

MAIN OFFICE
ST. VINCENT HOMES
7201 MILNOR STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19135

Residential and Shelter
Program

7201 Milnor Street
Philadelphia, PA 19135

St. Vincent Maternity
Group Home

104 E. Township Line Rd.
Havertown, PA 19083

Guardian Angel Hall
Mother/Baby Group Home
157 W. Carpenter Lane
Philadelphia, PA 19119

St. Joseph Hall Group Home
477 E. Locust Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19144

St. Joachim Hall Group Home
1509 Church Street
Philadelphia, PA 19124

Let the little
CHILDREN

Come unto Me

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Vol. III, Issue I

A Newsletter of St. Vincent Homes

March 2009



*Best Wishes
for a
Blessed Easter!*

FROM THE DESK OF THE ADMINISTRATOR

One of the benefits of working with St. Vincent Homes (SVH) is to witness the tremendous accomplishments of the youths in our care, in spite of the odds stacked against them. I have got-

ten to know a pleasant young lady named Zari over the past several months. Zari became a resident of SVH in July 2008 because of problems in her home. Zari also impressively came to us as a high school honor student. We were very pleased with Zari's attitude and demeanor from the first start. She studies hard, takes care of her health, keeps her room neat and clean, follows the rules of the house, and meets with her social



worker, Ms. Jen, regularly to discuss issues and plan for the future. She is respectful when she has a complaint and is always willing to listen to another point of view. She is well written, well spoken, and one of our most fashionable teens. Because of Zari's Charter School location, she wakes up at 5 AM every

school day, gets ready, eats breakfast, and then catches the first bus out. Recently Zari's hard work has paid off.

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CELEBRATE STAFF

Mr. Duwane Jenkins personifies what people think of as a "cool" teacher. For those of us of a certain age his style is "old school" and harkens back to the smooth delivery of a Don Cornelius as you could see him easily ending a tutoring session with "we wish you peace, love and soul".

He brings snacks and more baked goods to tutoring than Sara Lee. Although at the same time he demands the best of the young ladies so they can

advance and succeed in school. These kinds of skills do not come easily or overnight. Mr. Jenkins has been tutoring with St.



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SPOTLIGHT ON SOCIAL SERVICES

For those who are not aware, March is nationally known as "Social Work Month." This year's national theme is *Social Work: Purpose and Possibility*. The purpose is to focus on the future of social work. This interestingly enough directly relates to the daily works of the five social workers of the Social Services Department of St. Vincent Homes. Each social worker is working with a very diverse group of young ladies. Each young lady in our care has her own story, heartaches, and troubles.

Our social workers are the driving force in developing a plan for each individual in our care. The main purposes that we strive for are safety, permanence, and well-being. Social workers explore with residents, key people and agencies involved, the possibilities for their future once leaving St. Vincent Homes. This requires social workers to work closely with our Group Life Department and Clinical Department to assure that we are

providing the best possible services for each young lady. St. Vincent Homes has been blessed to be able to find permanency for many of our residents.

In the past year we have had several young ladies move on to



"Supervised Independent Living". This program allows for a young lady to move into her own apartment and utilize the "tool bag" that she developed while in our care. These tools include such skills as food shopping, budgeting, paying bills, self-care, and self-discipline, to

name a few. Please note that three of these successful discharges came from our Mother-Baby program. We are also very excited to be preparing several of our young ladies to enter college in the Fall. We have a resident on campus that is currently weighing her option to attend school outside of the Philadelphia area, as she is currently part of the National Honor Society at her school. We also have a teen mother at Guardian Angel who is in the interviewing process in her college search.

The possibilities of our social work practice are endless with the young ladies that we serve so long as everyone has an open mind and an open heart. All it takes is dedication to the mission of St. Vincent Homes and team work in exploring the possibilities for the youth that we serve. We are helping an at-risk population in achieving goals that they thought were not attainable even a short year ago.

Theresa Metz, MSW
Director of Social Services

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She was offered admission and a scholarship to a local College. She is planning to visit the school soon before she decides to accept because she was also accepted into several other schools. As if this

were not enough, Zari is also in the process of getting her own apartment but until that happens she wants to use SVH as a home base for when she is on break from college. We are happy to be a con-

tinuing resource for Zari and cannot wait to witness her future accomplishments. Best wishes and God bless you Zari!

Rick Pytlewski, MSW
Administrator

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Joseph Catholic Home and St. Vincent Homes for over 20 years. This dedication to educating young people is further exemplified by his full time "gig" which is teaching

high school in the Philadelphia School District where he has taught over 20 years. He presently teaches math at Overbrook High School.

