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Open Door Mission Hosts 24-Hour “Conversations on a Bench” Event to Spotlight Stories of Hope and Raise Awareness About Homelessness

In an effort to shift public perception around homelessness and offer raw, unscripted moments of human connection, Open Door Mission will host a 24-hour event called *Conversations on a Bench* on **October 9th and 10th** at **80 West Main Street, Rochester, NY 14614**. The initiative is part of a nationwide campaign led by Citygate Network, a faith-based association of rescue missions and life-transformation ministries across North America.

For one full day, Anna Valeria, CEO of Open Door Mission, will sit on a bench livestreaming one-on-one conversations with community members—ranging from local leaders and donors to former program participants and curious passersby. The bench becomes a platform for truth-telling, healing, and hope.

“Every person has a story, and every story matters,” said Valeria. “This event invites people to see past stereotypes and engage with the reality of what it means to experience—and overcome—homelessness.”

The livestream will be accessible on [Conversations on a Bench - YouTube](#) and [Conversations on a Bench | Facebook](#), and the public is invited to watch, participate in person, or submit questions and prayer requests online. In addition to raising awareness, the event will also raise funds to support Open Door Mission’s year-round programs focused on shelter, recovery, and long-term transformation.

This local effort is part of a coordinated movement, with more than 100 ministry CEOs participating in similar events across North America on October 9–10, 2025.

For more information, livestream access, or donation opportunities, visit www.opendoormission.com. To watch the livestream and submit questions in real time, join us on Facebook or YouTube.

About Open Door Mission

Open Door Mission is a Christian based rescue organization that has been addressing the needs of homelessness, emergency food and addiction recovery in the Rochester community since 1952. ODM provides shelter, food, guidance and a path forward to men and women when they are at their most vulnerable. Open Door Mission operates a men’s residential addiction recovery program, emergency shelter, a food and clothing program, transitional housing for women and their children and 24 supportive housing units for formerly homeless individuals.

About Citygate Network

As North America's largest association of independent, faith-based ministries, Citygate Network represents a unified movement of rescue missions, addiction recovery centers, prison outreach programs, and life-transformation initiatives working to address homelessness and its root causes.

The network equips ministry leaders and frontline teams with community, resources, advocacy, and best practices—empowering them to respond with excellence and compassion. By connecting shelters, recovery programs, and outreach efforts, the organization fosters shared strategies that guide individuals from crisis to stability and lasting flourishing.

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