

# The Open Door Witness

May 2015

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## From the Director



I recently had the opportunity to be part of another interesting and informative class that benefits my continuing education requirement. The class, "How Family and Culture Impact Learning and Development" expressed the importance of the teacher's

(or other caregiver's) need to "recognize, respect, and support children's connection to their families and cultures." Most adults who have children in their lives are aware of dress, food choices, religious beliefs, holidays, family dynamics, and other cultural differences. The course opened my eyes that family and culture are much more extensive, establish certain habits in a child that may have a greater influence than do classroom routines, and have significant implications for differences among children in a classroom. Examples include activities such as bedtime routine (is the infant rocked to sleep, or laid in bed to comfort

**(Director - continued on page 7)**

## Looking Back at Even Start

*Our feature article was prepared by Marilyn Brucker, an outstanding educator who served special populations of adults and children through the Bismarck Public Schools and the ND Department of Public Education. Marilyn, who currently lives in Florida, has been a dear friend to the Open Door for many years. In this article, she relates memories of people and events associated with the Even Start program at the Open Door.*

The late Mary Ann Anderson, Head Start coordinator, upon discovering that Open Door Community Center had offered use of its facility for the Even Start program said, "Those Methodists sure put their money where their commitment lies!" As Jolene Puhalla worked with us to implement the five pieces of Even Start, I found that is certainly the truth, Those five components of Even Start are: parenting education; early childhood education; adult education; parent and child time together (PACT); and home visits.



Prior to Open Door's generous offer, we had been carrying out the five parts in separate locations: buying slots in existing parent education programs, placing children in various child care settings, using Bismarck's Adult Learning Center classes, and scheduling PACT and home visits whenever and wherever the families' time was available. The result was a piecemeal approach that did not totally coordinate the goals of Even Start.

With the help of Open Door, beginning in 1997, we put all components into action in one place creating a welcoming feeling of cohesive learning, caring, and fun. I have many memories from that era, some of which are described here.

Not content to meet only basic requirements of the Even Start goals, the Open Door staff helped the Even Start families feel a part of the community. For example, one of the Bosnian families was longing for a taste of the sausage recipe from their homeland. The Open Door staff walked the extra mile to help the family locate a sausage making machine, much to their delight!

For families coming to the USA from a culture with high poverty levels, the adjustment to modern appliances that we take for granted was a challenge. At first the toilet was fearsome but, once the adjustment was made, they decided it was awesome. Things like zippers, elevators, refrigerators, and keeping track of keys for locks on doors were completely new and required careful examination to understand how they worked. Never having had access to refrigeration, we found the families opened cans of food and stored them in the cupboards. Searching for guidelines to tell them about what should be stored in the refrigerator, we explained that once you open something, it should be placed in the refrigerator. On our next home visit, we opened the refrigerator and discovered opened containers of cleaning supplies, diaper wipes, salt, crackers. etc. OOPS! Back to square one for further refining our explanation!

One of the women obtained a degree in Power Plant Technology. Thanks to money donated by the Methodist churches, she was able to rent a U-haul truck and drive her family and belongings across the country to where she had been offered a position. There was a near accident at the motel where they stayed the first night. She almost forgot what a high profile vehicle she was driving and stopped just in time to prevent tearing the canopy off when they checked into their motel room! Traveling across the country for a new job in a place that was totally unknown to her took much courage, but her

new workplace and community embraced her and her daughters and this turned out to be a successful endeavor.

A woman with many bruises and scared children came to Open Door from the Abused Adult Resource Center. As the mother settled into the classes, I sat with the youngest daughter who was playing with the dolls in the dollhouse. Solemnly, she looked out the window, pointing to a car with a windshield that had been shattered and was precariously held together by tape. "My daddy did that," she said with fear in her voice. With the warm environment created by Open Door, the children were able to find a sense of safety and security while their mother completed her GED.

It may not be a surprise to know that there were also some challenges! The violence and trauma that many families experienced in their native countries had left many scars. One instance illustrating the outcomes of the trauma was when Laura, my colleague, found a copy of a newspaper from Bosnia. We brought it along on a home visit thinking it would be a welcome connection to their country as well as a literacy tool. To our surprise and concern, there were tears and emotional words in their language that we did not understand. Taking out our dictionaries, we were able to decipher that these were articles about government officials being tried for the war crimes committed. The reaction to another newspaper story brought hopeful smiles and excited optimism. The photograph accompanying the news report was of Richard Holbrooke, the American diplomat appointed by President Clinton to broker a peace agreement between the warring factions. The parents began smiling through their tears and used a word that Laura and I were able to translate to the English word, "justice," telling us of their hope that justice in some form would be found.

