

The Open Door Witness

November 2018

Phone: (701) 222-3004

www.opendoorbismarck.com

Email: opendoor@midconetwork.com



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From the Director

At this time of Thanksgiving, we at the Open Door Preschool have much to be thankful for as we are finally settled in our new home at McCabe UMC. For nearly a year we have been challenged by a financial situation that has resulted in relocation from South 12th Street to McCabe UMC just south of the Capitol building; meeting the requirements for a new special use permit and license; attending to all the details associated with packing and moving the entire operation; and adjusting day-to-day classroom, lunchroom, and recreation activities. Along the way we have been greatly blessed with many volunteers contributing physical, emotional, spiritual, and financial support.



The process began at the joint December 2017 meeting of our board and McCabe representatives where a decision was made to explore the possibility of a relocation. The decision led to the application for a Special Use Permit, which was coordinated by Jerry Suko and Pastor Mark.

(See Director, continued on p. 6)

Open Door Board Chair Addresses Recent Changes

A big thank you to our volunteers. No one can say that the last six months have been anything short of BUSY. In August, the Open Door Preschool was moved from its previous location on South 12th in Bismarck to its new location in McCabe United Methodist Church. It took a Friday night and a Saturday to move and then another Saturday morning to move the library.

I remember showing up on the Saturday morning and already seeing a line of bright red pickups backed up to the front door of Open Door. The theme "many hands make light work" ran through my mind when I saw a team of volunteers from various United Methodist Churches in Bismarck and Mandan working as one to move the more than 3,000 books and bookshelves. It was truly remarkable.

In a couple of weeks, I saw another team of volunteers representing the Open Door Community Center working as greeters at Papa's Pumpkin Patch. These included board members as well as volun-

teers from area UMC churches making sure that guests to the Pumpkin Patch were greeted warmly, that their questions were answered and their hands stamped before entering for a day of fun.

About a week later, another group of volunteers were bringing food and serving about 70 people – mostly parents and children – at an annual Open House at McCabe UMC for the families attending Open Door. The families were appreciative of a hot meal that was prepared for them. And they got to meet with other families and the board of directors and staff of Open Door.

This is just the tip of the iceberg of the volunteers who help make the Open Door mission a ministry that we can all be proud of. We have volunteers who read to the children. Other volunteers write thank you notes or take care of this newsletter. In fact, it's a daunting task to think of how many people interact with the Open Door ministry as volunteers throughout the year.

The same can also be said for the legions of people who provide financial support to this ministry either individually or collectively through their clubs or associations with churches throughout the Dakota Conference. While the Open Door Community Center is now housed in McCabe UMC, it is still a stand-alone entity. The board of directors of this mission is separate from McCabe, as is the staff, the materials, the curriculum, etc.

As a board, we are most appreciative that McCabe has welcomed our mission into their building. We are able to save on some overhead expenses; however, we still must provide a high quality, Christ - centered preschool experience for the children and their families of Open Door. And, for that, I say thank you to our volunteers. You help provide the means to make this ministry a success.



These volunteers provided a "moving experience."

Steve Van Dyke, Chair, Board of Directors

Volunteer Hours

The total number of hours volunteered during the second quarter of 2018 was 189 hours; for the third quarter 214 hours were recorded. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for continuing to assist this mission.

If you have a special skill or talent or just want to have a delightful and satisfying experience with preschoolers, please contact Jolene (701-222-3004).

Meissner Joins Board



Hi, my name is Randy Meissner and I recently joined the Open Door Board of Directors. I am a long-time member of the Mandan United Methodist Church and have served on several committees. Currently, I'm the church

treasurer and also teach one of the three adult Sunday School classes at our church. I also supply lay worship leader services to the Dakota's Conference and to an extended care facility in Bismarck.

My wife Deanna and I live north of Mandan and we have two adult children. I work as the licensing manager for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. I'm also part of the trumpet section for the Missouri River and West River Community bands.

My experience with the Open Door Community Center to date has involved a variety of things. I helped mow the lawns once a month with a group from the Mandan UMC Men's Club. I also helped move furniture, books and equipment last August when Open Door was relocated from the South 12th Street location to our new home at McCabe United Methodist Church. I was also part of a Men's Quartet that helped with Open Door's 40th anniversary a couple of years ago.

I look forward to serving the children and the staff at Open Door as a board member. It is through missions like this that we become the hands and feet of Christ and touch the lives of others.

