



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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The Open Shelter gets \$10,000 gift from Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority to help support nonprofit's move to a new facility on Parsons Avenue

Columbus, OH – The [Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority \(CMHA\)](#) announced today a \$10,000 donation to the Open Shelter to help support the nonprofit's move from St. John's Church in Columbus to a new, 10,000-square-foot facility at 1037 Parsons Ave.

The Open Shelter is celebrating its 38th year serving Franklin County residents who are experiencing homelessness and those who are marginally housed. The organization supplies clothing, food, household goods and camping supplies to those who are homeless or who are housed but find it a struggle to stretch their income.

"We appreciate the assistance provided by the Open Shelter and are proud that this \$10,000 contribution will benefit this outstanding agency in their mission of helping our communities' most vulnerable citizens," said CMHA President and CEO Charles Hillman.

The Open Shelter serves hot meals, distributes sack lunches and fills as many of their client's needs as possible. The nonprofit serves as the mailing address for hundreds of individuals who do not have an address or for people who need a secure place to receive their mail. In addition, the shelter is the representative payee for about 55 people who receive either SSI funds or VA funds.

"Our team has spent a lot of years working beside people who are struggling to navigate the systems put in place to help them," said Open Shelter Director Sheli Mathias. "Over these many years, the needs have increased and changed. We have worked really hard to change also and fill in the needs gaps as we find them. We truly believe this new space will allow us to increase our impact on those we serve."

The Open Shelter staff works with individuals who receive SSI and are required to have a payee to manage their money, paying their bills and advocating on their behalf with landlords and utility companies. These individuals come up weekly, allowing shelter staff to keep a healthy, working relationship and better insuring their clients' stability.

"We discovered a huge need for these items following the pandemic and the lifting of some restrictions," said Mathias. "It became clear that this was a need we must fill, and our beautiful new facility and the additional office space will help us accomplish that aim."

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About CMHA: *CMHA helps people access affordable housing through collaborative partnerships, promotes neighborhood revitalization and assists residents in accessing needed social services. CMHA has more than doubled its portfolio of housing over that last five years, including over \$200 million in investment in 2020. It owns over 4,500 units of affordable housing and through its Housing Choice*

Voucher and Project Based Rental Assistance Programs provides rental assistance to more than 250,000 Ohio and Washington, D.C., residents. Half of the authority's apartments are set aside as workforce housing for families earning 80% of the area median income.