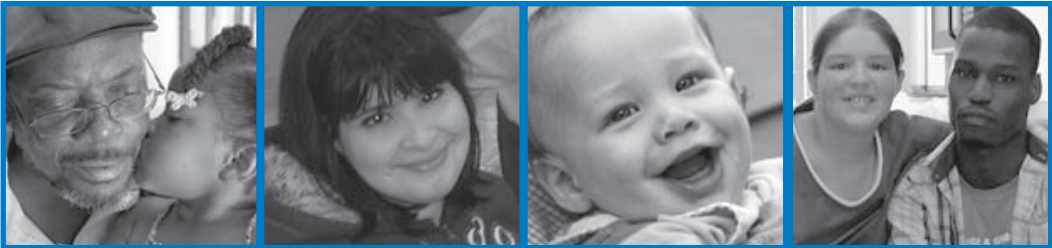


Blue SKIES

SPRING 2008



Methodist Mission Home

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

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Letting Go, Letting God

Birthmother finds comfort with decision at Methodist Mission Home

Mary knew she was not ready to care for a child. Although she was participating in a 12-step program to overcome an alcohol addiction, Mary felt she had a long way to go before she could completely take care of herself, much less a newborn.

Mary had been in the same situation before. In 2000, she gave birth to her first child, who was taken in by Child Protective Services and later adopted by another family. When Mary found out she was pregnant a second time, she began to search for a faith-based, open-adoption agency that could place her child in a loving home. This time, Mary was adamant about knowing more about the family her second child would be placed with.

"I wanted a level of comfort and support that I would...need for the months and perhaps years to come afterwards," Mary said.

She found this much-needed comfort with Methodist Mission Home. Mary said the staff with MMH's Family Services made her feel at ease and not pressured into doing anything.

"They made me feel [adoption] was an ideal option, but if I ever felt inclined to back out, that was an option, too. Nothing was set in stone," Mary said. "Help and assistance were offered and, best of all, I was the one who picked out the soon-to-be parents."

This option is one of the determining factors for some birthmothers, says Barbara Yehl, Adoption



With services provided at Methodist Mission Home, Mary (not actual picture) found the perfect family to raise the child she was not ready to care for.

Counselor at MMH. It provides a sense of control in a situation where one might feel out of control.

"Also, in spending time diligently questioning and considering an adoptive family, birthmothers are able to show that they love and truly care about the well-being of their child," Yehl said. "In open adoption, birthmothers have the power to place their child in the home of a family they deem appropriate, instead of just 'giving' their child away."

Mary says she was delighted when she was assigned a case manager to work with her and make the best possible decision for her child.

"[My case manager] was kind and discreet whenever we met...and honest about what was yet to come," Mary said.

See Adoption...Page 2



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Out of the abundance of a giving heart come gifts of joy. I am grateful to each person who is called to contribute to Methodist Mission Home. Thank you for your gifts of prayers, time and wealth.



We have begun a new year – full of hope and expectation. Following strategic planning with our Board and Leadership Team, we have defined our primary objective this year as Communicating our Ministry. MMH has opportunities for expanding services to children, birth mothers, adoptive families, and young adults with disabilities. We will focus on three key areas: customer satisfaction, marketing/outreach, and team commitment to accomplish our objective of improving awareness for our ministry.

As a friend of Methodist Mission Home, your opinion is valued. Please participate when we formally request your feedback. And more importantly, do not hesitate to freely offer your unsolicited suggestions.

Your Gifts of Joy have created our Home – a place where people’s lives are redeemed. Together we are fulfilling our vision – Giving God’s Children a Faith, a Family, a Future.

With a joyful heart,

Jennifer Sample
Executive Director

Adoption an ideal option for birthmother

One of the most memorable days of the adoption process, Mary says, was when she was shown a portfolio of couples who were waiting to adopt a child from MMH. Skimming through their photos and family summaries, Mary came across a couple she found to be the perfect fit.

Besides the lovely house, strong 10-year marriage, and substantial list of academic and work credentials, Mary was most impressed with the size of their extended family.

