



**IN OUR
COMMUNITIES**



Moravian Open Door continues assistance in NYC

What's happening at Moravian Open Door (MOD)? The short answer is "lots!"

Now in its 29th year, this ministry of the Northern Province helps the homeless of New York City help themselves by providing private and semi-private rooms for up to 41 men and women over the age of 50. Its full-time staff of three also provides supportive services to rebuild the residents' lives with the goal of moving residents into affordable housing of their own.

In July, MOD welcomed a new social worker, Gloria Berrios, MSW (Master of Social Work). She brings more than 25 years of experience to her work, helping residents obtain benefits and jobs, giving them needed encouragement to save, even with meager

income, to be able to move to independent housing. Gloria meets often with each client individually—in her office, on a walk or even on a bench in a nearby park—to listen to their stories, review their needs and set goals.

Here are two of those stories:

- Maureen "Moe" Panes came to MOD a few years ago after completing a substance abuse abatement program. She has professional training and past experience in food preparation, having earned a certificate in Culinary Arts in 1992. Since coming to MOD, she has been working part-time at a local grocery store as a food preparer. This past year, MOD hired her to be breakfast cook, and with her healthy and delicious food, she has made the breakfast program very popular. With her two jobs, she is now saving to be able to move to independent housing in the next year. Moe makes breakfast a "family" affair, providing variety and accommodating the various health conditions of the residents.

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Doris Schattschneider of Bethlehem is president of the board of directors for Moravian Open Door. Photo above: Volunteers stuff envelopes in Bethlehem. Left: Working on the facade of MOD.





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- One of MOD's oldest residents, Ned, an award-winning dance teacher and still teaching at 85 years of age, was in declining health. In May, with MOD's assistance and help with furnishings from some New York Moravian churches, he moved to an assisted living facility.

Replacing and modernizing

MOD's century-old building was completely renovated in 1987 to house this ministry, but now has reached the stage where many of those "new" building parts need replacing

and modernizing. Thanks to a generous donation of LED lights by manufacturer Forest Lighting, more than 80 fluorescent fixtures were replaced with new LED lights—in halls, stairwells, offices and Common room. All of these areas are now much brighter, and the difference in wattage will save MOD almost \$5,000 annually in electric bills.

Another major upgrade and modernization to an essential part of the building—the elevator—is in the works. The elevator has been out of service over several months, causing a trying time for the residents. The new elevator, funded by special donations, will be much appreciated.

Depending on volunteers

MOD's program depends on many wonderful volunteers to provide services to the residents and the building. One outstanding volunteer, Perry Garcia, comes every day to supervise government-paid interns with custodial duties. When the intern program shut down for reorganization for a few months, Perry came and did the work himself. MOD recognized a very surprised Perry with a plaque and gift at MOD's 2014 Christmas party.

Pastors of the Metro area Moravian churches

Left: installing LED lighting at MOD. At right, Susan Attzs-Mendoza, MOD executive director, reviews the MOD website.



started a special volunteer ministry to MOD this year. Each month a pastor comes to MOD to be available for spiritual counseling, meeting with residents who seek this service. Other volunteers—individuals, youth groups and groups from other churches—have come to MOD to paint the building's façade, provide special meals and entertainment for the residents and offer technical help with IT problems.

There are many volunteers in locations outside of New York City who also provide services for MOD. One notable group is the 30 or so who spend a day stuffing more than 8,800 envelopes for MOD's annual appeal.

Donations in response to the annual appeal are crucial to MOD's operating budget. MOD receives no government funds, and with generous support from individuals, churches and church and private foundations, MOD manages to provide a safe transitional home and supportive services for a fraction of what it costs per client for city-run shelters.

Other off-site volunteers include those who organize information and keep the website and social media sites alive. We have a dozen board members who use their special talents to oversee MOD and help in many unsung ways.

MOD also welcomes visitors from near and far—they come to see the facility, but mostly to understand how this ministry works. This past September, a special group from the historic Moravian town of Christiansfeld, Denmark visited and joined in a luncheon with the staff and some residents.

A new online presence

Last spring, MOD launched a fresh new web site, www.moravianhouse.org, designed by Sheila Sacks. The website features photos and updates on what's happening at MOD and offers information about MOD's history, services and needs, while providing a way to

make a donation to help support this important ministry to the homeless. MOD also has a presence on Facebook and YouTube, thanks to David Barwig, a professional digital marketer, who volunteers his services through the national foundation Taproot+. Weekly posts highlight what is happening and invite viewers to volunteer. Become a follower, and spread the word about MOD to friends!

The Coalition for the Homeless has labeled the current situation of over 55,000 homeless in the New York City shelter system a catastrophe. About 25% of those are single adults. The most vulnerable are the elderly homeless, and they are the focus of MOD's mission. Each time one of MOD's residents leaves for independent living, there is a list of others waiting to enter this caring community. ■

Bishops meet

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there, but rather that the Scriptures point us to Jesus so that we can find the answers in him." (*Guiding Principles for the Interpretation of Scripture in a Moravian Context*, by the Faith and Order Commission)

A spiritual retreat

Hosting for the Interprovincial Bishops' Conferences, held every four years, rotates between the provinces. The bishops selected Mt. Morris for this year's conference, which provided a relaxing, contemplative location for their meeting.

As the conference was drawing to a close, one bishop commented, "this felt more like a spiritual retreat than a conference." The bishops left the conference having experienced spiritual refreshment and renewal which was a significant blessing. ■