

MAIN OFFICE
ST. VINCENT HOMES
1509 CHURCH STREET
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19124

**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

**St. Joan of Arc Hall
Group Home**

3550 Frankford Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19137

Let the little
CHILDREN

Come unto Me

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A Newsletter of St. Vincent Homes

December 2009

PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

Education at St Vincent Homes is one of the most important parts of what we do. Many of our youths come to us with educational problems. When our youths leave, they should leave with an educational program that's on track for success. This is always our goal.

Social workers and program managers, with their staff, work hard daily monitoring our youths' school progress, attendance, homework, and grades. Some of our youths never had this type of follow up provided in the past and most respond well to our interventions, thoughtful care and support.



To aid in our youths' educational growth, we offer an intensive in-house educational support program for all residents in our five group homes. Tutoring is offered in-house morning and evening by trained professionals. Morning tutoring is for youths who are in the process of reregistering for school af-

ter placement, or who miss a day due to health appointments. Evening tutoring is for all youths all the time. Youths who attend these programs have supervised access to gifted teachers, supportive and sensitive teaching, and several computers in each home hooked up to the supervised internet and printers. Furthermore, our Maternity Group Home offers an accredited home school program which is pictured above with our happy student scholars. Please keep our hard working youths in your prayers for their continued educational suc-

Rick Pytlewski, MSW

THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving dinners come early to St. Vincent Homes. Each of our five group homes has its own celebration of the feast. Residents and their families are invited to enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving feast with all the trim-



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WHAT'S NEW

Each of the St. Vincent group homes has a Residential Council Meeting every month. Two or three individuals are selected by staff to represent the residents at a meeting conducted by a St. Vincent staff facilitator from outside of the home. The group proceeds using Robert's Rules of Order determining an agreed upon agenda before proceeding. The residents select two topics of interest to them and the facilitator does likewise. Topics vary but often include discussions concerning house rules, food issues, school attendance and house activities. Following

the discussion, residents agree on suggestions for their home to be submitted to the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Committee for recommendations to the Administrative Team. Both the CQI and the Administration may approve, reject and/or modify the suggestions but the Administrative Team makes the final decision to undertake an Action Plan, which includes individuals responsible for completion, a deadline date, a review date and a final status. Residents are up-dated on the status of their suggestions at consecutive meetings and are given full explanations of deci-

sions made by the CQI and Administration. The Residential Council groups are most appreciative of their opportunities to have real in-put into the opera-



tion of the group homes.

*John Timothy Paul, M, MBSQP
Director of Quality Control*

RESIDENTIAL REALITY

(Who Doesn't Need a Little Reality in the World of Group Life?)

Loss and the Holidays

Everyone experiences loss at some time in his or her life and these feelings are exacerbated for all at the holidays. We create traditions to lessen the sense of loss, so even if the person is not there, as a family,



we can reenact the same events, eat the same foods - it gives us a sense of com-



fort.

Imagine if your sense of loss was not for a loved one who passed away, but rather for the dream of family being together, for the whole notion of what the holidays are supposed to mean - being with the ones you love.

The deep sense of loss

that comes with grieving a dream is what our girls experience at the holidays. No matter how much we decorate, how many presents are under the tree, being in substitute care just really hurts at the holidays.

Therefore, when it seems like our girls are distant, or not as grateful as we think they should be for all we do and give, remember this is not where they want to be or even where you would want to be at the holi-



Pamela Y. Wilson
Director of Group Life

MED STOP

HOLIDAY SAFETY

Family functions, tasty treats and holiday traditions make this the most wonderful time of the year. Unfortunately, for emergency room doctors, it can also be one of the busiest.

Here are some ways you can make the season safe and fun for everyone:

Poisoning

- ◆ Mistletoe, holly, poinsettias and Jerusalem cherry plants commonly used as decorations are considered potentially dangerous and should be kept out of the reach of children.
- ◆ Bubble lights containing methylene chloride can be poisonous if a child drinks the fluid from more than one light.

Choking

- ◆ Tree ornaments, light bulbs, and tinsel are potential choking hazards for small children as they may block the airway.
- ◆ Peanuts and popcorn are potential choking hazards and should not be given to children under four years of age.

Fire

- ◆ Keep your Christmas tree secured in a sturdy stand. Make sure, if you buy an artificial tree, that it is labeled "fire-retardant".
- ◆ Avoid using real candles on any tree; keep live candles away from windowsills and mantles as they can fall, and never leave a room with a candle burning as it only takes a minute for a spark from a candle to burst into flames.
- ◆ Don't overload indoor or outdoor electrical outlets; overloaded circuits can start a fire.



LAUGHTER THE BEST MEDICINE

What did ADAM say on the day before Christmas?
It's Christmas, EVE!

Nurse Diane

Merry Christmas to you and all your families.

THE HEART OF THERAPY

"Women are like the apples on trees. The best ones are at the top of the tree. The boys don't want to reach for the good ones, because they are afraid of fall-



ling and getting hurt. Instead they get the rotten apples from

the ground that aren't as good, but easy. So the apples at the top think something is wrong with them when in reality they are amazing! They have to wait for the right guy to come along... the one who is brave enough to climb to the top of the tree!"

As a team, the clinical staff at St. Vincent's has been helping our young ladies realize their potential and worth. The goal is to help them develop a sense of self actualization and find their own identities outside of the not

so positive things that have happened in their lives. I know that our therapists are brave enough to reach out for the apples at the top of the tree. Many of our girls have been moved from placement to placement, seemingly passed over for someone better, smarter or even easier to deal with behaviorally. Our goal is to help them realize that despite this, they are indeed amazing!

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St. Vincent's complies with all regulations that prohibit discrimination in employment and services to clients

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www.stvincenthome.org

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**Apples**

The Outpatient Department has implemented a number of actions in order to make this feat a realization. Our most important step has been reaching out to and involving more families into the treatment process. We team up with the Social Workers once a month for a "Parent Group." We are also holding meetings twice a month where an employee from the Clinical, Social Services and Group Life Departments meets with the purpose of sharing information and coming up with ideas on how to run a program that helps each resident attain goals.

Furthermore, each resident is seen by myself or Sister Jean Santarone, SSJ, Intake Psychologist, for a personal interview in order to share information so that, that particular resident knows from the beginning that she has a support person available to her in this new environment.

We know that all our work has meaning and purpose; however, the ultimate goal is to make sure our girls know that we have no bad apples.



*Kamilah Barnes-Berry, M.A., MCP
Director of Clinical Services*

Thanksgiving

It takes many hands to present such a fete! Many staff and sometimes our residents spend hours in the kitchen preparing for this banquet. The girls especially help with the housecleaning, decorating and table setting. It is a great learning experience for these special young ladies.

Needless to say, it takes many hands to clean up as well. Usually this is done cheerfully, as all pitch

in to help.

Having our Thanksgiving events early frees up the girls to spend the actual holiday with their families and watch the parades and football games on TV.

Many blessings on all who have helped to make Thanksgiving 2009 enjoyable for all, especially the young women of St. Vincent Homes. Thank you!

Sister Louise Kane, SSJ,

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