

## Creating Freedom

A message from our President and CEO,  
Dr. Judith Bell

## Sharing is Caring

By Patricia Wilson

## A Phone Call to Remember

By Terri Gutierrez

# THE PLACE



by Providence Place

Ending the cycle of generational trauma through innovative services since 1895.

**SUMMER 2021**



# Freedom is Beautiful

Earlier this year, with your tremendous generosity, Providence Place transformed Oasis Home into a safe haven for young women 18-24, who have fled abuse of all kinds. Oasis Home is now a transitional home that provides them a place to rest their heads and gather their thoughts.

Take for instance Amber, she had been homeless since November of 2020, and was living on the rough streets of downtown San Antonio. She didn't have any family, friends, or contacts, and when we

found her she didn't even have shoes. Amber was referred to us by South Alamo Regional Alliance for the Homeless (SARAH) and entered our Oasis Home Program. Providence Place was able to sign her up for community resources such as food stamps, Medicaid, and cell phone service, we also helped her find a job. Amber is receiving case management, counseling, and money management classes. While she is eligible to stay in our Oasis program for up to 90 days, and can easily navigate into other programs, she is already well on her way to

becoming completely independent!

For this endeavor, we partnered with SARAH; in 2015, SARAH was designated as the lead Continuum of Care (CoC) agency for San Antonio and Bexar County. The SARAH alliance of service providers, board of directors, and people who have experienced homelessness, guide community-wide planning efforts, strategically allocate resources, and drive change to provide supportive housing to all. Their goal is to ensure everyone has a place to call home.

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# WHO WE ARE

## ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Judith Bell  
President and CEO

Regina Murphy  
Chief Operating Officer

Angelica Cervantes  
Chief Program Officer

Connie Amerson  
Client Services Director

Jessica Butters  
Child Placing Director

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Dan Rebmann, Past Chair

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## CONTACT US

Providence Place

6487 Whitby Rd.

San Antonio, TX 78240

(844) 546-8697

## LETTER FROM OUR CEO



### Dr. Judith Bell

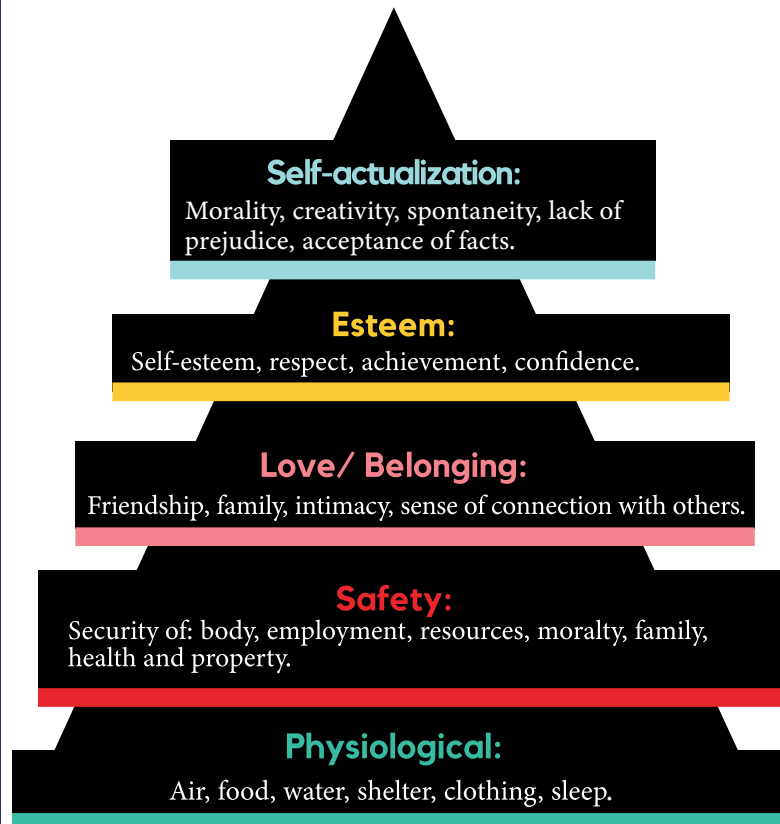
President & CEO

# Creating Freedom

*Maslow's Hierarchy of needs always comes to mind.....*

Providence Place is committed to meeting the physical, emotional safety needs, and sense of belonging for everyone we serve. While Maslow's fourth and fifth levels of need, esteem and self-actualization take time to develop, your gifts help our residents know that their basic needs will be taken care of as they move into their own personal journey of restoration.

