

Appendix A
First Congregational Letter

Dear Member of _____ Community,

Shelter House Community Shelter and Transition Services is one of the programs begun and supported by the Consultation of Religious Communities. Originally known as the Emergency Housing Project, it now has a 25 year ministry history of providing shelter, basic and transitional resources while encouraging self-sufficiency, to any person in our community who is homeless. Over the years the programming has expanded beyond basic shelter to providing resources to stabilize individuals and families while reintegrating them into our community.

This ministry now needs our help to expand the facilities to serve the adults, families and children in a better and more welcoming way. Exciting new plans have been developed to address the need to complete new facilities that will serve people. This ministry now needs our help to build new facilities to serve the adults, families and children in a better and more welcoming way.

During the next five weeks, you will learn more about this important effort, called *Opening Doors* to strengthen support for Shelter House construction and future programming. We pray that your commitment to this ministry will encourage you to become involved.

Yours,

(signed by Congregation Leader a/o pastor a/o council chair)

Appendix B
Second Congregational Letter
(See Appendix C for Phone-a-thon letter)

Dear fellow members,

We are in the process of learning more about our partnership in the life-changing ministry of Shelter House. This is a ministry that has impacted our lives here at (Church), by our encounters with the homeless throughout the community, or through volunteering with Shelter House and its Interim Overflow project many of our members have been touched by God's love directly and indirectly.

The Opening Doors campaign has set out to raise:

- Goal 1 \$4,000,000 for building construction, including \$500,000 for furnishings
- Goal 2 Establishment of an endowment fund to provide ongoing financial support for the day-to-day operational expenses of the Shelter House programs.

This spring in 2009, we will join other faith communities from across Iowa City and Johnson County in supporting the Opening Doors campaign. The [church council] has set a goal of \$(--), but we firmly believe we can reach or even exceed that goal. Pledges can be made over a 4-year period of time.

We will be receiving commitments from the members of our congregation (explain the method and timing of your response plan).

We look forward to you joining us in supporting the Opening Doors campaign. Whatever you can give will be appreciated. We hope that many will participate in programs as a result of this campaign.

In common service,

Pastor/Campaign Leader

Appendix C
Second Congregational Letter
(Only if you are conducting a phone-a-thon)

Dear member,

We are in the process of learning more about our partnership in the life-changing ministry of Shelter House. This is a ministry that has impacted our lives here at (faith community). Through experiences at Shelter House, many clients and volunteers have been touched by God's love directly and indirectly. Many clients have grown in their self-sufficiency and knowledge and have moved out to become active members in our community.

The *Opening Doors* campaign has set out to:

- Seek financial commitments to raise \$4 million for constructing and furnishing the new Shelter House facility
- Establish an endowment fund to insure a stable financial base for Shelter House

This Spring (2009), we will join other faith communities from across Iowa City and Johnson County in supporting the Opening Doors campaign. The [church council] has set a goal of \$(-). We firmly believe we can reach or even exceed that goal. Pledges can be made over a 4-year period of time.

Beginning (day/date/time) members of our congregation will be phoning families of the congregation to receive commitments to "Opening Doors". Please be ready to make your response when you receive then phone call so that we can complete the campaign effort quickly and successfully!

We look forward to your joining us in supporting the Opening Doors campaign. Whatever you can give will be appreciated. We hope that many more will participate in programs at Shelter House as a result of this campaign.

In community service,

Pastor/Campaign Leader

Appendix D
Letter to those who do not return a pledge card on Commitment Sunday

Date

Dear Member of (community),

On Sunday, (Date), (number) families participated in the Opening Doors, the campaign for Shelter House, raising over (\$XXX) to help construct Shelter House's new facilities. Gifts ranged from \$xx to \$xx and averaged \$(xxx) per family! Thank you to all who have already participated.

When we approved participation in this campaign, we hoped that all families at (church) would hear the story of Shelter House and make a commitment in some way. We have certainly heard the story and know that it is a meaningful outreach that touches hundreds of lives each year. We hope you will join in making a commitment to this endeavor.

