

Newsletter



June 2009

Volume 1—Issue 1

Living Grace Home Changes Lives!

Coming up June 18, 2009 we will be holding our second annual Life Changing banquet. We will present a short video review and you will hear the stories of young ladies whose lives were changed as a result of their pregnancy, and the time they spent at Living Grace Home.

Since February 2007 when Living Grace Home burst into life and burst into color, and March 2007 when the first pregnant, homeless, scarred young lady came through our doors, it has been an amazing adventure and many, many lives have been changed. Pregnant mom's, their parents, volunteers, and staff, whose lives have been forever changed.

Living Grace Home was opened to provide a safe haven for young women who were homeless or in danger of becoming homeless as a result of their pregnancy. Combining shelter with some good, orderly direction. Life skills which is a fancy way of saying house keeping chores! Meal planning and preparation including volunteers who can teach those young ladies who have no experience, how to prepare a well balanced nutritious meal; parenting classes in collaboration with Family to Family at St. Rose, and a large range of workshops and classes to prepare these young moms for parenting.

The vision of Living Grace Home is to help these young ladies transition into permanent housing and to avoid additional out of wedlock pregnancies. Not knowing where you are going to sleep from one day to the next is not conducive to good parenting, and statistics show that one out of wedlock pregnancy makes it difficult to work your way out of poverty, more than one out of wedlock pregnancy makes it almost impossible to rise above the poverty level.

Living Grace Home has been so welcomed and so blessed by the communities of Las Vegas and Hen-

derson! When the doors opened, there had not been a maternity home in Southern Nevada that assisted minor pregnant women since Catholic Charities closed Marian Residence in 1994. While there are many wonderful organizations that provide shelter to women, their missions are different than a maternity home; either protecting women who are in unsafe living situations, dealing with substance abuse or modifying behavior. While almost all of these programs will take a young woman who is pregnant, their programming is not geared toward parenting and once the baby is born, they must find somewhere else to go.

The governing philosophy of Living Grace Homes is: 1) Marriage, if the babies father is in the picture we offer counseling and direction toward marriage as studies reveal that men who marry their babies moms live longer, live healthier, and make more money over the course of their lifetime; 2) Adoption, as children do best in two parent married families, if marriage is not an option, then we give our young residents encouragement and all the information they need to make that decision; 3) Single parenting, as this is going to be the choice of most of our residents, we attempt to provide them as many tools as possible to be the best single parent they can be, as well as a support network they can depend on for ongoing direction and guidance.

In just over two years, Living Grace Home has assisted over 40 young ladies who were pregnant and in a housing crisis. Not all of these young ladies have resided at Living Grace, some have just needed assistance to get back home, some have needed direction on how to get on their feet. Of the 36 who have resided at Living Grace, not all have stayed for the duration of the program. But all have touched, and changed our lives.

Kathleen Miller,
Executive Director

Come Join Us!

Living Grace Home is a faith based non-profit corporation. I think the best way to explain the way we operate is we run by the Grace of God on the generosity of His people. Most of our funding comes from local churches. As we are located in Henderson, one of our most faithful supporters has been St. Thomas More Catholic Community. St. Thomas More has assisted us financially, with goods and services, we benefited from H.O.P.E for the Holidays, the social action committee adopted our young ladies at Christmas time, and many of our volunteers have come to us from St. Thomas More.

We have also had help from St. Peter the Apostle, St. Viator, Christ the King, Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, Holy Family as well as volunteers from many of the other Catholic Parishes. We have also been helped by Spring Meadow Presbyterian, Green Valley Christian Church and some wonderful people from Central Christian in Henderson.

We are always in need of help, we depend on the local community churches and businesses to support us financially, but we also depend on your life experiences to come in and spend time with these young ladies who need role models to look up to.



Our next volunteer orientation is scheduled for June 15 at 6:30 PM at Living Grace Home. If you would like to learn more, please call the volunteer co-coordinator, Nancy Korten at 702-354-1015.

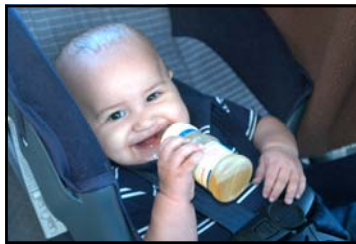
First House Mom

A friend once said to me "All change isn't good". But to those of us who lived at Living Grace Home during its first year of opening, we would say that seemingly all of the changes that occurred were good since they greatly restored our faith and have brought us closer to God and as such have altered the paths of our lives in a very good way.

As the first year house parents, my husband, Juan Contin and I witnessed first hand what the power of the Holy Spirit can do for believers and non-believers alike. At Living Grace Home, a community of faith-based volunteers and pregnant strangers all came together to help me to increase my faith by making miracles happen, seemingly every day.

Little things like someone needing a car ride to get to work on time and the door bell ringing moments later with someone else available to help (after a resident says a prayer), or a new resident moving into the lilac room and it needing a dresser and having a couple who has heard about the program calling to ask if anything was needed that day. And the very next

day them arriving with a beautiful dresser they happened to find at a thrift store for only \$10.00 and delivering it, or when a new resident needing a back-pack and school supplies is rescued by an anonymous donor calling to ask if by chance one was needed because she had bought one too many. These were just samplings of greater things to come as we began on our journey offering a safe place to pregnant teens needing a home, for just a short while.