Many of those we serve have lost confidence in their ability to identify who they are or where they belong. You provide important value, such as self-awareness that creates room for the sense of freedom, each time you make a gift to Providence Place.



### Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

As we celebrate the Fourth of July, let us remember there are others needing freedom; freedom from abuse/neglect, human trafficking, domestic violence, sexual assault and the story of their past. Please join me in celebrating freedom as we are reminded of our history, mission and day-to-day work Mary Volino set forth in the Spring of 1895. There is a donation envelope inserted in this newsletter. I am asking you to prayerfully consider a contribution to Providence Place as we partner to set women free of the bonds that hold them.

*Your contribution helps young women like Anika make good decisions for her and her newborn.*

Anika was a resident in Oasis Home, an emergency shelter for young women escaping homelessness.

She wanted no part of another shelter, someone telling her when to do something and how to do it. In short, she wasn't planning on staying.

Your contribution helped provide Anika with not just a safe place to live, but food and clothing and compassionate support. In the end, Anika decided to stay in Oasis Home and then made the decision to transition to My Mariposa Home where she and her newborn baby will live for 18-months. During her time at My Mariposa Home, Anika will have the opportunity to rest, pause and restore.

There is no doubt that your love for and financial support of our mission makes a difference to Anika and others like her.

## MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD



### Patricia Wilson

Chair of the Providence Place Board of Directors

# Sharing is Caring

My parents raised my sisters and me with an often-heard reminder that “sharing is caring.” This parenting technique was necessary for three self-absorbed sisters, but it also carried the values of our home. We are to care about and for others. We have raised our sons with the same simple equation. Caring and Sharing are each important so when put together the power of kindness is freeing when it is done as a choice.

A few years ago, my mother was recruited through her church’s college group to be a part of a fun lemonade-with-a-twist- stand on a nearby college campus. The twist was that with a lemonade you get a hug from my mom. And even better, the lemonade with a twist was free! Some people say that my mother resembles the Queen of England. Whether true or not my mother has a powerfully-connecting hug. It can heal, it can calm, and it can just make you feel good. The group “sold” out of the lemonade but not of the hugs. My mom has hugged her way through 95 years of pure love for people. Turns out that free has value. Sharing yourself is caring deeply.

I tell you this story because we all have the opportunity to share and care. As the summer progresses, we enjoy the Fourth of July holiday.

A day off is great but the why behind the day off is better. The freedom that was won provides people with an opportunity to build, share and care freely. The freedom was certainly not free. The freedom won then, still continues to have a huge cost.



The ideal of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness is a beautiful thing. It makes me grateful but also beckons me to be generous. Sharing what I have is caring. The act of selflessness can be found in a big hug, from a stranger who only wants to care for you. So, how can we give back? What can we do to pass on that grateful heart through a generous spirit? How can our pursuit of happiness create a better world and not a selfish one? It is our choice.

Providence Place appreciates the many generous and gracious people who choose to support and encourage the great work being done here. And by here it really is more than a place. It is a mission; a group of people sharing a message of hope that cares for our communities. You are important to us and this mission. Thank you.

*Pictured: Ladeen Akerman in Kennesaw, GA: wife, mother, grandmother, attorney, business owner, friend, and hug-expert.*

## Freedom is Beautiful (continued from cover.)

SARAH is designated by the federal department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as the Continuum of Care (CoC) Lead Agency for San Antonio and Bexar County (TX-500). As the CoC Lead, SARAH oversees the CoC Program, which is HUD funding that has been dedicated for housing with services that prevent and end homelessness here in our community. As with any new program,

there are things that our new clients will need. If you would like to help, please contact Brittany Ewing, the Development & Outcomes Officer, or Jessica Butters, the Oasis Home Program Director, for ways you can help welcome home and make the lives of people who have struggled with homelessness become more fulfilling. We can be reached at (210) 696-2410.



# A Phone Call to Remember

From the Memoir of Jane, a Former Birth Mother.

By Terri Gutierrez,  
Grants & Special Projects Officer

**P**rovidence Place has been providing adoption services for decades, and over the many years we have received countless phone calls from both grown children who were adopted through us and birth mothers that have lived with us through the years. Everywhere I go in the state of Texas, someone of any age will come up to me and talk about the story of their adoption from our agency. These stories are always memorable to me, but this past May, I received a really special call from a woman named “Jane” and her husband, “John”. Jane is now 88 years-old and called Providence Place, with her husband (91 years-old) in the background on speaker phone, because she wanted to talk to us about how we made a difference in their lives so many years ago.

