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THE STORK | WINTER 2017

Gratitude Board

IT COSTS \$10,500 PER MOTHER AND CHILD that are given free room and board along with extensive skill building coursework needed to graduate from the life changing program at Bethlehem House. The positive impact on families is a direct result of yearly donations of our amazing and highly valued donors.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS:

Our 2016 Corporate Sponsors: Baxter Auto, Lang Painting Group, Sisters of Mercy West Midwest Community, GMS Benefits Inc., Encore Energy, V and R Rentals, Wheatfields Eatery and Bakery, US Bank, Kiewit, Lutz, The Giving Lake Ranch, The Benefit Group, Orion, Primary Care Physicians, WealthMARK, The Knights of Columbus Council #7740, Lamson Dugan & Murray LLP, Reruns R Fun

Our 2016 Gold Star Sponsors (\$5000+): John and Cathie Fullenkamp, Knights of Columbus St Vincent DePaul, Walkup Tree Service, World Herald Goodfellows Charities, Inc, Daniel and Marguerite Young **Denim Saloon** – In November the Denim Saloon held a grand-scale denim drive resulting in more than 150 pairs of gently used women's denim donated to The Humble Lily Boutique.

Benson Soap Mill and Feel Good Natural Products – In November these local small businesses generously donated overages of hand-crafted soaps and bath products to the Humble Lily. All proceeds benefit programming at Bethlehem House.

BETHLEHEM HOUSE WINTER WISH LIST

Gift cards for grocery, gas, or department stores • Pull ups • Stackable plastic drawers
• Storage totes • Diaper cream or Vaseline • Financial gifts



New or gently worn current style denim, purses, accessories, and women's clothing items sizes 0-16.

**Hours: Monday – Saturday 10am-6pm
Closed Sunday**

2580 S 90th Street, Suite 1 Omaha, NE 68124
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CONGRATULATIONS!

Brandy, Samantha, Denise, Kelly, Teyrr and Kyndra are all official graduates of Creighton's Financial Hope Collaborative. This past fall these residents attended the nine week course that launched them into a new understanding of financial readiness. Several of these recent graduates have already reached financial goals of improving credit scores, eliminating debt, owning a vehicle, opening a checking account and registering for school. This amazing community partnership is critically important to our Family Life Program, giving women the tools that connect the dots toward financial security and open doors to scholarship opportunities.

Employee Spotlight RACHEL BURNS – DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANT



My journey to Bethlehem House began several years ago when I was organizing a spiritual adoption program at my parish, St. Joan of Arc. At the end of nine months, a baby shower is thrown and all items are donated to a local charity. My sister told me about Bethlehem House so we decided to donate our items there and asked Gina Tomes to come and speak. I knew little about Bethlehem House at the time but when I heard Gina telling the stories of moms and

babies who chose life against all odds, something inside of me stirred and I knew in my heart this was where God was calling me to be. After the event I asked Gina how I could be involved as a volunteer and that's where it all began for me.

I fell in love with Bethlehem House and the work being done here and so continued over the years as a volunteer in different capacities as my life allowed. This past year I felt God's nudges growing stronger and knew I was ready to be a bigger part of what was happening here. Applying for the Development

Assistant position involved hope and a leap of faith. I am so grateful for the opportunity to work at a place whose mission is so in line with what Christ asks us to do which is to be "His hands and feet."

On a personal note I am, first and foremost, wife to James and mom to Samantha (14), Braeden (11), Gabrielle (8) and Emma Rose (9 months). I received my undergraduate degree in English many years ago and then after baby number two, I decided to go back to graduate school. I completed my Master's in Social Work with a graduate certificate in Gerontology in 2011. I spent several years as a social worker in long term care because I have a great affinity for older adults and am so grateful for the wonderful wisdom and perspective they have to offer when we are open to receiving it. I am so glad that my path has led me here. I am excited to get to know many of you as we work together to continue and grow the mission of Bethlehem House - to lovingly serve moms and babies in need.

I am so glad that my path has led me here.

FUNDRAISING & MATCH GIFT Update

Kicking off 11 years of service to homeless pregnant women, Bethlehem House held its fourth Annual Benefit on November 11. More than 525 people attended the banquet, held at the Embassy Suites La Vista, which included dinner, auction and live program exceed by Julie Cornell. The theme, Doors to Our Future, also serves as our 2017 initiative to strengthen our long-term support services to alumni residents of Bethlehem House. The event raised more than \$130,000 and brought new awareness to Bethlehem House's mission of housing and rehabilitation for pregnant women in crisis.

MATCH GIFT

In 2016 we lacked adequate funds to sustain our Three Keys Scholarship Fund. We are happy to report that, with your help, we raised more than \$30,000 in October and November, which were doubled with the anonymous \$30,000 local match gift. Scholarship funds for housing, transportation, and tuition are now available in 2017!

