



The Magnifier

...news from Magnificat Houses

Magnificat Houses, Inc.

Houston, Texas

Winter Issue, 2017

Magnificat Refurbishes Midtown Cottage for Full-Time Clubhouse Members

Morning Star, our charming cottage on Austin Street, has a new paint job, a sparkling new kitchen, and a new purpose: to provide independent living circumstances for Clubhouse members enrolled in **St. Joseph Clubhouse's** daytime mental health programs. Transportation to daily activities and training in independence is frequently a hardship, and the 2016 addition of residential beds at **Dona Marie Clubhouse** in SE Houston has proved a boon to nine members and their families.

Now six Midtown members will find themselves surrounded by the Magnificat community around the clock. Originally targeted for summer, occupancy will begin in mid-February—expedited by volunteer painters and a generous gift from the **Ordinary Life** class of **St. Paul's United Methodist Church**, which also offers programs to help the homeless.

Morning Star originally opened in 1987 to HIV victims, filling quickly with men who had been ostracized by society and their families. As that need subsided, the cottage was repurposed to serve other needy populations.



***ORDINARY LIFE**, a class lead by DR. BILL KERLEY, shares their delight at providing Morning Star's new appliances...
...and MAGNIFICAT HOUSES volunteers wave back at Dr. Kerley's class in gratitude for expediting our mission.*



New AA Group Forms At St. Joseph House

Magnificat welcomes the **Alcoholics Anonymous** community to join our on-campus AA group, spearheaded by pastor **Fr. Frank Wittouck, SCJ**. Meetings are held Mondays, 6 p.m., at **St. Joseph House** (3307 Austin Street). Fifteen attended early Monday sessions; adding a second weekly meeting is under study.

AA Group Representative is **David Raines** and **Horace Anderson** Secretary. Both are long-time AA members and enthusiasts for the program. They agree: "It works if you work it." The only requirement to join our group is a desire to quit drinking. The general public is welcome. For questions email David confidentially. Email: info@MHIhouston.org.

Resident Artists Create Stunning Crosses to Benefit Our Mission

THE MAGNIFICAT CROSS, forged in steel at the **Dona Marie** workshop, became an instant source of pride throughout the community when introduced in December. The first design, an offset corpus which seems to rise out of the metal cross, was designed and manufactured by residents at the urging of Operations Manager **John Reece**, who was particularly impressed by the artistic talent and practical

skills of two residents in the maintenance division. "It's a big part of our mission—finding talent and focusing it toward the good of the community," he said with a nod to our founder, **Rose Mary Badami**.



Meet the artists on Page 2.



SUCCESS STORY:

Trish Greenwood's 20-Year Road to a Positive Future

Outreach Coordinator **Trish Greenwood** could run the world, or so it seems watching her multi-tasking: juggling phones and computer, writing a newsletter, organizing special events, counseling applicants, soliciting in-kind donations—all the while inspiring other members with her generosity of spirit. When desk duties at **Dona Marie Clubhouse** aren't too pressing, she cheerfully pitches in to help around the farm-based community, tending animals and gardens and, when she perceives a need, sweeping the kitchen floor.

Twenty years ago, Trish's circumstances were quite grim. While on maternity leave from her six-year job with the Houston Police Department, she had her first breakdown—then attributed to post-partum depression. Many hospitalizations would follow and, over the years, conflicting diagnoses and unproductive medications.

Meanwhile, her personal life was chaotic, shaped by uncontrollable tears, paranoid delusions and visions, even-

tually leading to divorce and later to loss of custody of her young son and daughter. In 2006 alone, she had four hospitalizations, and her elderly mother could no longer care for her. Then her older sister found Magnificat Houses online and sought guidance to find the right doctor.

Trish moved into **Susanna House** (then a women's home) where she began the tedious process of finding the right meds regimen targeted to her new diagnosis: *schizoaffective borderline bipolar with severe depression*. That qualified her as a member of **St. Joseph Clubhouse**, which offers a work-ordered day to aid the member back to independent living.

At first Trish couldn't face the computer without breaking down in tears—but in a few months she stabilized with support from the staff, her housemates and other members. In time she was able to accept the challenge of serving as assistant manager of the **Mustard Seed** resale shop, where she gained



GATHERING EGGS—and sometimes petting a chicken—is part of daily life at **Dona Marie House**, where daytime members mix with full time residents.

new skills and new confidence. When Magnificat opened **Dona Marie Clubhouse** in southeast Houston, Trish was a key member of the transition team.

Today, a confident Trish has a fulfilling job, meaningful relationships with her children and sisters, and a large community surrounding her with love. Gratitude might well be her middle name.

CROSS ORIGINALS... (Cont'd from Page 1)



Ken shows Gary how their metal "lace design" worked out. Spectacular.



KEN GRAY (L) and **GARY SCRIBNER** designed and made the first cross—an instant hit in our resale shop, **The Mustard Seed**. The enthusiastic reaction spurred further artistry, so while recreating the popular design they began experimenting with different forms and styles, adding eight more designs, each an original work of art. Gary is now training other talented residents and members to forge crosses from these designs—or create their own. On Gary's wish list funding for more sheet steel, which runs about \$72 a sheet. To make Gary's day, call him at 832-792-7258.

Mustard Seed Perks Up for Spring As Super Volunteers Join Team

Under the designer's eye of **Ann Justus**, the welcome new managing director, our Midtown thrift store is looking sleek and teeming with bargains. We are grateful to Ann and fellow volunteer **Jane Hayman** for showing us *what women want*. (And men too, as our men's clothing has also expanded.) The women have a knack for recruiting estate lots and goods from family and friends. Ann travels daily from Katy and Jane from Austin weekly to help. How's that for going the distance?