At 88 years-old, Jane remembers every detail of those years like it was yesterday. When she was 10 years old, her father left their family in Oklahoma and she grew up without a dad in her life. She met John in high school, they were sweethearts but broke up when they no longer felt compatible. After high school, Jane went to college and studied voice and music. During her senior year, at the vulnerable age of 21 years-old, she

was seduced by a man and became pregnant; just as smoothly as he had entered her life he left her and was gone. She reminded me what it was like in those years for a young girl who was pregnant and not married, after all this was the 1950s, she didn't know anything about sex before her encounter with this man and she was left scared, alone, ashamed and helpless. She couldn't tell her mother, so she called her estranged father, who had remarried and lived in Dallas, told him of her situation, and he told her mother she was coming to Dallas to live with him and get a job. Her mother never knew the truth of her situation, a secret that Jane kept from her all her life. Jane's father had heard about the Texas Mission Home and Training School for Unwed Mothers, now Providence Place, in San Antonio from his brother, who happened to be a faithful contributor.

He drove her down to San Antonio, left her alone at our front door, and sped away just like he did when she was 10.

Jane says she will never forget the people who helped and cared for her during that time. Ruby and Mayme were the matrons in those days...they helped the young women go to doctor appointments, shop, and they were in charge of ensuring all the cleaning and cooking was taken care of (in those years, the residents themselves did all the cleaning and cooking for each other). Brother Armor was the administrator at that time, and required all of the ladies to attend chapel every day. Jane remembers the two-story house, the older girls that were her roommates, especially Willie, who worked in the nursery and helped her to spend precious time with her baby before she had to say goodbye. When her time came, she





was in labor for 36 hours, the baby was breech, but she finally gave birth to a healthy baby boy on December 31, 1954, a New Years' Eve son. Willie would let her sneak into the nursery for the next three days where she was able to spend time with him, on the 3rd day she dressed him and watched as his new family came to the Home and take him away. She knew then that it was the right decision, she had no ability to take care of a baby, but she never stopped thinking of him, celebrating his birthday each year and wondering if he was alright.

A few years later, Jane reunited with John, her high school sweetheart, they married and had two more children together in Oklahoma. She told John everything and they shared a hope that her son was OK and that he had a good life. In early 2000, Jane called Providence Place and gave us permission to give her son her information should he ever come looking for her....when he turned 50 years old, he did just that!

Jane's son, "Paul", grew up in Kentucky and had a wonderful life with his adoptive parents. They had found out, from her history profile, that Jane was a college graduate whose focus was music,

so they decided to expose Paul to all kinds of musical experiences such as piano, guitar, and voice lessons, and like mother like son, he caught on and fell in love with the musical arts. His adoptive parents were loving and kind (his description) however, when he went away to college both of his adoptive parents passed away unexpectedly. Paul graduated as an engineer, eventually married, and had three children of his own; two grew up to be doctors and the other is a NASA engineer! Missing his parents and now curious to know his birth mother, at the age of 50 Paul contacted Providence Place on a quest to be reunited with her;

### **Jane had been waiting for that contact all of her life, her prayers had finally been answered.**

At first, they wrote back and forth for several months, then Paul told Jane and John that he would be driving to Tulsa for business, and asked if they could meet at a hotel in the area. Jane and John got there early and when Paul walked in, they recognized each other instantly. All Jane kept saying to me, with relief in her voice, was that he was a "Fine, Christian man" over and over; her fears and hopes for him were laid to rest, and they went on to have many visits after that, they are now an important part of each other's lives. Paul met his other siblings, along with nephews and nieces. They happily celebrate every holiday together.

Jane and John often travel to Kentucky. Every visit makes their family feel more and more complete. As Jane and John look over their lives and their many years together, they know that even though life can be difficult at times, sad times can turn into happy times. In their case, they know that prayers can be answered.

I was so grateful that Jane decided to call Providence Place. Currently, she is writing her memoir and felt that maybe we would appreciate hearing her story, and oh do we ever! She wanted us to know what we meant to her all those years ago and we want her to know what she means to us. Adoption stories don't always go this way, but when they do it helps us to understand how powerful adoption and family stories can be. We are so grateful that we could be a part of her family story and her life journey. Towards the end of the call John took the phone and thanked me for saving his wife's life all those years ago. I wasn't here when that happened, but I belong to an organization that has supported women and their stories for over 126 years.

As our supporters, you have also helped to save her life and the lives of countless women and children throughout these years. This work that we do can be very difficult sometimes, but Jane and John remind us why we do it, and the wonderful future stories that can come from this mission.

Pictures in this article are for illustration purposes only.