The mission of Shelter House is to provide shelter, basic and transitional resources, while encouraging self-sufficiency, to any person in our community who is homeless. Each month Shelter House must turn away 100 men, women, and children due to lack of space. There is no stereotypical homeless person. They are men women; they are children of all ages- every race and ethnicity. They are mothers and fathers; they are sons and daughters.

Please join all the families in this community who have made commitments so that our response to the Opening Doors campaign will reflect giving by the entire congregation. Together, we can touch lives and make a significant difference.

Sincerely,

(Name), Campaign Chair

Appendix E

Shelter Talk I — A History of Shelter House from a Zion Lutheran

Decades ago, our congregation decided to locate in the midst of city activities. We are near the downtown, city government offices, the community hospital and the student population. Being strategically located provides insight into the needs of the community. In the early 1980s, it became apparent to us and other congregations in the Ecumenical Council that a homeless shelter was necessary in Johnson County.

In 1983, Bruce Thorsen signed the Articles of Incorporation and became the Emergency Housing Project's first treasurer. Bruce was a member of Zion. Under the leadership of Pastor Roy Nilsen and church council leaders, our congregation supported the purchase of property on North Gilbert Street. At that time, the face of homelessness was single men, many with substance abuse or mental health concerns. The emergency housing was considered temporary, and no other human services were provided. The Ecumenical Council ran the house, the members of the Council's congregations served on the board. Numerous members of Zion served on the board of the Emergency Housing Project of gave money or goods to support its budget and mission

By the late 1990s, the face of homelessness had changed. Single men and women as well as families were seeking assistance. The lack of life skills, job skills, health insurance, livable wages, and disabilities brought instability and homelessness to many. Emergency housing had to change to help individuals and families move away from an endless cycle of hopelessness, poverty, and life on the street.

In 2001, the Emergency Housing Project became Shelter House. New by-laws separated Shelter House from the Consultation of Religious Committees, the successor to the Ecumenical Council. The Consultation would continue its stewardship with Shelter House, but the board members would not necessarily be members of the congregations of the Consultation. More services to help individuals and families become stable households would be offered.

Zion continued its active stewardship with Shelter House. There has always been at least one Zion member on the board, but currently there are four Zion members serving on the Shelter House Board of the Directors. One is secretary of the board, one is president of the board, and one is head of the New Facilities Development and Building and Grounds Committees. One is representing Mercy Hospital on the board. Zion children and adults raise money for Shelter House through noisy offerings, the alternative Christmas Night of Shelter Program, Thrivent grants, block parties, fundraisers at work or school, and the Consultation of Religious Community's Interim Overflow Project. They also provide clothing and linen donations and evening meals. Zion has long been a supporter of the Free Lunch Program, and many clients of Shelter House eat lunch there.

2008 added a new face to homelessness in Johnson County—those who were displaced by the floods and workers who came to Johnson County to help with cleanup. We had been blessed, and many of us never had any concept of what homelessness would feel like. We were broken by the horrible weather, but through faith, we were resilient. We dug deep and found a way to support individual families in our congregation, shelter House, the Free Lunch Program, the Food Bank, and other nonprofits through the weather crisis.

Our current economic situation is adding another face to homelessness—middle class individuals and families who did not expect to lose jobs and homes. We have been commanded to love the Lord our God with all our hearts and will all our minds and with all our souls and our neighbors as ourselves. Our God, through Jesus Christ, has given us to our community. As a congregation and a member of the Consultation of Religious Communities, we have given Shelter House and our time, money, and talents to create an environment in which all of us thrive and grow as our Lord intended.

OR

Shelter Talk I –The History of Shelter House

Shelter House Community Shelter and Transition Services is a private, secular, not-for-profit organization founded in 1983 by local faith communities, the City of Iowa City, and human service agencies. The organization's original purpose was to provide temporary shelter to those in need. Until 1993, the facility was operated by a half-time director and a largely volunteer staff that provided shelter and a hot evening meal. In 1993, with the support of the United Way, Shelter House hired a full-time director.

