



# The Magnifier

...news from Magnificat Houses

Magnificat Houses, Inc. (MHI)

Winter 2022

## Springing Forward...

### A Message from Executive Director John Boyles

As the country begins to see the two-year Covid Crisis in the rear view mirror, hope is breaking out all over. At Magnificat Houses, it's manifested in every area of our mission. And though the pandemic was an ill wind, it brought MHI opportunity for forward-thinking changes.



The attrition experienced in some of our houses, strictly for the health and safety of our guests, offered us badly needed down-time to make critical capital repairs on houses and apartments—some of

which had been in continuous group occupancy for decades. We simply couldn't turn away any man or woman who needed immediate shelter. **Each morning 10-14 were gathered on our doorstep**, which Covid rendered an unsafe situation. This caused a repurposing of our campus thrift store to allow social distancing during the admissions process—and provided a healthy setting for inoculations and house leader meetings and programs, which will be useful far into the future.

We, too, feel restored as we near opening up our restored **Holy Family Apartments**—by the grace of volunteer carpenters and handymen sent to us by churches and organizations (pictured in previous issues). We are proud to offer longer term housing for those who have experienced chronic homelessness.

With City, County and Tax Credit partnerships, we continue to pursue funding for greatly expanded PSH housing to occupy our Caroline lot. As we know, the wheels of government grind slowly. This gives me, especially, the opportunity to practice patience!

But, always, hope first.

## MHI INSTALLS BOARD FOR 2022: Welcomes New Officers, Members



**FAT THURSDAY FÊTE** on February 10 marked an auspicious first assembly for the incoming **2022 MHI Board of Directors**. Now the serious works begins! (\*indicates new member).

**Pictured from left are Kimberly Dennison, CPA (Vice-Chairman), Dr. Tony Kerrigan, Bobby Knight, Michael Ackal III, Abigail Gunderson (Secretary), Clay Jeansonne\*, Suzanne Young (Chairman), Wendy Clark, Jermaine Davis, JoAnna Bruce\*, and Bart McAndrews (Treasurer).** Also remaining on the Board: **Dr. Scott Hickey** and **Grant Kennedy** (not pictured).

The Board and **John Boyles** gave thanks to retiring Board Members **Rafael Garcia** and **Ed Cordes**.

## No matter what, Magnificat keeps the home fires burning.





# Happening in Our Ministries...

## At St. Joseph Clubhouse



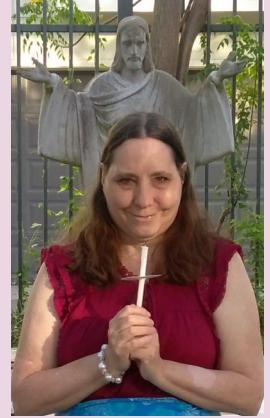
Clubhouse Director **Kevin Campbell** enjoys the season with effervescent member **Donnie** and friends.

No event goes uncelebrated at St. Joseph! Here, everyone is welcomed, loved and valued for who they are, as they are.



*An Anonymous Donor has honored Kevin Campbell's dedicated service with a generous donation. Thank you!*

## JUDY SCHEID



**1962-2021**

**Our Beloved Clubhouse Member**  
"Miss Judy" came to us in November 2017 and, without exception, had open arms for all she encountered. She worked and played with us, shared her joys and sorrows, and made us all stronger through her unwavering faith.

(Portrait by Gina Monti)



## In Our Housing

**BECOMING A SWAN....**Our Bethany House, though capacious and advantageously located in the heart of Montrose, was much in need of a makeover. Our in-house team with **New Hope Church** volunteers spruced up exteriors and added a new rear staircase. Your donations to our general fund made this "dignity uplift" possible. To Bethany residents, she is indeed a swan.



## At Loaves & Fishes

Meals served to street populations were up 23% in 2021 over 2020, despite the February ice storm causing temporary closure. Even "closed," a few brave volunteers rustled up modest sustenance for those not sheltered in Reliant Stadium. As the pandemic seems to wane, the numbers gathered in our food lines remain higher than pre-pandemic counts, with a daily average of 345 meals served. We have noticed a marked increase in families joining our line to supplement their meager incomes.



# *(We couldn't let Louisiana have all the fun)*

**Fat Thursday Fête** attendees were greeted by Louisiana Grand Champion Fiddler **John Jeansonne** and his student **Paul Eakin** (making his public debut)



Louisiana's modern Impressionist **Eddie Mormon** (R) enjoyed the buzz over his auctioned artworks



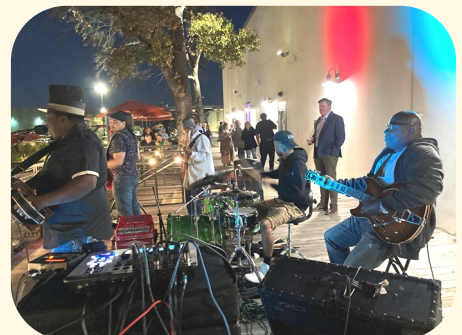
**Kudos!** to event Co-Chairs **Shannon Ackal** and **JoAnna Bruce**, sharing company with Sr. **Agnes Maria** and Sr. **Mary Jude**



The welcome sign's **Merci Beaucoup!** thanks the event sponsors. They made all the magic possible



Board Chairman **Suzanne Young** (in purple) gathers her volunteer squad "Anawim Angels" at **City Orchard's** vast courtyard





# When one sets out to feed the multitudes, the miracles never stop.

But it's the **everyday miracle workers**—the churches, organizations, companies and individuals—who make Magnificat's work possible. For example...

**Second Servings** has worked miracles for us since 2017, delivering a total of **456,508** pounds of donated food to our houses and our soup kitchen, **Loaves & Fishes**—all surplus food rescued daily from Houston restaurants, events and parties. This half-million pounds would have gone to waste but for their altruism, energy and generosity. Second Servings now serves some



90 non-profits more than a **million pounds** of rescued foods annually. Founder is Barbara Bronstein. Their website is most inspiring: [secondservingshouston.org](http://secondservingshouston.org)



**Food Services Manager Greg Lueb welcomes the Second Services van, today driven by Dianna Cousins, a rescue driver since 2017.**



**The Better Business Bureau** recognizes MHI's consistently low overhead—under 10%— which means more donor dollars go to our services to the poor and mentally ill.

MHI merits the **GuideStar Gold Seal of Transparency**, which allows nonprofit donors and funders to make educated decisions.



**The Magnifier** is published quarterly by Magnificat Houses, Inc. Casey Kelly, editor; Gina Monti, communications assistant. Tribute donations are recognized quarterly. Submit photos and news items to [ckelly@mhihouston.org](mailto:ckelly@mhihouston.org). We respect the privacy of those in our care; persons pictured have offered their consent.

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

## 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, address **Magnificat Houses, Inc.**, P.O. Box 8486, Houston, TX 77288, notation: Mabee Grant. If you wish to speak with 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.

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



**These dedicated volunteers at St. Joseph House took on the monumental task of co-chairing a fundraising party—as first timers. We salute their daring and marvel at the successful outcome.**

**MHI is grateful that money raised will help underwrite residential housing repairs.**