My final example involved a sharing group, during which some of the mothers who salvaged some treasures from their native homes brought their wedding photo albums. As we viewed photos of the beautiful, prosperous lives they had led prior to the conflict, we understood why a tinge of sadness often lingered in their eyes. To have lost so much must have been very difficult. It is to the families' credit that they admirably moved on from the past, building a positive future with few bitter feelings.

The example the Even Start families set gave me a model to follow in accepting the curves life throws at you. They taught us much more than we taught them and it was all thanks to the welcoming embrace of the Open Door Community Center!

## Ron Kinzler Joins Board



The Open Door welcomes Ron Kinzler as a new board member. Ron represents Calvary UMC, and replaces Marty Ketterling.

Originally a farmer from Kulm, Ron moved to Lincoln and joined the Calvary congregation in late 2012. His adult daughter and

son, along with grandchildren, live in the Bismarck area. In fact, Ron volunteers at the Lincoln Elementary School during the noon hour and sees his grandchildren who attend school there. His enjoyment of meeting new people is one of the reasons he worked at the Soup Kitchen on Expressway. Unfortunately, the Soup Kitchen which offers free meals to persons in need has closed recently due to loss of lease.

Ron is pleased to join the Open Door Board and is looking forward to becoming better acquainted with its staff and many supporters.

## Recognizing Marilyn Johnson

We are pleased that Marilyn Johnson has agreed to return to the Open Door Board after being on hiatus for several years. In fact, Marilyn has never really *left* service to the Open Door, since she regularly prepares correspondence thanking contributors for their support (including underwriting the cost of mailing) and many “other duties as necessary.” In addition, she coordinates the collation of the semi-annual newsletter and organizes the many copies for bulk mailing (a task that has apparently ever-changing postal requirements).

Marilyn is very familiar with the responsibilities of board membership, as she served for 16 years prior to a short break, representing Legacy UMC. As Secretary, she prepared monthly Minutes that were factual, to the point, and perhaps the most entertaining any of us had ever read.

Director Jolene describes Marilyn as a ray of sunshine who liberally shares her positive outlook of life, great sense of humor, and beautiful sounding laughter. Her witty style of writing and speaking and willingness to take on any task with confidence is an inspiration to us all.

Thank you, Marilyn, for your service to the Open Door.



## 40th Anniversary in 2016

In 2016 the Open Door Community Center will be celebrating 40 years of mission to children and their families. The Board of Directors is organizing a committee to celebrate this milestone. We expect to have a variety of activities (some small, some larger) to highlight our past, tell our current story, and look to the future of this mission. Updates will be in upcoming newsletters and other contacts as our plan develops.

We invite all interested individuals to be a part of this committee. If you have suggestions for events or projects but do not wish to be on the committee, or just want to help out where needed, we invite you to join in. Please contact Jolene at [opendoor@btinet.net](mailto:opendoor@btinet.net) or 701-222-3004.

## Caleb Olson Benefit

Sixteen year old Caleb Olson was injured during a skiing accident on March 20 in Red Lodge, Montana. He sustained a concussion, contused left lung, dislocated and crushed vertebrae and severely damaged spinal cord and is paralyzed from the chest down. Caleb was part of the 2002-2003 preschool class at the Open Door.

A benefit dinner, auction and bake sale was held on May 28th at the Mandan Eagles. Funds from this and other events will be used to help out with Caleb's medical costs and renovations to his home to make it wheelchair accessible.

You can help Caleb and his family. Please keep them in your prayers. Let them know you think of and support them using #TEAM CALEB. In addition, donations can be made to Capital Credit Union, Bismarck, to the “Benefit Account for Caleb Olson.”

Thank you for your encouragement and assistance, in whatever form you choose.

## Volunteer Hours

During the fourth quarter of 2014, 209 hours of time were volunteered in activities that support the Open Door. For the first quarter of 2015, 121 hours were contributed. We extend our sincerest "thank you" to all who so generously share their time and talents to support the mission of the Open Door.

## Graduation Held May 21

On May 21 at McCabe UMC, 22 excited Preschool students proudly presented their graduation program for moms and dads, grandmas and grandpas, brothers and sisters and other family members, friends, and supporters of the Open Door. There were oodles of smiles and giggles, and a sea of cameras to record this memorable milestone event.



