's-1970's**

**Sponsorship Levels:**

**Legend Sponsor: \$6,000 (Table of 10 included)**

**Super Star Sponsor: \$3,000 (5 tickets included)**

**Red Carpet Sponsor: \$1,500 (3 tickets included)**

**Celebrity Sponsor: \$500**

**VIP Sponsor: \$200**

**We're bringing  
a pop culture  
museum  
to you!**



# OPEN M launches new website!

OPEN M's digital appearance gets a transformation! Check out our new website at [www.openm.org](http://www.openm.org). If you want to stay up to date with what is going on with OPEN M on a daily basis, now you can! Visit the new website and click on the link for News/Blog to see any breaking news. View information on our programs, departments, upcoming events, newsletters, pictures and so much more!

We hope you will add [www.openm.org](http://www.openm.org) to your favorites on your browser so you can stay connected with OPEN M. This website is designed to be very functional and interactive. So by all means feel free to comment on our news and blog section.

**Join us on the web today! We hope you will enjoy the new look, feel and information we will be providing you!**



## Plastic Bag Shortage



Help! We are in need of plastic grocery bags for our food pantry. This is a great way to help OPEN M without having to spend money or do anything out of the ordinary. All you have to do is save your plastic bags from when you go grocery shopping and bring them to OPEN M Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

OPEN M uses plastic grocery bags to help bag food for our Food Pantry, Mountain of Food and much more! This is a necessity for our food programs and we are running dangerously low. We can always use more plastic bags. So next time you go shopping, before you throw away those plastic bags please consider donating them to OPEN M. We greatly appreciate your consideration! If you have, any questions contact Bobbie Boyer at 330-434-0110, Ext. 416.

# Christmas for the Love of Children

As we are putting away the games from our summer camp program, OPEN M is already preparing for our next big program – Christmas! As you know, OPEN M is able to help around 300 low-income families each Christmas with food and toys for their children. However, this task is physically impossible without support from each of you. **Already starting to plan ahead?**

**Here are a few things we need this season.**

- Individuals/businesses/groups/churches to sponsor a family and buy gifts for their children.
- Individuals/businesses/groups/churches to collect food for our food boxes for each family.
- Volunteers to work on our Christmas committee and help make this program happen.
- Volunteers to come for just one day and help organize gifts or distribute to the families.

Please let us know how you would like to help with Christmas this year. You can contact Hannah Nitz at 330-434-0110, Ext. 403, or e-mail her at [family@openm.org](mailto:family@openm.org).



## Kudo's Corner

### A Special THANK YOU to

- All the groups who provided hot lunch for the month of June
- All of the individuals who are volunteering as partners and working with our Getting Ahead graduates
- Desi Beck for being a giant support to the Summer Camp Program, OPEN M, and our staff
- All Summer Camp supporters and all our faithful supporters of OPEN M
- Pam Rybka for cooking a meal for our Getting Ahead graduates
- Huge thank you to Bev Bokovitz, and AGMC for helping us with disposing of our unused medications

## After Summer Networking Extravaganza

OPEN M is hosting its 3rd Annual Networking Extravaganza on Wednesday, September 28, 2011, from 5 to 7 p.m. at OPEN M. This is a great event for area businesses to join and network with other businessmen and women. We have invited the following Chambers of Commerce: Fairlawn Chamber of Commerce, Stow-Munroe Falls Chamber of Commerce, Cuyahoga Falls Chamber of Commerce, and South Summit Chamber of Commerce, Akron Boards of Trade, the Mayors Association and more. We are expecting around 200 people to come through the doors of OPEN M during this event.

The event is free! However, we ask you to bring a canned food item for our Food Pantry, over the counter medication for the Free Health Clinic, or a monetary donation to the overall mission of OPEN M. Please R.S.V.P. to [projects@openm.org](mailto:projects@openm.org).



# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

## OPEN M Donor List June 16th through July 15th

\*Akron Baptist Temple  
Ms. Linda Alexander  
Mrs. Patricia Anderson  
Anonymous (2)  
Drs. Denise & David Ballinger  
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Barber  
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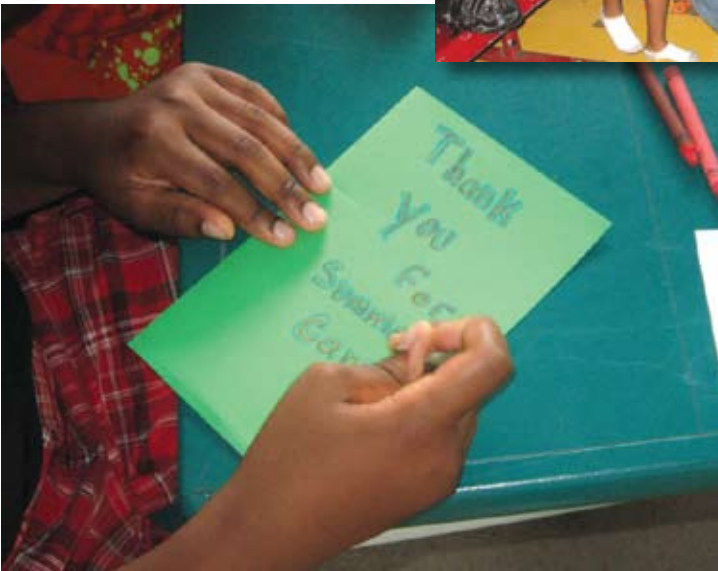
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### **In Honor Of**

Dave & Cindy Thomas'  
50th Wedding Anniversary  
by  
Mr. & Mrs. Ronald Glosser



# Summer Camp 2011



## Hot Lunch Headlines

August and September

Mon. Aug. 15  
Hudson UMC

Tues. Aug. 23  
St. Barnabas Northfield

Wed. Aug. 31  
First Congregational  
Hudson

Mon. Sept. 26  
UMC Stow

Tues. Aug. 16  
Fairlawn Lutheran

Wed. Aug. 24  
Grace UCC

Mon. Sept. 19  
Hudson United  
Methodist

Tues. Sept. 27  
Christ Church  
Episcopal

Wed. Aug. 17  
Prosecutors Office

Thurs. Aug. 25  
First UMC Falls

Tues. Sept. 20  
Peninsula UMC

Wed. Sept. 28  
1<sup>st</sup> Congregational  
Church Hudson

Thurs. Aug. 18  
Twin Falls UMC

Fri. Aug. 26  
Montrose Zion

Wed. Sept. 21  
Sigma Theta Tau

Thurs. Sept. 29  
Green Valley UMC

Fri. Aug. 19  
Macedonia UMC

Mon. Aug. 29  
High Street Christian  
Church

Thurs. Sept. 22  
Twin Falls

Fri. Sept. 30  
Summit County  
Prosecutors Office

Mon. Aug. 22  
Stow Munroe Falls  
Cheerleaders

Tues. Aug. 30  
Manchester UMC

Fri. Sept. 23  
UMC Macedonia



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## IMPORTANT DATES

**Tuesday, August 2, 5 p.m.**  
**National Night Out**

**Monday, August 8, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.**  
**11<sup>th</sup> Annual Golf Outing**

**Saturday, August 13, 9 a.m.**  
**Membership Meeting**

**Wednesday, September 28, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.**  
**After Summer Networking Extravaganza**

**Saturday, October 22, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.**  
**Fall Fest**

## Volunteer of the month



John Green is one of our treasured pantry volunteers at OPEN M and may be one of a few to have a Wikipedia page on the Internet! John is the director of the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at the University of Akron, as well as being a distinguished professor of political science. He is also a Senior Fellow at the Pew Forum

on Religion and Public Life. While John enjoys a distinguished career, it lends itself to his heart for service.

John, with his academia background, is very humble about his career life when he steps through the doors of OPEN M. John has always had an interest in helping hungry people, so we are fortunate that John found his way to our OPEN M Food

Pantry. John comes to the pantry once a week and helps fill the grocery bags with canned goods and non-perishables for our three day emergency food program. Dr. Green says his work here at OPEN M is a spiritual activity, a calling on his life. He said, *"I love working with the other volunteers and Bobbie here at the pantry. It's fun!"*

John and his wife Lynn, a career counselor, are members of First United Methodist Church, Akron, and have two grown children. Their son is finishing his doctoral work in international relations in Boston, and his daughter, who lives in Pittsburgh, is a home health care Hospice nurse. John comes from a large family. He is the oldest of six, and even in his childhood was brought up to give back to the community.

Our OPEN M volunteers come from all walks of life. We are truly honored to have such a distinguished individual giving his time to our Food Pantry. It's always fun when we see John featured in the paper or on CNN. We can say, **He is one of our volunteers!**