

# Blue SKIES

SPRING 2009



## Methodist Mission Home

Giving God's Children a Faith, a Family, a Future

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## Finding Sanctuary at Methodist Mission Home

*With nowhere to go, birthmother makes decision for welfare of baby*

There was no doubt about what 21-year-old Edna, Texas resident Brianna Linds\* was going to do when she found out she was pregnant with her third child.

Living on the streets in the small Jackson County town, Brianna had nowhere to go and knew raising a baby in a situation like hers would not be in the best interest of the child.

"When you're homeless you don't know where you are going to stay from day to day," said Brianna, who dropped out of high school her junior year to care for her sick mother. "It's hard. You just go to different friends' houses."

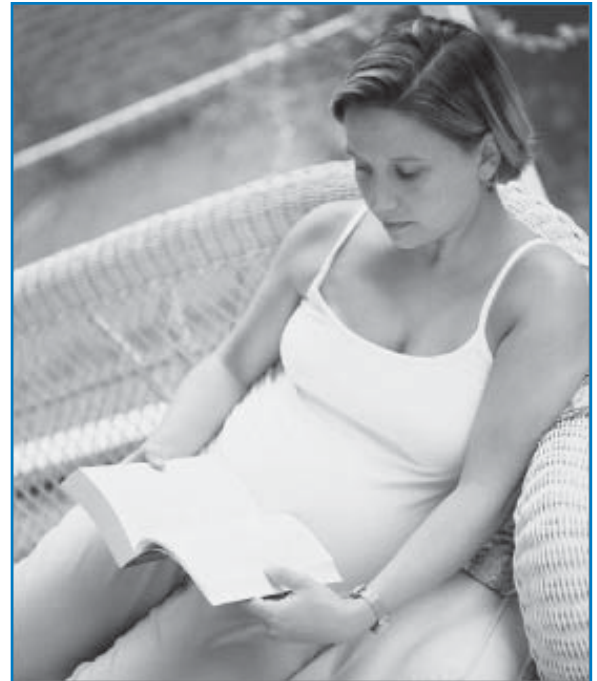
Brianna understood the chance she would be taking if she chose to parent the child. It wasn't something she was ready to do. With her two other children already living with family members in other cities, Brianna decided she would place her third baby for adoption. She received some guidance from family friends.

"They told me the right thing needs to be done," Brianna said. "They're right. I can't keep the baby. I have no stable home, no stable money coming in, no transportation. I can't do it."

Brianna was raised by a single mother, who passed away in March. Never knowing her biological father, she said she was excited by the idea that her child would be raised in a family environment and receive the things he or she deserves.

"I want my baby to have a good life," Brianna said. "I want him to go to school and go to college. I don't want another kid. I don't know what else to do."

In October, Brianna moved to San Antonio to stay in the Maternity Center at Methodist Mission Home. At the Maternity Center, a birthmother planning to place her baby for adoption can live free in one of the apartments. Working with an adoption counselor, she has the opportunity to decide on the best adoption plan for her baby, and she gets to choose the adoptive family.



**Brianna, 21, was living on the street before she came to stay at the Maternity Center at Methodist Mission Home to find a loving family for her baby.**

"The Maternity Center is very different than where I'm from," Brianna said. "It's peaceful and quiet and nobody bothers you. Right now, I'm just taking it day to day. I'm trying not to think about anything else but the baby and how the baby is going to have a good home."

"I talked to the adoptive mother on the phone and she's happy and can't wait," Brianna said. "She is loving and caring and the baby is going to get something better than I could ever give him – a mother and father who love him."

As for Brianna, she hopes the adoption process is also the first step in getting her life back on track. After the baby is born, Brianna plans to go back to Edna and move in with her sister and get a job. She would also like to go back to school to earn her GED.



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# FROM MY HEART

“...whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Galatians 6:7

My heart is joyful. My heart is grateful. Many hundreds of people like YOU have generously contributed to our Home. Some gave during the Christmas holidays. Some gave earlier in the year. Some gave large gifts. Some gave small gifts. Some gave regularly. Some gave in the past and returned to give again. Some gave time and talent. Some gave prayers.

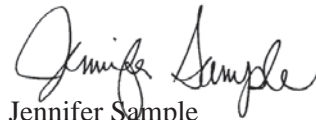
Thank you! Your gift is multiplied and magnified with the many gifts our Home receives. Every gift helps our ministry continue to touch the lives of people we serve.

