

# Growth spurts



## Sharing is Caring

BY JULIE OVERLEASE

Our big, crazy, upside down world is in desperate need of goodness. It takes courageous vision teamed with boundless energy, numerous resources and collaboration to effect change. What began as a simple thought that the Catholic community in Kansas City could fill a need by opening a home for expectant mothers is now a reality with living, breathing residents.

I experienced utter delight during a conversation with a mom residing at St. Mary's Home for Mothers when she expressed true gratitude for the opportunity to be in an environment designed to shower her with love and abundant support.

This is a novel experience for her, but one she welcomes and truly values. She recognizes the gift it will provide once her baby is born. A staff member told her, "You are going to have to get used to people being nice to you."

"Aha" moments are amazing partly due to the unexpected timing of their occurrence. My moment of clarity that St. Mary's Home for Mothers achieved the goal of building community for the pregnant women served came from a simple story about sharing. A dedicated volunteer checked in with a mom, I'll call her "Rose", to ask if she had any food cravings, as the volunteer wanted to stock special items the expectant women would enjoy. Rose recalled a day when a pregnant guest staying at St. Mary's came across a jar of pickles with only one remaining.

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“Oh no!,” I said, somewhat aghast, “Did she take your last pickle?” She calmly told me, “No.” “Did you GIVE her your last pickle?” I asked incredulously. Rose flashed a bright smile and said, “I shared it with her.”

I recognize that pregnant women having pickle cravings is cliché, but hunger for certain foods during pregnancy is real; growing a small human is no small undertaking. Rose shared her pickle! Her gesture was the epitome of kindness. When the reality of this simple story dawned on me I was struck with the richness of what it means to share life together and abide in community – where friends become like family. I told Rose she should be the poster child for friendship among pregnant ladies! Her humble smile told me that she thought nothing of it and would gladly share again.

God intricately and deliberately weaves the tapestry of our lives and blesses us with personal encounters with specific individuals. Perhaps the pregnant guest needed a loving gesture of generosity to fill a need in her heart that day. God is love and we bless one another when we choose to show Christ’s love to others through kind deeds. These positive interactions multiply, build trust and enhance relationships. This is the desired atmosphere at SMHM.

Each woman at St. Mary’s Home for Mothers articulated in her own way just what it means to live there. Moving in is like a reset and provides moms with resources to help their families grow stronger. “I’m going to raise my baby girl differently than the way I was raised,” one mom shared. She commented on how much peace she feels living in a stable environment free of toxicity. Another mom said with sincerity and enthusiasm, “I love everything about this place!”

Here is a snapshot of a day at SMHM. A volunteer promised to pray for a mom regarding an imminent struggle she faces. The ladies have a great time gathering together for movie nights, but practical conversations about the chores chart occur too. A sleepy-eyed mother with a swaddled babe in arms entered the dining room for lunch and an offer was immediately made to hold her baby while she ate. Hope, prayers, work, fun, help – all of these elements are found at St. Mary’s Home for Mothers.

The babies at SMHM are surrounded by love and add great joy simply by means of their existence. Bottles and blankets, binkies and burp cloths are in use. Babies get diapered and swaddled and rocked and burped. Sometimes they fuss and cry, as babies do. Faced with daunting obstacles, their mothers chose life in a culture that often snaps to the conclusion that babies are an obstacle to a woman’s happiness or upward mobility. However, the truth is that each baby is a blessed gift to the world and possesses unknown potential. Together we are showing women going through unplanned pregnancies that they are capable and courageous. We believe in them. We will wrap them and their babes in loving arms. The moms gain confidence, the babies thrive, and that goodness builds a more beautiful world. Thank you for partnering with us to continue to touch lives at St. Mary’s Home for Mothers.

**It's a Match!** St. Mary's Home for Mothers needs *your* help! We have a generous offer to match new donations received now through December 31st! Please consider making a donation!



*Julie Overlease with the first baby born in our out-patient program, a baby girl born June 8th!*

## Staff Spotlight:

### Lori Rauber

#### Volunteer and Donations Coordinator



*As a mother of 6, with quadruplets in the middle, how does your life experience best equip you to serve at St. Mary's Home for Mothers?*

The irony of God blessing a highly Type A personality with 6 kids in 3 years has never escaped me. I just couldn't imagine his plan and always questioned his sense of humor. My entire parenting experience has been seeing God in action as he brought people into my life to help me along the way, so the "it takes a village" concept is the basis of my core belief system. I believe in accepting with grace the gifts of service and donation. Now, how I organize that service and those gifts is where 23 years of having to constantly create calm from chaos comes into play! I see my ability to organize our donations and volunteers as a gift that lets us efficiently serve the most people possible. What others may see as shelving I see as a means to an end, for the more organized we are and the more accepting of other's service we are, the more mothers we will be able to minister to at SMHM.

