



Pregnancy & Parenting Residence

Spring Newsletter
2018

A Message From The Director

MOVING FORWARD

This past January marked the first anniversary of Sister Diane Masson's passing. Sr. Diane had a vision, and after six years of planning and untiring efforts, Gianna House Pregnancy and Parenting Residence has been brought to fruition here on the property of St. Veronica Parish.



Sr. Diane's vision is moving forward. We are making great progress as work on the last obstacle to opening to residents installing the sprinkler and fire prevention system—is scheduled to begin in March. While we await final approval for the sprinkler system specifications from the State Fire inspector for child care licensing, Gianna House is eager to have these tasks completed, as we have received new requests for housing from pregnant teens.

Although Sr. Diane is no longer with us her spirit lives, and we know that she is smiling down and excited about the progress we have made.

It truly has been a team effort from vision to reality. It could not have happened without *you*, our *community of caring*—all of whom have donated time, monies, services, ideas, prayers and solutions to help our mothers and children live healthier and happier lives.

Whether you give your time through volunteering, donating goods, services or dollars, or are one of the individuals and families we serve, thank you for your commitment to our mission. You are not waiting for someone to make a difference, you are the difference. You are changing lives and our community through action and advocacy while providing a path to a brighter future for mothers and their children.

We are confident that our resident program will be open by fall of 2018. Once the fire sprinkler system is complete, we will begin painting and flooring.

Jennifer Brubaker

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Cynthia Greening

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Sr. Theresa Mayrand, OP

Associate Director

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- A Mothers Story

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Passion and commitment are such important traits for a board member. Great board members hold themselves and our organization accountable. They take responsibility for their actions and the role they play in supporting and advancing Gianna House. They are passionate about our mission and help to share our mission with others. Gianna House is pleased to welcome Elizabeth (AKA Biz) Williamson and Cynthia Greening to the Board of Directors.



ELIZABETH (BIZ) WILLIAMSON

Biz Williamson came to Gianna House several years ago with her family to weed the backyard under the guidance of Sister Theresa. Like many others who encounter Gianna House, Biz fell in love with the house, the people and the mission. Biz went from volunteer gardener to co-chair of our fundraising event last September and helped raised over \$50,000 for Gianna House. She is now one of our most recent board members. Biz has a BS in elementary education and a Master of Arts in Teaching. Biz and her husband, John, have been married for 25 years and have five teenage children.

“I love Gianna House because it reminds me of John 10:10 when Jesus says, I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. Gianna House not only promotes life, but it is the hands and feet of Christ serving others so that their lives, which may seem hopeless, become full and abundant.” –Biz

CYNTHIA GREENING

Cindy Greening is a professional executive administrator, who currently serves as office administrator and Executive Assistant to the Dean of the Episcopal Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Detroit. Cindy has long and varied experience in support of top echelon corporate executives in addition to board governance, team-building and leadership, professional development, change management, communications, presentations, and event planning. Prior positions include a leading consulting firm, multiple hospital systems and major insurance companies.

Cindy is an active member of the Clinton Valley Kiwanis and Woman’s Life Chapter 911 *Macomb Angels*. She served twice as Chapter President of Executive Women International of Detroit-Windsor, supporting local and international community service projects. Cindy founded a nonprofit, *Hands of Hope for Tanzania* in 2013, raising money to provide for the education of orphaned children. She has also worked as an independent editor for local authors.

Cindy is happily married to husband, Bob, and together they have 6 children and 11 grandchildren. They love to travel and are active in their faith community, where Bob is a leader in the Knights of Columbus and Cindy serves as Lector and Eucharistic Minister.



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



Sr. Helen with Gianna Emanuela Molla, the daughter of St. Gianna who visited in 2017.

AN EVENING OUT

What mother would not delight in an evening out? In early December, 25 expectant and new mothers enjoyed such an evening at Gianna House when they attended our quarterly shower. It offered a time to meet other moms, receive important parenting tips, enjoy a nourishing meal, and delight in a raffle with enough prizes for all. Lillian Schreiber RN, Public Health Service Coordinator for Macomb County, provided us with materials to share about safe sleep, and Meredith Ammons addressed the importance of reading to infants, and demonstrated a lively reading session.

