

The Open Door Witness

November 2015

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From the Director



Hello! As you read the articles in this newsletter you will probably notice that many pertain to the plans being made to celebrate the Open Door Community Center's 40th anniversary. I'm excited! The 40th Anniversary Committee has met several

times and awesome things are happening to celebrate this upcoming event.

Looking over the old photographs, videos and newspaper clippings has been very interesting. History and remembering "back when" are favorite pastimes. I've been fortunate to have been part of Open Door's history for almost 20 years. My first day on the job at OD was January 3, 1996. I was teaching school in Mandan, ND, and saw the job opening in the church bulletin at McCabe UMC. As a single mom with three young sons I was interested because it was a new challenge offering not only the chance to work with children but also families. **(Director - continued on page 7)**

40th Anniversary Observed



Marvia Boettcher
Board Chair

Remembering beginnings, celebrating anniversaries, planning events . . . after enough time has passed that is what we do. Open Door Community Center is no exception. November 2016 will be the 40th year of the beginning of Open Door Community Center. We will celebrate the anniversary during the coming year and

plan several events so the people of the Dakotas United Methodist Church will be aware of the mission project they have supported over the past 40 years.

Numerous individuals have eagerly agreed to plan a wide variety of projects and activities. These include, but are not limited to, constructing and tending a Little Free Library in our neighborhood, preparing a history of the Open Door Community Center, producing a short video about the Open Door, and locating ODie the Clown dolls that served as a fundraiser in the past. In addition, the Committee

has set goals for facility improvements including funding the replacement of the carpet and linoleum (which were laid when the present building was constructed), as well as the freezer, microwave oven, and chalkboard.

The remainder of this article describes some of the above projects. We welcome your suggestions for other means to commemorate this special year, as well as your gifts of time, talent, and financial support to make this celebration a success.

~Building on 40 Years Video Produced

The Open Door is eager to share its story and needs with all United Methodist Churches of the Dakotas Conference, its supporters, and all interested persons and organizations. To that end, the 40th Anniversary Committee has produced a five-minute video to present this information. It is appropriate for short programs for UMW and youth groups, community organization and agency meetings and conferences, and other gatherings.

The raw footage was shot by Steve Van Dyke, an Open Door Board member. KAT Productions, a well-known video company in Bismarck donated its time and equipment to professionally edit and produce the finished product. The video, *Building on 40 Years: The Open Door Community Center*, can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zEzSbEv-xl&feature=youtu.be> and the Open Door website (www.opendoorbismarck.com).

~Little Free Library Under Construction



The Anniversary Committee enthusiastically supported the establishment of a Little Free Library on Open Door property. This structure will look like a little house of approximately 1-2 cubic feet, be mounted on a sturdy post, and contain books appealing to different ages. The books can be taken out and returned (or kept), and users can contribute a book to the collection if they wish. It's all on the honor system. Volunteers periodically check the inventory and replenish books.

While Little Free Libraries can be purchased ready-made, one of our talented committee members, Jim Unkenholz, volunteered to construct one for us. In

fact, he has had one on his property for a while and is well along in building one for the Open Door. Randy Nelson has supported the project by contributing supplies. When completed, the library will be placed outside the Open Door where it will be convenient for neighborhood residents.

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~Open Door History Being Written



LeAnn Lindteigen

A milestone observance is an opportune time to review the history of an organization and document its beginnings, programs and services, personnel, and accomplishments. LeAnn Lindteigen, a 40th Anniversary Committee member and previous assistant director of the Open Door, volunteered to chronicle this story. She is reviewing many sources including a brief history written for the Open Door Cookbook that was done a few years ago, many scrapbooks kept by previous directors, newsletters, board minutes, and other documents.

We are asking for your assistance. *If you have been involved with the Open Door over the years through volunteer work, board membership, or attendance at programs and other activities and have photographs, artifacts, or stories you would like to share for the history project, please contact Jolene at 701-222-3004 or opendoor@btinet.net.*

~ODie Clown Dolls Sought



The 40th Anniversary Committee is looking for ODie clowns and stories about the costumes that dressed them, and their creators. These delightful characters were the basis of a fundraiser several years ago and, we are told, were characterized as bride and groom, cowboys, cheerleaders, and many other personalities. If you have any of these notable creatures, please contact Jolene at 701-222-3004 or opendoor@btinet.net. We will display your photos and stories on our website.