St. Vincent Homes is particularly fortunate to have such a dedicated

teacher who can conduct a tutoring session with the smoothness of a Charlie Parker riff combined with the creativity of a Miles Davis.

Pamela Y. Wilson
Director of Group Life

THE HEART OF THERAPY

The St. Francis Adolescent Treatment Center has become increasingly youth focused over the last year. A few small nuances have been noticed by the girls, such as wall decorations, magazines and games in “the clinic”. There have also been some changes on a larger scale made to benefit our girls, including an increase in family therapy. We have made a concerted effort to reach out to our families and include them in our efforts in improving our residents’ quality of life. Another attempt in bringing folks together is our monthly *family dinner nights*. These are large-scale events, where family and friends are invited to dine and discuss the progress their daughters are making in our community group homes. Included on these nights, is a supportive parent group where parents/guardians are invited to share their worries, ask questions and shout their praises.

Through these events, we have been able to build more relationships with parents and help strengthen bonds between our residents and the families to whom



they are likely to return, ensuring a smoother transition. We, as therapists, have also been able to build positive relationships with the families, which helps to provide a stronger framework with support building and service planning.

Another successful program I have taken on personally with the moms is Mother Baby Attachment Facilitation (MBAF).

The purpose of this program is to promote attachment and bonding between mother and child. Thankfully, the young ladies have taken positively to the series. Every two weeks, I videotape a young mom interacting with her child and verbally praise the positive interactions she has. I will ask questions about her child, her birth experience, etc...all the while being constructive and encouraging. It is a great experience and the mothers get to keep the DVD, as a sort of video record, when they are

complete.

Overall, I am excited with the way things have gone in my first year as Director of Clinical Services. We have a great staff and motivated residents. I look forward to seeing many more of our young ladies off to new starts.

*Kamilah Barnes-Berry, MA, NCP
Director of Clinical Services*

“KNOW THAT I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS...” Mat. 28:20

The above words, a promise from Jesus to “always” be with us, have been our source of strength and courage in the last seven or eight months as we made our way through changes and challenges in our new group homes. It has been an exciting time for all of us as we strive to respond to the needs of our residents and their families in this time in history.

In an effort to “honor the old” and “embrace the new” we decided to move our Tabernacle from our St. Vincent Chapel in Tacony to our house Chapel at St. Joachim Hall. On January 14th Father Steve Wetzel (Pastor of St. Joachim Parish) officiated at a



memorable blessing, inspiring our little congregation with words of hope and joy.

Following the service – Father Steve and Ed Lis led a beautiful “house blessing” for our residents and staff, blessing every room and entrusting all to God in a spirit of friendship and peace.

Our first Mass in our new Chapel was offered on February 6th and really seemed like “a spiritual marker” along the way of our accomplishments and our work still in progress.

Our new Chapel is so beautiful! It will be “a place of peace, rest,

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and service” where we can pray individually and as a community; a sacred place where we can draw on the strength of a personal God who loves us and walks with us each day.



We are pleased to announce that on March 3, we had a “special blessing” for babies, moms and expectant moms. It was indeed, a blessed event! Our little Chapel was brimming over with 20 moms and 10 babies, helping us to echo the beautiful words of Jesus, “Let the little children come to me.”



*Sr. Barb Zurine, SSND
Youth Minister*

MISSION STATEMENT

INSPIRED BY THE GOSPEL MESSAGE, “LET THE CHILDREN COME UNTO ME”, ST. VINCENT HOMES PROVIDES SERVICES TO CHILDREN, YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILIES. RECOGNIZING THE DIGNITY AND WORTH OF ALL PERSONS, WE ARE COMMITTED TO WORK TOGETHER TO HELP FAMILIES AND THEIR INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS DEVELOP TO THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL AND TO EXPERIENCE THE FULLNESS OF LIFE THAT IS THEIR HERITAGE AS CHILDREN OF GOD..

IN THIS SPIRIT, WE ACCEPT EACH INDIVIDUAL AS JESUS DID, AND EMBRACE EVERY PERSON OF EVERY RACE AND CREED IN A COMMUNITY OF FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE. UTILIZING THE CORE VALUES OF COMPASSION, DIGNITY, CHARITY, JUSTICE AND EXCELLENCE BASIC TO CHRISTIANITY AND THE

FIELD OF PROFESSIONAL CHILD WELFARE, ST. VINCENT'S WILL

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