Kim Morales, Parent Liaison of Macomb County's Great Start, arranged for a wonderful catered meal of chicken, pasta, salad, vegetable, and rolls. She brought two staff members to lend a hand and they joined Gianna House Partners in caring for the infants while moms were dining. Each mother left the evening with a generous bag of infant clothing, diapers, wipes and other baby items, as well as a toiletry bag for themselves.

Great Start's participation in the shower culminated their year of amazing gifting to Gianna House through their \$16,000 Trusted Advisors Grant from the Michigan Department of Education. The grant was given to aid young mothers by providing education on early childhood development, safe sleep, and maternal infant health and nutrition. Great Start used their grant to purchase wonderful items for our mothers: 75 pack 'n plays, 25 combo carrier/strollers, 50 children's books, the Mayo Clinic's *Guide to Your Baby's First Year*, boppy pillows, cases of baby toiletries and so much more. Immense thanks goes out to Macomb County's Great Start's Kelly Isrow who obtained the grant, and to her Parent Liaison, Kim Morales who frequented Gianna House, bearing grant gifts and presenting a series of Parent Café sessions. What huge blessings Macomb County's Great Start Collaborative brought to Gianna House!



SR. HELEN SUSALLA, CSJ

What an amazing gift Gianna House received when Sr. Helen Susalla, CSJ came in October 2016 to lend a hand! A sister of St. Joseph who taught and directed Religious Education and was a Guidance Counselor at Holy Family School in Rochester for 22 years, she now spends each Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday at Gianna House and has never stopped moving. With Sr. Helen's amazing organizational skills, she finds a place for all incoming donated items, has organized clothing rooms for new and used infant and mom clothing, and has seen that future residential rooms are stocked with all necessary items. Helen's zest for life and radiant joy are special gifts that brighten our days. And what a great ambassador she is! Her deep zeal, passion and commitment to Gianna House has led her friends and family, congregation and Holy Family Students to donate as well, bringing in close to \$25,000 over the past year and a half. God certainly blessed us greatly when Sr. Helen partnered with GH!



A WARM, WELCOMING CENTER OF SUPPORT, LEARNING AND ENRICHMENT

VISION

To change the lives forever of teen moms and their babies by providing the opportunity to live in a safe and loving environment that provides education, life skills and career planning that positively impact the youth, their child and their community.



Gianna House's Outreach Program has grown by leaps and bounds. During 2017, 658 services were rendered to mothers through classes and provision of vital items as diapers, wipes, baby clothing and toiletries, up from 244 services in 2016. The items given at times included formula, strollers, bouncers, high chairs—provided through the generosity of local parishes, women's groups, Knights of Columbus, schools and individuals. Yet these provisions describe only a part of what Gianna House offers.

Here, mothers find a warm and welcoming center of support, learning and enrichment—a place to meet and share with other moms through core classes that help mothers grow personally and as parents: Prenatal and Infant Care, Parenting, and Personal Growth. Enrichment classes offer additional benefits: The Spiritual Journey class nourishes the spirit while Yoga relaxes the body. Scrapbooking helps mothers preserve precious memories. Crocheting and sewing classes offer helpful skills which could lead to entrepreneurial work. Lined tote bags were made in early sewing classes. Moms made

covers for their rocker pillows, receiving blankets, burp cloths, a yoga mat, and an infant dress. A couple of the mothers were so thrilled with their new sewing talent that they purchased sewing machines at thrift stores. It is wonderful to see these women feel empowered by the new skills they have acquired. Great gratitude goes to our partners who teach the classes and those who provide sewing machines and other supplies. What a blessing!



Elaine Bisdorf teaching scrap booking.

One Woman, One Parish, One Amazing Gift!

