

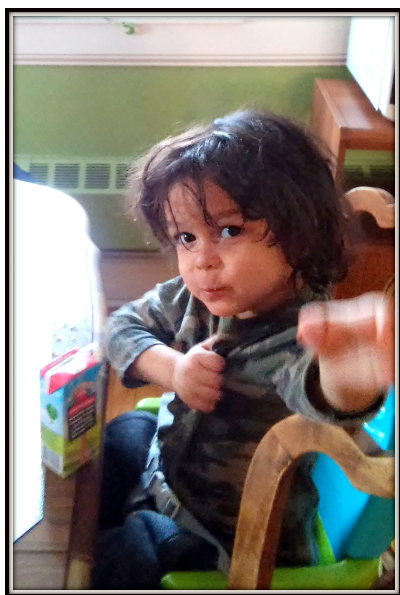


# St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter

*For Homeless Families*

## Be it ever so humble, there is no place like...

One thing we learn at St. Mary's is that families come in many sizes and shapes all with lots of similar hopes and dreams, but **Home** is one clear vision – a safe place to share with those we love. At St. Mary's we try to show our families what home feels like – safety, order, comfort. Home, the ground under our feet, is the foundation from which we take the next steps - jobs, education, and some financial security. Our families all desire a home but finding the path to having a home sometimes seems insurmountable for them.



We often talk about being at home, going home, staying home. If you have no home these simple concepts are incomprehensible. Home is basic to everything that we are about. It is in this space, the **Home**, that children first put together the pieces of the puzzle of life. Homeless children have dreams, hopes and goals, they simply need a stable roof over their heads!

Do you ever wonder how you would define "home"? Some ways that our families define home includes a place where I lay my head at night, a place where I can get away from the stresses and problem of life, a place that "is mine". Another parent thinks of home as a place where she can think and dream and pray. Another sees home as a place where she could hang her pictures and mementos on the wall. Sometimes we just know that our home is our sanctuary, our own sacred space.

One family in speaking of their newfound apartment said, "We don't have much furniture, or money to spend but we have a roof over our heads and a door to close and lock. We can make our lives matter in this little space. We can dream and wish and pray. We have a home."

Can any of us ever imagine living without a home? It is because so many people understand the value of housing and work together at St. Mary's that we sometimes have the wonderful delight of seeing a family move from homelessness into a secure, affordable and permanent place to live. How I wish we could all see the smiles and excitement of the children when they know they have a home! No words can really describe this awesome joy! **Be It ever so humble.....**

—Sister Bernadette, Executive Director

## Remembering Christmas with grateful heart....

On behalf of all of us, Board of Directors, staff, present and past residents, and so many others, we extend our great thanks for all that was given, spoken, offered, carried and collected during our 2017 Christmas Season. We especially acknowledge those who adopted a total of 24 families making Christmas extraordinary for them. We also thank the many churches and local organizations (12+) who included us as part of their giving tree program. We could not be more grateful.



## Young Volunteers Pay it Forward...

Students from **Kimberton Waldorf School** marked Martin Luther King Day with service to our families. Their gifts of time and talent (and amazing strength) made it possible for us to complete the installation of our new computer lab. The computer tables were here but the task of putting them together required the minds of these young entrepreneurs. With some competition and engineering, they completed the task with perfection! Simultaneously the students formed a second group to use their organization and management skills to reorganize, clean and sort the areas of supplies. These supplies will be used for our families while they are living with us and packed for each family to take with them to their new home. Thanks to Kimberton Waldorf for their generous service to us.



Kimberton Waldorf School

**Villa Maria Academy** returned this year to give to the families of St. Mary's a day of caring service.



Villa Maria Academy

They always bring enthusiasm and great-hearted love for those in need

and provide for us the extra hands required to keep St. Mary's running smoothly. This year they worked both in our classrooms and in our storage areas to make the spaces user-friendly and allow us to rapidly put together "Moving Boxes" of kitchen and bathroom supplies for our residents to take with them to their new apartments. This was an enjoyable and productive day and we are indeed grateful for their help!

