

## The Open Table Mission

Open Table trains congregations and their members, through the Open Table Model, to form communities - called Tables - that transform their vocational and life experiences into tools our Brothers and Sisters in poverty can use to develop and implement plans that create change. The Open Table process is a catalyst for the collaboration of faith communities, government, universities, business and non-profits working through a shared purpose model to move themselves and their communities from a transactional relationship with our Brothers and Sisters in poverty to one of transformation.

While congregation members join Tables to help others, they soon realize they are changed forever by the relationships they create through missional community. In Open Table, relationship is mutual: love, healing, purpose, faith and transformation given by each other for each other. God gives everyone human potential and the Open Table model allows us all to use it to give lives of meaning to each other.

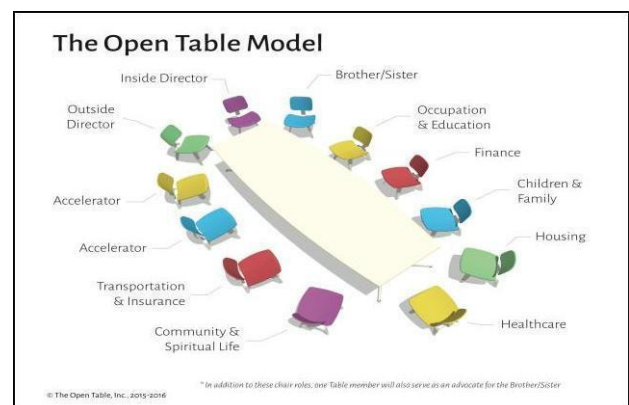
## Rapid Expansion of the Movement and the Model

From a chance encounter with a homeless man at a local church outreach, Open Table has expanded to a movement of people and communities in more than 20 states. The movement is demonstrating that the abundant, renewable resources of intellectual and social capital in people and their communities can be directly and effectively invested in the human potential of our Brothers and Sisters in poverty. The breakthrough element is a model based on seven years of implementation experience that prepares, teaches, equips and coaches participants for authentic, direct, transformative relationship.

[www.theopentable.org](http://www.theopentable.org)

## The Open Table Model

Congregations use the Open Table model to create community and transformation with the homeless, working poor, young adults transitioning out of foster care, veterans, probation/re-entry and survivors of human trafficking.



Congregations recruit volunteers who are trained to launch "Tables." A Table is the platform through which our Brothers and Sisters in poverty and congregation members enter into relationship, allowing them to create change in their lives. Candidates for Tables pass through a psychological assessment and backgrounding process. Each Table is composed of a group of volunteers that make a year commitment to act as a team of life specialists, encouragers, and advocates for impoverished Brothers, Sisters and families. The Table members, together with the individual or family being helped establish goals, accountability, develop an overall plan and implement it. Table members network in their congregations and the community for resources to support the plan. As Tables end, they transition into an After Plan, through which Table members and Brothers and Sisters are able to remain in supportive community together.

Each Table is hosted by a congregation (up to three congregations may share a Table). A required team of volunteers (10-12 people help an adult or family and 6-7 help a young adult transitioning out of foster care or a veteran) serve over an 8 – 12 month period. Tables generally meet once a week and often at a lesser intensity as the work progresses. Table members are primarily generalists, work as teams and also provide leadership for important life domains (see Open Table model diagram). A national team of volunteer Open Table Coaches train a volunteer Congregation Coordinator in each faith community to lead the model and launch Tables.



Family Portrait: A graduated Sister in Dallas, TX and her Table.



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## *The Faith-Government Shared Purpose Initiative*

Open Table model is re-defining the faith-government relationship to build new community capacity to serve individuals and families experiencing poverty.

Faith -government projects in five states with SAMHSA and Systems of Care have now been launched.

Congregation members are implementing Open Table in more than 20 states.

Open Table processes draw from the extensive research base of Wraparound, an established evidence-based practice method for assisting people in transition,

Both models emphasize the importance of individuals' prioritizing their own needs; learning to manage life on their own; and building natural support networks to help sustain them once formal services end.

The steps and procedures for both models are highly similar. As a result, the extensive research base for the Wraparound Process, which comes from 25 years of development and high levels of Federal funding for research, is directly applicable to Open Table. These studies show that support, when tailored to individual needs, with high levels of voice and choice, backed by specific plans to address unmet needs, actually work to address complex long term needs central to living in the community.

*The unique contribution of Open Table is its focus on establishing intensive and long sustaining positive supportive relationships, and introducing bridging social capital resources and connections for the person in poverty (however that poverty is experienced). It is clear that cross cultural and socio-economic systems understand the need to address the challenges inherent in successfully transitioning from formal care systems.*