



# The Magnifier

...news from Magnificat Houses

Magnificat Houses, Inc. (MHI)

Fall 2021

## Two Super Volunteers Urge All to 'Save the Date'

**Shannon Ackal (R)** and **JoAnna Bruce**, devoted volunteers at St. Joseph Clubhouse, have raised their hands even



higher, offering to co-chair a fund-raising event to support all Magnificat's programs. Their playful theme, **Fat Thursday Fête** is subtitled, "Why should Louisiana have all the fun?"

They invite your attendance as well as your help with

the event and silent auction. They are seeking "great auction items, such as trips, experiences, sports tickets, gift cards, art, you name it!" To help, contact [shannonackal@yahoo.com](mailto:shannonackal@yahoo.com) or [jbruce2007@gmail.com](mailto:jbruce2007@gmail.com).

The two shared their experiences about

how they came to be volunteers at St. Joseph Clubhouse.

**Shannon's Story:** I heard John Boyles speak at a Mass one Sunday, honoring MHI's founder Rose Mary Badami. I was immediately in awe of Rose Mary's unwavering commitment to practicing The Corporal Works of Mercy and her belief

that everyone deserves a second chance, no questions asked. With a background in psychology, I was particularly

drawn to the mission of the St. Joseph Clubhouse, where people with mental illness are treated with mutual respect and have the ability to live and work well, in community with one another.

**JoAnna's Story:** "I would drive by homeless people in Houston and felt compelled to take action. I have a brother

**February  
10th  
6-9 p.m.**



with paranoid schizophrenia, who was homeless for a while, so I know the struggles of the family firsthand. I enjoy volunteering at St. Joseph Clubhouse and connecting with the members. These people need human connection, services, and a second chance to turn their lives around. I'm proud to co-chair this party...

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## Volunteers Lend Us Their Weekend Superpowers



Two of our older properties were in need of deep spiffing—and two organizations sent their troops in to fix paint, repair, and replace what was needed most.

Here, Executive Director John Boyles greets a repair blitz team from **Strake Jesuit Class of 1975** ready to take on our Scanlan House on Stuart Street.

A block away, the **St. John Vianney Catholic Church** team was finishing up detail work on six new SRO apartments. *See more on Page 2.*

### HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

**VISIT MHI'S HEROIC SIZE CHRISTMAS TREE** in the great hall of the Houston Museum of Natural Science, featuring community made ornaments depicting our mission. Big thanks to the Museum for awarding us this coveted honor. Our tree will be on display through January 3, 2022.

**ADVENT & POSADA TRADITIONS** are in progress throughout the community, with our Sisters leading house-to-house processions, lighting the Advent wreath, dining and caroling with our residents and guests.

## Happening in Our Ministries

### At Loaves & Fishes...

We served **391 Thanksgiving Day** meals with three churches and two businesses teaming up to round out the traditional menu. All are grateful to **New Hope Church** for the turkey and green bean entrées; to **Sugarland Baptist Church** for stuffing, gravy and cranberry sauce; to **St. Theresa's Catholic Church** and **Russell Scott** for sweet potatoes; and to **Costco** and **Three Brothers Bakery** for pies and bread. Thanks for this monumental effort.



### At St. Joseph Clubhouse...



The Clubhouse is now fully open to our membership, providing productive and useful programs to those with mental health diagnoses—and welcoming all these Houstonians, not just our residents, to join in our work, advocacy and play. We are always open to building new friendships!

**LEFT: Trish and Loretta costume-up for the Halloween party.**



**RIGHT: Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings brings together the whole family—Members, Staff, and Monsignor Golasinski to offer blessings.**

### In Our Neighborhood Houses...

In the last 90 days, Magnificat has placed 30 homeless or displaced men and women in our existing emergency housing. This month, houses we repaired and upgraded during the pandemic are back online, ready to fill with 18 new residents and guests!

Newcomers are welcomed into the community by resident peer **House Leaders**, who meet monthly to share solutions, review policies and apprise themselves of upcoming events and opportunities to pass along to their peers at home.



**Sr. Mary Jude lays out the ceremonies and events of the holiday season—after which Janice Arredondo, Director of Housing, honored the Leaders with a special Cajun feast (thus avoiding two turkey feasts in a row).**



### (Housing Volunteers, Continued from Page 1)



**Deacon Dwight Coles**, a six-year volunteer at **Emmaus House**, happily helped Board Member **Rafael Garcia** organize the repairs and general sprucing up of two of our buildings (See Page 1). Deacon Coles, who serves at **St. Theresa Parish**, also helped coordinate repairs with **St. John Vianney Catholic Church**, which has a long and varied history of service to our programs and guests.

