



# St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter

For Homeless Families

## Baby on Board!! Meet Anna, Monica and Baby brother on the way.....

Anna\* came to St. Mary's shelter with a young child and another on the way. Even though Phoenixville had been the family's home for quite some time, economic and circumstantial hardships fell on Anna's family and resulted in her homelessness. Despite being a young, single, working parent, Anna brought her family's lively energy into St. Mary's and has inspired us all with her motivation and hard work towards her independence.

Anna and her child quickly adjusted to life here at St. Mary's and have become close friends with the other residents of the shelter. Anna is currently working with multiple agencies towards securing housing for her family and has been keeping up with all the program's goals that she is setting for herself. Anna still has a couple of weeks left at the shelter, but we are confident that her resiliency, matched by the generosity of individuals and agencies in the community will result in successful housing for her, her child, and the newborn she is expecting.

As Anna's accomplishments continue to grow, so does our certainty in her family's future. We will continue to aid and support her journey as she discovers the many paths and services available to her! \*Name changed for privacy

(Update: Anna moved into her new apartment this week and is happily and gratefully awaiting the birth of her son.)



## Volunteers - Christina and Jake



We are extremely fortunate to have wonderful volunteers at the shelter. They bring a positive outlook, compassion, helping hands and ears to listen to the families living in the shelter. One such brilliant young couple is Jake and Christina Malarz. Jake and Christina immediately signed in for weekend playgroup volunteers. It is always an immense help for the families to get an hour to themselves to prepare for the week ahead and an incredible support for our weekend staff. Jake and Christina mentioned, *"We moved to Phoenixville in 2016, and were looking for a volunteer opportunity we could do together. We heard that St. Mary's shelter was looking for volunteers from our parish St. Basil the Great. As soon as we contacted the shelter it felt like a good fit. The coordinator and other volunteers were so friendly and appreciative. Best of all has been our experience getting to know the families at the shelter. We have met some wonderful people! The kids are fun and full of energy and time flies by when we are there! We really look forward to the time we spend at St. Mary's and are grateful for the opportunity to have met such great families in our community."*

We, at St Mary's shelter, are thankful to Jake for helping us with the upkeep of our website and sharing his high technology skill set. Their willingness, skill, and dedication to support the shelter beyond the regular volunteering hours are unparalleled.

## Our Home is Your Home...Nuestra Casa es Su Casa.

I am in the office this beautiful sunny almost-summer evening. I expect to hear the sounds of children getting ready for dinner and parents chanting "Wash your Hands." "Take your seats". What really touches me though is the sound of our dinner helpers and staff making sure everything is just right.

Our dinner helpers add an amazing dimension to the lives of homeless families. They come in with a loving spirit, they call the families by name, they catch up with them about the things that have happened in the last week and show the residents what a real family might look like. Friends visiting, relatives stopping in, neighbors showing interest...



Evenings can be difficult for homeless parents. The schedule is different, the faces of staff change and the children are restless after a long day. The shadows remind them of the tentative life they live. Evenings are sometime very lonely. Our dinner helpers not only help prepare the table, serve the food, clean-up, but they also give the house a feeling of home, a feeling of others who care, a sense of being in a nice, friendly place. Our dinner helpers are some of the unsung heroes who make our house a "safe place on the journey home". Thank you to each and every one of them!!

## Beware! Construction Ahead!!

St. Mary's, our beloved 150+ year old building on Emmett Street, has been suffering the effects of aging. In 2011 we found out that the joists and pilings under our kitchen had rotted and the structure would have to be rebuilt. During the past 7 years this has been a nagging concern for all of us. Recent signs of continued decay made it clear that this had to be addressed immediately. During the next couple months we will restore the structure, rebuild a kitchen, replace our laundry room and add a powder room. The project will be daunting!

With the amazing skill of our team, Carnevale Eustis Architects, Dymond Quality Builders, and Teague Lumber Kitchen Designers, as well as the generosity of National Appliance Warehouse, we have been able to navigate this project with people who share our concern for homeless families. For the most part, our home will stay open and our families will be housed safely. Thank you to each and all for your part in completing the amazing task that is now underway.

God bless all of us as we move ahead securing this lovely old building which is home to so many families.



## 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**



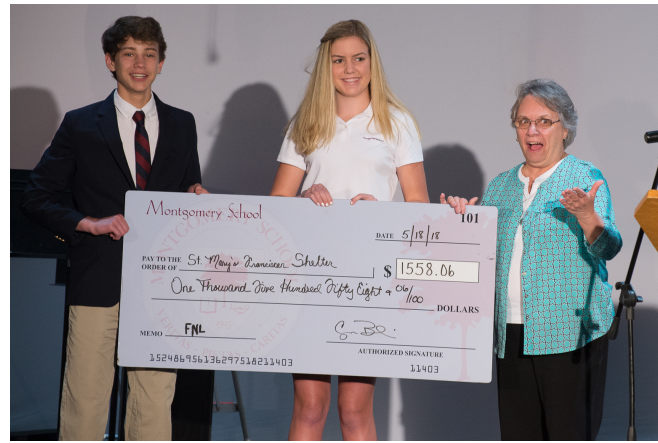




## INTRODUCING OUR NEW MEMORIAL CARDS:

Over the years, many of you have used the St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter Memorial cards to honor a friend or relative at the time of death. We are very grateful to you for turning to us for prayer and support during these sad and difficult times.

Today we are happy to show you our new cards. These cards were lovingly designed by our friend and local artist, Elyssa Hilton. We are so proud of the cards and so grateful to Elyssa for her gift to us. We are happy to send complimentary cards in the mail or prepare them for pick up. For all the support that you give us, many thanks. Inside the card: "A donation has been made in celebration of the life of \_\_\_\_ at the request of \_\_\_\_ to St.Mary's Franciscan Shelter fro Homeless Families. We extend our prayers and sympathies."



## Montgomery School's Gift to St. Mary's

Every now and then a kind act takes us by surprise. Thank you to our friends at Montgomery School for such a wonderful contribution to our homeless families.

*"Anyone who does anything to help a child in his life is a hero to me."* **Fred Rogers**



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Franciscan Shelter  
For Homeless Families

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