

Opening Doors
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For Immediate Release

New Executive Director for Opening Doors

DUBUQUE (November 20, 2017) – Opening Doors announces a change in leadership as Michelle Brown is retiring having served as the organization’s only Executive Director since the organization was founded in 2000.

Michelle was hired almost 18 years ago without even a desk to sit at. For the first few months, she sat alongside Sister Helen Huewe, the project initiator, at a card table on the second floor of St. Patrick’s rectory while Maria House was being renovated. Since that time, Opening Doors has served over 3,000 homeless women and children and the organization has grown to include Maria House, Teresa Shelter and our new permanent supportive housing program at the St. Francis Apartments on the Steeple Square campus.

Carol Gebhart will take over as the new Executive Director on November 27. The official announcement was made at Opening Doors’ annual fall gala “Attitude of Gratitude” on Saturday, November 16. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education from the University of Iowa and a Master’s of Arts degree in School Administration from Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, TX. She most recently worked as the Director for the Protection of Children at the Archdiocese of Dubuque. Prior to that, Carol was a teacher at an inner-city school in Houston, TX and then a Private School Administrator in Dubuque.

Opening Doors is the nonprofit organization that operates Maria House, Teresa Shelter and the permanent supportive housing program at the new Francis Apartments on the Steeple Square campus. 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 the same transitional housing, as well as short-term emergency shelter services. Our permanent supportive housing program completes our continuum of housing services for homeless families in our community.

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

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