# Freedom from Uncertainty

By Jessica Butters, Child Placing Director



## Through our innovative services, Providence Place seeks to provide freedom from uncertainty....

In the Adoptions Department, the majority of clients turn to Providence Place during times of crisis whether that be an unplanned pregnancy, homelessness, or for the need of a safe place away from abuse or neglect.

As we reflect upon the meaning of Independence Day, we think mostly of the signing of the Declaration of Independence where our country was no longer subject to the British monarch. On this day, we celebrate freedom with fireworks, cookouts, and time with our friends and family. For our clients and residents, this struggle for independence and the effort to take control of their own future is an ongoing battle.

From the eyes of one of our current Oasis Home residents, admission to the program meant a new start and a momentary reprieve from the unnerving thoughts of “what’s

going to happen to me?”, “where do I go now?”, and “will I be safe one more night under the overpass?” The Oasis Home gives her a place to safely rest her head and her mind. It gives her time to gather her thoughts to continue the battle, call for reinforcements, and take charge.

For a birth mother who unselfishly relinquished her rights of her infant so that she could continue treatment for her chronic illness, our Private Adoption Program gives her the freedom to know her child is in a safe place with a loving family. She gets updates, pictures, and visits to ensure that the baby is thriving and allows her peace to continue her personal battle for her health.

A child who is sleeping on a cot at a DFPS office or in a hotel waiting for a foster home faces the uncertainty and the fear for their future. When

the individuals entrusted to protect them from harm fail to do so or perpetrate that harm, there is a trepidation in the thought of being placed at a stranger’s home for the unforeseen future. Through our DFPS Foster Care and Adoption Program, our families provide warmth, comfort, and understanding. Whether it is a temporary situation or permanent through adoption, that child’s physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental well-being is cared for by individuals and families who themselves face the unknown but still choose to join this child on their journey.

Through our innovative services, Providence Place seeks to provide freedom from uncertainty so that the children, youth, and families that we serve can catch their breath and continue the battle for their independence with the hope of victory in their future.





# Selfless Planning

## Leads to Freedom and Independence for Tomorrow

By Brittany Ewing, Development & Outcomes Officer

Your selfless planned giving, estate planning, or bequests can help ensure a legacy of freedom and independence by partnering with Providence Place in the mission of ending the cycle of generational trauma.

Among the many opportunities for giving, we hope that you will consider naming Providence Place as a charitable bequest in your will. This estate-planning option is a simple way to enhance your personal legacy and help us safeguard the freedom, independence, and the healing process for women who are escaping domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking; as well as continuing the work of creating new and loving families through our adoption and foster services, for many years to come.

### **Here's why making a charitable bequest may be the perfect giving option for you:**

Through planned giving and estate planning, you can accommodate

multiple giving priorities.

A bequest can be made as a percentage of your estate, so you can ensure that your loved ones and the causes closest to your heart benefit in relative proportion. Providence Place can also be named a contingent beneficiary – meaning the needs of surviving beneficiaries come first.

You have security. A bequest allows you to balance your charitable giving wishes with your current needs. Because you aren't parting with your assets today, you don't need to worry that you'll run into financial difficulties in the future as a result of your gift.

You can change your mind at any time. We understand that circumstances change, and your gift to us in your will may no longer be possible in the future.

Your estate can receive tax benefits. In addition to the heartfelt satisfaction that comes with selfless giving, making a bequest to a charity can provide tax benefits to your estate. Donors often seek giving options that can help avoid significant taxes on their estate. Bequests may include cash, stocks,

mutual funds, bonds, life insurance policies and retirement assets such as IRAs and 401Ks; naming a charity as a beneficiary can be very beneficial as you can escape estate taxes on the remainder left in your account.

Naming Providence Place as a beneficiary of a retirement asset does not affect your ability to make withdrawals during your lifetime. And of course, you can change the beneficiary of a retirement plan at any time should circumstances change.

As always, we recommend that you consult with your financial advisor or attorney to ensure that all your objectives are met, as gifts have varying benefits depending on if they are made outright during life or through a bequest.

So, thank you again for your commitment to Providence Place. We are thankful for the opportunities to serve that your support provides. Please continue to allow us that privilege by continuing your support of our vital mission. May you be Blessed and be a Blessing to others.

# Snapshot: YTD 2020 Stats of . . . . . Our Programs

Thanks to your generous donations, we served:

- 4,104 people served for our Parenting with a Purpose Program.
- 237 Survivors served for our My Mariposa Home Program
- 10 Children Placed in loving homes in our Adoption/Foster Program
- 17 Admissions into our Supervised Independent Living Program

**We cannot do this great work without you! May you be blessed and continue to bless others with your loving kindness. We wish you a delightful Summer!**