



The Magnifier

...news from Magnificat Houses

Magnificat Houses, Inc. (MHI)

Spring, 2019

MHI Resident Addresses HCC Homelessness Conference

It's **Gina Monti's** fifth year at Magnificat and her first as a Dean's List student at our neighbor **Houston Community College Central**, where she gathers credits toward a business degree and a social services career. Gina was honored to speak as an HCC student who has experienced homelessness and as an MHI resident-volunteer. At the symposium, *The Politics of Homelessness and HCC Students: Awareness, Solutions, Resources*, she joined HCC students, professors, homeless advocates, and film student Justice Butler, who showed her powerful documentary *Invisible*.



"Homeless students are forced to choose between tuition, transportation and lunch. This overlooked population may not be aware of the resources available—such food support and emergency shelter—and how we can help ourselves and others." Gina suggested students can help others by volunteering at MHI and St. Joseph Clubhouse.

Department of Answered Prayers

Maranatha House 'Adopted'

Annette Brown found us at the Cathedral celebration of our 50th Anniversary, and thought her prior



PAUL & ANNETTE DUPELCHAIN
with grandson Julian.

17 years with Shell Oil management might prove useful to MHI—but she had to pray about it first. When her prayers were answered, so were ours for her people skills and professional outreach and training experience will be invaluable. Working with our Adopt-A-House program outreach, Annette was moved to interest her attorney husband, **Paul Duplechain**, in adopting **Maranatha House**, which houses up to 11 men. Annette's compassion for the homeless grew from her family's long struggle to help her beloved older brother **Joe** manage his adult onset schizophrenia, which lead to homelessness and his untimely death. Annette dedicates her work here to Joe's memory.



Five of our homes are still available for "adoption," which means assisting with operating costs for one year. If you can help, kindly contact Executive Director John Boyles at jboyles@mhihouston.org.



RESIDENT GINA MONTI addresses HCC students, educators and homelessness advocates to a capacity audience in February.



In the Q&A, several homeless students rose to ask Gina questions about her personal journey and steps they might take. Gina elects to stay in service at **Magnificat**, where she is especially dedicated to helping women who chronically live on the streets find emergency housing through **Myriam's Hostel** and to serving 250 to 300 of Houston's hungry at our **Loaves & Fishes** soup kitchen, both in downtown Houston.

Our New Mission Statement

Rose Mary Badami's 70-word original mission statement —so eloquently compassionate— has surrendered to modernity. The new statement of purpose must fit on tiny screens and in grant application boxes. We still do all our founder prescribed, and just as passionately. Going forward, we'll be using these 19 words:

Magnificat Houses, Inc.

A welcoming community where those needing housing, food and mental health programs can grow in stability, productivity and independence.

Rice Capstone MBA Teams Seed MHI Leadership with Possibility

Two MBA teams offered MHI *gratis* a stimulating range of creative solutions to challenges non-profits face, tailored to our unique structure, location and situation after months of study, interviews and on-campus visits. After their April 27 presentations, the teams gifted MHI with comprehensive business plans of a wide range of possibilities—a \$100k value to corporations.

Executive Director John Boyles sought the opportunity with Rice last fall. “It’s easy for a mature organization to fall into routines that might not fully reflect

all they have become capable of in current times,” he said. A Board retreat is scheduled to discuss the findings.

Professor David VanHorn of the Jones School of Business assembled and supervised the teams. He has our profound thanks!



TOP: Brent Danielson, Matt Wishall, Damon Webster and Marcos Martinez



RIGHT: Presenters Brian Holthouse, John Jabbra, Landon Jones and Alexandra Orzeck

SUCCESS STORY

Monica (and Grace) Cross MHI’s Bridge to Independence

“MHI provides a bridge back to the outside world and gives our residents the courage to cross it.” Rose Mary Badami

Monica Lynn Smith drove away from her home of nearly five years with a healthy dose of joy and wistfulness. She looked forward to getting a job to support herself—she already had a good lead, and some strong skills she had developed at Magnificat while training in our thrift store and as a driver. Fellow resident Alan helped her fix up a clunker so she could drive into her new life in Killeen, with her best buddy Grace at her side. Residents, now friends, cheered her off—they would miss the joyful-hearted Monica and her perpetual smile...and Grace had their hearts too.

