

**I Have Placed Before You An Open Door** (Rev. 3:8)

*A word from Deborah L. Roeger, Executive Director*



Much has happened since I last wrote down my thoughts to share with you.

Thank you so kindly for the many inquiries we have received in recent months about the absence of our newsletter. Your e-mails and phone calls have been an encouragement to us. The task of our next newsletter has been on my “to do list” month after month since last summer. However, the start up of “Opening Doors<sup>®</sup> in the Family” - our new work to serve offenders and their families and help the children in those families break the cycle of incarceration - has managed to capture not only my heart, but much of my waking hours as well. (see page two for an update) There is so much news to share since our last edition, I hardly know where to begin. I trust you will enjoy catching up as we take time to catch our breath!

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**Introducing Sarah's House**



**3070 Brice Road, Brice, OH**

Sarah's House is truly one of those things that gives life to the familiar words ... *“only a God like our God.”* This lovely three story home, built in 1922 and situated on 1.2 acres of property in the small village of Brice is soon to be home to young women transitioning out of Scioto Juvenile Correctional Facility. The first call came close to

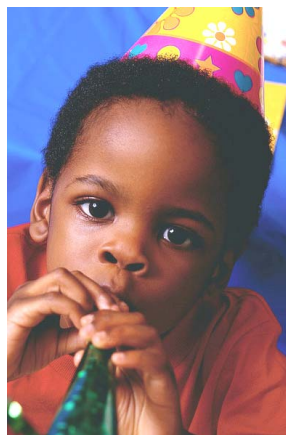
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***“One thing I know for sure, God has not called us to a housing ministry!”***

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Christmas, it was from an out-of-state attorney. She introduced herself as representing a client who owned a house in Brice, Ohio. “His expressed desire was that the house be used to benefit Stand in the Gap, Ohio,” she said. She asked whether Opening Doors would accept the gift. As we talked, I assured her we would pray about it and remarked with absolute certainty: *“one thing is for sure, God has not called us to a housing ministry!”* At that time my mind was just not ready to even acknowledge the possibility. I'm learning our God

*continued on page 2*



## Opening Doors in the Family celebrates its 1<sup>st</sup> birthday...as Opening Doors concludes its 7<sup>th</sup> year of prison ministry

It's been a busy, but exciting year since we received the seed money from grants to begin the work of Opening Doors® in the Family. It was work we didn't even see 7 years ago when I stepped into Marion Correctional for the first time. But God saw it and had it planned even before I was born. I find that truly amazing. On June 30 we celebrate the close of our first year's work – it can only be described as a labor of love. There has been laughter, tears and the thought of giving up more than once ... but God was surprised by none of it. Over the past year we've served more than 40 adult men and women in Ohio prisons with the goal of strengthening their families and breaking the cycle of incarceration – not just for the offender, but for their children who often follow in their footsteps without loving intervention. During an interview several months ago, the evaluator in our adult men's project asked me, *"Which of these men do you think you have impacted by your work?"* I think my answer surprised him as I quickly exclaimed, *"all of them!"* I know our God and He doesn't waste our obedience. ♥

On June 16, 2000 I sat in Christine Money's office for the first time. She was at that time the Warden at Marion Correctional. That day, 7 years ago, forged a new relationship which launched a ministry later to become Opening Doors of Ohio.

**Happy Birthday Opening Doors!**

is so gracious with us that when the thought of the "new thing" is too overwhelming to even consider He can protect our hearts from rebellion by not disclosing the desire of His heart until ours is ready to listen. And I've learned all over again not to put God in box! During the days and weeks of prayer that followed that first phone call, we came to understand that God was indeed calling us to a housing ministry. The house has now been anointed with prayer and dedicated to the service of the Lord. He has shown us His heart's desire is for us to serve a small, but underserved group of young women. They are women 18 – 21 years old who became incarcerated as a juvenile, but are being released as a young adult. They have no place to go, no home to return to, and they are too old now for the juvenile foster care or group homes that served them in the past. God has heard their cries and His answer is Sarah's House. God was very quick to put into place the model we were to follow and to call the Resident Directors, Jon and Peggy Pence. Pastor Jan Raurk who began the work of Rachel's House and has been serving adult women transitioning out of prison for the past five years has graciously taken us under her wing to advise us from her wealth of experience. Our first task was to introduce ourselves to the Brice Village Council. Over the course of just a few months, Jon and Peggy and the idea of Sarah's House won the hearts of the Council and they gave us their blessing to begin operation. It has been exciting to watch God move. We have begun to develop a working relationship with the Department of Youth Services Parole Authority who have warmly received us as a new partner to serve these women. There is much work to do, but we are determined to fix our eyes on God and watch Him move every mountain that stands between us and the assignment He has given. It's always the way He works. ♥

**Gardeners Needed:** We need women who love gardening and are willing to maintain the flower gardens around Sarah's House. If you are interested in this labor of love, please contact Debbie Roeger: 614-543-0417 or Peggy Pence: 614-577-0524.

