



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**YMCA of Greater Cleveland**

# OPEN DOOR PROGRESS REPORT

Through a distinct partnership between the YMCA of Greater Cleveland, Center for Families and Children, Cuyahoga County's Office of Reentry and Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority, the Open Door Reentry Program launched in November of 2010.

The Open Door Program is a collaborative effort that offers formerly incarcerated individuals comprehensive case management, transitional housing and the necessary wraparound services in a safe housing unit. Participants successfully completing the program will receive preferential permanent housing placement with CMHA.

- Planning for the Open Door Program began in 2009.
- Formerly incarcerated homeless men, 18 years or older released within the past 24 months are eligible for the

program. Clients must also be entering Cuyahoga County from a correctional institution or social/human service agency in the state of Ohio, can not have any previous criminal history related to Methadone or infractions determined by CMHA to make individuals ineligible for public housing and must be assigned to a case manager for the duration of residency at the Stokes Mall.

- Open Door is managed by the YMCA of Greater Cleveland's Y-Haven Program and housed at CMHA's Carl B. Stokes Social Service Mall.
- Maximum stay is 18 months.
- The capacity of the Open Door Program is 61 clients.
- Open Door has served 45 unduplicated clients and has a current census of 31.

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- Funding for program start-up and operation was provided by Cuyahoga County, Health and Human Services - Office of Reentry and the Community Vision Council through a grant to the Center for Families and Children (GCIRP).
- Open Door currently has 13 partner agencies that provide regular client referrals.
- Program goals include: increasing client self-sufficiency, reducing the homeless population of formerly incarcerated persons and decreasing the recidivism rate.

- The average age for an Open Door resident is 42.5 years old, 83 percent are African American, 17 percent are Caucasian. Over 95 percent of residents struggle with substance abuse and more than 54 percent have a mental health diagnosis.



I was released from Lake Erie Correctional in January 2011. I was homeless and staying at a shelter.

From there I went to CATS who helped me remain sober. I was still in need of a home and this is when I learned about Open Door.

I moved into my apartment at Open Door in April 2011. I have become more independent by learning to help myself. I now live to help others, too.

By staff caring enough to make sure I take my medications as prescribed and teaching me better life skills, I am doing great. I have maintained my sobriety, and this is easier now that I live in a sober living environment.

I am grateful for having been given this opportunity. I hope it is around for a long time so other people like me get the help and support they need.

Hello. My name is Kevin, and I am a client of the Open Door Program.

I came into the Open Door program on January 20th of this year. When I came into this program, I was on felony probation, and under "monitored" house arrest. This, as a result of a conviction in 2007.

This set of circumstances made it difficult to have much hope of being able to re-enter society.

And, at times, I did struggle with depression. However, my situation, and indeed my outlook on the prospects of my future have moved in a much more positive direction.

The Program Director here, Jenn Lasky, wrote a letter to my probation officer petitioning her to

have me released from home arrest. On March 8, I was freed from home arrest. Obviously, it was not the letter alone that caused this to happen. I had to comply with, and meet the conditions involved as well. But it also gave me the feeling that I am not alone. A sense of support. And that is what the Open Door program has come to mean to me.

I still have obstacles to face. But I know that I at least have people that I can talk to.

Both Jenn Lasky's and Life Skills Director Victor Vaughn's doors are always open. And both have helped me a great deal with advice, encouragement, and with direction as well. I am very grateful for this program. The prospects of my immediate future and beyond are much brighter than they have been for quite some time.