



The Magnifier

...news from Magnificat Houses

Magnificat Houses, Inc. (MHI)

Summer 2019

MHI Single Room Housing Initiative Proves Next Step to Independence

With 80 percent of our SRO units filled, and new applications pending, our Single Room Housing initiative is proving the kind of long-term housing solution encouraged by national and local housing experts. Magnificat

embarked on the experiment in 2018, converting some group living spaces into 27 standard SROs, low cost rental units reserved for very low income populations. All units in **Rosary House** for men and **Dona Marie House** for women are occupied.

Department of Answered Prayers (#1)

Bethany House Adopted!

Our **Bethany House**, home to up to 16 residents, many enrolled in our Clubhouse mental health programs, has been underwritten for 2019-2020 under our annual **Adopt-A-House** program. Bethany's new parents, Steve and Tricia Szymczak, will generously cover home and living expenses, including food, utilities, maintenance upkeep and insurance in support of MHI's mission. With their gift, the Szymczaks honor their parents Jack & Dorothy O'Brien and Rudolph and Elizabeth Szymczak.

Department of Answered Prayers (#2)

ACTUALLY, WE HADN'T THOUGHT TO PRAY FOR THIS:



The total redo of our Business Offices!

Our 16 residential houses always had first dibs on updates. Our new Super Volunteer **Annette Brown** took one look and took charge, hiring her own painter and carpeting crew to repair, repaint, re-carpet, re-shelve, and even replant the common walkway. In her "spare time," Annette wrangled our impossible archival files into submission. Wow!

Our SRO's provide an ideal last step for incoming residents seeking to rebuild their lives and incomes to achieve full personal independence. **Residents can steadily progress** from temporary emergency beds into our residential program while they develop needed life and work skills—taking 90 days to a year, on average—then move to independence in a room of their own.



BEAUTIFUL SRO's DOWN ON THE FARM: These new SRO tenants share the artfully updated living room provided by the family of SRO Housing Manager Janice Arredondo—and join the entire Magnificat community.

Citywide, most SRO units are stand-alones, while Magnificat SRO's offer residents a community where they are encouraged to participate and grow, attend events and seed friendships, access our **St. Joseph Clubhouse** mental health programs and nearby social services, and abstain from drugs and alcohol. Other major advantages are our Midtown location, proximate to potential jobs, bargain shopping and to all forms of public transportation.

Special thanks to:

Ascend Performance Materials, LLC

With joy and purpose, Ascend volunteers regularly staff our **Loaves & Fishes** soup kitchen for a day, always much appreciated. Last month they invited us to corporate headquarters and presented a generous check.

At right, **Dina Astorga**, Ascend's enthusiastic volunteer coordinator, introduces MHI Executive Director **John Boyles** (center) to Ascend President & CEO **Phil McDivitt**, who announced the company's ongoing commitment to MHI's mission.



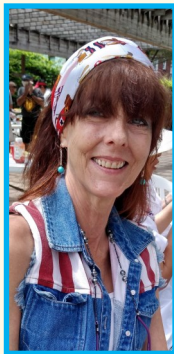
Two Ways Magnificat Measures Success

#1 by our residents' triumphs



Take MISS IDA (68) of Duchesne House, who first learned to read at age 42. Genre? She loves them all, mysteries, best sellers, non-fiction—you name it—and the St. Joseph Clubhouse scrambles to keep her supplied. Miss Ida is always ready to use her skills to help **The Magnifier** team put out the newsletter.

Take DENISE (57) of Morning Star House, a resident and Clubhouse member of 18 months who will be stepping out on her own September 1st. Crossing Magnificat's bridge back to independence is a key element of our mission, and we are proud of Denise for taking the step. Denise was assigned to training in **The Mustard Seed** resale store, where she was a delight to customers and co-workers. "While at Magnificat I have regained my confidence, my stability and my ability to live on my own. I will come back often to see the close friends I have made here—they will forever be my family and my community."



Take MICHAEL (59) master woodworker and Bethany House resident who, despite his personal challenge, has passed along fine craftsmanship to others seeking a trade. One major project—a 14' pirogue—taught patience and determination for completion took a year, while Michael's trainees also worked on rehabbing furniture for our houses or for sale in our thrift stores.



#2 by doing the impossible daily

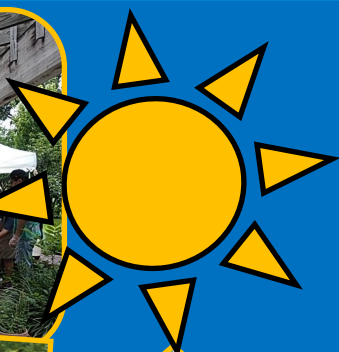
By 5:30 a.m. We're already on it!