The theme of this year's ceremonies, "We Love Rainbows," was evident in favorite songs and recitations delivered by the students as well as on graduation caps and decorations. The children and audience enjoyed a science demonstration of creating colors. Re-

freshments following graduation were colorful, enticing, and delicious, including taco in a bag, rainbow jello, fresh veggies and dip, rainbow marshmallow treats, and lemonade.

Of the 22 children, 16 will enter kindergarten this fall. They received the Crazy Praise CD as a gift, while those who have been with Open Door for one year received the Children's Bible.

## Employment Opportunity

The Open Door is seeking applications for a part time hourly basis cook position. Duties include working with staff to plan menus, grocery shopping, preparing snacks and noon time lunch, and kitchen clean-up. Benefits include daily smiles and hugs from little people.

If you are interested or know someone who is, please contact Jolene Puhalla at 222-3004.

## Where Are They Now?

Kodi Berg (After school program and Summer Day camps 1996-98) is a graduate of the Univ. of Mary with a B.S. in Biology. She is employed at the ND Dept. of Health in Bismarck, and is pursuing a Master of Public Health degree through the Univ. of Missouri, Columbia. Kodi wed Charlie Pinks on December 6, 2014.

Erica Nitschke (Summer Day Camp 2002-2003), an NDSU student from Bismarck was on Capitol Hill in March as North Dakota Fellow in the National Newspaper Association, Washington, DC.

Ronee Glatt (Preschool 2003-2004) was one of 27 students from the Bismarck High choral program selected from a pool of more than 400 students to attend UND's annual Honor Choir in Grand Forks on January 23-25, 2015. She took part in the Women's Choir.

Sarah Vadnais (Preschool 2003-2004 and 2004-2005) and Cole Wilz (Preschool 2003-2004) were winners of the 2014 Oral Essay Contest of the Voice of Democracy Contest. The theme was "Why Veterans are Important to our Nation's History and Future." Sarah took first place while Cole took third place for Bismarck High.

Jordann Brandner (After school program and Summer Day Camps 2001-2003) graduated with honors from NDSU in Fall 2014 with a B.A. in Psychology.

Ajay Brown (Preschool 2001-2002) has been admitted to NDSU "with distinction" starting in Fall 2015 and plans to major in computer science. Distinction means NDSU is acknowledging Ajay as an honor student.

The Legacy High School Honor Roll for Grade 10 included Benjamin Dalbol (Preschool 2003-2004) and Meric Beck (Summer Day Camp 2005, 2006)

## Free Dental Services Available

On February 28th the parents of Open Door children who are unable to afford dental care and do not have dental benefits were offered free dental services. Prairie Rose Gentle Family Dentists, 121 E. Front Avenue, Bismarck, offered one procedure for each child. Treatment included x-rays, cleanings, fillings, extractions and pain control.

We appreciate the Prairie Rose dentists for generously offering our families as well as the community this gift of free dental services.

## Fall Preschool Registration

Registration is being accepted for the Open Door Fall Preschool for children who are 3, 4, and 5 years old. The program is on a full day basis, 8:15 a.m. - 5:30 p.m., which includes after school care. Before school care from 7:30 – 8:15 a.m. is available for an additional fee. The Preschool begins August 31 and follows the Bismarck Public School schedule. (See <http://www.bismarck.k12.nd.us>)

The Open Door provides Christian-based programming. Activities are developmentally appropriate and teach literacy and math readiness, science, communication, social, music, arts and creativity, and motor activities. The program is staffed by two licensed early childhood education teachers and numerous volunteers. A nutritious lunch and snacks are provided by the on-staff cook.

To register or to obtain further information, please contact Jolene at 222-3004 or [opendoor@btinet.net](mailto:opendoor@btinet.net)

## Summer Camp Has Begun

Summer Camp for this year has begun with all openings filled, and will continue until August 21. It is divided into three sessions, each four weeks in length. The Open Door will be closed July 3 in observance of the Independence Day holiday.

A number of fun activities are planned, including art projects, water play, Vacation Bible School, and field trips. This year the children will take trips to the Bismarck Zoo, the ND Heritage Center, and the Dakota Stage Limited production "Seussical Jr."

If you have a talent you would like to share with our summer campers, please contact Jolene at 222-3004 or [opendoor@btinet.net](mailto:opendoor@btinet.net).