*Tell us about a recent volunteer project at SMHM.*

Karen Schmidt from the Respect Life Ministry at St. Charles Borromeo came out one day to drop off donations. This was my first time meeting Karen, although her Respect Life Ministry had already become strong advocates for SMHM. She asked what we needed and I told her that it was getting difficult to keep track of donations and properly distribute them without a proper shelving system. I showed her an area in the basement and she took it from there and connected me with those able to assist. John Hiatt listened carefully to our needs about the ideal setup and then designed exactly what I wanted. The next thing I knew, he and John St. Clair with the Knights of Columbus at St. Charles Borromeo made plans to build 60 linear feet of shelving.

Bill Tott, a Project Manager at Lowe's worked with us to provide materials specified by John Hiatt's design at cost. Lowe's cut the plywood and boards to specifications and delivered the products to SMHM. A crew of 5 built 14 individual shelving units that connected to make one huge unit in one day! The units are 6 feet tall and 32-48" deep. Special thanks to: Knights of Columbus #3414 - John Hiatt, Bob Keefe, Bob Borusheski, Dave Catron and former St. Pius High School and current University of Missouri student - David Deters. The cost of the supplies was paid for by the Respect Life Ministry at St. Charles Borromeo and the sweat equity of the volunteers. It was an amazing project!

*Share how you see the future of volunteers at SMHM.*

SMHM wouldn't exist without the love and support of many amazing volunteers that constantly give of their time and talent. As we grow and expand, so does our mission. With that growth, I hope to utilize our volunteers to provide for the needs of all mothers in crisis throughout the entire Kansas City community. My goal is not only to utilize volunteers to fill our shelves, but also to empty them. It doesn't matter how many donations we bring in if we aren't getting material aid into the hands of the families who need it. I see our volunteers becoming an important part of our outreach. One of the most immediate and impactful ways to provide support to our moms in need is through our network of women serving as Gabriel Project "Angel" volunteers. SMHM is willing to provide any resources these volunteers need to help the pregnant mothers with whom they are paired.

## CURRENT NEEDS

- Simply go to Target's Gift Registry Site: [www.target.com/gift-registry](http://www.target.com/gift-registry)
- Search for An Organization: St. Mary's Home for Mothers in Liberty
- Shop and Target will deliver the items to us and update our list!

*Please contact Lori Rauber with questions: [rauber8@yahoo.com](mailto:rauber8@yahoo.com)*

# Deacon's Corner

BY DEACON KEVIN CUMMINGS



SCAN ME

We've been very busy at Saint Mary's Home for Mothers! We celebrated our opening by hosting a celebration on September 15th at the beautiful Belvoir Winery in Liberty, MO. We had over 100 friends, benefactors, and our moms present at the event. Our intent is to have a larger gala event next Fall 2023!

Our focus is to engage our partners in "building out" our basement at SMHM to serve our residents and moms in the community. This 5,000 square foot expansion will allow for an art studio, instructional kitchen, group meeting room, and bathroom facilities for our moms and their children. Included in our design are educational and computer technology centers for career planning and assistance. We will present these new and exciting developments at our fundraising events. We plan to update our donors through our newsletters, mailings, and Facebook page.

SMHM needs your help to make this dream a reality. The cost will be approximately \$450,000 to complete this area. Please know we will be asking if you might consider partnering on this expansion.

The QR code above is for our new video by Michael McGlenn with Sistine Films. Please take time to view the seven-minute piece! You can also visit our website to view the video.

We're moving pretty quickly here at SMHM, but the most important arrivals have been the three babies delivered to SMHM since the first of this year!! We could not be prouder of our moms and these beautiful little infants that brighten our days!

If possible, please come out for a Wednesday Mass, and afterwards, enjoy homemade cinnamon rolls and coffee. The BEST is yet to come...



*On the left, Bishop Johnstone said Mass with us on August 24th and blessed a freshly painted statue of Blessed Mary. Bishop Johnstone is pictured with our art teacher, Rosemary Overstreet, and Sr. Doris Engeman.*



*On the right, another baby boy born on 7/22/22!*

## What's Happening at St. Mary's

# CELEBRATING OUR FIRST YEAR!



In September, we held a small event with a few of our donors and supporters to celebrate how far we have come this year!

## HOW TO DONATE

### Mail:

Attn: Deacon Kevin Cummings  
9508 El Monte St.  
Overland Park, KS 66207

### Online:

[www.smhfm.org](http://www.smhfm.org)

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