Lynn Dodge, a parishioner of St Clare of Montefalco in Grosse Pointe Park, accomplished an unbelievable dream. She had toured Gianna House 3 years ago when she brought her two high school daughters and other members of their Grosse Pointe South's Students for Life group to decorate Gianna House for Christmas. Knowing Gianna House was now seeking sponsors for the Mom and Baby Suites that are being prepared; she recently approached Fr. Andrew Kowalczyk, her pastor at St Clare, asking if she could seek parishioner donations to sponsor a suite for \$5,000. With his permission, she made her appeal after all liturgies the weekend of February 10, leaving Gianna House brochures and donation envelopes with parishioners until the following weekend. She knew her parish was generous, but their generosity far exceeded her goal of \$5,000; \$10,422 was contributed within the one week! She was delighted that St. Clare Parish could sponsor 2 suites to house teen moms and their infants once residency begins this fall.

When asked what motivated her to take on this appeal, Lynn replied: "As I study the pro-life situation, go to meetings and marches, and visit pregnancy aid centers, I am profoundly aware of how easy it is to say "don't terminate your pregnancy" and then go home to my own life, protected from the difficult decisions and lack of options that some women face. Gianna House provides a very real and tangible option for these teens."



St. Clair of Montefelco

Great gratitude goes out to Lynn, her Pastor and St. Clare parishioners for this outstanding gift. One Woman, One Parish, One Amazing Gift!

HOUSE MOTHER WANTED

About Gianna House

Gianna House currently serves as a community outreach program that aims to provide education and support to families with young children. These services assist women through this very challenging period in their lives. Services include educational classes and support as well as necessary items such as diapers, wipes, and clothing.

In the fall of 2018, Gianna House will open a residential program for pregnant teens 17 years of age and under. Our aim is to change the lives of these adolescents who have chosen LIFE for their babies. The home accommodates up to seven teens and their infants, regardless of their religious affiliation.

Gianna House is looking to hire a live-in house mother who will be provided with a salary and her own private quarters.

Primary Job Responsibilities

The House Mother is responsible for assisting in all aspects of residential operations and supports delivery of programs and services in fulfillment of the mission of Gianna House. The House Mother ensures the maintenance of safe, secure, and healthy housing for the women and babies in residence.

- Provide staff coverage in the residence overseeing basic operations, including chores, curriculum, and/or follow up with residents on assigned structured activities or other resident responsibilities identified by the Executive Director.
- Ensure that threats to safety or serious health issues regarding the residents and babies, including the on-set of labor, is handled properly.
- Supervise/mentor clients as a motherly influence that will promote an atmosphere of safety and trust. Through modeling and coaching, assist with mentoring teens and staff in house maintenance, food prep, nutrition, and other life skills necessary to become self-sufficient.
- Complete required documentation, including incident reports.
- Other duties as assigned.

Interested applicants should send a cover letter and resume to jbrubaker.giannahouse@gmail.com.

“Life will be full of ups and downs. It will be one tough ride. But your love for your child will be the anchor that will see you through it all”.

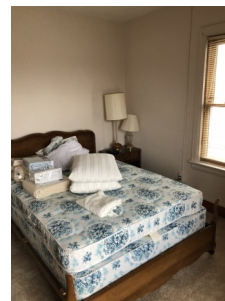
Requirements

- Minimum of High School diploma
- Have personal or professional experience with the population that Gianna House serves
- Ability to work with a diverse group of individuals with respect and an open mind
- Ability to give direction to residents, while maintaining a friendly, professional working relationship
- Valid driver’s license
- Willingness to live at Gianna House (see pictures below)

Education, Skills, Experience

- Previous experience in human services field or related education
- Excellent judgment skills
- Basic computer literacy in word processing and spreadsheet software
- Strong crisis intervention skills
- Ability to maintain confidential information
- Good communication skills, verbal and written