Director Presents at UMW

Director Jolene Puhalla reports on her presentation to the fall Dakotas Conference of United Methodist Women

At the invitation of the Dakotas Conference of UMW, I delivered an hour-long presentation to the group on Friday, October 12. After a wonderful introduction by Karen Workman from McCabe UMC, I discussed a variety of topics concerning the Open Door. The focus was the move of the Open Door from South 12th Street to McCabe UMC at North 6th Street, including extensive planning and necessary adjustments in our new surroundings. The presentation was an opportune time to invite and answer questions about the need for and benefits of the move.

Following the presentation, I had the pleasure of speaking with several women who approached me with special questions, stories to share, and reintroductions of themselves. We all enjoyed fun and fellowship (and root beer floats).

I was very pleasantly surprised after the presentation to find the Open Door display table overflowing with materials, supplies, and other items needed in our classroom. These gifts were the result of efforts of Glenda Kluckman of the Dakotas Conference UMW who had requested a needs list several months ago.

The UMW of the Dakotas Conference have always been very supportive of the Open Door with their time, concerns, prayers and gifts. And for that I am truly grateful.

New Cook Joins Staff



Hi! I'm Linda O'Neill, and I cook for the Open Door Community Center. I'm new but love my job cooking for little ones. I also enjoy my co-workers. They are so kind and special and understanding with me

and the kids. I've had many years cooking, serving people all ages. I enjoy that! Happy to be here.

Vision Screening Conducted

On October 9 the Lions of North Dakota Sight 4KIDZ program provided a free vision screening for the preschool class of the Open Door. It was offered to the children by a local Lions Club with consultation of a licensed medical advisor.

Vision screening produces images of the child's eyes which are used to determine presence of eye disorders. No physical contact is made with a child and no eye drops are used during the screening. The screening is approximately 85-90% effective in detecting problems that can cause reduced vision. Signed consent forms from parents were needed for the children to participate. No vision problems were detected by the screening.



Our new address:

Open Door Community Center

1030 North 6th St

Bismarck, ND 58501

Open Door Flag Found

In the process of moving the Open Door to the new location I discovered in the storage room a rolled up flag and flag pole. When we were opening the center on 12th Street in 1996 I recall someone telling me the flag was from the Boys Scouts who used it at the Open Door. It was laid in a pile with electronics that we were going to dispose of.



Several days later when I came back to retrieve something from the shed, I found the flag unfurled and standing upright in its base. I was surprised to see that it was a flag from the Open Door. It had "OPEN DOOR COMMUNITY CENTER" written in bright red letters, as well as the Methodist flame and cross. Now I'm wondering if anyone has the history of the flag, how it was used at the center, and who made it. I'm really interested in how it came about. If anyone has answers, please let me know. (Contact Jolene at 701-222-3004 or opendoor@midconetwork.com.)

Papa's Pumpkin Patch



On September 11th the children took their annual field trip to Papa's Pumpkin Patch. They enjoyed

the pumpkins, corn box, hay bales, mazes, climbing ropes, zip lines and farm equipment playground. We were there several hours and could have spent several more. All the children left with a small pumpkin and pumpkin cookie.

A big thank you to van driver Jim Unkenholz , and to Hannah Rexine for helping with the children.



Winter Fleece Gifts

The children of the OD were blessed to receive handmade matching winter hats, scarves and mitten fleece sets just in time for winter weather. ***These items are featured in our front page photo.*** They were made by Connie Johnson of Bismarck. The fleece patterns included rainbows, penguins, stripes, dots, strawberries, plaids, and sport themes. It was an exciting time as each child picked out his or her set of winter gear. Connie also made a few extra sets to keep at school as needed. The children all drew pictures and created thank you notes to Connie in appreciation.

Halloween Party

Halloween was a FUN day at the preschool. The children dressed in costumes and enjoyed a Halloween parade. We played games - Pumpkin Patch Crawl, Jack-o-Lantern Disk, and Pumpkin Bowling. We made Mason lid pumpkins and boa bats, and lunched on quesadillas jack-o-lanterns, and orange pumpkins. The "Spooky Wheels on the Bus" was a fun book we all read together.



Pastor Mark and Karlee watch the Halloween parade.

From 5-6 pm McCabe UMC hosted a Trunk or Treat event in the McCabe parking lot for neighborhood children as well our preschool class. Near the end of the event we were treated to hotdogs, potato chips, and cookies and bars. The children were ready for more but the teachers were tired by 3 pm. It was a "spooktacular" day!



