

Dravecky to speak in Omaha

By Lee Warren
Contributing Writer

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Former major league pitcher Dave Dravecky will speak at the Open Door Mission's 51st Anniversary Banquet. Candace Gregory, President and CEO at the Open Door Mission, couldn't be happier.

"To have someone of his caliber and integrity to speak on our behalf is totally awesome," Gregory said. "We are so excited to have him share how God is at work in his life, but also because he is very concerned about the poor and needy and homeless and hungry right here in Omaha."

Dravecky is perhaps best known for battling a cancerous tumor in his pitching arm while he was a member of the San Francisco Giants. In 1989, he returned to the mound after undergoing surgery to remove the tumor. He won his first start, but five days later his arm broke, making a loud snapping noise, while delivering a pitch in Montreal.

Quick facts

Open Door Mission 51st Anniversary Banquet

Date: Tuesday, Sept. 27

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Place: Holiday Inn Central on 72nd Street.

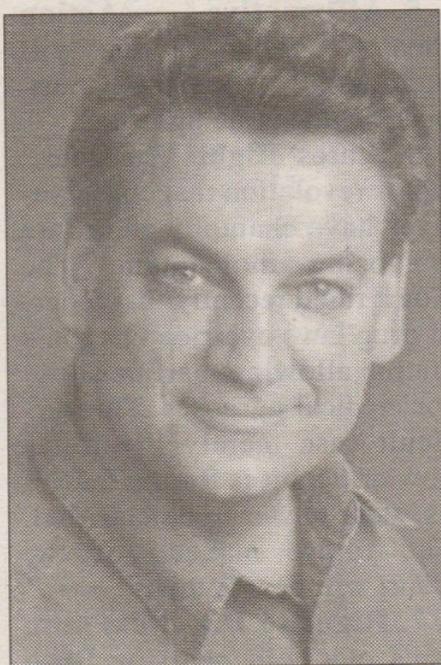
To make reservations: Call Deb Hayes at the Open Door Mission (402) 422-1111, ext. 1577, or email her at dhayes@opendoormission.org

Two months later, Dravecky broke his arm again. His cancer had returned and he was forced to retire from the game. Doctors amputated his arm to stop the cancer from spreading.

As a result of his fight with cancer, Dravecky and his wife Jan received thousands of letters from people (many of whom were also battling cancer, amputations or other illnesses) who were encouraged by the way his faith in Christ sustained him during such a difficult time. God used those letters to prompt the Draveckys to start a ministry in 1991, Outreach of Hope, to minister to people with ailments such as his.

Dravecky's desire to help those in need however didn't end there.

"I think he is very active in his own area, in his own homeless



Dave Dravecky

shelter, and that was his first exposure," Gregory said. "And while he was traveling as a baseball player he saw the homeless on the streets, and I think that's been a contributing factor to him speaking out for the homeless and breaking the cycle."

"He feels very blessed and I think he'll speak about that. This is part of being a Christian—giving back and taking care of the poor and the needy and the widow and the fatherless."

According to Gregory, Dravecky knows what it feels like to be broken. He also knows the power of God's healing touch.

"He understands that bad things happen to good people," Gregory said. "I think that he can relate to the pain and suffering that someone goes through whether it's an illness, or going without food, he can definitely relate."

"And he's a survivor. One thing about being in the survivor club—it doesn't matter what you survive from, you are part of the survivors. So, if you break the cycle and you get out of poverty, or you break the cycle of homelessness, or you overcome cancer, you are a survivor."

The Open Door Mission's annual banquet is their main fundraiser of the year and, equally important, following the banquet many new prayer warriors take to their knees for the mission after learning what life is like for the homeless.

"This night is an opportunity for us to thank the generosity of the community and to let people know what goes on at the Open Door Mission," Gregory said. "And I just challenge the community, that if they don't know about the magnitude of the lives that are being impacted, then this is a great night to come out and see for themselves how God is changing lives." †