



# The Magnifier

...news from Magnificat Houses

Magnificat Houses, Inc. (MHI)

Summer 2023

## Restorations Completed!

## Holy Family Apartments Reopen to Welcome First SRO Tenants



On June 1, **John Escobedo** proudly unlocked the door to his new **Holy Family** apartment and stepped into the beautifully restored, significantly upgraded flat he'll call home. His reaction, "It's amazing."

**With donor and volunteer help, MHI** has been upgrading these six on-campus apartments over several months, rewiring, taking care of weather damage, adding all new appliances and bathroom facilities, buffing up the floors, resurfacing walls and ceilings and painting the exterior.

"Holy Family has been in continuous use since its acquisition in 1988—that's a lot of wear and tear," said **Victor Hay**, executive director. "We're restoring our properties now for the long haul, assuring they meet our standard for *dignified* housing."

John came to us through our new partnership with **Harmony House**, a Houston nonprofit seeking low barrier housing options for homeless working men. The organization is sponsoring five of the restored Holy Family units. Welcome to campus, John!

### Want to help with restorations?

Restorations take *money* and *man-power* and we are grateful to those who can offer us either, or both!

If you can help us open more spaces to the homeless, please contact our Director of Development :

Shun Johnson  
sjohnson@mhihouston.org  
713-530-2647



*Ofc. Theragood receives a Certificate of Congressional Recognition and a City of Houston Proclamation for his goods works... while along Austin Street various agencies and non-profits staff outreach tents.*



## MHI Hosts 'Homeless Street Outreach Festival'

**St. Joseph House** was action central on June 3 as two dozen homeless resource organizations, local dignitaries and citywide visitors converged on Austin Street to offer or receive homelessness services, share ideas and resources, and honor the organizer of this first Homeless Street Outreach Festival.

Organizer **Officer Sheldon Theragood**, a member of **HPD's Homeless Outreach Team (HOT)**, wanted to "connect his homeless friends with resources and organizations." All along Austin, amidst the food trucks and entertainment, guests received needed counseling, haircuts, inoculations and rapid testing, while learning about City and MHI resources.

Considering Ofc. Theragood's significant contributions to Houston's neediest, Mayor Sylvester Turner proclaimed his birthday, June 3, as **Sheldon Theragood Day**. The officer's nonprofit **TheraGood Deeds**, which puts youth on a path to community service, has also brought good will and resources to our guests at **Loaves & Fishes**.



# In Our Ministries...

## Loaves & Fishes

### SIX-MONTH MEALS SERVED TALLY

January-June 2023 **53,808**

An additional **29,558** meals were served in our residences



**SPORTS LEGEND CHARLES OAKLEY** cooked 600 of these meals himself. For 19 years an NBA superstar (Chicago Bulls, NY Nicks and Toronto Raptors, Houston Rockets), Oakley now devotes his energies to his Oak Out Hunger program, a traveling soup kitchen. Many L&F lunch guests recognized “The Oak” fondly, and appreciated his world class burgers.

## Housing

### SIX MONTH ADMISSIONS TALLY

**534** granted emergency shelter for up to 14 days

**61** enrolled in 90-day or longer

**29** living in SRO apartments



‘**NEW GUESTS EAT FIRST**’ is among the house rules at **Scanlan House**, where incoming guests become instant family as they dine together, share household tasks and help each other build new lives.

## St. Joseph Clubhouse

**Clubhouse Members** participated in the *Spring United Day of Hope* sponsored by **NAMIWalks Greater Houston** to raise awareness of the citywide resources available to those having a mental health diagnosis. The National Alliance on Mental Illness theme was *Mental Health for ALL*.

**Mental Health America** estimates that 46% of Americans will meet the criteria for a mental health condition sometime in their lifetimes.



## MHI Billboards Light Up!

Throughout the month of July, two full size LED billboards brought our mission to the attention of thousands of passing drivers and passengers along busy corridors between Houston and the Gulf. The eye-catching signs were donated by SignAd.

# HOMELESS?

*Don't give up!*

## 713-529-4231

Magnificat Houses...Since 1968





## We're watching RoseMary's Place become a reality...



*On this site, 149 chronically unsheltered will find a home and community with Magnificat in 2024. Though now only elevator shafts are apparent above ground, below the vast network of plumbing and electrical systems are in place. Expect upward expansion soon!*

## ...and keeping our community vibrant



**POWER VOLUNTEERS:** The Eaton Corporation, a power management firm, sent 60 volunteers to hone the grounds of St. Joseph Clubhouse.



*MILL CREEK RESIDENTIAL CARES donated materials and manpower to restore the full exterior of our 15-bed Susanna House.*



**BIRTHDAY GIRL:** Miss Amy celebrates her birthday in the St. Joseph House kitchen prepping for other July birthday celebrants.

## Street Festival Moments...



*(L) FATHER HONEST MUNISHI of the Spiritan Order performs the Ritual Washing of the Feet and says Mass during Holy Week.*



CAFÉ CATHOLICA connected hundreds of young Catholic men and women with non-profit organizations which could use their volunteer service and commitment. Dozens signed up for Magnificat tours and information.





# STAFF NOTES



## BRIAN BLEVENS

*Chef, Loaves & Fishes*

A 15-year veteran of **Pappa's Restaurants**, Brian worked his way from server to Assistant General Manager and member of Papisito's Culinary Team. Later he worked with known chefs in Houston and San Antonio to bring authentic Texas foods to **Bush Inter-continental Airport**, where he opened kitchens in two terminals.



## SHUN JOHNSON

*Director of Development*

Shun (*pronounced Shawn*) was promoted from Volunteer Coordinator in July. In her early career she served 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.



## KIM MARTIN

*Accounting*

Kim joined Magnificat after 30 years working in public accounting, industry and family offices. Kim is eager to use her skill set to help Magnificat make a difference in transforming the lives of those most in need.

## SUCCESS STORY: MICHAEL WEBSTER

After years of struggling with drug addiction and months of homelessness, Michael came through Magnificat's doors knowing it was time to change. Completing his initial 90-day term here, Michael volunteered to stay on to serve as a Peer House Leader at **Ave Maria House**, where he helped newcomers get their bearings, learn to participate in group meetings, reach out to support others and share housework. Saturdays, he volunteered at our Anawim Thrift Store where he felt loved and appreciated, continuing even after he started a job.

On April 21, Michael returned to living independently, having found a job and an affordable apartment.

"Mr. Webster thanks the staff and supporters of MHI for affording him the opportunity of having shelter, a leadership role and all resources provided which helped motivate him to live a positive, drug-free life," reported Housing Director Cynthia Rogers. She called Michael "a model guest" as she handed him a Certificate of Appreciation.



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



Magnificat's ongoing, responsible stewardship means you can give with trust and confidence. 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 **2023 Platinum Seal of Transparency** awarded by **Candid** (formerly GuideStar and Foundation Directory).

**DONATE ANYTIME:**  
Via our QR code, or  
[mhihouston.org/donate](https://mhihouston.org/donate)



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



The reigning **MISS UNIVERSE Houstonian R'Bonney Gabriel** chose her 29th birthday to offer a service day at Loaves & Fishes.