



The Open Door Newsletter



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Guardians of the Open Door

Pictured to the right are the staff of The Open Door, Yvette Wiggins, Lisa Dukes-Garner, Jerome Maynor and Nathaniel Williams. Yvette, Jerome and Nate have been with us since the beginning of the program and have shaped many policies and decisions regarding The Open Door. When Yvette and Nate were promoted to Program Managers of The Open Door in July 2007, taking on many of the responsibilities previously held by the volunteer board, they brought on our newest hire, Lisa Dukes-Garner who also works full time at the Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force. Yvette works full time at a doctor's office for people living with HIV, The Positive Health Clinic. Staff work every evening at The Open Door providing support and guidance to residents when all other agencies are closed. They provide a much needed ear to listen, a shoulder to cry on, and a smile to cheer with. Staff reminds residents of medical, behavioral health, and benefits appointments and often accompanies them to these visits. Staff also assists residents

with medication management and other daily life skills. They coordinate all of our evening events, prepare the meals, and assist residents with monthly bill payments. But the most important thing that our staff does is provide a safe space for our residents to talk about any challenges that they face. Our residents know that they will not be judged by staff, because our staff are peers to our residents, having faced many of the same challenges themselves and learned how to overcome them. The staff of The Open Door are the heart and soul of our program and there would be no program without them. Until July of 2007 all monies raised for The Open Door went directly to staff salaries. We now also use those monies for program supports like food, cooking supplies, linens and bedding for new residents and paper supplies. Thank you to our wonderful Staff! You guys are the best!



Standing: Nathaniel Williams, Jerome Maynor
Seated: Lisa Dukes-Garner, Yvette Wiggins



Nourishing Volunteer

Long time volunteer, Art Post, from the Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force (pictured left) provides monthly food to the residents of The Open Door. He also provides special fixings for holidays like Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. Our

holiday meals are usually planned the day before the actual holiday so our staff and residents can plan to be with their own families on the holiday. Program Manager, Nate, not only coordinates all the

food orders, he's also our resident chef! Thanks so much to Art and the Pittsburgh AIDS Task Force for providing all the food and to Nate for preparing it all!

Alcoa Volunteers Lend A Hand

Alcoa volunteers helped out The Open Door for the second year in a row on Friday, October 26th by lending their hand in preparing over 30 dishes for the residents. Seven volunteers went to two different board members houses and cooked for over four hours creating meals that included chilli, lasagna, stuffed peppers, many casseroles and even grape leaves! Now The Open Door has healthy, already prepared meals for its weekly educational and quality of life events. Pictured at the right are long time volunteer Dawn Predmore

and Alcoa volunteers Mike Rooney and Vivien Sawtell. Located at board members Dana Davis and Colleen Henning's house were Demir Demik, Pat Love, Karen Langmann and Paul Donald. Many of these same individuals were part of Alcoa's volunteer day last year when 10 volunteers provided a day's worth of hard work cleaning and painting three apartments at The Open Door. Shortly thereafter, The Open Door received a check for \$3000 for being a part of this volunteer event. Thank you so much to Alcoa and all their dedicated volunteers.



Holiday Gifts...

Happy Holidays from The Pusateri Family! Did you know that all of our residents make out a holiday wish list each year and Dr. Dorothy Pusateri from AGH and her children Meg, Nick, Emmy, Tim along with husband Dave purchase the items to provide a very generous holiday to residents each year? It started when daughter, Emmy, offered to provide a community service to The Open Door residents by pur-

chasing gifts while providing HIV education to her classmates. Now the Pusateri family has offered to make it an annual event that they plan with their friends, family and community members. Our residents have never had such wonderful holiday cheer as they've experienced through the gifts of the Pusateri family. Thank you so much to the Pusateri family for their wonderful holiday wishes to our residents!

...and Holiday Fuel

Howard Williams from The Christian Bible Kodesh Church Of Emmanuel heard about The Open Door when co-worker, Colleen Henning, founding board member, talked about it one day at work. He invited her to his church to talk about the inspirational housing program. The church then took it upon themselves to include The Open Door in their holiday meal dispersement. On Thanksgiving Day last year Howard just showed up and a resident let him in the building and he passed out hot plates of

turkey, mashed potatoes and all the fixings. Residents and staff didn't even know who these kind folks were until the message was passed down to Colleen when she figured it had to be Howard and his beautiful ministries. Howard and his church now make it a planned event to provide hot meals on the actual holidays of Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. Thank you so much to Howard and his church for all that they do for our community!

"Our Truck Guy"

"I have to check with my truck guy," is what I tell people when they generously offer their gently used furniture and household goods to The Open Door. Bill Hawk is that "truck guy" and he has been hauling furniture for us on a monthly basis since we started the organization. Bill provides his time, his truck, his muscles and thank goodness his sense of humor. He never knows what we're going to pick up but he's always willing to do whatever it takes to get the furni-

ture to the residents. Even if it means carrying a sofa bed from a third story walk up on the Mexican War Streets. Each resident is provided with a furnished apartment and all of the furniture has been donated by individuals in the community such as Dr. Patrick Digiacomo pictured below on the right with Bill. This is Patrick's second furniture donation to The Open Door. Other community members that have donated furniture and goods to The Open Door multiple times include among others Michael Chance and Ron Johnson, Karen and Chuck Petrosky, Eda Simonsen, Anna Sangl and the Glenshaw Valley Presbyterian Church and a whole community of folks from the Mexican War Streets neighborhood. THANKS BILL!



The Board!!!

Founding board members Colleen Henning, David Piontkowsky, Mary Gallagher, Mary Hawk, Carol Frazer, Patrick Putorti, Lisa Perkins and Dana Davis started making the plans for The Open Door Housing Program in January 2005. With nothing more than their own money, will and a "just do it" mantra, they mortgaged a building in April 2006. By June 2006 they moved in their first resident. Not only did these individuals plan, implement and pay for the costs of this program they also did everything else. It was a year and a half later when founding board member, Dr. Piontkowsky provided a medication adherence talk to the residents when one of the residents remarked "You're a doctor? I thought you were the maintenance man." The board has provided cleaning and repairs of apartments, fund raising, donor solicitation, grant



writing, furniture moving, food preparation, and staff supervision going on three years this January. Thank goodness we welcomed the addition of board members, Jeff Conover and Margaret Palumbo in 2007. Jeff is a marketing specialist and has helped move us into the 21st century by providing a beautiful brochure and website at www.opendoorhousing.org. Margaret a quality management specialist providing us with much needed outcome measures and assessment tools. We couldn't have done it without any of them and we want to personally thank each and everyone!