



St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter

For Homeless Families

A Gift of Love...

Gleice Paulino, applied to be a volunteer little over two years ago. Her application spoke so much about her skills and ability to provide services to children. We knew from the beginning that she would be a great fit for our playroom activities. When we asked about what motivated her to apply to be a volunteer at the shelter she mentioned, "Because I am from Brazil and live in a boarding school I felt I needed to be more in the community and what better way to be immersed in the community than by sharing love and care with those that would appreciate it." She is so right! She definitely spreads joy when she comes for her playroom nights. Children and their parents equally feel elated when they know it is Gleice's night in Playroom. She added, "I was doing a simple search on Google about homeless shelters that were near the school where I work. I was moved with St Mary's mission." Gleice teaches and lives in a boarding school for children with special needs. Her acumen and ability to engage with children at the shelter is very natural.



Apart from being our beloved 'Play-Lady', she brought baked cookies to the shelter that she made with her students in the school, she helped her students collect supplies for daily necessary needs and donated to the shelter and she runs orientation sessions wonderfully for our new volunteers joining playroom. She does so much for our families and especially for the children. Gleice sings with them, plays with them, plans little puppet shows and said, "I try not to think about the situation they are in rather focus on offering them as much normalcy as I can during my time. I have a lot of love to share; and the children that come to St. Mary's Shelter always seem to receive it."



In her own words, "My time with the children has always been fun, entertaining, warm, and at times a little too loud and a little too crazy, but never boring. One of the hardest things about working at St. Mary's is the fact that I meet children and I want to see them again, however, I am always torn because if they are still there that means they have not found their home yet." She said, "Thank you St. Mary's for offering me, the children and their families a place of warmth, love, and care. I am proud to be part of this wonderful family!"

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Thank you Gleice for choosing to volunteer with us and to be part of our family. You make our home special with your wonderful presence.

FROM OLD CLASSROOM TO NEW HOME.... OUR SCHOOL RECREATED

Rejoice with us! The transition of this sacred ground from an amazing learning center to a lovely living space has begun. Each classroom will become a 400 square foot apartment with its own living area, kitchen, bathroom, and two bedrooms. The new area will also include a large laundry room, a state-of-the-art meeting room and storage for both the shelter and the transitional housing. Homeless families who have successfully completed the 8-week shelter program, have a job and some savings will qualify for the transitional apartments. Thus they will be able to benefit from 18 to 24 months in the apartment, engage in educational programs, and receive the assistance of a Case Manager. Transitional housing will help residents to strike a motivating balance between external support and personal responsibility.

Renovating a 19th century schoolhouse can only happen with generous volunteers and donors as well as our team of amazing professionals who are guiding and directing us through this process.

A big shout-out to our volunteer professionals:

Mike Lese, a recently retired pre- construction specialist came forward and offered to help us. His ability to read architectural and mechanical drawings with an eye out for St. Mary's has made this part of the project go smoothly. Analyzing the data in each bid proposal and leading the process to choose our contractor was not only scientific and successful! Mike will stay with us as our representative during the construction.

Steve Niggeman, Board member and chair of our facility committee has been working tirelessly to make sure we are completing the needed tasks and remaining true to our mission. Steve sees buildings and outreach projects such as ours with simplicity due to his extensive experience as Executive Vice President of Metro Commercial. His experience working with many high-profile tenants assures us that the job will be done on time, within budget and pardon the pun, with class!

Travis Peyton, formerly the President of the Board of St Mary's and a Partner HPE Group Engineers of Berwyn has gifted us with the amazing skill of a professional engineer and a great heart for homeless families in Chester County. Travis and his company donated services for all the mechanical drawings which include replacing our existing central heating system with a ductless heating and air conditioning system.

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

Fundraising is always a challenge and a delight... we are challenged in the process and delighted with the results. Often hidden in all the activity and business of this work are the generous, talented people who make up our Fundraising Committee. Today we give a shout out to an amazing, tireless committee member and friend to all at St. Mary's, Christie Milano! Christie has called, visited, emailed and met with so many of us many times during the past year. Her energy, organization and communication skills are only surpassed by her kind and loving persona. To Christie and the team of Fundraising professional, thank you for so willingly sharing your time and talent with our homeless families.



From Liberia and Seattle to Saint Mary's

Here at St. Mary's, we are lucky enough to meet families of many shapes and styles. In January, a small family came to the shelter: mom, dad and baby boy. Dad, James, was born in America and mom, Sonia, is originally from Liberia. The addition of a beautiful baby boy, Adam, made a family of three. They had dreams of success and happiness just like every other young family. They had been living and working in Nevada when a job opportunity opened up for them here, in Pennsylvania. They decided to pack up and move across the country in hopes of finding that dream. Sadly, when they arrived, the job did not last as expected. The small family found themselves in need of shelter. St. Mary's opened its' doors to them while they are working on getting back on their feet. James started immediately trying very hard to find a job that could support them, while Sonia



stayed with the baby until they could get him into daycare and then, hopefully she could find a job as well. They are determined to create a success story while they are living here at St. Mary's. Their end goal is to find employment that will support their small family and find a place that they can call home. We, here at St. Mary's Family Shelter, will do everything in our power to help them succeed in their endeavor.

COMING SOON: Second annual..

STAY-AT-HOME-BENEFIT

St. Mary's Franciscan Shelter

A relaxing fun event – 100% of donations to the Shelter!

Watch for your invitation in the mail or visit us at: www.stmarysfs.org





Following the Guidelines of

CHESTER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

We are maintaining hand washing, cleaning and following the protocol to keep everyone safe in the building during COVID-19

Goodbye to St. Mary's Can Collection

Since September 1999 your support of our aluminum can collection has helped us with many needs. However, with the new construction comes the end of some processes that we took for granted. The hutch that stored the cans can no longer be used and will be removed from the site. We cannot thank you enough for over 20 years of aluminum can support.

Keep recycling and keep helping to keep our environment clean and safe!

Blessings on all of our can collectors!



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For Homeless Families

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