**Lawn Mower Needed:** We need a riding lawn mower to maintain the 1.2 acres of property that surround the house. We are praying that God will move in a person's heart to donate a used mower in good condition to this ministry. We also need a **dehumidifier** in good working condition.

## Mohican Juvenile Boys Enjoy Opening Doors for the First Time

**Sent:** Friday, June 08, 2007 2:52 PM  
**To:** Peggy.Pence@OpeningMoreDoors.org>, <lance@roundlake.org  
**Subject:** Thank you~

Peggy and Lance -

Thank you for bringing such a remarkable program to the young men and the staff at Mohican. Unit Manager Gonzalez summed it up yesterday when he expressed his gratitude for having his dorm, Knox Hall, selected to participate in the first-ever Opening Doors program. I attended the closing yesterday and was so impressed with the heartfelt words expressed by our young men.

Please extend my thanks and appreciate to Loving Lois and Marvelous Marjorie as well. They are so "alive" with love and caring and pass that along to everyone they meet. Touching the lives of our youth through a faith-based program that is fun as well as enlightening is so important.

The impact of volunteers in our facilities cannot be overestimated. You all are an invaluable resource -a gift - to all of us. Thank you for everything. You are welcome here any time.

Martha Reprinted by permission.

Martha L. Spohn, MA, LICDC is the Superintendent of Mohican Juvenile Correctional Facility.

Peggy Pence is the Opening Doors program coordinator for the juvenile correctional facilities in Ohio.

When he is not facilitating Opening Doors for juvenile boys "Livin " Lance Powers, is Wilderness and Private Retreat Director at Round Lake Christian Assembly Camp.

"Loveable Lois" York is a longtime volunteer with Opening Doors whose heart to serve those incarcerated was well established before she was first trained as a program facilitator in 2003.

"Marvelous Marjorie" Chappell is 65 years old and was an enthusiastic student in our May facilitator training – her first opportunity to facilitate was with these Mohican boys.

## From Engineer to Ministry Partner Meet Derf Roeger

Many of you know that I've been married to Derf Roeger, my high school sweetheart for more than 33 years. Since the beginning of our work in the Ohio prisons he has played a very important behind the scenes role in all that I've done. He is the computer expert, the developer, the designer, the troubleshooter, the listener, the encourager and the hand holder. He has also held the position of Board President since our first Board of Directors met in 2002. What we never expected was that God would make clear to us that He planned to bring Derf out of the marketplace early in 2007 and position him for greater Kingdom work. Have you ever figured out that you simply can't negotiate with God's timing? Our interpretation of "early" was perhaps May or June. God's idea was mid-January! Derf's company announced its first major reduction in force. Because God's plan was so clear to us, Derf rejected offers to change positions and stay with his former employer. Instead he embraced the idea of early retirement and joining me as a full time ministry partner. Wow! It has been a thrill to learn to work together as a ministry team. Derf is learning to transition from engineering manager to operations manager for Sarah's House, bookkeeper for Opening Doors, computer guru, overall fixer of problems and effective July 1, the project lead for the men's Opening Doors in the Family project. When we celebrated our wedding anniversary a few months ago, we had the fun of reminiscing with a series of questions all beginning with, "*Did you ever think we would ...*" High on the list was, "did you ever think we would be launched as fulltime missionaries to the Ohio prisons?" And that's what we are. When you sign onto God's team, hang on for the ride. It's sure to be full of new adventures. Stay tuned for the next chapter, which only God knows and that's fine with us. ♥

## PRAYER REQUESTS:

- † Favor for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of OD in the Family
- † Ability to serve more Christian ex-offenders with SITG™ mentoring
- † Staffing & new volunteers
- † Corporate partnerships to do more prison staff programs
- † Wisdom for new work beginning with Ohio's female offenders
- † New Funding Sources

## PRAISE REPORT:

Opening Doors is now in 7 of the 8 juvenile correctional facilities in Ohio.

The gift of Sarah's House and the promise it holds.

Our faithful volunteers.

Opening Doors of Ohio, Inc.  
~ A Prison Ministry ~  
P.O. Box 281  
Lewis Center, OH 43035-0281  
Deb.Roeger@OpeningMoreDoors.org  
614-543-0417 • 614-361-6783

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## A Fresh New Look

Thanks to the efforts of a team of very creative people, you'll find a new logo for Opening Doors on page one. It better represents the direction we have been heading as over the years we continue to listen to God's heartbeat. It is no longer just about the individual serving time in prison – it's also about "*turning the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers.*" (Malachi 4:6) We believe our new logo will help others more readily understand the heart, the passion and the call of this ministry.

*Thanks Creative Team!*

## CURRENT NEEDS

We need a **CPA with non-profit experience** to conduct our first financial review. If God is calling you to add your time and talent to ours in order to benefit those we serve, please contact:

Allan Mitchell: 614-785-0858  
allan.mitchell@OpeningMoreDoors.org

## The True Value of our Volunteers

The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently published national survey results reporting that the value of a volunteer hour in Ohio is \$16.40. But according to the survey of those we serve, the true value of our volunteers is **priceless**.