



An update from

Midland's Open Door

restoring hope and transforming lives

Holiday 2019

A Community of Faith

When Leland came to the men's shelter at Midland's Open Door in February 2017, he felt frustrated, empty and entirely drained. He had been working for years as a semi-truck driver, and was even a veteran of the Air Force, but a broken marriage left him with nowhere to go.

"There was a lot of uncertainty," Leland said. "When I got here, that uncertainty left."

"I thank God for this place."

The shelter case manager assisted Leland with procuring some of his military records and filling out job applications. Leland started working at the Midland Meijer, as well as taking extra responsibilities by serving as a resident advisor in the men's shelter.

"It felt good, but I also knew that it gave me some privileges," Leland said. "I couldn't let it go to my head. I was here to assist and to serve."

While Leland was in the shelter, he became connected with a local church. The church supported Leland and became a place to help him heal from those broken relationships.

As the church supported Leland in his faith, he was able to build his own community with them. They even helped him search for his apartment.

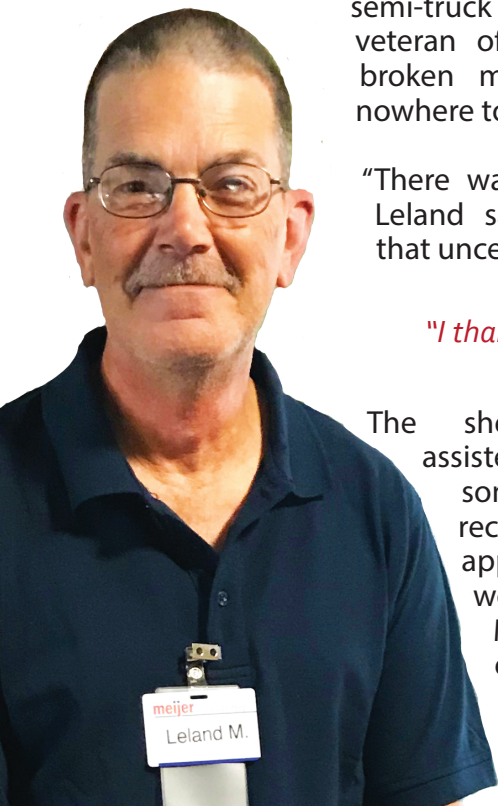
"Things were a whole lot brighter," Leland said.

After Leland moved out of the shelter, he reconciled with his wife. Now the two of them still return to eat at the soup kitchen and interact with the new friends both of them have found there. He's worked at Meijer for over 17 months, and has been living independently for almost a year with his wife in their own apartment.

"I thank God for this place," Leland said.

The hope that Leland found at Open Door is more than temporary; it is a permanent reminder of "the good and perfect gifts" that come from above.

"As far as the Open Door goes," Leland said, "there's always room for one more."



Monthly Clothing Assistance

In September 2019, we moved our growing clothing ministry to the basement of Emmanuel Baptist Church at 502 Cherry Street.

This new space is large enough for all of our clothing needs, plus allows extra room for volunteers to sort and catalogue items as they come in through donations.

Our free clothing assistance, which is open to public, takes place on the first Saturday of every month from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM.

Please join us in giving thanks to God for providing for our needs!



A Community of Support



Chrissy with neighboring volunteer, Pat Smith.

When Chrissy first came to stay at the women and children's crisis shelter in the fall of 2015, she burst into tears. A single mother of two boys, with a third on the way, she had no one she could list as her emergency contact. Her support systems were gone, and all her bridges had disappeared.

"I was going to school and I was engaged – and it just did not work," Chrissy said.

Throughout her time at the shelter, Chrissy grew in her understanding of community and God's call on her life. She connected with a local church and received grant funding for housing.

"It gave me peace of mind to know there was a roof over our heads," Chrissy said. "I didn't have to worry about the boys not having heat because it was in the wintertime. I knew that they were going to be okay."

Then the funding for her housing ran out. This left her and her children with nowhere else to turn, again.

"It was either go back to the shelter, or something else was going to have to happen," Chrissy said.

During this time, Midland's Open Door had launched the Bridge of Hope program for homeless single-parent families. The program, based on a national model, includes a graduated schedule for rent assistance, allowing Chrissy and her three boys to remain independently housed.

"The Bridge of Hope program is an intentionally relational program that teams up a group from a church with a single mom and a case worker from, in this case, the Open Door," Pat Smith, one of Chrissy's Neighboring Volunteers, said.

Now Chrissy had a whole team of people supporting her in her journey toward financial stability. She was able to finish her associate degree from Delta College and, when she graduated from the Bridge of Hope program in the fall of 2019, she also celebrated the purchase of her own home.

