



# The Magnifier

...news from Magnificat Houses

Magnificat Houses, Inc. (MHI)

Winter 2023

## MHI Groundbreaking February 1

### RoseMary's Place to Occupy 'Sacred Grounds'

Record rainfall dampened the day—but not the spirits—at the groundbreaking for RoseMary's Place. Now construction has begun on our grounds pledged to serve Harris County's chronically unsheltered, in partnership with Coalition for the Homeless.

#### Remarks of Victor Hay

Thanks to all who made this auspicious occasion possible, the culmination of three years of creative planning, funding and partnership-forging across the many levels of local, state and federal government, foundations, and my predecessor at MHI, John Boyles. We are grateful and want you all to enjoy knowing:

RoseMary's Place will stand on hallowed grounds—land made sacred by the thousands who have passed through Magnificat's doors, on this block alone, seeking refuge from the

streets. Made sacred by those workers and volunteers who came here daily to offer solace and comfort, along with a bed, clothing and meals, to every petitioner—regardless of who they were or what they'd done. Our focus was on what they could be.

Right now, right here, we're surrounded by what *is*, and what *was*, and what *will be*. What *will be* is RoseMary's Place, named in honor of our 99-year-old founder, Rose Mary Badami, who in 1968 set out "to get every homeless Houstonian off the streets as possible in my lifetime."

On a social worker's salary, Rose Mary rented a modest house

then drove around town sighting homeless women. Boldly, she would approach and ask, "Can I take you home?" They'd admit they didn't have one. "You do now! Get in the car!" Many women did, and the rest is history. Rose

Mary solicited the means to purchase down-at-the-heels houses in "iffy" areas, got volunteers to spiff them up, and other volunteers to teach her new guests basic life skills and strategies for becoming a supportive family.

That's what we are today, and our joy is to welcome the 149 newcomers into our community of supportive families, to our empowering programs, to our gatherings and celebrations, where friendships can be formed, and acceptance is inevitable.

Need I say: Houston Midtown is no longer "iffy"—it's a vibrant, sought-after area with essential services, great transportation, clearly a dignified place to call home.

What was here before—our intake offices, residences, convent and chapel—melded into a block of hallowed grounds, deserving reverence for the many thousands it welcomed and served, and those to come. Hallowed grounds...pledged to serve the grand vision shared by our NHPF partners.

Let's do this!



**TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE** for our inevitably-fun fundraiser co-chaired by JoAnna Bruce and Shannon Ackal, instigators of the Cajun MHI funfest. They welcome you to St. Arnold Brewery for a lookback at Sixties Era shenanigans!

**APRIL 20, 2023**

<https://one.bidpal.net/mhihouston/ticketing>





# As we celebrate RoseMary's Place...



we remember with reverence our five lost places...



From left: **Opus Maria Intake Center** on Caroline where since 1990 many thousands came seeking refuge and hope; **Carriage House**, for men abandoned because they had AIDS; the venerable **Maranatha House**, opened 1977 and for decades serving our prison ministry; **Visitation Convent**, where several orders of sisters lived, and lived to serve, next to our **Visitation Chapel**, open to all who sought solace

...and recognize our **leadership** and **staff** for their persistence over the five-year long haul...and our **boards** current and past...and most of all our inspiration:



**Hey, Jude** and Everyone Else!

**Come Together** for MHI's annual FUNdraising party, **Here Comes the Sun**, 'cause **We Get By with a Little Help from Our Friends**. And though **Money Can't Buy You Love**, it can buy amazing auction items while you **Twist & Shout!** Get your **Ticket to Ride** at <https://one.bidpal.net/mhihouston/ticketing>

**Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup> • 6–9 pm**

St. Arnold Brewery Beer Hall  
2000 Lyons Ave • Houston, TX



**Rose Mary  
Badami**

**MHI Founder, 1968**



# In Our Ministries...

## Loaves & Fishes

**2022 TOTAL SOUP KITCHEN MEALS SERVED: 110,397**  
(an additional **47,608** meals were served in our residences)

Happily, we have returned to all-indoor meal service, and ceased the to-go lunches mandated by healthy Covid practices. It's heartening to see new friends made and old friendships rekindled in the refurbished dining room, in continuous service since 1976.

