

Opening Doors

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For Immediate Release

Smith Home Gallery & Cabinet Works and Spahn & Rose Lumber Co. Collaborate to Reconfigure Teresa Shelter

DUBUQUE (June 27, 2019) – Opening Doors has been challenged to meet its mission over the past three years due to the space constraints at our Teresa Shelter facility. This shelter provides emergency housing for women and children experiencing homelessness. The increase in the demand for our services prompted a need to reconfigure the space for staff efficiency and the safety of our residents. Two local businesses collaborated to provide a solution.

Gerb Smith of Smith Home Gallery & Cabinet Works visited the site and proposed a solution to build an intake room, which allowed additional office space for staff. Gerb reached out to John Cook, General Manager of Spahn & Rose Lumber Co. (Dubuque) who offered to donate all of the supplies needed for the project. Gerb's team constructed the main structure for the room. Opening Doors volunteers are in the process of finishing the project.

“When there is need in this community, people step up,” said Executive Director Carol Gebhart. “We are so grateful for the support from Gerb Smith and John Cook to help us better meet the needs of women and children experiencing a tough time. As a result, staff have adequate office space to support our residents, and we have a dedicated, private intake space to welcome new residents. Providing a safe, supportive and hospitable environment is a basic tenet to meeting our mission.”

Opening Doors is the nonprofit organization that operates Teresa Shelter, Maria House, and a supportive housing program at Francis Apartments. Women, alone or with children, who are experiencing homelessness come to us to help build a new life. We provide goal setting and life skills training that will enable them to take care of themselves and achieve their full potential. We offer a hand up in the world, not a handout.

Since 2000, Opening Doors has served over 3,400 women and children through a continuum of services. Teresa Shelter offers emergency and extended stay programs. Maria House offers transitional housing for up to two years. Francis Apartments offers an opportunity for income-based affordable housing with support services; a combination that has proven to be effective at ending the cycle of homelessness. Our three doorways of hope for homeless women and children are much more than a place to sleep. We offer the opportunity for women to claim their own power and become self-sufficient.

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