



The Magnifier

...news from Magnificat Houses

Magnificat Houses, Inc. (MHI)

Summer 2024

An Enduring Legacy of Service

Rose Mary Badami, MHI Founder Has Passed at Age 100



Rose Mary Badami, MSW, died quietly in her sleep on Saturday, June 1, 2024, more than 55 years after founding Magnificat Houses, Inc., the enduring Houston non-profit addressing the interrelated problems of hunger, homelessness and mental illness.

In 1968, Rose Mary purchased a single house through private donations in a then-undesirable area now known as the Second Ward. Over time, Magnificat grew to encompass 15 residential properties, mostly neighborhood homes where the homeless and ex-offenders could re-enter society through a supportive, family-style environment. In 1972, Rose Mary began her iconic downtown Houston soup kitchen, [Loaves & Fishes](#), which has operated continuously since 1976 at 2009 Congress and now serves a daily average of 340 meals to hungry Houstonians.

By 1991, confident that mental illness underlies most social problems, Rose Mary founded [St. Joseph House](#) to offer free healing programs for Magnificat residents. With its 1995 accreditation by Clubhouse International, St. Joseph Clubhouse programs became free and open to anyone over 18 with a mental health diagnosis. Its adjacent two-acre Brennan Park accommodates community-building activities, such as organic gardening, cookouts and holiday celebrations.

The first graduate of the University of St. Thomas's new school of social work in 1954, Rose Mary logged in years of social work for Houston and Harris County agencies and for the Good Shepherd Home for Delinquent and Pre-Delinquent Girls. She also helped launch a home for displaced mothers and their children.

By midlife, she was ready to launch her privately run non-profit, Magnificat House. Rose Mary speculated that given a dignified home and peer training, a group of displaced strangers could come to love and accept each other, share home tasks and responsibilities, and gain self-worth and confidence while they strived for an independent life.

Rose Mary developed a personal goal of "getting all the people off the streets that I can in my lifetime." She sometimes drove the streets looking for downtrodden women, telling them to "Get in the car—I am taking you home." There was no stopping Rose Mary if she saw someone she thought she could help.

Thousands of displaced persons have come through Magnificat's doors over the past 55 years, and many have gained what they needed to become productive members of society. "Rose Mary created a ministry to serve the most vulnerable in our community, Magnificat Houses, Inc. It is our duty and privilege to continue her legacy indefinitely, and all of us at MHI will strive to do so," affirms MHI Executive Director, [Meredith Vaughan](#). (see pp 3-4)

Born in 1923, Rose Mary was deeply affected by the Great Depression and the countless homeless men who came, hat in hand, to her grandmother's back door. Instead of handing them a sack lunch, her grandmother invited the strangers into the dining room to eat on her best china. Rose Mary never forgot the dignity her grandmother bestowed on the less fortunate. It shaped her life and her career. Rose Mary never married and had no surviving siblings. Her family was the Magnificat community.

To honor and further Rose Mary Badami's legacy, memorial donations may be made online through www.mhihouston.org/donate or by check to Magnificat Houses, Inc., P.O. Box 8486, Houston, TX, 77288. Please designate "Badami Memorial."

Our Ministry...

Our Guiding Spirit Wrote a Love Letter to Stand the Test of Time

From the Desk of Rose Mary Badami (2011)...

It is surprising, but understandable, when some do not know what the work of Magnificat is: it is a ministry and not a social agency. A social agency is first a secular operation with specific job descriptions. In a ministry the primacy of love is the operating factor. "The gospel can be reduced to a sentence: love one another as God loves you. This is the basis of the solution to all human problems" (Mother Teresa). The main factor in dealing with the unwanted, the unloved and the distressed poor is in making them welcome and needed (and they are) to accept them as they are. We do not work with people in Magnificat in groups. We treat them as individuals, no different from ourselves. They are our suffering brothers and sisters. It is a different concept, and it is done out of love of God and love of one another.

The houses are run by the residents themselves. Everybody has a role to play. It is like a family — where everyone is wanted and needed. The staff is there to support them, encourage them, and show concern and love. Like in a family there is someone who gives direction, help and guidance, there is someone who nurtures and they all contribute in some way to making a house a home. They support one another, and they are proud of their responsibilities and accomplishments. Since the houses in the Compound are together, they visit, socialize, form relationships and feel part of a family. The staff knows **each individual**, and knows their needs and treats them with concern and "love". The problem is to know how to reach that person, to receive them as equals — not clients, consumers or whatever the going words are now. You have to reach **that individual** as all are not alike.

If you familiarize yourself with the works of Mother Teresa, who sent her sisters out into the "slums" to do the Works of Mercy, then you will understand our work. Love includes understanding, sympathy, compassion, devotion and service. In our country, there is a different kind of poverty. The "slums" comprise "the streets", the drugs, alcohol, prisons (which are multiplying) etc., so in a way, we do not go the "the slums" — the people in need find a way to our doors.