Then there were the bigger things. One resident, a former gang member, achieved earning her high-school diploma and obtained her driver's license. She's a very good mother; she begins college in the Fall semester, and has chosen to give back to LGH by telling her story to donors and young teens. She's become a most effective public speaker and inspiring role

model to her peers.

A second resident received the opportunity to keep her second child after her first child was forcibly placed in a familial adoptive home due to her young age and her custody as a ward of Foster Care (CPS). At LGH she obtained many practical life-skills that Child Protective Services deemed suitable to qualify her for their Independent Living Program. And now as a high-school graduate, CPS has helped set her up with programs that continue helping to enable her. She's a very good mother, and she plans to marry and to obtain a nursing degree.

A third resident could have lost her child to CPS, but she did not. A volunteer helped her to locate relatives that would accept custody of her child and took them both into their home. Two residents found suitable adoptive loving families for their sons. Both placements were gracious and offered to keep the girls informed about their sons' lives with pictures and letters, if either girl desired it.

But the greatest change I can attest to is the change to my own life which

First House Mom continued.....

occurred on September 17, 2008, (about nine months after leaving LGH) when my son, Juan Andres, was born. Perhaps he would have been born regardless of whether or not we had served as house parents at LGH. However, I do not think so. I can't explain it...it's just a knowing. My husband and I had tried to get pregnant naturally for eight years before our tenancy at LGH, but to no avail. Somehow, in a way that only God can bring about, in the safety and comfort of my new home at LGH surrounded by my newly established family in Christ, we conceived our son.

Undeniably, the Holy Spirit makes its presence known at LGH everyday. The changes that occur to our hearts and minds while there can be remarkable if we let it. In our attempt to do something "good" for others the most good was done unto us. Isn't that just like God to put a spin on things!

Letter from Rev. John McShane



As human beings we have three different homes we all enjoy. Our first home is warm and comfortable

and secure, but it is a relatively short stay of just nine months in our mother's womb. Emerging from this safe environment exposes us to the wonders and terrors of the vast world beyond!

Our second home is an earthly home, a roof over our head. Each week I work with those without shelter in their second home, bringing them simple comforts such as water, fruit and a clean pair of socks to help them feel human. As much as I sympathize with those who are homeless in home #2, they at least have a

fighting chance to make it.

I have an ever present advocacy for those in home #1 who are often "kicked out" before their time to enter home #2. Those who are abruptly ripped from their mother's wombs and left to die, do not have a fighting chance and few to rescue them.

Many in our country favor homeless support, and rightfully so; but the neglect of the countless left homeless from the scourge of abortion shows an inconsistency. Wouldn't it be great if all men and women of good conscience would be promoters of the right to life of all in their first and second homes, for they will surely be welcomed into the #3rd and final, eternal home that is being prepared for all of us.



Alyssa's Story

Running away used to be who I was. Getting pregnant was a big shock for me but that didn't change my old ways just yet. After four months at home with my pregnancy there I went again. running from my problems that I didn't even know I had trying to make things work. The baby's dad was my main focus, and the fact that if I did want to come home there was the chance of going to juvi because I was on probation. Finally when the baby started moving I realized I couldn't be doing this to him. I needed to go home and get prenatal care. The scary fact of going to juvi and getting him taken away scared me to go home.

My baby's dad's mom gave me the push that I needed to wake up and just get help. Seven months with no doctor was not a good thing on my

part to do. So one day the baby's dad, his cousin and I all went to St. Rose hospital to ask what we could do for a "homeless" pregnant teenager. They gave us a number to call Nurse Betty. Nurse Betty gave Living Grace a call and the next day I was here getting a tour of this great big house.



Scared of leaving my baby's dad I knew I couldn't be selfish anymore. Living Grace helped me get what I needed to get on Medicaid, and food

stamps. Also teaching me that life has hard things to overcome. Like being less rude with people you can't stand. They've helped me with trying to get back into school. Mrs. Kathleen Miller has also helped me get my community service complete before my court date. Many people that come through these doors to help Living Grace help us girls with challenges in life.

Living Grace Home gave me the strength to change my ways. I've grown more mature living here, and for once I am not a selfish person anymore. I am very thankful for Living Grace Home for helping me and my son.

Photo shown is that of a pregnant teen not Alyssa

Great Support!

In our first two years of existence Living Grace Home has truly been blessed with Community Support. If we are not characterized as represented by the story of the Widow's Mite, I don't know who is! If we had not had donations of \$25.00, \$50.00, \$100.00. per month from individuals and \$500. to \$15,000. donations from small companies and foundations we would not have been able to continue. Out reach groups from different churches had raised, \$500 to \$1000. with small events and donated to Living Grace Home.

While one church donated funds for our power bill for several months,

another donated the funds for a swamp cooler to help stretch those dollars for at least two months longer than if we were using only air conditioning to cool Living Grace.

