Building Lives Initiative

The Building Lives Initiative will advance Open Door Shelter's comprehensive service model for those in need. It will bring together affordable housing, job training, and health care at the Smilow SoNo Life Center. The 19,800 square foot building will be the first to combine these services in one location in the region. The first phase will be located at 2 Merritt Place in South Norwalk and will revitalize a 19th century historic factory building to a new life committed to serving the homeless and those living in poverty.

The Smilow SoNo Life Center
2 Merritt Place, Norwalk

THE PROJECT

Phase I is a $6.8 million project to develop the Smilow SoNo Life Center, which will provide:

- **Health care services** for thousands of underserved men, women and children operated by our partner, Norwalk Community Health Center.
- **Affordable apartments** for 16 homeless and low income individuals.
- **Job training** for hundreds of individuals to achieve living wage jobs in the trades.

Phase II is an additional $3.25 million to fund additional affordable housing for families in the neighborhood and a children’s resource center, allowing them to access healthcare, childcare, and job training services at the Smilow SoNo Life Center.

Phase III is an operating reserve and endowment for emergency housing, hot meals, food pantry services, and counseling at The Open Door Shelter’s facilities at 4 Merritt Street and future housing projects.

The Building Lives Initiative will bring together **proven practices** that combine housing, healthcare, and job training to change lives.
YOUR SUPPORT IS NEEDED

Imagine the transformational impact this project will have on our shared community! You can play a vital role in moving someone from homeless to housing. Those most in need, the area’s chronically homeless and working poor, need your support. Please join us with a gift:

- **Founders Club** – Gifts above $100,000 are recognized as foundation gifts by membership in the Founders Club.
- **Sustainers Society** – Gifts above $10,000 are recognized as providing core structural support and are members in the Sustainers Society.
- **Friends Fund** – Friends Fund donors are recognized as builders of community.

Private gifts will be leveraged with nearly $4 million in public funds anticipated to support this initiative.

IMPLEMENTATION:

- Major giving opportunities - January 2016 – December 2016
- General community support opportunities – beginning September 2016
- Break ground - September 2016
- Identify additional family housing and develop renovation plans - 2016-2017
- Open the Smilow SoNo Life Center – Fall/Winter 2017

Since 1983, The Open Door Shelter has saved lives and changed lives … one person at a time, by providing multiple services for homeless and low income men, women, and families, including emergency shelter, food, clothing, job training, supportive housing, and case management.

The Building Lives Initiative will wrap home, health, and hope for those living in South Norwalk all into one.

Your support will build lives and transform the community … one person at a time.

For more information:

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