

Opening Doors
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For Immediate Release

Teresa Shelter Residents Displaced by Retaining Wall Collapse

DUBUQUE (April 11, 2016) – Staff working at the Teresa Shelter on March 9 were startled and sprang into action after hearing a very loud sound at the rear of the building. Staff said it sounded like a helicopter had dropped a bunch of boulders on the top of the building. Upon inspection, they discovered that the 10’ high retaining wall behind the building on Bluff Street had given way, slamming large boulders, chunks of cement and earth into the side of the building.

Professional engineers inspected the property and determined that the wall would need to be rebuilt by pouring gravel eight feet high to stabilize the bluff. They were impressed that Opening Doors was proactive in addressing the issue. With a price tag of over \$28,000, Opening Doors authorized the unbudgeted expense and work will begin today requiring that the residents be displaced for up to four days. Maria House is at full capacity, so they couldn’t accommodate the additional women and children from Teresa Shelter. Fortunately, Opening Doors’ board member and Clarke University President Sr. Joanne Burrows generously volunteered to house the women and children on an empty floor in one of their resident halls until the work is completed. Opening Doors’ staff will provide transportation to the residents as needed.

“Thanks to the quick action of our staff, contacts were made to city engineers and local fire department to insure that staff and residents weren’t in any immediate danger,” said Executive Director Michelle Brown.

A special fund has been established to financially support this unexpected expense. Donations can be dropped off or mailed to Maria House, 1561 Jackson Street, Dubuque, IA 52001 (ATTN: Retaining Wall Fund) or online at www.openingdoorsdbq.org/ways-to-help/donate/.

Opening Doors is the nonprofit organization that operates Maria House and Teresa Shelter. Homeless women, alone or with children, come to us to help rebuild their lives. We provide goal setting and life skills training that will enable them to take care of themselves and achieve their full potential. Women are dependent when they come in...independent when they leave. Since 2000, Maria House has provided transitional housing, where residents can stay for as long as two years. In 2006, we opened Teresa Shelter. It offers extended stay housing, as well as short-term emergency shelter services.

For more information, please contact Michelle Brown at 563-582-7480.