In 1998, Shelter House was awarded a substantial HUD grant intended to provide comprehensive services for chronically unemployed persons experiencing homelessness in the Johnson County area. The STAR Program, Supported Training and Access to Resources, provides tremendous diversity in skills and talent with the addition of new agency personnel. Staff now has backgrounds in mental health, substance abuse, housing provision, counseling psychology, social work, and planning. Program partnerships have been developed with the Iowa City School District, HACAP, the Veterans Administration, the Community Mental Health Center, and the provision of an Outreach Clinic staffed by STAR case managers/outreach workers weekday mornings at the Wesley Center and in partnership with the VA and PATH outreach workers.

Shelter House has worked to build the capacity of the organization from one with an operating budget of \$165,000 and 3.75 FTE's in 1998 to over \$850,000 and 15.5 FTE's in 2005 with only 1.5FTE's serving in an administrative capacity. Programming and organizational capacity are continually developing based on identified needs of the community and service population. Since 1998, executive director has worked with the board of directors and staff to develop and codify the structure of the organization beginning with job descriptions, personnel policies, and operating procedures. Shelter House continues to focus on increasing accessibility to professional staff. Whereas the In-House Counseling Program was originally staffed at only part-time, two full-time employees now staff the program and have done so for over five years. Since 2003, operations have been sustained at 24 hours a day Monday through Friday, a significant improvement from years prior when the shelter was not staffed during the day and remained closed and inaccessible during daytime hours. The small facility has turned into a daytime drop-in center during weekend daytime hours (11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) through the winter months. Prior to 2003 the facility was unavailable during these hours, which is most particularly beneficial to families with small children.

Shelter House staff deny shelter to hundreds of men, women, and children each year due to a lack of shelter space. Serious health, safety, and welfare concerns are presented daily due to the chronically over-crowded conditions in the current house. Overcrowding becomes even more of a concern given the needs of families with young children, an ever growing portion of the homeless population, as the majority of residents have special needs relating to mental illness, substance abuse, and/or medical disability. Shelter House is and has been for some time committed to building and operating a new facility. The OPENING DOORS capital campaign committee has been formed to seek funds in the greater Iowa City community. Additionally, Shelter House is researching other programs and applying for grant and foundation funds for the project. To date, approximately \$1.5 million has been raised. Shelter House has purchased land, which has passed historic and environmental review tests. While the project had been awarded the necessary special exception to the zoning by the City, the building efforts have continually been delayed by continuing legal issues with the neighborhood. A case has been taken to the Iowa Supreme Court by both Shelter House and the City of Iowa City and ruled in favor of Shelter House, but the project is continually facing new obstacles. Further progress on the project is fundamentally compromised until all legal issues are reconciled. The organization continues to build community awareness and recognizes the challenge presented by increased expenses related to operating a significantly larger facility.

Appendix F

Shelter Talk II- A New Facility Is Needed

- “Shelter House is Johnson County’s only general use homeless shelter. Originally known as the Emergency Housing Project, it was founded in 1983 by the Ecumenical Council, now the Consultation of Religious Communities, in collaboration with the City of Iowa City. Shelter House remains today at its original location of 331 North Gilbert Street, a single family home never intended for this purpose when built in 1900.

The Shelter House mission is simply stated but far –reaching; to provide shelter, basic and transitional resources, while encouraging self sufficiency, to any person in our community who is homeless. Shelter House residents include men, women, and children; military veterans; the disabled and the elderly. The current facility can serve 29 individuals each night, but an average of 100 individuals is turned away every month due to lack of space. Since 2004, Shelter House has worked with the Consultation of Religious Communities to provide thousands of nights of overflow shelter in church facilities during the coldest winter months.

- By providing hope and opportunity, Shelter House positively impacts the community in many ways. Through its overnight services, Shelter House provides a safe alternative to living on the streets. And because Shelter House has personal expectations, it gives clients motivation and reinforcement for positive behaviors.

With shelter and a warm meal assured, clients can begin using Shelter House programs to get back on their feet. The In-House Counseling Program gives clients assistance with community resources, employment, and housing searches. The John E. Thomas Security Deposit Assistance Program rewards clients for their efforts with financial assistance for rental security deposits. Through the STAR Program, clients receive case management and vocational support for transition periods of up to two years.