As you read “Blue Skies,” you will know your gifts help people like Brianna, our birthmother.

Your gifts help people like Ian, our student in Southwest Center for Higher Independence (SCHI). Your gifts help people like our SCHI students who sang during the Christmas chapel service. And your gifts indirectly help our Genesis Cooperative partners, like the women and children in L.I.G.H.T., participate actively in our MMH community.

I know you will continue to do your part to contribute to Methodist Mission Home. You will reap the generosity you sow. You will reap the compassion you sow. You will reap the love you sow. Together we will sow the seeds for...Giving God’s Children a Faith, a Family, a Future.

Peace be with You,



Jennifer Sample  
Executive Director



## Birthmother searches for loving family for baby

Her advice to other young women who find themselves having to decide whether or not to parent a child: “If you parent a baby make sure you have a good home and have a pillow to put

your head on at night,” Brianna said. “It’s going to be hard. And if it’s going to be hard for you, it’s going to be harder for a baby.”

*\*Birthmother name changed*

## NEW LIFE DEAF FELLOWSHIP

On Nov. 2, 2008, Methodist Mission Home began hosting services for the New Life Deaf Fellowship from the Northern Hills United Methodist Church in the Perry Chapel at MMH. Services are held every Sunday at 4 p.m. New Life began at Northern Hills several years ago and was recognized as its own Methodist congregation during the 2008 annual conference session.

“This is a response to what we felt God was telling us to do,” said Rev. Sam Carpenter, pastor of New Life. “There’s a need to offer worship and ministry to the deaf community on this side of town. Our primary objective is to reach the deaf in this area.” *(Story and photo by Rachel L. Toolson, Witness Newspaper)*



The Rev. Sam Carpenter, pastor of New Life, explains communion to a student of MMH’s Southwest Center for Higher Independence. For more information about New Life contact Rev. Carpenter at (210) 215-3908 or visit [www.DeafChurchSA.com](http://www.DeafChurchSA.com).



# GENESIS COOPERATIVE

## 2008 CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Methodist Mission Home and its Genesis Cooperative partners celebrated the holiday season with a Christmas Program in the Perry Chapel on Dec. 17.

The Genesis Cooperative is made up of MMH, HandsOn, L.E.A.P. NISD, Volunteers of America L.I.G.H.T. program, the San Antonio Food Bank, and the Chinese United Methodist Church.

During the performance, students from the Southwest Center for Higher Independence and the women of the L.I.G.H.T. program sang carols. There was also a traditional reenactment of the birth of Baby Jesus that included students dressed as the Three Wise Men and angels.



Meghan Lewis and Kevin Bowen sing a duet while Assistant Residential Services Supervisor Wanda Poppell translates the song in American Sign Language.



Women of Volunteers of America's L.I.G.H.T. program sing and dance to "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" during the Christmas festivities.



The Three Wise Men visit Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus while an angel sings majestically over them.

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*Vehicles may be donated to MMH through the Vehicle Donation Program. Contact Cathy Walker at [cathy@mmhome.org](mailto:cathy@mmhome.org) for more information.*

Since 1895, Methodist Mission Home has relied on contributions from individuals, businesses, churches, and foundations to continue our mission. Your prayers and support help us help others who are facing challenges in their lives.

As always, you can donate online at [www.mmhome.org](http://www.mmhome.org). Please visit our website and click on "How To Help" and learn how to donate through In-Kind gifts, wills and bequests, honor and memorials, matching gifts, monthly and automatic drafts, and church offerings. You can also send your contribution to Methodist Mission Home, 6487 Whitby Road, San Antonio, Texas 78240.

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**\$54,530.92**

*These funds will help Methodist Mission Home provide outreach, education, and support to those we serve.*

*Please visit [www.mmhome.org](http://www.mmhome.org) for a complete list of challenge Grant donors.*

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## Moving Forward

### *Ian Mackay ready to take next step in independent living*

Walk into a room with Ian Mackay and chances are you won't be a stranger for too long. Ian is a personable young man who will take the first step to meet you by simply extending his hand and introducing himself. With that much confidence, it's hard to believe that only a few months ago, Ian considered himself antisocial and somewhat temperamental.

"In high school I always had a hard time being social," Ian, 20, said. "It wasn't good. I was more the quiet type, so I wasn't used to talking."

