



St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter

For Homeless Families

A Teacher and a Reacher: St. Mary's Family Garden

St. Mary's Family Garden



Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932), a British horticulturist and shining star among garden enthusiasts, once said, "A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust." And while a garden does those things indeed, St. Mary's Family Garden is more than a teacher. It's a reacher.

All one needs to do is reach back a few months into the past -- to the exact date of April 6th, 2019 -- to see how far back St. Mary's Family Garden reaches into the future.

April 6th was St. Mary's first Garden Day of the year. Though it was a joyous event, one we happily shared with the good people of Saint Elizabeth Parish, St. Mary's first Garden Day of 2019 was a culminating event for more reasons than fun.

For starters, this April day in 2019 picked up where 2018 left off. It was not just in a new calendar, but also in a new backyard, on the same plot of land that once housed a 10,000 square foot building. It now housed 10,000 feet of square air.

That's because in the beginning of 2018 there stood an 80-year-old schoolhouse. And in the beginning of 2019, there stood a one year-old demolition site. The debris of the demolition site was cleaned up by April's gardening group. In doing so, this first gardening group of 2019 saw not only the land where the future garden would be housed, they also prepared the land that would expand St. Mary's home.

Another gardening group and two months later, St. Mary's Family Garden reaches forward again, from spring to summer.

The June transition period brings about professional landscape work. Week by week, new installations pop up. First a wooden split-rail fence, then a gazebo, and finally a mixture of shrubbery inside the fence and around the gazebo. Together, all of these smaller installations make up one big installation, a focal point and land finale: St. Mary's Family Garden.

Though, we all know garden work is never truly finished. Not like a lesson assigned for the pupils it teaches. Instead, a garden is more like a blessing entwined with the people it reaches.

So reach out to us at volunteer@stmarysfs.org to take part in the teachings and reachings, the lessons and blessings, of St. Mary's Family Garden.





VOLUNTEERS ARE THE HEART OF SAINT MARY'S ...

Meet Marvin Stroman our volunteer of the season. Marvin has been an invaluable volunteer. Marvin comes every Wednesday afternoon and patiently restores our shredder box to "empty"! Most would not think this a challenging job but to us it is a Godsend. Marvin is about to retire from this mission but he leaves behind so many grateful staffers of St. Mary's. Our papers will never be so carefully attended to again. Bless your heart, Marvin. All good wishes in the days ahead!

PLAYROOM VOLUNTEERS – SUMMER STYLE!

Here is how Playroom Helpers work in the summer days... Open the shed, take out the tools, and set the children in motion! No season is quite so much fun as the summertime... Equipment is ready and so are the children- an hour with their Play parents! Thank you to all of our playroom volunteers. They are the best no matter what the season.



EVEN OUR BABY TWINS LOVED PLAYTIME!



Introducing Marcus and Marquis. These adorable infants are now living independently with their mother and father in a local apartment. They engaged the program and succeeded. Congratulations to this young family. We wish them great success.

There is always a sense of joy and delight when a families finds a home of their own. We do have to admit though that at times we feel a bit of a loss as the children leave... however, new children arrive soon on our doorstep and new relationships begin.

Graced Perseverance....

"Carrie" moved into St. Mary's with her two children after challenging circumstances with her younger son's childcare. This childcare issue led to her losing her job and unable to re-sign her lease due to her inability to pay the rent. Carrie was determined to find a new job but found it difficult to establish adequate childcare without a paycheck. Through meetings with case management and careful planning, she was able to apply for subsidized childcare benefits and re-establish childcare with a local program that was willing to accept the subsidy.



Carrie and her two amazing children

While in the program at St. Mary's, Carrie was able to update her resume which helped her to quickly land a new and more stable job. Even with some difficulties resulting from a planned minor surgery, Carrie was able to continue searching for housing on her own with assistance from case management and a local community resource. She put considerable individual time and effort into researching potential housing options in the county that would still allow her to keep her child in day care and for her to continue working. Through connections with these community resources and her own determination, Carrie was able to find a new place and move before her time in the program came to an end. She is very excited to keep working and to keep moving forward to make sure she gives her and her children the best life she can. All of the staff here at St. Mary's wish Carrie continued success as she continues to press forward!

We cannot thank them enough!



We are so grateful to our friends at the Phoenixville Hospital Thrift Shop!. With their generous gift we will be able to say goodbye to our 20+ year old carpets in the resident bedrooms and replace them with brand new ones. We will also be able to replace the blinds and swags to add a homelike comfort for our families. A million thanks for this and so much more that you do for our families all year long.

It is and will always be about the children...

The children who come to stay at St. Mary's bring amazing gifts and talents. Our friend in the photo delighted in the "flower" found in the area designated for our new garden.

The innocence and delight of children make each day a wonder-filled event.

"What was wonderful about childhood is that anything in it was a wonder. It was not merely a world full of miracles; it was a miraculous world."

— Gilbert K. Chesterton



St.Mary's Needs List:

Instant Ice Tea	Coffee	Individual Snack bags for children's lunch
Clorox or Lysol wipes	Febreze Air Freshener	Swiffer dry pads and dusters

Thank you so much for all that you do for us!!

Choose St.Mary's Franciscan Shelter!
Just click the **Amazon Smile**



Donations can be made to: www.stmarysfs.org
UNITED WAY Donor Option #9208

BBQ & Brews

To Benefit St. Mary's Family Shelter

November 9, 2019

On Saturday, November 9, join St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter for Homeless Families in celebrating its 32 years of service. This FUNdraiser will be held at the Kimberton Fire Hall from 6:30 til 10:30 pm.

Local restaurants and craft brews will be featured along with music by The Sofa Kings.
www.sofakingsgroup.com (102.9MGK House Band, Philly Hot List Band).

For more information, or to buy tickets, visit www.stmarysfs.org/events/BBQ&Brews