Open Door a Family Tradition

My name is Ben Dalbol and I am a junior in high school. I am the third oldest of four sons and the third to attend Open Door. It was about 1988 when my two older brothers Brad and Rob attended – more than 25 years ago! Dad says then it was a white house, smaller than the building that exists now, with a small porch in the back and a small play area.



When I attended Open Door in 2003 the new building had been built. I think the playground has gotten larger and there is different playground equipment. Twelve years is a long time ago, but I sometimes recall memories when I go with my dad to pick up

Seth, my little brother. I remember when I sang songs, played games, or watched movies with my friends and classmates.

Seth really loves Open Door and looks forward to attending every day. He enjoys going to school with his friends. Seth says his favorite parts of school are lunch and the playground. But it's pretty obvious watching him that he enjoys learning, being read to, putting puzzles together, and playing with the toys with his friends. He also loves his teachers and staff.

Open Door has provided other services like eye screenings that determined Seth needed glasses to help his eyes develop.

My dad likes Open door because it provides an opportunity for small children to learn as well as a daycare function while he works. Even though he is of a different religion than Open Door he really appreciates the spiritual component, and is glad Open Door confirms many things he teaches us boys about God.

My dad also thinks it's important that teachers worked with Seth to encourage him to try different foods for lunch. Little guys like Seth can be finicky and become very difficult when it comes to eating something new. The teachers told my dad about Seth being unwilling to try new food and asked for suggestions and help. Together they got him to look forward to trying new foods. Now Seth is always so proud when he tries something new.

Open Door sends a book home with Seth (and all students) each week. This week Seth got a book called "Gift Horse" written by an author from the Standing Rock Reservation. Dad read it to Seth last night and this morning Seth told Dad that he is "Dad's big warrior."

Seth has one of the same teachers as I did when I was his age, I think her name is Jolene. I didn't go to Open Door for just Pre-School. I also went for a summer program where we did similar things, but I was old enough to respect the time that was given to us from the teachers. The teachers were always very friendly and often joined in the games and activities. I always remember Jolene's son, Justin, playing outdoor activities with us. I had a lot of fun at Open Door for more than just one year, and will recall memories of time there as I grow older. Maybe my children will also go to Open Door!

Buddy Bench Finds Home

A casual "I wish" statement made by Director Jolene quickly became reality this fall. During a committee meeting in October, Jolene described the idea of a Buddy Bench that she had recently learned of and thought it would be a helpful addition to the preschool. A Buddy Bench can be any size, made of a variety of materials, and be decorated in any way. Its purpose is to provide a place for a child who is perhaps feeling a little lonely or sad and wants some companionship or another person's attention.

An almost immediate response came from Marilyn Johnson, a Board Member from Mandan UMC. She donated a charming bench made of a pre-WW II fir door that is now



the Open Door Buddy Bench. On October 21, University of Mary students applied urethane to seal the surface and make it child-ready. Our Buddy Bench makes an attractive and appealing addition to the preschool program.

Deidre Wessner Joins Staff

We welcome Deidre Wessner as our new cook. Deidre is responsible not only for preparing snacks and noon time lunch, but for menu planning, grocery shopping, and kitchen clean-up.



Deidre very much enjoys spending time and working with young children and watching them grow. She comes from a large family of 7 sisters and 3 brothers. She and her husband have been

married for 12 years, and they have 4 children with a baby due next year.

Deidre is a native North Dakotan, born in Jamestown and has lived there and in the Bismarck-Mandan area. She enjoys outdoor activities of camping and fishing, and is in gymnastics. She also likes working with and assisting elderly persons.

University of Mary Day of Service Benefits Open Door



The Open Door benefited from the University of Mary Day of Service. During the October 21 campus wide event 11 University of Mary

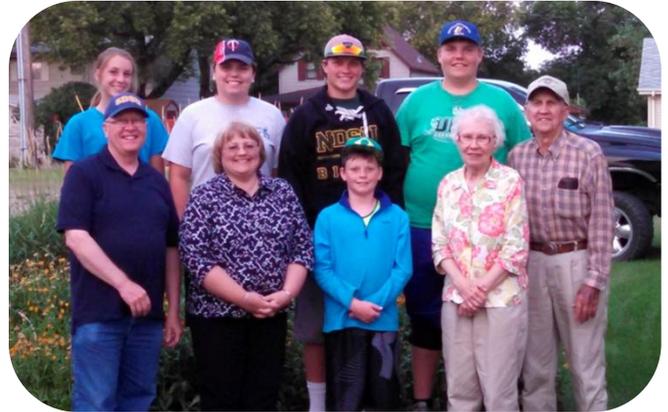
students energetically raked the yard, removed potatoes and carrots from the garden, polished woodwork, washed windows, and cleaned toys. They also applied urethane to our new Buddy Bench (described elsewhere), making the piece ready for use. Their hard work is very much appreciated and we thank them very much.