## Jim's Garden

As has been the practice the last few years the children of the Open Door will be planting a garden in our four above-ground plots. To add some new discoveries to our gardening adventures we are trying a few of the 52 fun experiments described in the book, "Gardening Lab for Kids" by Renata Fossen Brown.

Each child has already completed a shoe garden for a Mother's day present. We will be completing Seeds in a Bag, and making a rain gauge and sprinklers out of soda bottles.

New in the planting process will be Potato Tire Tower. This project will use old tires to make towers

as our potatoes grow. We hope this will result in even more potatoes than in the past. In addition to potatoes we will be growing green beans, tomatoes, carrots, cucumbers and peas.

We are thankful to Jim Unkenholz for his dedication and learning moments involving the gardening experience for the children this and in previous years!

## Food Bank Stops Donations

The Open Door Community Center was notified by the Great Plains Food Bank that we are no longer eligible to receive their food donations. This ends an important community support of the Open Door that has been in place for ten years and that will have significant impact on our budget and staff time.

The Open Door began receiving donated food from the Food Bank in November 2004 as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization. The contributions of canned food items, pasta, snack items, beverages, condiments, paper products, cleaning supplies, and some main menu items were significant to our operation.

Several changes affected the decision of the Great Plains Food Bank. The Food Bank, no longer connected to Lutheran Social Services, is looking to support programs that serve larger numbers of people such as soup kitchens and food pantries, instead of smaller groups. Also, the Food Bank reviewed its eligibility requirements and determined that our fees could be interpreted as requiring families to pay for the food the children receive here.

Losing the donations of the Food Bank has increased expenses of our kitchen budget by 30 percent and increased staff time for food shopping and planning the monthly menu planning.

Please consider offering financial support to the Open Door to offset this loss, and/or volunteering your time and talents for food shopping.

## Wish List

Here is a list of some items that we would be grateful to receive. If you have questions about specific items, please contact Jolene at 222-3004. Thank you. Empty plastic frosting containers with lids (for storage and art time), cloth totes for weekly library day, markers, tissue paper (all colors), paper punch (regular dot-shape), stamps, Kleenex, Scotch and masking tape, pom poms and other craft supplies, watercolor trays, small toys or items to be used for prizes.

## Gifts

The Open Door has been blessed by the many thoughtful people who support our mission with their prayers, presence, gifts, and services. These enrich our program and services, and help maintain our day-to-day operation and physical facility. Thank you very much for remembering us so generously. The following identifies contributors between November 1, 2014 and May 25, 2015.

**Materials** have been donated by the following persons and church families.

Carol Desper, Bismarck, ND – Popcorn, sloppy joe and chili seasoning packets  
Esther Circle from McCabe UMC, Bismarck, ND – Paper towels, toilet paper, Kleenex, paper plates, napkins  
Jim Karn, Bismarck, ND – Potatoes  
Bob Keim, Bismarck, ND – Calendars, notepads, Christmas cards  
Myrna Petermann, Mandan, ND – Sewed and completed 10 library book bags  
Linda Suko, Bismarck, ND – Summer sausage  
Bev Solberg, Bismarck, ND – Fruit cups

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

Dick and Pat Unkenholz, Prescott, AZ – In memory of William (Bill) Guymer  
Shirley M. Buchholz, Bismarck, ND – In memory of Laurence Buchholz  
Daniel and Bonnie Taylor, Bismarck, ND  
Jerry and Jean Newborg, Bismarck, ND – In honor of Marilyn Johnson for her work with the Open Door; In memory of Bob Morgan; and In memory of Eugene Redmann  
LeAnn Lindteigen, Medina, ND – Scholarship fund  
Ed and Faye Hasche, Bismarck, ND  
Joan Tracy, Bismarck, ND  
Connie Kotchman, Bismarck, ND  
Loretta Knight, Bismarck, ND  
Mavis J. Fuher, Bismarck, ND – In memory of Eugene Fuher  
Lewis and Sherry Heaton, McKenzie, ND – In honor of Sterling UMC members Luella Rath, Sharon Lang, and Marlin and Carol Sapp  
Barbara and Daniel Kingsley, Hill City, MN – In memory of mom, Anita Newmann  
Rachel Bahrenburg, Bismarck, ND – In memory of Linda Suko's dad, Gene Redmann  
Carol Guymer, Mandan, ND – Hazel-Gene Redmann memorial