Consultant Jane Hayman lends her considerable business and craft skills to our general community.



Ann Justus hand-paints "Welcome" on the front door in mustard yellow, of course.

CROSSES ARE AVAILABLE at The Mustard Seed. Call ahead to check styles currently in stock, or to place an order.

The Mustard Seed 713-524-7333
1410 Elgin at LaBranch
Parking in rear

NEW HOURS: 10 a.m.—4 p.m.
Tuesday through Saturday
Closed Monday for restocking.

Jessica Young Organizes Monthly 'Blessing Drop'

Organizer **Jessica Young** demonstrates "the power of one," inspired by her mother-in-law's commitment to MHI (**Suzanne Young** is a super-volunteer at Anawim Thrift Shop in NE Houston). Jessica dreamed up the idea of a monthly "**Blessing Drop**" —baskets filled with whatever might be needed, or enjoyed—to each of our 15 houses, encouraging residents to return their list of needs and wishes in the basket. Her idea appealed to would-be volunteers with limited time: once a month was perfect for most. In January, the group delivered fresh sheets and baked goods; in February, goodies and cleaning; March will be panchos and goodies. More volunteers show up every day, including a 4th grade class making Valentines for the residents. Check out Jessica's Facebook page: **2017 Magnificat House Blessing Drop**.

FAMILY FUN as the little kids help load the baskets, and the big kids get to deliver. Jessica's in pink, and the January team includes Jane, Madison, Alejandro, Catie, Gloria, and Suzanne.



Our gratitude to those who make our mission possible and pleasurable!

NORTHWEST GLASS & MIRROR provided and installed new double glass doors at our soup kitchen, then SIGNS BY DESIGN hand-lettered a welcoming Loaves & Fishes monogram...as Manager Ron Graham demonstrates.



Thanks!



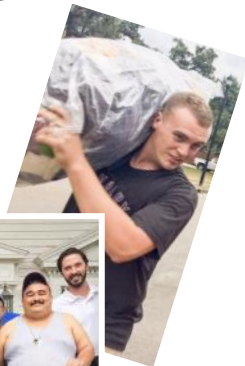
Thanks!

CHRISTO REY JESUIT HIGH brought 62 student volunteers to repair and paint the Morning Star ramp....

...while resident George edges into place the new washer-dryer from Ordinary Life.



Thanks!



JESSIE GONZALES of STHS created this flower garden for us on his way to becoming an Eagle Scout.

WHO IS HUSSEIN?

That's the organization name of the Muslim led group which, for two years, has joyfully collected and delivered large quantities of coats for the homeless or otherwise needy.



HOW TO VOLUNTEER

Contact Larry Cronin

LCronin@MHIhouston.org

713-824-0344

Gala Committee Gears Up to Plan Magnificat's 50th Anniversary

In 2018, **Magnificat Houses, Inc.**, logs up **Fifty Years** continuous service to Houston's neediest—and that's cause for celebration! An all-volunteer committee formed to create a gala fundraising event at which will be presented a hardbound illustrated book depicting our colorful—and often challenging—history and the immutable force that made it all happen: **Founder Rose Mary Badami**. In 1968, Badami pledged to devote her life to feeding and housing all possible homeless women and men and to restoring their dignity through meaningful participation in work and community. From her guiding vision sprang the comprehensive organization which today offers 15



GALA COMMITTEE includes volunteers from our staff, residents, Clubhouse members, and the Greater Houston Community.

dignified homes housing 180, two Clubhouses offering mental health programs to an additional 200, and a downtown

soup kitchen which daily feeds 200-400 of Houston's hungriest.

Marty Matulia recently resigned as Board Chair to focus on leadership of both the St. Joseph/Dona Marie Clubhouse Advisory Board and the 50th Committee, which he co-chairs with **Enid Cruise-Clelland**. Volunteers are welcome! Gala Committee Chair is **Suzanne Young** (281-650-8712). If you have historical information or photos, contact staff writer **Casey Kelly** (713-446-5226).

HOW THIS HELPS OUR MISSION: Working with our trained professional staff, our residents and Clubhouse members will gain skills in organizing, photojournalism, photo and copy editing, research and publishing.

Join Arts on Elgin (You Know You Want To)

Our **Arts on Elgin** drawing classes kicked off in January to high praise for fine artist Jeff Jennings. Jeff volunteers with Clubhouse members by day, and Tuesday evenings opens our studio to the general public. With small classes and rolling admissions, you can start anytime you like and fit right into the nurturing, laid-back atmosphere. *Also enquire about Basic Metalsmithing classes for jewelry making and small sculpture.*

832-567-3199

Arts on Elgin @gmail.com

Super Bowl Touches MHI

HOUSTON PRESS PICTURES OUR PRESIDENT: In the run-up to the Super Bowl, President **David Taylor** expressed his concern for the homeless as Houston prepared to receive up to a half million visitors. A longer article appeared in the online version.



TAILGATE MONDAY delighted our residents and members as the Super Bowl Commission delivers 200 top quality BBQ dinners and fixins' well worth waiting for!



**More Ways to Help Us Help Others
...and thanks for asking!**

SPRING CLEANING? REDECORATING?

Please remember our thrift stores The Mustard Seed in Midtown and Anawim in NE Houston. Both offer job training opportunities to help our residents gain independence. We need salable items and clothing in good repair. We pick up large furniture, appliances and estates. Call Managing Director Ann Justus to arrange: **713-524-7333**

TO DONATE

Kindly visit our website:

www.MHIhouston.org
(same site, new web address)

Or use the enclosed envelope.
Please write your check to:

Magnificat Houses, Inc.