University of Mary students who participated are Sam Razink, Lance Pflinger, Lindsey Becker, Stashy Pesmann, Sarah Redding, Katelyn Campbell, Kate



O'Conner, Jacquelyn Smith, Allison Dehn, Kacie Hamm, and Allison Kipp.

North Prairie Parish Enjoys Mission Trip



Members of the North Prairie Parish, including Bowbells UMC, Mohall UMC, and Sherwood UMC, visited in October to clean and organize the Open Door inside and out. Pictured here are Pastors Marilyn and Eugene Moeller, Steele Olson, Gay Sundin, Robert Sundin (front row, l to r), and Jorie



Holsten, Braeden Volk, Statler Olson, and Charlie Ericksmoen (back from, l to r). Our special Thank You for your time and effort.

Our VIP Volunteers

Many individuals and organizations generously contribute their time and talents to the Open Door. They sponsor parties, teach music, read stories, wash toys, care for the lawn, organize the media center, organize gardening activities, and many other tasks. Our volunteers are essential to the Open Door and we sincerely appreciate all they do. During the second quarter of 2015, 267 hours were volunteered. For the third quarter, 284 hours were contributed.

Gifts to the Open Door

Many generous and thoughtful people have supported the mission of the Open Door with their prayers, presence, gifts, and services. We thank you for enriching our program and services and helping maintain the physical facility and daily operations. The following identifies contributors between May 26 and November 3, 2015.

Love Ribbon Grant. During its annual meeting in October, the United Methodist Women Dakotas Conference awarded a Love Ribbon Grant to the Open Door. The \$200 grant is designated for purchase of Rest Time Cots for our preschoolers. Each cot costs \$80. The Open Door continues to seek donations to acquire this equipment for each child.

Materials and Supplies. The following persons and church families have donated materials and supplies to the Open Door.

Karen Vasey with Jimmy and Benny Harrington, Bismarck, ND - Four Christian floor puzzles/music CD/stories, Bible Trivia games, Scripture Memory games, Let's Get Ready for Preschool books, Let's Get Ready for Kindergarten books, Five Leaves, Two Fish and One Big Hat book, Jonah and the Bear book, Bible Alphabet Activities for Kids, Word Finds for Kids, Bible Stories, Bible Crossword Puzzles for Kids, Bible songs, Jelly Bean Prayer and Activity book, Daniel and the Lion's Den, Bed-time Bible Stories, and Little Bears Cottage house toy

JoDean and Mark Person, Bismarck, ND - In honor of their children Noah and Anna Person: School supplies including crayons, pencil boxes, storage containers, 2 bins, pencil grabbers, school glue, markers, Scotch and masking tape, glue sticks, color pencils, and pencil sharpener

Mohall-Sherwood Youth Group, Mohall and Sherwood, ND - Chalk play set, Kleenex, toilet paper, garbage bags, glue bottles, playground balls, paint, markers

Legacy UMC, Bismarck, ND - Food items, snacks
Angie Wescott, Bismarck, ND - Kleenex, Fiskars scissors, crayons

Carol Desper, Bismarck, ND - Hand sanitizers and boxes of mashed potatoes

Carmen and Carol Wold, Bismarck, ND - Produce from their garden

Marlene Johnson, Williston, ND - In the name of Faith United Methodist Faith Quilters in Williston and in honor of my sister, Marilyn Johnson (who is really good to me and the Open Door): 22 sewn library bags, markers, pom-poms, Play-Doh, Slinky toys, Pet Shop toys, Hot Wheel cars, TMNT pencils, stickers, lip balm, jewelry, coloring activity packs, puzzles, glue bottles, mini Lego building sets, plastic shovels, Kleenex, paper punches, My Little Ponies, tissue paper, empty frosting containers, tape
Calvary UMC, Bismarck, ND - Fill the boxes Dixie cups, color pencils, notebooks, Play-Doh, glue sticks, markers, watercolors, and crayons

Monetary gifts were given for unspecified purposes in memory or in honor of a loved one, or as a donation for general use.