The health, safety and welfare of the larger community also benefits when these clients take on productive roles, and resources such as law enforcement and emergency care can be directed to other needs.

- The current Shelter house has been laboring beyond the limits of its capacity for a number of years. The new facility will have two floors totaling 16,500 square feet of finished space and will provide shelter for 70 individuals. In addition to this expanded space, every area is carefully designed for its specific use.
 - The first floor will house the Shelter Staff, drop-in center, training room, nurse’s office, kitchen, dining room, laundry, and two outreach offices.
 - The second floor is divided into two dormitories—one for single men and one for single women, each having designated space for veterans—and a family only area.

A single location will be more cost-effective and efficient for staff, clients, and volunteers. Shelter House staff will work in the same building, eliminate travel time between two facilities and clients will have easier access to services. Volunteers will have defined work spaces in the new shelter. Being adjacent to other service providers and close to the bus line, a grocery store, and various employment opportunities are assets to clients at the new location as well.

- The Opening Doors campaign will help fund the construction of the new Shelter House facility needed for providing adequate services to the homeless population of Johnson County. Our support of Shelter House will strengthen for years to come both our community and the ministry of the Consultation and its member faith communities to help those most in need.

APPENDIX G
Shelter Talk III - The Opening Faith Doors Campaign

- The **Opening Faith Doors** campaign is an opportunity for Consultation of Religious Communities and individuals to express their faith and trust through a vital ministry. Funds raised will enable construction of the new facility so that people of all ages can experience the benefits of a new homeless Shelter with expanded programs.
- **The campaign** will help Shelter House continue its mission to provide shelter, basic and transitional resources, while encouraging self sufficiency, to any person in our community who is homeless. Families, congregations, and individuals throughout Johnson County are invited to join in the effort to build a new shelter where "Doors are Open."
- Each family who is a member of a church that partners in ministry with Shelter House is encouraged to consider contributing a gift to this campaign by completing a four-year "statement of intent" or contributing a one-time gift to the campaign. In general, your gift will provide facilities that will meet multiple needs of a low-income constituency, connecting our faith communities through common commitment and service.
- The "Opening Doors" campaign goal is \$4 million with a challenge goal of \$2 million. Shelter House supporters and leaders truly believe this campaign will more effectively serve the construction of the new shelter as well as the greater community. Each family is invited to consider a 4-year commitment to this campaign as part of their congregation's support. With that, Shelter House will continue to be a sheltering place where "Doors are Open."

Appendix H
Shelter Talk IV

(Talk prior to intent forms being filled out during Sunday worship)

For the past few weeks, we have heard stories of how Shelter House has been [building a ministry for people here in our community and across the eastern Iowa.]

We have also heard that [other congregations have provided support to the Opening Doors campaign.] Now, it is our turn. Our congregation has set a goal of (\$xxx).

Please complete your intent Form. Even if you are unable to give at this time, put your name on the card and write "no gift at this time" so that we do not follow up with you any further.

In just a few moments we will pass the offering plates to collect intent cards from everyone (or, you will come forward with your intent). Please join me now in supporting the Opening Doors campaign.