Snow White (aka Pastor Jenny) and Dopey (aka Miles) distribute treats at the McCabe Trunk or Treat event.

Gifts to the Open Door

Equipment, Materials, and Supplies

Roger and Betty Becker, Bismarck, ND - crayons, color pencils, garbage bags, Kleenex, paper towels, toilet paper

Celebrate Recover at McCabe UMC - construction paper, glue bottles, watercolors, glue sticks, crayons, markers, color pencils, pencils, notebooks, storage bins for 24 children

Connie Johnson, Bismarck, ND - 27 sets of hand-made children's fleece hat, mittens and scarves

Arlene Fluto, Bismarck, ND - copier paper

Kayla Friesz, Bismarck, ND - construction paper

Rolla UMC, Rolla, ND - standing marker board unit

UMW Regional meeting - paper products, water colors, markers, color pencils, cookie and brownie mixes

Karen Vasey - plastic animals, scissors, Play-Doh, modeling clay, crayons, watercolors, small glue bottles

Carmen and Carol Wold, Bismarck, ND - garden vegetables, fruit, pumpkins

Monetary gifts received from June 11, 2018 to October 30, 2018

Roger and Betty Becker, Bismarck, ND

Cleveland UMC, Cleveland, ND

Dakotas UM Foundation (Gordon Endowment), Mitchell, SD

Dakotas Conference UMW, Dickinson, ND (2)

Mary Ann Hanson, Mandan, ND

Legacy UMC UMW, Bismarck, ND

Mrs. Cheryl Riddle, Cummings, GA. Cheryl (a sister of Becky King, a former director of the OD) and her sister visited in June when traveling with their parents on a trip to all 50 states.

St. Paul's UMC, Jamestown, ND

Mrs. Ralph Sjursen, Phoenix, AZ, in memory of Herb Sjursen

Steele UMC, Steele, ND

Sterling UMW, McKenzie, ND

Underwood UMC, Underwood, ND

United Parish Women, Elkton, SD

Thank You!

Wish List

The Open Door is always in need of various supplies and materials, especially the ones listed below. We appreciate your contributions to our classroom and recreational activities.

Science Center items relating to nature, weather, seasons, animals, etc.
Math readiness activities (counting, shapes, numbers 1-10 recognition)
Alphabet activities
CDs and DVDs for children and families
Seasonal and holiday decorations
Finger paints and finger paint paper
Stickers of all kinds
Baby food jars
Scotch and masking tape
Copier paper (various colors)
Postage stamps
Children's books for school library and Little Free Library
Small plastic animals, especially farm, dinosaurs, sea life, zoo
24 - piece puzzles

(Director, continued from page 1)

An outdoor recreation area was not available at McCabe, so an agreement was pursued with Bismarck Public Schools. The present arrangement, finalized October 8, allows our use of Will-Moore School playground 8:45 to 9:15 a.m. each morning, and after 4:15 p.m. Fortunately, McCabe's spacious gym is available and greatly enjoyed by our preschoolers.

Concurrent with meeting paperwork requirements of Bismarck City and Burleigh County Social Services, we planned for the physical move of 22 years of accumulated equipment, materials, and supplies. On 6 p.m. on August 17, the last day of summer programming at 1140 South 12th Street, a U-Haul, trailer, and several pickups began the moving process. Each made several trips to transport the majority of contents from the building to McCabe. The following day, a crew of volunteers reassembled the preschool center at McCabe so that a licensing study could be done by Burleigh County Social Services on August 20. We made the deadline, but because a signed paper copy of the license to operate was not obtained until August 27, the preschool could not open until the next day, one day later than planned.