Marie Cissell, Sioux Falls, SD - In memory of Jim Cissell
Mary Jane Herr, Bismarck, ND
Marilyn Johnson, Mandan, ND
Robert and Faye Sundin, Bowbells, ND
Ashley UMC, Edgeley, ND
Calvary UMC, Bismarck, ND
Cleveland UMC, Cleveland, ND
Legacy UMC, Bismarck, ND - Scholarship Fund
Legacy UMC UMW, Bismarck, ND - Luncheon donation
Mandan UMC, Mandan, ND (2 contributions)
Mohall United Methodist Youth Fellowship, Mohall, ND
Oakes UMC, Oakes, ND
Sakakawea District of Dakotas Conference
Steele UMC, Steele, ND
Streeter UMC, Streeter, ND
St. Paul's UMW, Jamestown, ND

Campbell's Soup labels supplement Open Door resources when they are redeemed for early childhood equipment and materials. Thank you, Souper Savers!

UMW of Fargo First UMC, Fargo, ND
Audrey Horsager, Edgeley, ND
Legacy UMC, Bismarck, ND
UMW of First UMC, Devils Lake, ND
Marlene Johnson, Williston, ND



Wish List

Empty frosting containers and baby food jars. Tissue paper. Buttons. Left over craft materials. These are everyday items that many of us would likely scrap but that preschool classrooms can use for learning and art activities. Napkins, toilet paper, markers. They are consumables that are essential to facilities such as the Open Door and we are grateful to receive them. Here are some specific things that we are seeking. If you have questions, please contact Jolene at 701-222-3004. Thank you.

Empty frosting containers and lids
Dry erase markers and erasers
Chalk for chalkboard and sidewalk chalk
Watercolors and markers
Finger paints and finger paint paper
Buttons and other craft supplies
Napkins, paper towels, toilet paper
Plastic totes and bins with lids
Baby food jars
Tissue paper
Washable paints
Construction paper
Good used toys
Play-Doh

Open Door Open House

Our preschool children, their families, board members, and friends of the Open Door gathered at an Open House event on September 22. Parents and children had fun on the playground and families had an opportunity to become acquainted and visit. Parents conveyed their appreciation that the Open Door taught solid academic skills preparing their children for school, as well as appropriate social manners. Everyone enjoyed the meal of sloppy joes, chips, baked beans, fruit, and, of course, cake.



Photos From the Open Door



Summer Day Camp children enjoyed Seussical Jr.



Grandma Myrna made donuts for us this summer



Parachute Day at the Open Door



We grew baggie beans in the window and potatoes in a tower!



(Director continued from page 1)
 The work schedule seemed more flexible than a school setting allowing me more time for my sons' activities. The only concern I had was the full summer schedule. But I forged ahead with the application and interview process and as luck would have it was offered the job. My intentions were to work a few years at this until my children were older and then go back to teaching in a school district. The evolving and every changing programs kept me at the Open Door.

My first few months involved getting the brand new center re-licensed as a childcare center. In March 1996 we reopened with nine students in the after school program (the next school year we had 50 children enrolled). Summer Day Camp 1996 saw 50-55 children each weekday for 10 weeks of summer fun. Preschool classes started three mornings a week, went to five mornings a week, and even had several years of both a morning and afternoon session.

The years of the Even Start program were a lot of

fun and so purposeful. The refugee families came for English as a Second Language classes, parenting classes, and Parent and Child Time (PACT). Home visits were an enlightening experience for both the families and staff. When the after school program need was met by the local school we expanded the preschool program to a full day with preschool in the mornings and supportive activities and extended day program in the afternoons. The summer program was expanded to 12 weeks.

As with life there have been peaks and valleys and bumps along the road. The almost twenty years have gone by very fast. I have had (and continue to have) some great people to work with, great families and remarkable children, and supportive members of the board of directors and local churches as well as conference wide connections making the Open Door adventure a truly charming experience. I certainly have appreciated all the help and assistance on this adventure.

We invite you to embrace the upcoming celebrations and special events by whatever means possible. We welcome any memories, stories, photographs, artifacts or contacts that anyone would like to share. You will be hearing more in the coming months and hope you will feel the same excitement and gratitude that we are experiencing at the Open Door.

Looking forward in anticipation of God's blessings in 2016.

Jolene Stading Puhalla, Director



*From all of us at the
 Open Door*



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Open Door Community Center Mission
Through the Open Door Community Center, children and families receive Christian-based education and support services, enriching them to become responsible members of their families and community.

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