**(FAR LEFT) Clay Fryer and John York** spent days “alone together” painting the six SRO apartments of **Holy Family Apartments**, while **(CENTER) The Strake alumni** took on the Scanlan House, tackling its second floor en masse.



# In Thanksgiving

...for the continuing vision of our Founder, who proved the possibility of sustaining a loving multi-cultural community where all can grow toward their best selves

...for our residents and guests who give back to the community in immeasurable ways

...for the House Leaders, peers who offer nurturing orientation and structure to incoming guests and residents

...for the privilege of feeding the hungry, housing the homeless

...for the exhilarating gift of the sisters, priests, and deacons who people our campus and remind us to strive for our personal best

...for the campus volunteers who honor us by sharing our mission, and integrate the Houston community into ours

...for the businesses who help us without fanfare or publicity, but just because it's the right thing to do

...for the churches of all denominations throughout Greater Houston who find creative ways to help: with community cookouts and holiday festivities and clothing drives and movie nights, and more

...and the foundations which, indeed, provide a foundation for our works by supporting major programs and capital projects.

...and, of course, to the Individual Donor...our very heartbeat, who makes every single day possible.



*As founder Rose Mary Badami turned 98 in November, we gathered at her feet to sing her favorite hymn, "Whatsoever You Do to the Least of My People, That You Do Unto Me" — the philosophy that led her found Magnificat House in 1968. Rose Mary has been moved to hospice care at St. Dominic Village.*

## Just a few of the many who helped out this season...



*Every house was furnished with a Thanksgiving feast (plus leftovers!) by Prince of Peace Catholic Church.*



*Barnhart Crane & Rigging made a generous donation to our general fund.*



*Chick-Fil-A dropped off enough fried chicken to feed our hungry flock.*



*"Anawim's Angels" regularly descend on Anawim Thrift Shop to run the whole show.*

## Remembering

### Marci Jill Tidwell Armstrong 1972-2021

Our hearts go out to Adger Armstrong, who met and married Marci Tidwell when both



were residents and volunteers at Magnificat Houses, helping newcomers overcome adversity. Adger proposed to

Marci at our Christmas Dinner (see photo) before their 2014 wedding.

Marci, vivacious and popular with her MHI family, moved on to new ambitions: she would have graduated as a phlebotomist just two days before her sudden and unexpected death from asthma.

(Continued from Page 1)

...to create awareness and fundraising for Magnificat, which acts on behalf of those society neglects," JoAnna said.



Shannon added, "I volunteer with the purpose of serving the less-fortunate, the oppressed, those on the fringe of society, and I try hard to form meaningful connections with these individuals. However, each and every time I leave, I wonder if in fact I'm the one who is benefitting most from these relationships? MHI residents and members keep a smile on their faces when most of us would crumble, maintain a steadfast faith, when most of us would doubt, and have hope and courage despite everyone who tells them they shouldn't. We all have something to learn from them."



## Help Us Meet the Challenge!

The Mabee Foundation has generously offered MHI a challenge grant toward the necessary renovation of three Lourdes apartments, damaged during recent storms and in dire need of refurbishment after decades of continuous occupancy.

**The Challenge:** MHI must raise \$16,162 to receive the Mabee challenge grant of \$15,000. Every contribution, no matter what size, does double duty toward making more safe, low-income MHI housing available to Houston's unsheltered.

### To Help Us Help Others:

Kindly donate through our website at [www.mhihouston.org/donate](http://www.mhihouston.org/donate). In the [Add Special Instructions](#) box at the top, add "Mabee grant" to earmark your gift. **To donate by check, please send to Magnificat Houses, Inc., P.O. Box 8486, Houston, TX 77288, adding notation: "Mabee grant."** If you wish to contact someone about your gift, please email: [MLampe@mhihouston.org](mailto:MLampe@mhihouston.org).

The Mabee Foundation of Midland, Texas, has supported nonprofits in six states since 1948 through new construction and building renovation grants. We are deeply grateful for their support.



### David Raines 1964-2021

A former resident and enthusiastic volunteer, David lent an upbeat air to whatever he pursued. A missionary in his youth, he brought many skills to his residency here: woodworking, photography, gardening, singing, guitar, and the occasional radio controlled airplane experiment. And he shared his gifts and his kind nature freely.

*An Anonymous Gift was made to MHI in the name of volunteer*

**GINA MONTI**

*To honor the life of her beloved*

**"Aunt Lynda" Tipton Foret  
1943 - 2021**

*Gina was her loving caregiver for two years. All here at Magnificat know the joy of Gina's loving care.*

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

*Thank you for your loving support of our mission!*



**OUR LIGHTS BURN BRIGHTLY** for those who come to us in need, in this sacred season...or in any season.