Monica had been through it all: life in the homeless encampment at Airline and Loop 610, struggling day to day surrounded by drugs, dealers, prostitution, petty crime and physical danger. Influences led her to jail time and a desperate bid to look life straight in the eye. When paroled, Monica

moved in with a friend who was subsequently evicted. She would not let herself return to the streets, where options were few and panhandling impossible for her. She abhorred the idea of “something for nothing.” All she wanted was a chance to turn her life around. She knew she had begun by her recent mental diagnosis and discovery of the right psych meds which eliminated her

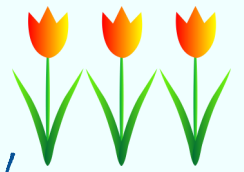
desire for self-medication. Still, as the eviction date neared, Monica could find no place to take her while on psych meds. She was at her all-time low when she contacted Magnificat and was told psych meds were not a problem and would be monitored here. That night she had a new home at Sherman House surrounded by women who exactly understood her past and her plight. The next morning she would have been back on the streets.

She is unstinting in her gratitude toward Magnificat Houses: “I don’t know what would have become of me if they had said no. Instead, I have taken a big step up in life. I will never forget all they’ve done for me.”

Another grace note: Monica will now be living near her 9 month old grandson. How Grace-the-dog will handle her new affection is anybody’s guess. But her name is a good hint.



Spring Happens!



Art Happens!



Advocacy Happens!

Clubhouses Members join the annual walk of the National Alliance on Mental Health.



Visitors Happen!

Our Missionary Sisters of the Eucharist hosted the Canonic Visit of their General Supervisor from Guatemala. (We assume they all got A-Pluses.)



Hearts take flight, each in their own way.



Holy Week Happens!



(Clockwise from top) HOLY THURSDAY: 12 Apostles await the washing of the feet; all are residents, some newcomers, shown in an evening procession. HOLY SATURDAY: Rev. Roman Newbold, CP, blesses a Clubhouse member; reception for participants; Ceremonial Lighting of the Pascal Candle. GOOD FRIDAY: Kissing of the Cross and attendants reading Lenten Liturgy.



STAFF UPDATES



Grant writer **MARY LAMPE** joined our consultants team in March, bringing with her 16 years of experience with non-profits in executive and grant development capacities.

COQUICE CLOUD, MBA, MSW, just added the Master of Social Work degree from UT/ Arlington to her professional accomplishments. "CC" volunteers in our residential services office helping with case management.



Remembering...

Jerry Frieling
Ted Obernasser

A generous gift was made by
Steve & Tricia Szymczak honoring
their lives and their courageous struggle
with cancer.

The Magnifier is published quarterly by Magnificat Houses, Inc. Casey Kelly, editor; Gina Monti, resident photographer and guest photographer Albert Eballe. Tribute donations are recognized quarterly. Contact ckelly@mhihouston.org.

Thank you for all you do to support our mission!

Special thanks to...



ALTAR'D STATE, the trendy clothing store with a conscience, gave us a generous donation and invited us to spend a day educating their Rice Village customers about our work. Our Mustard Seed mavens Michelle and Gayle did the honors. Thanks, Altar'd State!

and to...

CLUTCH CITY CONNECT connects often to our soup kitchen **Loaves & Fishes**—they've donated over 50 pounds of frozen meats, 225 pastas, 50 bars of Stroud Soaps and 50 hygiene care packages. The organization's ambitious mission: "To aid those in reaching self-sufficiency through connecting to every non-profit and shelter in our area."

Here Justin Sepulveda (R) delivers a Clutch City donation to L&F Manager Damarcus Johnson and MHI Director of Volunteers Larry Cronin (R).



Ways to Help

DONATE

Kindly visit our website:

www.mhihouston.org

(same site, new web address)

Or use the enclosed envelope.

Please write your check to:

VOLUNTEER

Contact Larry Cronin
Director of Volunteers

lcronin@mhihouston.org

THRIFT STORES:

Shop or Donate

The Mustard Seed

1410 Elgin @ LaBranch

Anawim Thrift Shop

2102 Common

We pick up estates & large items:

713-524-7333

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Rev. Richard Wahl, CSB, kneels to wash the feet of the Apostle Judas during Holy Week ceremonies in Magnificat Houses' Brennan Park.