### Manavon Girl Scout Troup #4308

contacted us in early February with an idea – they wanted to collect some needed

items for homeless families. They decided to collect hair care products, lotions, bath soaps and poofs! They came to the shelter with boxes, and boxes filled with needed items! Their gifts were very welcomed and their visit to Saint Mary's was a highlight for all of us!

**A remarkable family from Saint Teresa of Calcutta School** came to St. Mary's laden with sweets and desserts to share with our families. Seeing the compassion and dedication of these young children lifted our hearts. The future of volunteering, philanthropy and caring for other is alive and well in our neighborhood. We are so happy for their loving and understanding way.



St Teresa of Calcutta



Manavon Girl Scouts

## Are you interested in volunteering?

St Mary's Franciscan Shelter is looking for people who are interested in helping plan and execute our fundraising and friend-raising events during the 2018 calendar year. Being a part of the PR/Fundraising committee is a great way to spread the good word about what the shelter does while also raising much needed funds. If you are someone who would like to be a part of this awesome group, please contact St. Mary's at 610-933-3097 or [SMFS@stmarysfs.org](mailto:SMFS@stmarysfs.org). Thank you

## Meet Laura,...

Laura\*, a single mother of two children (both younger than five years old), came to St. Mary's from the state of Delaware. They arrived at the shelter with nothing – no local support, benefits, or connections.

Throughout her eight week stay at St. Mary's, Laura was very appreciative of the support and guidance she was receiving. She took full advantage of the resources and programs that St. Mary's has to offer. With the help of our staff and other social service agencies in the area, Laura was able to attain childcare for her children, update her resume, begin a thorough job search, and most importantly -secure a safe and affordable local apartment for her family.

Laura has successfully finished the program! Throughout her time with us, she was able to create a supportive network of friends and connections to help keep this new roof over her and her children's heads.

Laura left us with these words, "Thank you for welcoming me and my kids with open arms. This has been a blessing."

With spring on its way, so is this family's exciting new beginning! \*Name changed for privacy.



**As these wintry days begin to show signs of Spring, we share with you the words that warmed our hearts this winter...**

*"Thank you to everyone for welcoming my kids and me with open arms. This has been a blessing." Resident discharged 2-09-18*

*"We felt so welcomed and appreciated. It was my first time at a shelter, and I learned a great deal about the needs of some of the members of my own community." Volunteer – J.P.*

## Back to School for St. Mary's Staff

On February 24, 2018, the Staff of St. Mary's reported to "Saturday School". This semi-annual staff meeting/retreat provides us an opportunity to be together since our 24/7 schedules makes this a rarity. We lunched on Thai Food, planned for inevitable changes in the structure of our home and attended a presentation on our new security system. Our speakers, representatives from Honeywell and Tronnix corporations, walked us through the intricacies of securing the building, accessing the camera footage and other details of our new system. They also helped us to better understand the concerns of security and the preventive safety measures we can all take. We proved to be an attentive, engaging and humorous audience. We are now ready to put aside our keys and swipe our way into our workplace.



From left to right: Tronnix trainer Dave Barnhart Honeywell's Holly Newell, and staff Naomi and Angela



St. Mary's employees from left to right: Diana, Sr. Bernadette, Angela, Denise, Neomi, Tasia, Francesca, Janetta, Kate



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Franciscan Shelter  
*For Homeless Families*

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## Another Fundraising Event!



**WHEN**

**SUNDAY, APRIL 22<sup>ND</sup> @ 1:30PM**

**\* DOORS OPEN AT 12:30PM**

**WHERE**

**KIMBERTON FIRE HALL**

**2276 KIMBERTON ROAD, PHOENIXVILLE**

PROCEEDS  
BENEFIT



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