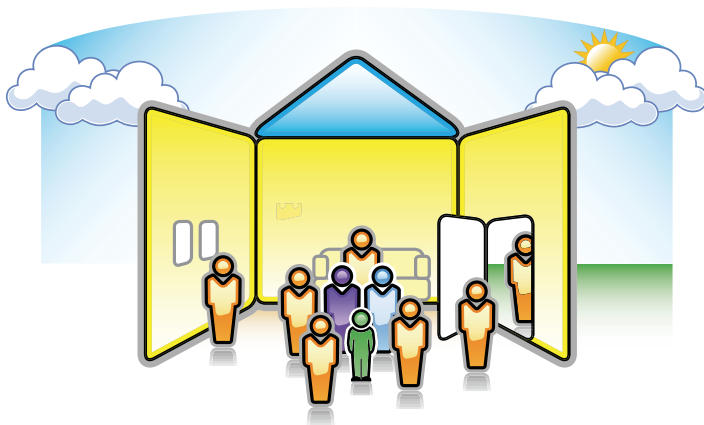




Stand In The Gap™

In Ohio, more than 26,000 men and women leave prison every year and return to Ohio communities. Many of them will be exposed to the same negative and destructive influences that led them to prison in the first place. Helping them deal with these pressures is key in their successful transition to life after prison.

Out of a burden to help ex-offenders in this difficult process, Opening Doors of Ohio has employed a very successful re-entry program called Stand In The Gap (SITG). This unique group mentoring model is based on Christian community.



Ex-offenders who qualify for the program become a “neighbor” in a spiritual “family” that consists of six to eight committed believers.

The neighbor and family members sign a covenant to meet together at least twice a month during one year for fellowship and prayer. The family may also meet at other times for social occasions or Bible study.

An ex-offender’s first year out of prison is usually the most difficult. By surrounding them with a support group where everyone is committed to following God’s lead, the chances of recidivism decrease significantly. The relationships that began in the family group often last much longer than the one-year commitment period enabling an ever more successful transition.

Currently, SITG, Ohio is primarily serving adult ex-offenders in Central Ohio. Eventually the model will expand across Ohio to include both adult and juvenile offenders and their families.



Stand In The Gap™

What is the vision of

Opening Doors?

The vision of Opening Doors is to help those impacted by incarceration to build healthier relationships resulting in strengthened families, steady post-release employment, reduced recidivism and restored communities. We do this by creating effective partnerships with individuals, the faith community, the prisons, and the corporate community.

What is the mission of Opening Doors?

Opening Doors of Ohio is a Christ-centered ministry that believes dramatic life transformation occurs when a healthy, loving community is experienced. Poor skills, social isolation and the absence of caring role models have often prevented those impacted by incarceration from developing healthy supportive relationships. When faith-based volunteers work together with prisons, families and corporate communities, lives are transformed, families are strengthened, and communities are restored.

When did Stand In The Gap begin?

SITG began in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in 1997, and has been very successful in helping ex-offenders transition into a life after prison. SITG Ohio began in October 2005.

Who qualifies for Stand In The Gap?

To be selected to participate in SITG, an ex-offender (called the "neighbor") must meet certain criteria: 1) whether God is active in this person's life; 2) whether they are embracing the activity of God; and 3) a willingness to do the hard work of change.

What qualifications do mentors need to have?

Mentors, called "spiritual family members," must be believers in Jesus Christ and should be active in a local church. These beliefs are critical to the understanding of prayer that takes place for family needs. Family members do not need prior experience working with ex-offenders in order to participate in a spiritual family. SITG, Ohio provides free training to everyone involved in the spiritual family.

What if our "small group" is interested in becoming a SITG spiritual family?

Existing small groups are ideal candidates to become spiritual families. In fact, they can elect to become trained in the SITG family meeting process and begin using this process even before a neighbor is assigned to the family. When a neighbor becomes available, the SITG program coordinator will contact the family co-leaders to present the neighbor candidate. If agreeable to the group, the neighbor will become a part of that spiritual family.

Who can the small group turn to when they need help?

Each family group is assigned a professional Christian counselor. The group may call on this professional for advice and input.

How can I become involved?

As a spiritual family member - Your commitment is for two family meetings/month for one year. Resources are provided to ensure your success; you need to show up, participate, care, pray and watch God work!

- **As a prayer partner** - The backbone of all that is accomplished in SITG, Ohio will be a strong prayer team. Will you commit to stand in prayer with us?
- **As a counseling professional** - Without directing the process, Christian counselors use clinical expertise to support family lay leaders and clear road blocks in family meetings.
- **As a financial supporter** - Much of the work of SITG, Ohio will be done by volunteers. Funds are critical however to pay Christian counselors and recruit and train new volunteers.