

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

Mother Caroline Hall
Group Home
 9600 State Road.
 Philadelphia, PA 10114

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

Inside this issue:

What Child Is This?	2
Memorials	2
St. Joseph Hall	3
Med Stop	4

Ripples from the River

Christmas



Blessings

Vol. V, Issue 3

A Newsletter of St. Vincent Homes

December 2011



Rick Pytlewski

TEACHING TEENS... AND TOTS TOO!

St. Vincent's prioritizes education for all our children. Often times youths enter our program with neglected educational needs and our job is to get them back on track. Once a youth is re-enrolled in school, usually the public school they were in previously, our staff monitors their attendance, reviews report cards and other essential school placement testing needs. They also oversee the completion of homework and their attendance at our in-house educational tutoring program. We have a high success rate in our youths getting back on track here. Education can never start too early! This January we are offering a workshop for our ten teenage moms in our mother/baby program. The program promotes the importance of initiating literacy at an early age. At the workshops each mom will be given a reusable storage bin with ten age appropriate board books for their babies. After the initial workshop, the girls will then have time each night designated in their schedules to read and bond with their children.

In our maternity program we are also getting ready to start our new twelve week parenting program in which there is a set educational curriculum. Realistic Baby Alive Dolls will be provided for our maternity youths on which to practice. Feeding, diapering, holding and playing with baby are some of the topics to be discussed and practiced.

These are just two of the many services we offer our youths (and their babies too!). We couldn't do it without your support. On behalf of our children, God Bless you and Merry Christmas.

Rick Pytlewski, MSW
 Administrator



WHAT CHILD IS THIS?



S. Barbara Zurine

*What child is this who stands before - our door on Christmas morning?
For those who have eyes, it is Christ in disguise -
this blessed Christmas morning.*

Recently, we, at St. Joan of Arc, had the privilege of receiving a very special visitor, a young woman who left Joan of Arc over a year ago and stopped by to say hi. We were all overjoyed to see her again; she looked so good!

This was no ordinary visitor. Yasmine came to apologize to our staff; she came to deliver a very important message. She commanded the floor, spontaneously address-

ing staff and residents alike. "To the staff, I say, I'm sorry. I'm sorry that I gave you all such a hard time by constantly leaving without permission, by disobeying house rules - over and over. To all of you residents, I say, listen to the staff; they are wise and they are here to help you. You need all they have to offer. It's really rough out there, and I did not realize what I had at St.

Joan of Arc until I lost it all. By the grace of God, I turned my life around, but it was very hard. I took an apartment with my sister, I have a job,

and I am planning to go to school. I also took a one year vow of celibacy because I want to respect myself and be independent. I want to do things for myself!"

As Yasmine shared her story with all of us, I looked around the room to find our staff beaming with joy and gratitude for our very sincere visitor. Our residents, as well, were just captivated to hear a firsthand account of life after St. Joan of Arc. What a wonderful witness to the importance of our ministry! We never know just how we are impacting or empowering our young women. This

SEE What Child Is This? P. 3



Ms Myrtle, Ms Jamie, Yasmine, Ms Wanda and Ms Colleen

MEMORIALS

Over the past several months St. Vincent Homes has received generous donations in memory of deceased family and friends.

We would like to further memorialize them by placing their names on a Honary Scroll which will appear in our newsletter.

For these and all the souls of our departed families and friends, we say, "Rest in peace Amen."



ST. Joseph HALL

In the past I have featured articles on four of our five community-based group homes: St. Joachim Hall, Mother Caroline Hall, Guardian Angel/Mother Baby Residence, and Joan of Arc Hall. In this article I would like to tell you a bit about St. Joseph Hall.

St. Joseph Hall is a very historic building. Its roots go back some years. It was once a group home for boys; then St. Joseph Catholic Home for girls. Following the Catholic Homes/St. Vincent merger it was moth-balled but was resurrected when St. Vincent-Tacony closed its campus facility and moved the services to five community based group homes serving young women, pregnant teens and their families.

You see, St. Vincent's mission is not bound by location! It just so happens that now the mission has moved from the "old" campus to group homes in the community. All that really matters is that the mission is still upheld and that the residents are receiving the best possible care.

St. Joseph hall is located in the Germantown section of Philadelphia. It presently has the

capacity to house twelve residents. The Manager of the program is Teresa Staten whom I call "the quiet storm". The residents love Miss Teresa and appreciate the genuine care she demonstrates day in and day out. She really advocates for the residents. She has worked with St. Vincent's youth for over fifteen years.

Ms Cathy and Ms Lisa work the day shift and ensure that the residents get to school and that their medical needs are met. They have worked with the agency ten plus years. Ms Michele has worked with our youth at St. Vincent's for more than twenty years and the residents just love her cooking.

Mr. John is quiet, but knows where everyone is and what's going at all times. Ms Celestine, our Heritage Award Winner, keeps the house straightened and clean during the week and quiet at night. Ms Madly and Ms Sheena work the weekend shift and are also an integral part of the team.

Ms. Bryannali, our newest Youth Care Worker, is working with Michele on the 2pm-10pm shift and is learning the routine from all the staff.

Miss Diamond is the Social Worker for St. Joseph Hall. The

girls really like Miss Diamond and love to tell you her schedule and when they talk to her and what they talked about.

Once a teen is admitted to our program, we begin to wrap an array of services around them including medical, educational, spiritual, life skills, parenting and therapy services. This is done in an effort to prepare them for the future.

I appreciate every one of our SJH team and thank them for all they do! We will continue to work together to guarantee the best outcomes possible for the youths in our care.

Pamela Gallagher
Director of Group Life



Pamela Gallagher



Teresa, Kathy, Michelle, Lisa, and Diamond

What Child Is This?

story is why we do what we do! Be assured that all things take place in God's own time. Yasmine, you are a most precious gift to us this Christmas. We ask

your forgiveness also, and we thank you for your presence among us.



Merry Christmas
and
Happy New Year to All!

Barb Zurine, SSND, PCS

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

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Diane Amato

MED STOP
Winter Safety Tips

Whether winter brings severe storms, light snow dustings or just cold temperatures, it is always good to review some valuable tips on how to keep your children safe and warm. The American Academy of Pediatrics offers the following:

Dress infants and children warmly for outdoor activities. Several thin layers will keep them dry and warm. Don't forget boots, gloves and a hat.

The rule of thumb for older babies and young children is to dress them in one more layer of clothing than an adult

would wear in the same conditions.

Frostbite happens when the skin and outer tissues become frozen. This condition tends to happen on extremities like the fingers, toes, ears and nose. They may become pale, gray and blistered. At the same time, the child may complain that his/her skin burns or has become numb.

If frostbite occurs, bring the child indoors and place the frostbitten parts in warm (NOT HOT) water. Warm washcloths may be applied to frostbitten nose, ears and lips.

Do NOT rub the frostbitten areas.

After a few minutes, dry and cover the child with blankets. Give him/her something warm to drink.

If the numbness continues for more than a few minutes, call your doctor or seek immediate medical attention.

Laughter the Best Medicine

This joke is courtesy of my lovely mom.

Why couldn't the "pony" sing the Christmas Carols?



Because he was a "Little Horse."

Have a safe and healthy season,

Nurse Diane

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