2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President Kevin Bartak	Members at Large Mike Bojanski Deacon Terry Ficenec Sister Patricia Forret
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Holly's letter

A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2016 was another busy year for the women and children at Bethlehem House. We've had so much to celebrate! The annual fundraiser brought both funds and awareness to our growing programs. With more than 170 graduate families in the community, their needs have been the natural driving force in our expansion efforts to ramp up our aftercare pathways. I look forward to strategically growing this year to make sure no pregnant mother feels hopeless, and every graduate leaves empowered with the knowledge and skills to maintain her healthy independence.

The amount of growth our families experience in one year is amazing. Heidi is one of the many BH mothers who stays connected for mentorship and resources. Her journey continues, and attributes your support with forever changing her future.

Holly

BETHLEHEM HOUSE CHRISTMAS

Christmas 2016 was one we will remember for a long time. With a full house and several residents expecting babies near Christmas, we decked the halls with excitement and hope.

This year **Michaela McColgen** and her **Northwest Omaha Moms** group planned a beautiful Christmas party for our 11 residents to enjoy. We enjoyed holiday-themed food and a beautiful dinner. The hosts also provided each resident with gifts for mom and her child. The ladies were overwhelmed and uniquely touched. One resident stated, "I could not believe people like this existed". We plan on connecting again with this amazing mom's group and inviting them to Bethlehem House for dinner.

Reality Church also hosted a spirited Christmas cookie baking night with all of our residents. Their congregation purchased

gifts for the residents and even made Christmas happen for the children currently living in foster care. Reality Church has gone far above and beyond nurturing each Bethlehem House resident. They have also helped with maintenance needs and have renovated several rooms at Bethlehem House including three bedrooms, the Overnight Coordinator office, and the living room. We Love Reality Church!

C&A Corporation, St. Mary's Bellevue, CHI Creighton Nurses, the Ortmeier Family, and the ladies from Steier Group also gifted each resident with lovely gift bags of special items. Christmas 2016 was a beautiful success!

Colleen's Story

In early 2016, Colleen moved back to Omaha from Florida after going through a rough divorce. Her ex-husband and 13-year-old daughter stayed in Florida. Her parents were also in Florida. Times were hard. Colleen lived in an extended stay hotel with a boyfriend for a while until he left her, at which time she moved in with a friend. Three weeks later, Colleen found out she was four and half months pregnant. In need of support, she left her friend's house and walked to the Lydia House - she knew she had to get her life back on track. Even though she was in a difficult situation and felt very alone, Colleen knew that this baby was a part of her and she had make things work for him. The people at the Lydia House told her about Bethlehem House and she moved in at five months pregnant.

"This pregnancy changed everything for me. I'm grateful for Bethlehem House for giving me a chance to turn my life around."

Colleen said that being pregnant without a father around was very hard, but the structure and program at Bethlehem House helps. In late December, Colleen gave birth to a healthy baby boy, Caleb. Before she got pregnant, she recounts partying a lot on the weekends but says now her focus is Caleb and showing him that she will always be there for him.



She plans to go back to work in February and is avidly looking to find her own place. She dreams of building a life and home. Colleen is grateful for Bethlehem House and the help it is providing her in creating stability for her son.

...a chance to turn my life around.

ALUMNI VOICE



Can you believe another year has flown past so quickly? Our year started out with a move. On January 30 we moved from the Bethlehem House to a spacious two bedroom apartment. Willow was six months and cutting her first teeth. I also applied to the Grace Abbott School of Social Work at UNO.

However, February 23 was the first day Willow got to meet and spend time with her father. It was hard for me to let go and share my baby, but it was for the best. Not to mention, I had my very own special Valentine this year.

Ready for spring, to not only shed all the layers, but anticipation of the end of the semester and for Willow to move from crawling to walking. We had 43 people in all who attended Willow's first birthday!

It was overwhelming, the feeling of hard work paying off, as I got accepted into the GASSW at UNO. We got to enjoy the summer before I started my two year program and Willow started her new daycare. It's a place where she can advance into preschool.

Stunned that we made it through the kickoff of the holidays in the midst of finals. I am happy to report, that out of four classes, I've received two A's so far.

To date we are working on simple words with Willow, such as drink, please and thank you.

Moving forward.

Another year has come and gone and we have been blessed in so many ways.

So I would like to take this time to thank you for your continued support. Without you we would not have had such a successful year!

Heidi ♥



GO ONLINE TO KEEP UP WITH OUR MOST RECENT EVENTS:
bethlehemhouseomaha.org

STAY CONNECTED WITH US DAILY

In addition to visiting our website, find us on Facebook -search Bethlehem House Omaha and the Humble Lily by Bethlehem House- where we post birth announcements, prayer requests, contests, special requests and photos of our community in action.



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