5:30 at **Loaves & Fishes**, our soup kitchen manager begins prepping to feed 300 off the streets in the next seven hours...while upstairs, **Myriam's Hostel's** house leader rises to make coffee and breakfast for the nine homeless women Myriam's has sheltered overnight. **5:45** At **Dona Marie Farm**, the grounds are being tended, and soon the gardens, bees, goats and chickens. **6:00** Our **16 neighborhood houses come to life!** Alarms and possibly a little short-term grumbling, followed by coffee and breakfast and lighter spirits as the 148 residents plan their differing days. **7:00** Residents tackle their daily house-keeping chores. **7:30** Vans start rolling out from the outlying houses to bring residents to our Main Campus. Meanwhile, soup kitchen helpers begin dealing with refuse pickup, unloading deliveries. **8:00** Residents begin their respective days in job searches, vocational training, GED prep, on on-campus volunteering. **8:30** Our **Admissions Unit** opens its doors to process homeless persons seeking housing. **9:00** In our **mental health program**, our St. Joseph Clubhouse members share a convivial morning coffee before their **9:30** meeting to choose the daily work of running our mental health unit. Meanwhile, **soup kitchen volunteers** arrive and begin peeling, washing, chopping—whatever it takes to feed the coming multitude. **10:00** Our resale shops **The Mustard Seed** and **Anawim Thrift** open their doors with resident help, begin pricing, sorting donations. By **10:15** Our **Clubhouse members** are busy learning horticulture in our organic garden, or learning chef skills while preparing members' lunch, or working on the newsletter or job placement. **10:30** **Woodshop workers** are deep into refurbishing donated furniture for resale or for use in the houses...while our **box truck** calls at Costco for donations...and a **van driver** delivers an elderly resident to a medical appointment. **11:00** Our **soup kitchen** lunch line opens and the manager greets a many regular diners by name. The long line moves like clockwork, and most have their plates within 45 minutes ... when clean-up begins. **12:00** The Clubhouse members sit down to a member-cooked-and-served hot meal.

And it's only noon!

Just six hours left in our 16-hour day to:
find emergency housing for the 14 homeless who came to our door, to feed and bed down our 148 residents, pay our bills and... prep to do it all again tomorrow.

We succeed because your donations make all our works possible. Thank you!



Our annual 4th of July picnic delights residents and Clubhouse members while St. Maximillian Kolbe volunteers serve (and hopefully, their all-night cooks nap in). Thank you for sponsoring!



Over the long, hot summer...
our stalwart volunteers never missed a beat



Volunteer Susan Wolff brought her grandkids to The Mustard Seed for a day of dusting. From left, Sophia Dominguez and Evie and Bella Vinson finish polishing the crystal stemware for sale.



For three years, the KAMAL GOODMAN FOUNDATION has brought volunteer barbers to groom those who cannot afford haircuts. Inset: Kamal himself (R) with soup kitchen manager D.J. Loaves & Fishes hosts in our courtyard.



Ivy Knight, a soup kitchen volunteer since childhood, makes a video about MHI's Adopt-A-House Program, here interviewing Gayle, house leader of Morning Star. Ivy's project qualifies her for the Girl Scouts of America Gold Award. Her volunteer cinematographer is Anthony Lopez.

STAFF UPDATES

GREG LUEB



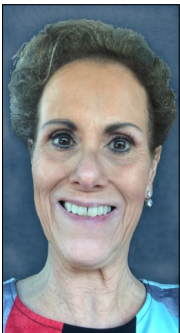
Food Services Manager **Greg Lueb** was recruited to take MHI's organization-wide supply and delivery systems to the next level. Greg has an accounting and financial background, significant food drive experience and two-years' weekly volunteer service at Loaves & Fishes through St. Maximillian Kolbe Parish, where he is active in community outreach and longtime Scout Master to BSA Troop #277.

BUZZ LOEFFLER

Our new driver **Christian "Buzz" Loeffler** comes to us directly from Bluebell Ice Cream, where he retired from his route after 34 years—but he quickly escaped retirement to put his long experience behind the wheel of our box truck, which regularly picks up donations for our soup kitchen, houses and thrift stores.



CHERYL GREB, RN



After 45 years as a practicing RN, **Nurse Cheryl** joins us on Fridays as volunteer case supervisor. Her distinguished career has covered hospital nursing, certified case management (CCM), healthcare quality management (CPHQ); she holds her professional certification in healthcare (HACP) and attended college for her BSHI. Nurse Cheryl loves sharing her knowledge of case management and quality management. Not to mention...she has run 29 half and full marathons throughout the USA States and Canada. In October, she will be a certified Pilates instructor.

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

Thank you for all you do to support our mission!

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:
Magnificat Houses, Inc.

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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LOUIE, LOUIE ... This duo never fails to jam together to the popular song. At our Loaves & Fishes soup kitchen, Louie (Left) is a frequent volunteer and Louie (Right) a frequent luncheon guest.