“What really attracted me was this one beautiful picture of them with a vast number of family members surrounding them,” Mary said. “I loved the idea of [my child] being surrounded by family. I remember growing up I was also surrounded by family. The more family, the more love to receive.”

The couple was Mark and Linda. Mary said after their first phone conversation, she knew she had made the right decision.

In April 2006, little Kylie was born. Mary describes placing her for adoption as a sacrifice. When the time came to sign her rights over to Mark and Linda, the feelings she had were “numbing” and “surreal.”

“But I was able to put in perspective the slogan ‘Letting Go, Letting God,’ and truly understanding it,” Mary said. “Don’t fight it. Let God’s words flow in and the right answers will come.”

Mary thanks Mark and Linda for what they are doing for Kylie. She keeps them in her thoughts and prayers everyday and is grateful she was able to connect with them through an organization like MMH.

“My daughter’s placement was heaven-sent and I couldn’t ask for anybody better than Mark and Linda to be her parents,” Mary said. “Adopted children are very special because they’re the ones chosen to fulfill one’s emptiness.”

Cas Posadas 2007

Methodist Mission Home and all its Genesis Cooperative partners celebrated the holiday season with a traditional Las Posadas event on Dec. 19. 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.

Las Posadas is a reenactment of the journey Joseph and Mary took in search of a place to give birth to Baby Jesus. Joseph and Mary are turned away at each stop before finding a safe haven in the form of a manger in Bethlehem.



A client from HandsOn, a partner of Methodist Mission Home's Genesis Cooperative, plays one of the three Wise men during Las Posadas.



Friends of the L.I.G.H.T program, and students from the Southwest Center for Higher Independence play shepherds during the drama.



"Joseph" and "Mary" look for lodging in the MMH chapel during the annual Las Posadas event on campus.

For more information on the Genesis Cooperative visit www.mmhome.org.

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SOUTHWEST CENTER FOR HIGHER INDEPENDENCE (SCHI)



Adrian Richardson concentrates in the kitchen. He and Marissa Maciel were two SCHI students who graduated from the San Antonio Food Bank Community Kitchen program last summer.



Marissa and Adrian work behind the scenes to get a meal prepared for guests. The meal consisted of cracked bulgar wheat, plantain chips, grilled shrimp, and cherry-pie cheesecake for dessert.

SCHI students heat things up in the kitchen

"Twenty minutes folks, 20 minutes!" yells San Antonio Food Bank (SAFB) training chef John McGinty as he walks into the kitchen where three students are preparing their final meal for a culinary training program held on the campus of Methodist Mission Home (MMH). "Feel the pressure!"

Move over Wolfgang Puck, Rachael Ray and Emeril Lagasse. Three new graduates are ready to spice things up.

Last summer, Adrian Richardson and Marissa Maciel, two students from MMH's Southwest Center for Higher Independence (SCHI), graduated from the SAFB Community Kitchen. SCHI empowers adults with disabilities to achieve their personal best through vocational and life skills training.

Since its partnership with the Genesis Cooperative, a network of five nonprofit organizations located on the campus of MMH, SAFB has graduated 72 students from the program. SAFB provides eight weeks of intensive on-the-job training that gives graduates the chance to find an entry-level job in a commercial kitchen.

"The students get to use all the equipment in a kitchen setting," said Jill Jurkow, Chef de Cuisine for SAFB and instructor for the program. "They're going to be able to go into any kitchen and start working as prep people and wash dishes and work their way up."

For the final exam, cooking was not the only thing students had to do, says McGinty. They were also graded on designing a menu, preparing a shopping list and serving guests.

On the menu for the graduation ceremony were cracked bulgar

wheat cooked with coconut milk and sprinkled with cranberries, plantain chips, grilled shrimp with a slice of mandarin orange and orange rum sauce, grilled fruit salad and cherry-pie cheesecake for dessert.

"I wanted to teach them how to prepare a meal that you can't go to Denny's and get," McGinty said.