House Mothers Private Quarters



Partner Impact

2017



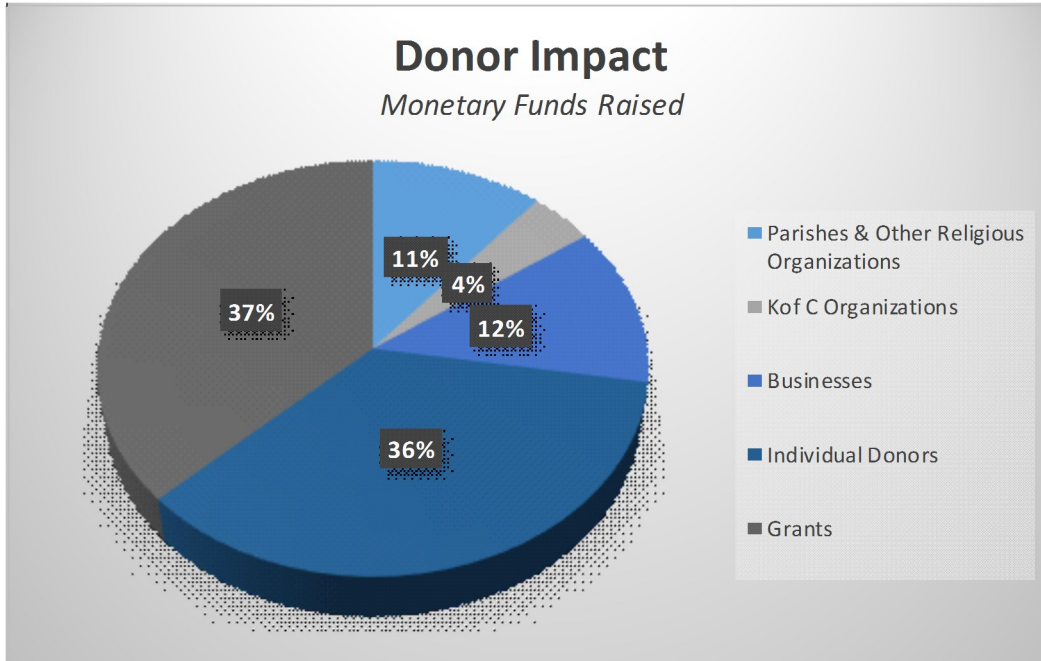
◆ 3 staff
◆ 8 Board members



REASONS WHY IT TAKES A COMMUNITY

1. Other people to love you and your children
2. Your kids get a bigger support system
3. Parenting is hard
4. Life is short
5. A strong sense of family creates strong children
6. Sometimes others have the better ideas
8. Other people have different talents and skills
9. People create a sense of community
10. Kids can help their “community” as much as the community helps them

Donor Impact



DONOR IMPACT
2017

Parishes & Other Religious Organizations- **\$34,754**

K of C Organizations - **\$13,054**

Businesses- **\$38,783**

Individual Donors- **\$111,361**

Grants **\$116,100**

DONORS

38 businesses and organizations donated to Gianna House

A MOTHERS STORY

My name is Tiffany Vance. I attend Gianna House. When I first attended, it changed my life. When I got pregnant with my 6th child I was mentally drained and didn't know how I was going to get through my pregnancy. The day I walked into Gianna House I felt so loved. I started attending classes and have learned so many valuable skills.

I have attended cooking classes and have learned how to make clothes for myself and my family. I call Gianna House "Heaven" because if it was not for their incredible caring and committed staff I don't know where I would be today. The people that work at Gianna House make me feel welcome and accepted. Gianna House saved my life and my baby. They even told me that my baby I was pregnant with was a blessing from God. And with that blessing I named her, Mary Justice Dean.



Tiffany Vance—Sewing Class

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MISSION

The goal of Gianna House is to provide a safe residence for pregnant teens and their newborn infants while providing spiritual, educational and parenting support and resources to all pregnant women.

Gianna House is a 501 (c) (3) Michigan non-profit organization. We welcome any donation of time talent and/or treasure.



A COMMITMENT TO OUR DONORS

Gianna House takes seriously its responsibilities to donors and the ethical use of donor dollars. Our fundraising budgets are carefully considered each year through our budgeting process and are used in a thoughtful way and practical manner in order to have the most impact on our programs. We consider our donors our partners and work to maintain long-standing relationships with each donor. Our goal is to match your wishes for impacting mothers, children and our communities with the appropriate services and programs. We are all about families at Gianna House. We welcome all donors and partners as part of that family.



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