Born in Puerto Rico, Ian and his family moved to El Paso, Texas when he was just a baby. At an early age, Ian was diagnosed with autism. According to the Autism Society of America, autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person's ability to communicate and interact with others. Approximately 1.5 million people live with autism. It affects 1 in 150 American children.

"When I was little, I really didn't know what autism was," Ian said. "I didn't understand until I got to high school and then came to Methodist Mission Home (MMH)."

Ian's time during high school in El Paso was not memorable for him. Along with acting out his aggression and getting in trouble with teachers, Ian only had a few friends. He didn't get along with the students who ridiculed him for being different.

"I was bullied a lot," Ian said. "They would make fun of me. They would treat me bad. People would take advantage of me. I'm not sure if they saw that I had a disability, but if they did they took advantage."

It wasn't until enrolling in the Southwest Center for Higher Independence (SCHI) that Ian said he understood one reason, other than negative people, high school wasn't such a great experience.

"I used to be really mean," Ian said. "I would be really nasty to people on purpose. I was failing my classes, and it was a mess. Now I am more calm and concentrate on my work."

At the Southwest Center for Higher Independence, students learn vocational and life skills to transition into an independent lifestyle. Ian says he now has a better grasp on what he needs to do to be successful. It might have taken a little extra time for him to warm up to the idea, but soon Ian was on board.

"At first I didn't want to come to MMH, but after I observed and realized that I was here to learn and to advance more, I wanted to come," Ian said. "That's how I was able to get a job. I came to



Ian Mackay says he came to Methodist Mission Home to learn how to live independently, work on his behavioral problems, and find a job.

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**"The things I have gone through at MMH have built me up to who I am today."**

**- Ian Mackay**

*Student at the Southwest Center for Higher Independence at Methodist Mission Home*

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understand more about the program. I learned to like it."

After getting a job (he works at a local carwash), Ian was excited to venture off on his own. When he lived at home, his parents did everything for him.

"They would do the dishes for me and all the normal chores," Ian said. "I would always be on the computer not doing anything. When I got here, I realized I wouldn't have mom and dad to

rely on anymore."

Through vocational and life skills classes, Ian has learned to do things he never thought he could do on his own, including ironing his clothes, riding the bus to work, and taking his medication without assistance. Next month, he completes his training in SCHI and will move out of the dormitory into his own apartment.

"The things I have gone through at SCHI have built me up to who I am today," Ian said. "I've matured a lot and am looking forward to all new challenges."

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Peggy and Mike Nipper

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Cola or Rome Emmons

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Mr. Ronnie McElmurry

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and Tom

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and Frances Grimmert, Jr

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Mrs. Viola Johnson  
Mrs. Linda Scott  
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# Birdies for Charity is Back!



The 2009 Valero Texas Open has been moved to the month of May. This is an exciting development as the tournament is now part of the FedEx Point Program for the pro golfers and will be nationally televised!

Tied into the Valero Open is the Birdies for Charity fundraising program.

Whether pledging money per birdie or with a straight \$20 or more donation, if you guess the correct amount of Birdies made by the pros during the tournament you can win a brand new car, roundtrip airfare for two and other prizes.

To make a donation for the Methodist Mission Home go to our website [www.mmhome.org](http://www.mmhome.org) or the Golf San Antonio website [www.golfsanantonio.org](http://www.golfsanantonio.org). In the middle of the page you will see the Birdies logo with a link next to it. As a participant we receive 100 percent of the monies donated.

In addition, the donation helps us become eligible for additional funds through the number of participants. Last year we received an additional \$750.00, making the total raised through this fun event over \$11,000.00!

In addition to the online pledge you and your business or group can request pledge forms that can be shared with others to promote donations to the Methodist Mission Home.

Thank you for your support, and we'll see you on the green!

## AROUND CAMPUS



A reporter from Univision Ch. 41 interviews Methodist Mission Home Family Services Director Helen Ruttenberg about adoption.



Volunteers from Incarnate Word High School work on smoothing out the walking trail on the Methodist Mission Home campus.

Blue Skies is the official newsletter of Methodist Mission Home. Your comments, suggestions and ideas for future issues are most welcome!

**Please write:**

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San Antonio, Texas 78240

**Call:**

(210) 696-2410 ext. 177

**E-mail:**

kiko@mmhome.org

**Or visit us on the Web at:**

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

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**Methodist Mission Home**  
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