Hal and Lois Neff, Bismarck, ND – In memory of Eugene Redmann  
Jim Karn, Bismarck, ND  
Darlene Farrell and Deb Grinaker, Bismarck, ND – In memory of Jim Suko, brother of Jerry Suko  
Jolene Stading Puhalla, Bismarck, ND – In memory of Eileen Smith, mother of Rick and Orla Smith  
Calvary United Methodist Women, Bismarck, ND – In support of programs of the Open Door  
First United Methodist Church, Jamestown, ND – In honor of Pastor Elmo Herman, Pastor Michelle Brennan, and Tami Severance  
Faith United Methodist Church-UMW, Minot, ND  
First United Methodist Church-UMW, Fargo, ND  
Hazen United Methodist Church, Hazen, ND  
Legacy United Methodist Church, Bismarck, ND  
Mandan United Methodist Church, Mandan, ND (Offering plate collections)  
Mandan United Methodist Church-UMW, Mandan, ND  
Mandan UMW, Mandan, ND (Rummage sale portion)  
McCabe UMC Tuesday Workshop, Bismarck, ND  
McCabe United Methodist Women, Bismarck, ND  
Oakes United Methodist Church, Oakes, ND  
Steele United Methodist Church, Steele, ND  
United Methodist Women, Dickinson, ND  
United Methodist Women, Lisbon, ND  
United Methodist Women, Rolla, ND  
United Methodist Women, Washburn, ND  
Women of the UMC, Langdon, ND  
Wyndmere United Methodist Church-UMW, Wyndmere, ND  
We thank the Bismarck Legacy UMC for submitting Campbell's Soup labels to the Open Door. They will be redeemed for early childhood equipment and materials.



Coloring Easter eggs.

## Kids Enjoy Song and Dance

On December 5th the children of the Open Door were excited to take a field trip to the Belle Mehus City Auditorium to see the Let's Dance Studio's rehearsal production of Disney's *Frozen*. The dance version of the story of Anna, Elsa, Kristoff, Sven and Olaf involved about 500 participants.

*Frozen* has been a favorite Disney movie of the Open Door children since its release in movie theatres. We enjoyed front row seats and the children sang along to the songs. It was a very special day.



Dave Allen from Rock 101 Radio came to the Open Door on December 15th and recorded the children singing Christmas songs for a special spot on the radio. The recording was played the following day on Rock 101 and KQ94.5. The children, families and friends were excited to hear their songs on the radio.

**(Director – continued from page 1)** him/herself, and is there a specific bedtime or does the child choose when to go to bed?); mealtime (is the family meal shared around the table, “eaten on the run,” or shared with older family members?); and family goals and morals. The course discussed ways to express interest and openness to families' ways of doing things, and suggested ways to develop skills to resolve differences with families.

A statement used several times this school year at the Open Door went something like, “While this behavior is acceptable at home, it is not acceptable at school when 21 other children are part of the group.” An example would be lunchtime: while relaxed manners may be the norm at home, we at school need to get 22 children’s hands washed, seated at the table, fed, table cleared, hands washed again and prepared for rest time. We aren’t allowed time to play in the water at the sink, wander around the room not yet willing to settle into

the chair for lunch, or very slowly eat our lunch or visit the first part of lunch and then gulp our food down when others are ready to be dismissed. It’s a balancing act to say the least. I am thankful for Jean, our classroom assistant, and our cook who maneuver this slippery slope every day.

The cultural influences of a family tell the child how much freedom he/she has. We offer this freedom of choice daily to children, such as deciding colors to paint with. Barbara Rogoff in her book, *The Cultural Nature of Human Development*, states that “Research on human development has tended to focus on determining when children are capable of certain skills without examining the cultural processes that shape their development, coupled with the assumption that ‘early is good, late is bad.’ People think that what they have experienced is natural.”

Rogoff believes a key variable in child development is “whether children are routinely included in the range of events of their community or are often segregated into specialized child-focused settings.” Our society tends to be a highly age-segregated society. Children spend much of their time away from the activities of adults (parents, grandparents) removing important moments to observe and learn from adults. Early childhood is often viewed as preparation for later entry into elementary, secondary schools and into the adult world.

So what have I learned? I still have more questions than answers. I am still “digesting” the information I have been given. I do know that I am looking a lot differently at ideas, goals, skills, and how to measure developments with age milestones to learn more culturally inclusive approaches to teaching the children who come to the Open Door.

Jolene Stading Puhalla, Director



**Lots of memories were made and pictures taken at graduation**



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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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**2015 Board of Directors and Staff**

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