



# The Magnifier

...news from Magnificat Houses

Magnificat Houses, Inc. (MHI)

Winter 2018

## Our 'Farm' Adds Beds for Homeless, Opens to Wider Uses

March will usher in expanded services at **Dona Marie House**, our six-acre haven in Southeast Houston serving those with mental health diagnoses—some by day as Clubhouse members, others living on campus full time in satellite homes.

While that mission continues, MHI will add 50% more beds by converting the underused second story of the “big house” to include rooms and dorms for general underserved populations.

**St. Joseph Clubhouse**, our accredited facility in Midtown, will continue to serve Dona Marie members and residents, with busing and expanded services between the two campuses.



**Dona Marie Clay blesses the DMH grounds. She and husband Al Clay made it all possible back in 2015.**

The vivid green Dona Marie campus will soon welcome the entire Magnificat community—our elderly and disabled and those recovering from life on the streets, alcohol and drug abuse, and prison time. The grounds are replete with rolling hills, working flower and vegetable gardens designed to attract butterflies, a pool, and small animals to tend—goats, rabbits, roosters and laying hens, and a shepherd dog.

“The spiritual and rehabilitative value of connecting with nature cannot be underestimated,” said Executive Director John Boyles. “We look forward to more interplay between our residents with nature, and each other, in this little slice of Eden—for which we are profoundly grateful.”

In planning are skills training courses, rehabilitative programs, workdays, play days, and spiritual retreats.



**DOWN-ON-THE-FARM PLAYDATES** offer families of residents, members and staff quality time together.

### DEPARTMENT OF ANSWERED PRAYERS:

## Four Houses ‘Adopted’ for 2018!

In the midst of our Hurricane Harvey recovery, families and corporations have stepped up to claim individual houses for their own, some sponsoring repairs and others underwriting house and resident expenses for an entire year. Thanks be!

**Morning Star House** on Austin Street was adopted, and taken to heart, by **Jim and Debbie Mensay**, who are already getting to know its enthusiastic first residents and their individual needs. The cottage will be home to up to eight women enrolled in our psychosocial rehabilitation programs just a few steps away at **St. Joseph Clubhouse**. The Mensays are generously covering all operating expenses for 2018, including utilities, insurance, repairs and maintenance.

Two other couples and a corporation have stepped up to

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### It's Official!

January 2018 began our  
Fiftieth Year  
serving the poor.  
Join us in our year  
of thanksgiving and  
celebration, and save our  
Gala date: October 6th.



**EARLY ADOPTERS.** *Jim and Debbie Mensay arrive at Morning Star eager to meet their new 'adoptive' family and tour with Executive Director John Boyles.*

## Adopted Houses, Cont'd.

underwrite houses throughout 2018. The **Jim and Mary Boyles Family** will sponsor **Susanna House** on Elgin, which serves up to 19 residents.

Similarly, **Dr. Charles and Sophie Russo** and family will cover **Bethany House**, a 20-bed residence on Fairview.

The **Scanlan Foundation** announced it will again underwrite **Scanlan House** on Stuart, which houses 16.

**Duchesne House** was first to be adopted last year by the unrelated **Duchesne Alumna** who offer friendship and hands-on repairs by their families.

### Only Nine to Go!

If you or your organization are seeking a worthy purpose, other houses need adoption: **Sherman House** and **Myriam's Hostel** (for women), **Dismas House** (for elderly and disabled men), **Ave Maria** (for formerly homeless men who work full time at our soup kitchen), and others serving the poor, outcast and mentally ill.

There are various levels of adoption, and costs vary by location and population. Please contact John Boyles for more information ([jboyles@mhihouston.org](mailto:jboyles@mhihouston.org)).

## SEAN CASTILLO

Sean passed away on January 20 after a brief illness. With us for over two years, Sean won many friends for his cheerful disposition as a resident of Bethany House and as supervisor of MHI's tools department.



## SUCCESS STORY

# 20-Year Resident Moves On To Pursue New Horizons

Nights, Tony slept under a bridge for six long years, suffering from undiagnosed schizophrenia. Even so, he arrived at Magnificat remarkably prepared to succeed, for Tony had spent his homeless *days* in the Houston Public Library, teaching himself computer programming and emerging information technology. To be all he could be, Tony only needed help to find the right diagnosis and drug regimen, a process Magnificat saw him through. Over the next two decades Tony upgraded MHI's rudimentary computers and software, de-



*Tony's many friends gather for his poignant send-off.*

signed our first website, managed email and mail services, and served as personal assistant to Founder **Rose Mary Badami**. In his spare time, Tony studied game theory and copyrighted several games—a venture he plans to pursue in his new life in the East, where he will care for his aging mother and keep on learning. And (we guess) he will miss us as much as we miss him, and his wry sense of humor.