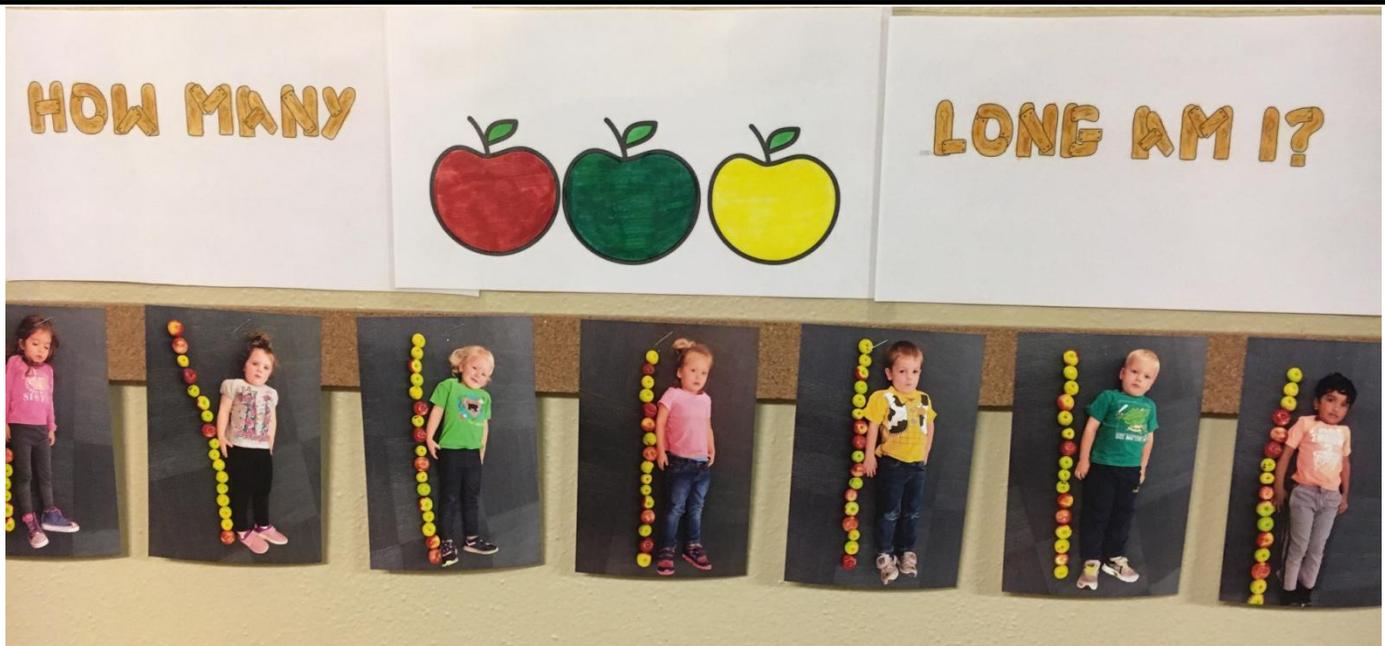
Classroom, lunch, and recreation activities were adjusted because the physical layout at McCabe is significantly different from that of the Open Door Community Center. The classroom floor space is licensed for 28 children, many fewer than 50 allowed in our previous location. The separate space for lunch needed to have child-friendly tables. Our cook resigned unexpectedly and fortunately temporary helpers filled in. We no longer have windows and cannot simply step out the back door into a playground area. The bathrooms are located down the hall from the classroom, so the children can no longer use them independently. An adult needs to accompany them. The children seemed to acclimate themselves easier than my assistant Jean and I did as we struggled to adapt. But we had a lot of support from McCabe staff and volunteers, and within a few weeks we all were more comfortable.

My concern now deals with losing our support as a Dakotas Conference Special Mission project. The move was necessary for the long-term survival of the mission. Although housed at McCabe, we still have our separate Board of Directors and need to pay for staff, supplies, and food. It is my hope that the support (financial, emotional, spiritual, volunteer assistance) from churches, groups, and individuals doesn't wane because of the move. I ask for prayers as we continue to meet the needs of the children and families of the Open Door through a high quality Christian-based preschool experience at an affordable price.

A big THANK YOU to all who have been part of the Open Door experience for the past 42 years. We ask for your continued support for the coming years.

Jolene Puhalla, Director
Open Door Preschool





Many common activities and materials can be used to teach concepts of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Above, the children learn about units of measurement as each counts apples to determine his or her height/length in apples. Below, clockwise, Summer camp kids enjoy flapping and hiding in the huge parachute; moving day for the Open Door; original design of 12th St. Open Door; Playing on Will-Moore School playground equipment, which is about one block from McCabe UMC





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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.

The Witness is produced semi-annually by the Open Door Community Center. Editor: Jean Newborg; Layout: Jerry Newborg; Photocopy: McCabe UMC, Bismarck; Collation and Mailing: Marilyn Johnson; Website: Marketing & Advertising Business Unlimited, Inc., Bismarck.

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and Staff**

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