At the hour of death we believe we will be judged according to the words of Jesus who said,

- ◆ **I was homeless** — *you took me in* We have eleven houses where take the homeless in. Not only the homeless, but those in need of shelter. We do not discriminate. (We accommodate — there is always "room in the inn")
- ◆ **I was hungry** and *you gave me food* Loaves & Fishes Soup Kitchen feeds thousands of people yearly. We feed the residents three meals a day in the houses. Friends and people who support us have outings, picnics in Brennan Park — sharing their time and offering friendship.
- ◆ **I was sick** and *you took care of me*: Magnificat's Health Services take care of the sick, obtains the necessary paperwork to be eligible for services, etc. It is not a simple matter to get people accepted into clinics, etc. They need birth certificates or Texas identification, Gold Card, statements regarding income, etc. Health Services also takes care of dental and eye care plus keep a record of appointments and arranges for transportation when needed. St. Joseph Clubhouse is available for those with a mental diagnosis, and Morning Star Hostel for people with HIV/AIDS. It is a mammoth job accessing the need, applying for aid, securing appointments and seeing that they are kept, plus seeing people are compliant with their medications.
- ◆ **I was in prison** and *you visited* — the prison ministry is our main population at this time, and we favor those who are sick, been in prison 15, 20, 25 years or longer and are now incapable of employment.

"Truly as I say to you what you do for the least of my brothers, you do unto me."

If you want to know what the MINISTRY of Magnificat is, read books on Mother Teresa. Our ministry is patterned after hers — love of God, transferred into love of one another, the most needy of our brothers and sisters.

We encourage you to pray for Magnificat and its work, follow its spirit, and adopt its aim.

It is not difficult to understand our work if you consider it in the realm of faith and the gospels.

We are grateful for each one of you. *Rose Mary*

...Her Legacy of Love Endures

Rose Mary's words blossom to life daily at Magnificat



Rose Mary Badami, MHI founder, whose vision and dedication established MHI's mission of compassionate care & support.



This is where it all started in 1968! The first Magnificat House, Anawim House, will be reopened after a major facelift thanks to generous partners, volunteers, and dedicated MHI Maintenance staff.



MHI guests nurture each other as they gather to dine at the table in a family setting, enjoying the comforts that make a house a home.



MHI Executive Director Meredith Vaughan takes part in feeding Houston's hungry at MHI's Loaves & Fishes Soup Kitchen, serving an average of more than 340 meals daily.



The St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Community joined MHI Board members at Memorial Day and July 4th picnics for Clubhouse members & MHI guests at Brennan Park at St. Joseph House.



Sr. Gabina responds to the more than 1000 letters received annually from prisoners seeking to find a fresh start on the right track to successful reintegration into society with MHI's support.



Officer Sheldon Theragood's 2nd Annual Homeless Outreach Festival, a b-day party of epic proportions, brought fun, food, musical entertainment, and community resources to the 3300 block of Austin Street. Among the orgs joining the festivities were students and faculty from the University of Houston College of Nursing, partners through the generosity of a grant from CommonSpirit Health for MHI's homeless community.



Individuals find mental health healing through art thanks to the kindness of MHI Board member JoAnna Bruce's paint parties at the Clubhouse encouraging members to find their gifts.



RoseMary's Place is now 90 percent complete as MHI moves into an exciting chapter to expand Rose Mary's dream "to get as many people off the streets as possible." This development will house 149 chronically homeless and disabled.



The love keeps growing daily with this passionate team committed to the ministry Rose Mary Badami envisioned when she started Magnificat. We thank you for partnering to serve the most needy of our brothers and sisters.

STAFF NOTES



KIMBERLY ELLIOTT

Development Director

Fun fact! Kimberly's career started in live sports broadcast TV. She has since channeled that vitality and enthusiasm into fundraising, development and events, most recently working with St. Dominic Village where she had the opportunity to meet Rose Mary while our founder was in care. Kimberly's zest energizes a dynamic Development team while cultivating relationships that champion MHI's movement in an exciting direction as we continue Rose Mary's vision to serve and love our neighbors.



CATHY ODE, MBA

Director of Housing

Cathy felt the tug to come to MHI to continue active and impactful mission-driven work with the homeless. She brings over 19 years banking experience and 11 years working in non-profit housing to the table, along with 6 years of homeless services work with Operation ID. Cathy embraces her new role as a marriage of her background in finance, banking, and HR as an opportunity to use her skill-set to address the human condition through MHI's ministry.



DARRIEN PHILLIPS, MPA

Clubhouse Director

With over 30 years serving with non-profits in roles working with at-risk families and individuals, Darrien says the Clubhouse was love at first sight. He loves working with St. Joseph members, "being their sense of understanding" while lending his ear to help them navigate and overcome barriers and become empowered.

DONATE ANYTIME:

Via our QR code, or
mhihouston.org/donate



Save the Date! *Blossoms of Change*

Join us for a very special evening to commemorate our founder, Rose Mary Badami's birthday and to ensure her legacy endures!



The Magnifier is published quarterly by Magnificat Houses, Inc. Gina Monti, editor/photographer. Tribute donations are recognized quarterly. Submit photos and news items to gmonti@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 third 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*). MHI depends on your generosity to continue providing care, shelter, food, and support to those in need. By including MHI in your planned giving, you help ensure your legacy of compassion lasts for generations.

Thank you for your loving support of our mission!



MHI Executive Director, Meredith Vaughan joyously serves at Loaves & Fishes Soup Kitchen, jumping in to serve Houston's hungry directly. Peek inside to see how MHI's new leadership team and dedicated staff is shaping MHI's future while honoring Rose Mary Badami's legacy.