



2015 Open Gate Annual Report

Bering Memorial United Methodist Church

www.beringopengate.org

Open Gate, Bering's homeless young adult ministry, completes its eighth year of operation in 2015. We have not missed a single Sunday Hawthorne Dinner since February 2008.

In 2015, Rev. Stephanie Snyder became our pastoral lead. Program Director Tommy Calzadias took a three-month sabbatical leave beginning in September; he returned on December 1. Assistant Program Director Kellie Rivera Falconi stepped in to fill both roles. During this period, we have developed new job responsibilities and descriptions that will be reviewed by the Staff Parish Relations Committee for implementation in 2016. Among other things, this realignment will increase Open Gate's connections and partnerships with community organizations and social service providers and will help with participant outreach, volunteer recruitment, and fundraising.

We undertook several initiatives in 2015. We expanded our participant age range from 18–24 to 18–30. Because of her position as a social worker with SEARCH, Kellie Rivera Falconi is able to do social-service intake interviews for Open Gate participants; she is also pursuing being able to do housing intakes. An Open Gate mission statement is being written. We adopted a new logo (above). Our web page, www.beringopengate.org, went online. Open Gate had booths at Houston Pride in June and at White Linen Nights in the Heights in August. We expanded our efforts to cooperate with other groups serving homeless young adults. In August, we hosted a meeting with the board members and staffs of Montrose Homeless Outreach Project and Stand Up for Kids; representatives from Montrose Grace Place, Salvation Army Social Services, and Homeless Gay Kids Houston (with whom we have met subsequently) were invited but were unable to attend. We plan to continue these meetings on a regular basis. Open Gate has ongoing interactions with Salvation Army Social Services and Stand Up for Kids, which cosponsors our annual Christmas party. And we are planning, for 2016 implementation, a Participant Advisory Group for Open Gate programs and potential regular meetings of participant representatives with the Open Gate Board.

Statistics relating to Open Gate's participants derive from the computer registration we ask all participants to complete at each Sunday's Hawthorne Dinner. Participants self report their name, age, gender identity, ethnicity and race, and sexual orientation. Some may not register at all; they can

chose to answer or not answer questions; and their answers to the same questions can vary from week to week. In consequence of this, our statistics often do not literally add up and must be viewed from a fairly aggregate level, and with some caution.

So, with these caveats, we can report the following over the last 12 months. Open Gate has served over 1,100 Hawthorne Dinners to an average of 22 participants per week, usually between 15 and 30 participants each Sunday. (However, this does not include participants' infant and young children.) During the third quarter of 2015, we have been consistently serving 30–35 participants, and this seems to be increasing.

A total of 1,121 participant registrations were recorded. (Many of these do not represent unique individuals, but rather individuals who come on multiple Sundays.) The median age of our registrants is 21.7 years, with 25% of registrants over 25.2 years and 25% below 20.8 years. Registrant gender identity was predominantly male (68.2% male, 30.6% female, 1.1% transgender identified and 0.1% other), and sexual orientation was primarily heterosexual, though 12.8% of our registrants identified as LGB (84.6% heterosexual, 7.0% bisexual, 3.3% gay male, 2.4% lesbian, and 2.7% other). Our registrants were racially and ethnically diverse (71.5% African American, 7.8% Caucasian, 3.7% Multiracial, 2.6% Native American, and 14.5% other or unreported; Hispanic ethnicity was reported by 7.8%).

This year we have distributed over 800 hygiene packs and 120 backpacks. During 2014 and 2015, thirty-nine Open Gate participants, especially LGBT participants, obtained housing through the Salvation Army's Houston Social Services Group.

There are usually 12 volunteers each Sunday who are drawn from a core group of 15–20 very regular volunteers. In 2015, we established volunteer leads for clothing, hygiene packs and backpacks, volunteer communications, cooking, and kitchen utilities.

Our income is exceeding expenses, and our account balance is larger than that with which we started the year. As of November 30, 2015, Open Gate had \$48,279.41 year-to-date income and \$47,607.06 year-to-date expenses (\$21,167.72 for salaries; \$12,765.00 for security; \$5,729.11 for food and kitchen; \$7,945.23 for hygiene items, clothing, fundraising expenses, and other special needs). We began 2015 with an account balance of \$19,872.13 and have an end-of-November account balance of \$20,544.48.

Our October 2015 *Fiesta* fundraiser raised \$16,462, netting \$12,030 after paying \$4,432 in expenses—of which \$3,500 was covered by underwriters. In 2015, we had one annual pledger and one monthly pledger. Our corporate supporters include Baker Botts, Dentiq Dentistry Houston, ExxonMobil Foundation, KBR, Inc., Morgan Stanley, and Starbucks (Montrose at Hawthorne). And finally, a significant source of support is donations of hygiene items, clothing, Metro transit cards, food, supplies, etc.

In 2016, Open Gate will have a budget for the first time (rather than just using monthly financial reports). A major new income source approved by Church Council will be 10% of Second Blessings' net revenue, transferred monthly. (The Bering Support Network also receives 10%.)

Income:	
Pledged Giving	\$8,400
Donations	\$12,000
Dinner Sponsorships (50 @ \$175)	\$8,750
Fundraisers (2)	\$13,250
Second Blessings (10%)	\$10,000
Altar Rail Collections (4)	\$3,000
Total Income:	\$55,400
Expenses:	
Salaries	\$26,400
Security	\$14,400
Food	\$6,000
Supplies, Miscellaneous	\$750
Hygiene Items	\$2,000
Backpacks	\$600
Assistance Fund	\$2,000
Training, Conferences	\$600
Bank Fees	\$250
Total Expenses:	\$53,000

For future planning, we will use the following model for sources of income: 35% fundraisers; 30% pledges, donations, and altar rail; 20% Second Blessings; and 15% sponsored Hawthorne Dinners.

All in all, 2015 has been a very good year for Open Gate. Participation is up—and, most importantly, the number of participants regularly attending Hawthorne Dinners has increased, as has our ability to connect them with needed services. Our finances are in order and our income sources are improving. This has been made possible by our exceptionally gifted program directors, our committed and loyal body of volunteers, and the continuing support of the Bering congregation. To you all, our deepest appreciation and thanks!

Open Gate Advisory Board

Amelia Coffman	Constance Gray	Pedro Pinto
Cheryl Custer	Esther Houser	Luis Mario Téllez Ríos
Nate Custer	David K Johnson, Chair	Rev. Stephanie Snyder
Joe Dembowski,	Patrick King	Frank Staggs
Secretary	Jim Knauff, Treasurer	Scott Yoshinaga