## DANNY McCARTY

Danny passed away unexpectedly on Christmas Eve, leaving behind wife **Corazón San Andrés** and a large community of devotees. A Vietnam veteran, Danny came to MHI in **2002**, just in time to handcraft the altar, lecturn and cabinetry for the new **Visitation Chapel**. He managed the **Moran Center Woodshop** at its opening in 2012. Many residents benefited from Danny's careful tutoring in woodworking, using their new skills to gain employment. Happily, Danny met his Cora through Founder **Rose Mary Badami**, whose 2015 wedding she attended at the altar he built. In recent years he and Cora tended to Rose Mary in her home. The moving eulogy delivered by his sister **Mary McCarty Heintschel** expressed gratitude to the MHI family for being Danny's family too.

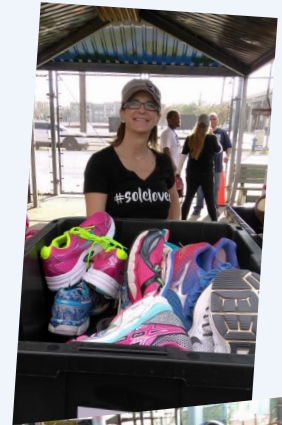




OUR GALA TEAM finds unique ways to raise money for our October gala. Seriously, these volunteers are hard at work! To join an upcoming shopping spree or just-for-fun event, email [Mhigala@yahoo.com](mailto:Mhigala@yahoo.com). So far, thanks to Elaine Turner, Anything Bling, and Okra Charity Saloon for their fun and generous sponsorship.



**So many to thank—so little space!**



CLOCKWISE FROM STEAKS:  
His Disciples Cooking Ministry  
Sole Loved (a shoe ministry, 2 photos)  
St. Maximilian Kolbe Church  
Celtic Chorus  
Waste Management VNP  
Sts. Simon & Jude  
Houston Metro Santa  
Knights of Peter Claver  
Ladies Auxiliary (Council 159)





## Join Us for a Lenten Spiritual Tune-Up

MHI invites you to participate in our Friday services throughout the Lenten Season—to enjoy the privilege of sharing the company of those Jesus loved most: the poor and the stranger. Here, no one is a stranger for long! We hope to see you on—

**FRIDAYS** (Feb 16 to March 23) Fast and Abstinence

11 a.m. Mass, Visitation Chapel

Eucharistic Adoration 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

Stations of the Cross, Visitation Grounds

Visitation Chapel is on Stuart Street, just west of our Admissions building at 3300 Caroline.

### Meet Billy Chen

Residents of **Dismas** and **Rosary** houses appreciate the counsel and company of Diaconate Candidate **Billy Chen** who visits regularly through St. Ignatius of Loyola Catholic Church in Spring, Texas. “My time with the residents has helped me grow spiritually,” he said, “and I hope I have been able to do that for them.” That, he has. Billy anticipates ordination into the Diaconate in January, 2019.



### DONATE

Kindly visit our website:

**[www.mhihouston.org](http://www.mhihouston.org)**

*(same site, new web address)*

Or use the enclosed envelope.

Please write your check to:

**Magnificat Houses, Inc.**

### VOLUNTEER

Contact Larry Cronin  
Director of Volunteers

[lcronin@mhihouston.org](mailto:lcronin@mhihouston.org)

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### THRIFT STORES:

***Shop or Donate***

The Mustard Seed, 1410 Elgin  
Anawim Thrift Shop, 2102 Common

**We pick up estates: 713-524-7333**



### ***Las Posadas Joyfully Reenacted Throughout MHI Community***

The Missionary Sisters of the Eucharist—no strangers to Santa Claus hats—make it their business to keep spirit and tradition alive at Magnificat. These Guatemalan natives introduced *Las Posadas*—a 400-year old tradition—to us eight years ago, now our residents look forward to it launching the Christmas Season. *Las Posadas* begins with a procession from the street to each of our residences, reenacting Mary and Joseph’s search for lodging in Bethlehem. “Joseph” raps on each door three times, requesting entry, and is finally welcomed in for food, ceremony and song. This symbolizes the opening of our hearts to the love of Christ by welcoming the stranger, the sojourner—so central to Magnificat’s core values.



***Posada Celebrations at (from top) Susanna, Myriam’s Hostel and Scanlan House. Above, Board Chairman Rafael Garcia enjoys the ceremony in good company.***



**(Right) Silk Screening Technique was added to the Moran Center’s arts program, thanks to super-volunteer Jane Hayman. Here, St. Joseph Clubhouse members work together toward a self-sustaining t-shirt enterprise.**