

Open Door Mission provides basic necessities

By David Familetti

Warm beds, fresh food and a roof over our head sound like reasonable accommodations to expect in our daily lives. But for some in the metro, these basic necessities may seem like luxuries.

The Open Door Mission works hard to provide basic essentials to all those who need help the most. For more than 60 years, the Open Door Mission has helped the homeless.

Today, the Open Door Mission helps men, women and children of all ages and has expanded its reach throughout metro Omaha and the state of Nebraska.

Breaking the cycle of homelessness and poverty is the goal of the Open Door Mission in its efforts to serve more than 20,000 homeless individuals in Nebraska every night. Every day the organization offers more than 800 shelter beds for men, women and children and provides 2,000 meals a day.

Steve Frazee, senior program director for the Open Door Mission, knows the importance of keeping volunteers and members motivated to keep up their efforts.

"We believe that what we are doing is helping the ministry of Jesus Christ," Frazee says, "We're impacting people not only with their

immediate temporal needs but also with eternal needs."

The Open Door Mission has several campaigns in motion to continue its quest of ending homelessness and poverty and to heal those still suffering.

One campaign involves the use of warming areas, which provide a place for people to come in from the cold, harsh conditions and eat a meal. Other highlights of the changing seasons include the Drive-Through Christmas and Drumsticks on Wheels. The purpose of these events is to help make certain choices for people easier.

"Just a whole bunch of things to help people who are still in the community to receive some of the things," Frazee says, "so they're not choosing to 'Do I buy Christmas gifts for the kids or do I pay my light bill?'"

One of the biggest challenges the Open Door Mission faces is the overflow of people in need of their services, especially in winter. To overcome this, Frazee says the Open Door Mission relies on fellow charitable organizations such as the Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless (MACCH). Frazee praised the cohesiveness of the local nonprofit groups as they are all trying to accomplish the same objective: end homelessness.

"We're always trying to get somebody from a mat on the floor into a bed and a bed to a room." Frazee says.



Metro Area Continuum of Care for the Homeless