

# St Mary's

## Franciscan Shelter for Homeless Families

*"Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible."*  
*--Saint Francis of Assisi*

### Director's Report

### *It is all about relationships...*

As these summer days evolve, I am touched with the beauty all around us. We are blessed with a colorful, life giving and amazing new garden making our little space on Emmett Street a peaceful and lovely oasis on the North Side of Phoenixville. How grateful we are to the friends who made this possible. Along with new plants, we (and our neighbors), sit back and breathe a bit easier knowing that our home is bright and secure with new outside lighting installed on all sides. This came about from a series of relationships - one person speaking to another and another until this chain of generous, caring people literally brought light into our darkness. New life and new light - maybe that is truly what we are all about. Lights and gardens, donated to us by very caring and generous friends... yes, it is all about relationships!

Our St. Mary's families continue to grow and struggle with the daily worries and concerns that may be a bit different than the ones others carry. *Where can I find a job, who will provide day care, where will I live, how will I get from home to work,*

*will my past always hold me back?*

Having a car, a job and a roof over our heads seems so simple, but for our families it is not at all simple. Each of course, has a unique story but some



common threads are present: enormous obstacles such as poverty, disability, addiction, family breakdown, and other crises bear down on them. So often our residents speak of a turning point and always this turning point involves a special person- a friend, a case manager, a sponsor, a volunteer, a staff member. It is someone who truly believed in them, treated them with dignity and hope and

led them to support and opportunities. It is all about relationships...

Finally I wanted to share with you a letter we received this month. This young woman's simple yet profound act of kindness gives deep meaning to the phrase "graced relationships". With her permission, I share her words.

*As a young teen, I'm in a constant mental battle with myself regarding what I can do to help people in my community and beyond. Normally I am convinced that there is nothing that I can do. Fortunately, my 16<sup>th</sup> birthday was earlier this month. Instead of having my friends purchase gifts, I asked if they could bring a small donation for St. Mary's Shelter. They responded with enthusiasm, and thanks to their generous contributions, we are able to present to you a donation for the shelter of \$383.00. It is really all*

*thanks to my amazing friends that this was made possible. I am overjoyed that we are able to give money to such a great cause. I hope this donation helps.*

So yes, young and old, rich and poor, near and far, we are all the pillars that support a community of inclusion, hope, belief and love. It is all about relationships....

*--Sr. Bernadette*

## Resident Highlight:

### *Lauren and her sons*

Lauren came to St. Mary's in the spring of this year. She had recently been discharged from a long term drug rehabilitation facility. Her journey as a person with a history of drug use, is different from most families that we meet here at St. Mary's. When Lauren graduated from high school, she acquired a job, purchased a car, had her own place and was married. She was on a solid path! This unfortunately ground to a halt when she had a car accident which left her with back problems, but also introduced her to the world of pain medications. She was given many different kinds of medication due to the pain she was experiencing. This treatment opened the door for "other" drugs once the prescriptions were exhausted. Her husband was also addicted to drugs. It was a downward spiral from there. Lauren divorced and stopped doing drugs and remained clean for 2 ½ years. She had another relapse and this time she began using heroin.

Lauren somehow found the strength within to face the fact that her behavior patterns were repeating themselves. She was fortunate to have the resource to find a more intense form of rehabilitation. She began a stay at

a "live in" residence along with her sons and started an extensive program and together they could begin another journey to a sober lifestyle. This path is shaky at times and often frustrating but Lauren is presently remaining strong in spite of numerous setbacks. She has the wisdom and strength right now to find her place in society and regain the status that she abandoned a couple years ago.

Lauren's parents have always been there for her through her rocky journey. She recently shared a quote about her Mom that summed up that feeling. "My Mom raised me right, I did wrong all on my own."

After feeling a sense of confinement for the past six months at the "live-in" residence, Lauren feels that St. Mary's was a good transition for her. The structure is here but also the sense of freedom to regain her independence.

Lauren's goal is to gain independence in all aspects of her life. She would like to someday volunteer here at St. Mary's where, of course, she will always be most welcome.

We offer Lauren and her boys, best wishes and many blessings.

## Our volunteers



## Our children





Here it is.... the new logo for St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter. We designed our logo to capture our mission and spirit as well as to promote the movement we desire for our residents.

We hope that when you look at it you will see....

- A loving, safe place on the journey home.
- An openness to diversity .. (note shades of color in arms and hands)
- Our Christian, Franciscan heritage ( the cross on the home)
- And always the light that places our families on a productive path. (yellow path and sunshine showing hope and a bright future.)



**St. Mary's**  
Franciscan Shelter  
*For Homeless Families*

## STRATEGIC PLAN- 2016-2017

The Board of Directors and the staff of St. Mary's Shelter, with the help of funding from the Phoenixville Community Health Foundation, is engaged in a strategic plan to define and focus the next 2-3 years of St. Mary's service to homeless families. They are working under the direction of Constance Carter, CFRE. Connie is leading them to dream of the future while remaining grounded in the mission and history of St. Mary's. These conversations continue as we "go to press" so be sure to read the Fall 2016 edition to see the results of this process.



## Needs List/Wish List

We are always grateful for your support and kindnesses to us. We only hope that we are adequately thanking you. We do not take your thoughtfulness for granted!

Sometimes we have specific needs and use this newsletter to communicate this to you. This time we ask that you consider St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter when you assign a workplace donation. These funds are a very significant and necessary part of our budget. We are thankful to each of you who consider us in this way.

We also have ongoing needs for postage stamps, gift cards for retail and food stores, coffee and juice boxes.

Just a reminder, the shelter is closed during the month of August in order to make some needed repairs. Although staff will be in each day, it is best to call first if you plan to visit or drop off any products.

**Please remember us. Our United Way Donor Option # is 9208.**



We also have a new website! Be sure to visit and enjoy the vibrant faces of our families and facts that remind us all of the reason that we are here. ENJOY!

And with hopes of saving money, paper and our environment, we will provide the Fall newsletter as an electronic document! Be sure to sign up for electronic mailing on our website and opt out of paper. Please visit us!

[www.stmarysfs.org](http://www.stmarysfs.org)



209 Emmett St  
Phoenixville, PA 19460

Trenz Pruca  
4321 First Street  
Anytown, State ZIP