APPENDIX I
Fillers for Bulletins and Monthly Newsletters

1. Homelessness is often the result of a complex set of circumstances that push people into poverty and force impossible choices between food, shelter and other basic needs. The Shelter House mission is simply stated but far –reaching: to provide shelter, basic and transitional resources, while encouraging self sufficiency, to any person in our community who is homeless. Residents include men, women, and children; military veterans; the disabled and the elderly. The current facility can serve 29 individuals each night, but an average of 100 individuals is turned away every month due to lack of space. Since 2004, Shelter House has worked with the Consultation of Religious Communities to provide over 6,000 of nights of overflow shelter in church facilities during the coldest winter months
2. Shelter House Community Shelter and Transition Services is one of the programs begun and supported by the Consultation of Religious Communities. Originally known as the Emergency Housing Project, it now has a 25 year ministry history of providing shelter, basic and transitional resources while encouraging self-sufficiency, to any person in our community who is homeless. Since the creation of Shelter House, the population of Johnson County has increased over 35% but the shelter's capacity has not been able to increase at all. This ministry now needs our help to expand the facilities to serve the adults, families and children in a better and more welcoming way. Exciting new plans have been developed to address the need to complete new facilities that will serve people. This ministry now needs our help to build new facilities to serve the adults, families and children in a better and more welcoming way.
3. The current Shelter house has been laboring beyond the limits of its capacity for a number of years. The new facility will have two floors totaling 16,500 square feet of finished space and will provide shelter for 70 individuals. The first floor will house the staff, drop-in center, training room, nurse's office, kitchen, dining room, laundry, and two outreach offices. The second floor is divided into dormitories—one for single men and one for single women, each having designated space for veterans—and a family only area. A single location will be more cost-effective and efficient for staff, clients, and volunteers. With all working in the same building, travel time between two facilities is eliminated and clients will have easier access to services. Being adjacent to other service providers and close to the bus line, a grocery store, and various employment opportunities are assets to clients at the new location as well.
4. Shelter House provided shelter and supportive services to 452 individuals for a total of 11,182 nights during the 2007/2008 operating year. During the same operating year, Interim Overflow provided shelter for 163 individuals for a total of 1,143 nights. The Interim Overflow provided shelter for 60 people in December, ranging from one night to regular nightly attendance. Each night of shelter provided by overflow needs at least 5 volunteers, and often uses several more. In the winter of 2008-9 Interim Overflow has so far provided 530 nights of shelter. A new shelter can more effectively serve clients.

Appendix J

Suggested Commissioning Service

Ask the "*Opening Doors*" campaign workers to come to the front.

Beloved in the Lord:

You have been chosen for the very important responsibility of contacting the members of this congregation to receive their gifts for strengthening Shelter House programs for men, women and children and improve facilities to serve for years to come. By your presence, you are signifying your acceptance of this responsibility before God.

May God bless you in your mission. May God grant you courage to bring to each member and to this entire congregation and community the challenge of this responsibility so that our children and families may grow in faith. May God equip you that your efforts shall meet with a full measure of success to the honor and glory of God.

Let us hear the Word of God concerning the stewardship of possessions:

"Honor the Lord with your substance, with the first fruits of all your produce." Prov. 3:9

"The point is this: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." II Cor. 9:6-7

I ask you now, will you accept this task to which you have been called and carry out this mission to the glory of God and to the full extent of your ability, until all the members of this congregation have been given the opportunity to share in this work?

If so, answer YES, with the help of God.

Will the congregation please stand:

I ask you also, will you support of these fellow members who will contact you on behalf of Shelter House, will you receive them as messengers doing God's will; and will you accept the challenge God has given to you, giving of your substance as God has prospered you and as the Word of God sets forth?

If so, answer YES, with the help of God

Let us pray:

Heavenly Father, we pray that you will make us worthy members of your church, who by both word and deed glorify Your Name. We pray you to bless these, your servants, who today go out to ask for gifts that shall enable us better to serve your people. Touch the hearts of those they shall visit, that their mission may be lightened and made joyous.

Grant every member of this congregation a vision of the importance of the work in which we are engaged and help us all that we may share to the full extent of our abilities. Prosper us in every good work. "And let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us." In the Name of Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord. AMEN.

APPENDIX K
Sample Thank You Letter

Dear member of.....church,

Thank you so much for your contribution to the ***Opening Doors*** campaign.

Your gift is an investment in Shelter House and the ministry that it will provide to our community's men, women and children for years to come.

To date, our congregation has generated \$ _____ in gifts and commitments to the ***Opening Doors*** effort. We hope that more members may respond in the next few weeks.

You will be receiving acknowledgement of your gift from the Shelter House office in the near future. The congregation will receive and report periodic updates on the campaign progress.

Thank you again for your partnership in this effort.

Sincerely,

(Congregation leader/Committee members/pastor, etc.)

(Reminder: If the donor has not received or kept a copy of their intent form be sure to enclose it with this letter.)