"When you're a single parent and you don't have that secondary person, no matter who that secondary person is, it's hard," Chrissy said. "You cannot do it on your own; you're set up for failure."

One of the biggest blessings of all was the fact that Chrissy was paired with a team from her own church: Midland Reformed. There, Chrissy could rely on a support system of neighboring volunteers that cared for her and her boys, not just as people, but as brothers and sisters in Christ.

"It's amazing; it's not just my church, it's my family," Chrissy said.

But Chrissy is not alone. As of this moment, Midland's Open Door only meets 60% of the needs of homeless single mothers in Midland County. As the holiday season approaches, these needs will only escalate as parents and families struggle to provide for their children during the winter months.

Four years after she became homeless, Chrissy has a degree, a better-paying job, and she now owns her own home. More than this, she has her own support system – she has rebuilt her bridges and found peace for her family.

From the Executive Director

No more gloom, new light and increased joy - all bound up in the child born, the son given (Isaiah 9:1-7).

This was the glory song that broke heaven's silence. And this is the cause for great joy, for all people.

It is this hope-filled message that carries single mothers like Chrissy from a point of loneliness and despair and places them securely into a new community where they are faithfully wrapped in patient love and compassionate support. It is the same message that heals broken relationships like with Leland and his wife, restoring joy and setting a foundation for new memories.

"There will be no more gloom for those who walk in distress . . ." Isaiah 9:1

As men, women and children are discovering their value and God-given gifts, we are seeing the beautiful fruit of transformation. None of this would be possible without your prayers and kind support.

But the need is great! More than support with basic needs, we are welcoming more men, women and children to our door who are looking for emotional and spiritual help, too.

In our effort to remain financially healthy, while growing our vision, Midland's Open Door needs to increase our annual giving by \$150,000. To meet this goal, we ask you to prayerfully consider joining our monthly giving club by pledging to send a monthly gift in 2020.

Will you consider how you can partner with us in a greater way in the year ahead?

God bless you for helping us share the good news that leads to great joy, year-round.

With joy,



Renee Pettinger
Executive Director



Seasonal Needs

With our busy winter season ahead of us, we need your help to provide hospitality for our shelter and soup kitchen guests. For a more detailed and up-to-date list, visit our Amazon Wish List.

Guest Assistance

County Connection tickets (red)
2020 planners
Bike locks
Adult backpacks
Men's wallets
Men's boxer briefs (size M)
Razors

Shelter Needs

Flash drives (2GB)
Ibuprofen and Tylenol
Baby wipes
Facial tissues
Disinfectant wipes
Toilet bowl cleaner
Cold meds (alcohol free)

Soup Kitchen Needs

Ziploc bags (gallon, quart, sandwich and snack sizes)
Bacon
Frozen peas
Ranch dressing
Italian dressing
Mayonaisse
Sliced cheese
Sour cream

Join Our Monthly Giving Club!

36 partners	\$25/month	\$10,800
32 partners	\$50/month	\$19,200
25 partners	\$100/month	\$30,000
20 partners	\$150/month	\$36,000
10 partners	\$250/month	\$30,000
4 partners	\$500/month	\$24,000
TOTAL		\$150,000

For those tax-minded donors, here's a few questions to consider when making your contribution!

- **Does it make sense to double up my donations in one year and skip the next?** This may help get you over the standard deduction limit and allow you to itemize while taking advantage of your other itemizable deductions (mortgage interest and property taxes).
- **What about my required minimum distribution (RMD) obligation?** If your annual donation to Midland's Open Door comes directly from these funds, your donation will eliminate the taxable income on your personal return.

For every dollar you donate to Midland's Open Door, 86 cents goes directly into funding programs for our neighbors in need.



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Bulletin Board

Experience Our Impact

In 2018, we provided over **40,000** meals and more than **12,000** nights of shelter

Below the text, there are two white icons on a dark blue background. On the left, a fork, a plate, and a spoon are arranged vertically. On the right, a simple white outline of a house is shown.

Thrivent Choice Dollars

Eligible Thrivent Financial members with available Choice Dollars® have until March 31, 2020 to direct them. Don't miss this opportunity to recommend that Thrivent Financial provide funding to Open Door. Go to [Thrivent.com/thriventchoice](https://thrivent.com/thriventchoice) to learn more, or call 800-847-4836 and say "Thrivent Choice" after the prompt.

Did You Know?

Last winter, Open Door's soup kitchen operated as a warming center during the polar vortex. While hats and gloves are always appreciated, our greatest winter needs are:

- Kleenex
- Hot chocolate packets
- Regular ground coffee

Find Us Online