If you or family members work at WAMU/Chase you can support Living Grace Home with your company withholding. If you work for MGM Mirage you can ask that we be the recipient of your Voice! funds, if you shop at Albertson's you can register your rewards card to donate to Living Grace Home, all of these are wonderful ways to help Living Grace Home change lives.

Our two most consistent financial donors though are our wonderful Pastoral guide, Father John McShane who has supported us both spiritually and financially from his own retirement funds. Without Father McShane, Living Grace Home would never have opened their doors. The other is Mr. James Heaton and his company, Halo Electronics. Jim was a board member for our first year and was a wonderful mentor as well as providing the financial support to get a new non-profit up and running. Jim is still on our advisory board and we are very grateful for the input he gives on the business aspect of running Living Grace Home.

Introducing Our Board of Directors

Our board of directors at Living Grace Home are not the people whose names you see on the society page. Our board of directors are people who have a loving heart and a strong desire to walk the walk, not just talk the talk. When they see a problem they are front and forward with offers of assistance. Kathleen Larmore is our secretary/treasurer. She takes her role so seriously that when the first couple of attempts to open a maternity home faltered, she and her husband purchased the current residence expressly for the purpose of opening this much needed shelter. Kathleen also gives of her time, treasure and talent to make sure that the books are kept up to date, the home is maintained, and also fills in when to many girls who have to go in to many directions! Again, Living Grace Home would never had opened if not for the quiet persistence of Kathleen Larmore.

Michael Peters was on the original board and involved in planning, designing and opening Living Grace Home. Mike is an attorney who has practiced family law and worked with adoptive parents for many years in Las Vegas, he is a great asset to the board. Mike has been supporting women who struggle to make a choice for life and has invested many hours of pro-bono work on their behalf. Mike also serves on the board of First Choice Pregnancy Services.

Janet O'Donnell is a Registered Nurse who set that most wonderful example of staying at home until her own children were raised before going back and resuming her career as a nurse. Janet works at Odessey Hospice and gives aid and comfort to people in the last days of their lives. Because Janet is there, many have had a peaceful passing. Janet is also one our original board members who has been there to support, suggest and assist with

the development of Living Grace Home. In her spare time she also volunteers at First Choice Pregnancy Services.

Anne Killoran is the newest member of the board of directors. Anne was a member of another Ladies organization that Kathleen Larmore and I belonged to. From the time I first spoke about Living Grace Home in 2002, Anne was interested. Anne has been on the board for just over a year and has brought enthusiasm and organization to our fundraising. Taking the lead on the banquet planning committee, she has surrounded herself with outstanding committee members.

We are in the process of expanding the board for Living Grace Home, if you or someone you know would be interested, please contact Kathleen Miller, board president at 702-212-6472.

Wish List

Living Grace Home has been more than blessed with goods and services. Our paper goods and cleaning products have been provided free of charge almost exclusively by Brady Industries. Toilet paper, laundry soap, dish soap, window cleaner, paper towels and other cleaning items to make sure that Living Grace Home is always clean and welcoming to new residents and visitors.

All of our furniture was donated at a local furniture and accessories convention or by members of the board. But there are always ongoing needs, in addition to food we often have young ladies arrive at Living Grace Home with only the clothes on their

back. They may have a small bag of odds and ends, but may have been robbed or if 'couch surfing' may have left personal items along the way. Often that includes having no form of identification; no birth certificates, no social security cards, and no Nevada I.D. before we can get them in for prenatal care, we must make sure that they have these forms of identification. The costs can run \$40.00 — \$50.00 per person. We get wonderful donations of both maternity clothes, and other clothing for the girls, now if we could just figure out how to get the same size girls in as clothing that gets donated, we would be in clover! However, it does seem that we get size 2 girls when we have

XX maternity clothes, and vice versa! Gift cards to Target, Kohl's, Walmart help make sure the girls have something to wear when they are pregnant, even if it is just an outfit or two so they can be presentable when applying for jobs.

Girls are transported to medical and educational appointments, however they often need to take a bus to work or looking for work, there is a need for monthly bus passes.

Bedding needs to be replaced, when we have several girls through a room in a year, the bedding wears out. Our beds are queen size deep pocket beds that were donated by a mattress company.

Living Grace Home Seeks House Parents

Employment Opportunity with Living Grace Home -

Married couple between the age of 45-55 who are parents but empty nesters. This is a Live-in position, with room and board plus salary. Patience, structure, organization parenting skills and home organization skills are necessary.

E-mail your particulars to Kmlivinggrace-home@gmail.com or call 702-212-6472.

Mission Statement

The teaching of the dignity of human life provides the indispensable foundation for this entire undertaking.

Goals

- To provide a safe place for young pregnant and parenting teens, ages 14-22, who have no place to live.
- To offer a place of love and safety, an alternative to abortion, as a testimony to life.
- A non-denominational home run under Christian principles.
- Staffed with 24 hour supervision - three shifts. The housemothers are responsible for the general cleanliness of the house. They also offer advice and support.

Living Grace Home will seek a community wide solution, calling on churches, businesses, and other non-profit agencies to assist us in our goal to protect young women who are pregnant, and to reduce the number of repeat pregnancies among teenagers in our community.