Volunteers always needed. Contact: Shun Johnson, [sjohnson@mhihouston.org](mailto:sjohnson@mhihouston.org)



*Your generosity makes this daily event possible.*

## Housing

National data show unsheltered homeless in the U.S. has increased 30% since 2015. **The number of homeless encampments have reached levels not seen in almost a century—Houston included.** Magnificat has responded by rethinking our properties to provide maximum housing. Our emergency and temporary programs run from 1-90 days, providing stabilization while guests work toward creating an independent future.

Director of Housing Cynthia Rogers celebrates all incremental gains. "What seems small can be the vital step *this* individual needs to move on." For Ronald B., it was granting extra time for his application to truck driver's school to clear—it did, and he's off and running. He came back to offer thanks and hope to new applicants.



## St. Joseph Clubhouse

Our Members share the joys and sorrows of everyday life, and form lasting friendships through our mental wellness programs. Special road trips happen too—like New Year's Day at NRG Stadium, where members mingled with staff and residents in prime seats near the 50 yard line, donated by ABB, a leader in automation and electrification.



**The Texans lost, but WE WON!**

## *Farewell to 10-year Volunteer*



### *Joan Riley*

GED Candidates eagerly studied with 'Miss Joanie' until gaining their high school certificates. She passed away in January 2023

"Members light up when they hear the name, **Joan Riley**. She brought light and love into the darkness of those who struggled with serious mental illness. An amazing friend and educator for so many at Magnificat Houses, she improved the lives of all she encountered. We thank God for Joan Riley!" ~ Gina Monti

"It is an honor to have served with her. She was such a blessing to see with the members. The precious way she had with them was a marvel. God bless you with eternity, in Jesus' love and presence. I love you, we love you, Ms. Joan. ~ Nicole Escalante Mosqueda

# STAFF NOTES



## SHUN JOHNSON

*Volunteer Coordinator*

Shun (*pronounced Shawn*) gained proficiency in outreach and placement early on, serving as assistant director of Louisiana's Metropolitan Battered Women's Program.

In Houston, after years as a top real estate salesperson for Coldwell Banker, she sought out a nonprofit where she could make a difference again.



## CYNTHIA ROGERS

*Director of Housing & Residential Services*

Cynthia was promoted from Housing Manager. She has deep

experience with street populations and the mentally ill, having recently served the **Salvation Army** supervising case management in the diversion program, and for 11 years prior worked for the Houston Housing Authority.

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**DONATE ANYTIME:**

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

## Volunteers Offer 'Day of Service'



Young women representing all local colleges and universities tackled the racks at our Anawim Thrift Store for the **Alpha Kappa Alpha Multichapter MLK Day of Service...**



...while **U of H Downtown** fraternity **Omega Delta Phi** tackled some serious rearranging

BELOW: **Loaves & Fishes** got a needed volunteer boost from **New Hope Church (L)** and **Collier Real Estate**



*Many thanks to you all!*



Magnificat's ongoing, responsible stewardship means you can give with trust and confidence. Our low overhead, under 10%, assures 90% of donations go directly to serve the poor. For the second year in a row, the **Better Business Bureau Awards for Excellence** panel recognized MHI as a **Winner of Distinction**. MHI also earned the highest possible **Four-Star** rating from **Charity Navigator** (citing MHI's commitment to *good governance, financial health and accountability*); and the **2022 Platinum Seal of Transparency** awarded by **Candid** (formerly **GuideStar** and the **Foundation Directory**).

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

**Hey, we gotcha covered for April 20th (See Page 2)**



- ◆ **Come 'Twist and Shout' with the Fab 5**
- ◆ **Take Photo Booth pix - Sixties props!**
- ◆ **Bid in Silent Auction on fun, eclectic and luxurious stuff**
- ◆ **Enjoy eats & drinks in a great beer hall**
- ◆ **Feel good now by sponsoring or donating valuable auction items**