The challenging menu didn't phase Adrian, who had been preparing for weeks.

"My favorite part of this program was getting to learn different techniques and different recipes and things that I can make on my own when I get my own place," said Adrian, who was presented with a black chef's jacket at the end of the graduation ceremony to identify him as the top student of the class. "The instructors really took their time and didn't rush me. If I had to do a step over and over they carried us through it."

Marissa, too, was comfortable in the kitchen environment. She enjoyed working with different people and making sweet breads.

"I also liked the catering part of it," Marissa said. "I think I want to do catering [as a profession]."

Although Adrian enjoyed his time in the program, he does not see himself working in the food industry. However, he says the skills he has learned during his courses will help him earn a job in any career he decides to pursue.

"I've learned to work with people and a lot of different things in the kitchen," Adrian said.

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Mr. & Mrs. O'Neil Stout

Betty Leighton

Mr. & Mrs. Roger C. Swift

Betty Flo Leighton

Betty & Brad Thomas

Dr. Marvin Shetlar

Utopia United Methodist Women

Betty Flo Leighton

Mr. Craig M. Vandiver

Betty Leighton

Walkup Company

Paul A. Walkup

Ann Wallace

Laurin Gaines

Ann Wallace

Eva Thompson

Ms. Kathleen Mims Walstrom

Betty Flo Leighton

Sonya H. Willis

Haywood Perkins

YOUR LIVING LEGACY

The gifts you make in your estate plan can carry on your charitable support long after your passing. An estate plan allows you to choose the type of legacy you would like to leave. There are several ways you can include a legacy gift to Methodist Mission Home in your estate plan:

Designate Methodist Mission Home as a beneficiary in your will

Make a contribution to the Methodist Mission Home Endowment

Make a contribution to the Methodist Mission Home Capital Campaign

Establish a fund named for your family

Designate a gift of insurance

Create a charitable remainder trust



Please consider making a gift to Methodist Mission Home in your estate plan. For more information contact Mike Countryman, Planned & Major Gifts Director at 1-800-842-5433.

Thank you to all the churches and individuals across Texas and New Mexico who helped us meet the Alamo Heights UMC and Canadian UMC Challenge Grant.

Together we raised:

\$70,528.41

(Includes Challenge funds of \$35,000)

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

Please visit www.mmhome.org for a complete list of Challenge Grant donors.

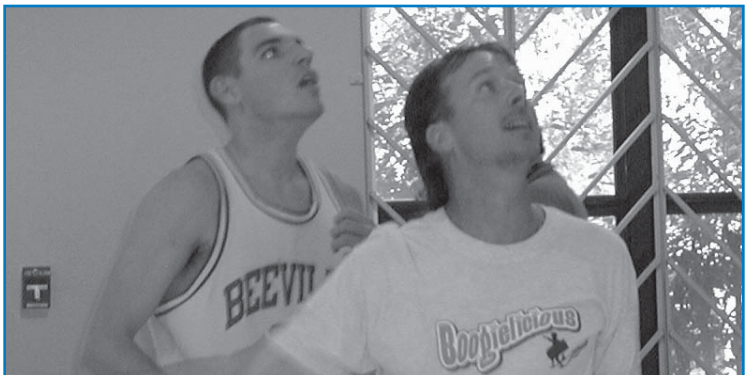
AROUND CAMPUS



Gordon Hartman of the Gordon Hartman Foundation presents a check for \$10,000 to executive director Jennifer Sample and SCHI students Anastasia Saenz and Beuford Akers.



Executive director Jennifer Sample gives Justin Rodriguez, San Antonio Councilman for District 7, a tour of the Methodist Mission Home campus on Jan. 16.



SCHI student Louis Johnson (left) goes for a rebound at the monthly SCHI student-versus-staff basketball game.



SCHI student Dayana Alvarez is treated to a Girl's Day Out complete with a stunning makeover.

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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Methodist Mission Home
6487 Whitby Road
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

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Methodist Mission Home

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

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