

# President's Message



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As we cling to the sanctity of life and God's gifts of love, caring, and forgiveness, we are experiencing a worldwide virus associated with much illness and death. Dealing with COVID-19, our lives have been altered in so many ways as we stay sheltered and wonder what the new normal will look like as we emerge from a pervasive series of economic and isolation-related changes. At the same time, we are grateful for the dedicated and heroic efforts of those who support the life sustaining needs of victims of COVID-19 and the economic hardships imposed by its contagion. Each day, we are one day closer to getting this unseen enemy past us.

We are most grateful for those who have miraculously recovered from COVID-19 through the relentless efforts of others -- **just as we are grateful** for those young teens who have chosen life for their unborn babies and who rely on our mission driven efforts to support them through each of their journeys. **It is in this that Gianna House staff and volunteers find joy.** We are committed to help keep teens safe and to provide a loving, nurturing, and empowering environment. In doing God's work, Gianna House is blessed to be ministering and walking in His path.

During these difficult months, staff leaders have written and implemented CDC-compliant COVID-19 guidelines to protect the welfare of residents and staff. The added responsibilities were met with caring concern for one another. While Community Outreach classes have been suspended, community mothers have received much needed supplies using safe distancing guidelines. A government grant to temporarily support the salaries for 12 staff members was granted, which has enabled Gianna House to preserve the resources needed to maintain vital operations. Meetings among staff, Board members, and outside agencies are held virtually to ensure the continuity of projects and the efficient use of donor contributions and in-kind efforts. Further, efforts continue to attract and recruit new Board members with the skills and experience necessary to take Gianna House to the next level as we become a more complex and comprehensive residential and community-based service organization.

In this newsletter you will read updates on several of exciting projects and programs including:

Digital Version of the Newsletter – For the first time, those who have shared their email addresses with us, will receive our Spring Newsletter online. This means less paper mail for you and lower costs to Gianna House for mailing. It also makes us better stewards of our environment. *Please share your feedback with us at [giannahouse.org](http://giannahouse.org).*



Mary Alice Simpson, MS, RN– Board President

*Continued on page 2*

## President's Message Continued

The New Gianna House Website – The service features of our website are under construction in conjunction with a marketing strategy that better targets what our supporters want to see. Upgrades will include a new web design and will offer more streamlined navigation to amenities like secure merchant services [for event registrations and donations] and links to other services. Users will be able to update personal information such as name, address, and preferred email address, and will be able to see how their donations are being used to support Gianna House programs and services. Readers will find information on how we are partnering with other service agencies to leverage shared programs and gain greater visibility. Long-time and new donors alike can read testimonies from our residents and other local mothers about how Gianna House is impacting their lives.

Residential Expansion: Discussions are underway to open the second wing to accommodate additional residents, including restoration of the bath and shower rooms and installation of a separate HVAC system to provide heat and air conditioning to both wings. Since we opened to residents, we have received a multitude of inquiries from pregnant 18-year-olds, who Gianna House is not currently licensed to house. This has become a pressing need for Gianna House to consider with this new expansion.

Elsewhere in this edition:

- \* Meet our New Board Member – Christine Nathman-Parisi who brings financial and treasury experience to Gianna House.
- \* Spring Appeal Letter – Please respond in whatever manner your heart and ability support. When someone prays, ours are the hands He uses to answer those prayers. Please prayerfully consider making a donation at this time. There are new COVID-19 federal tax-deductible incentives to donate to Gianna House.
- \* Grant Development on Caffeine! Read Cindy Greening's article: "*For those who choose life...*"

And goodness, if we talk about a *calling*, it is I who has had the honor and the joy every day to serve the Gianna House Board for the past two years. I was called to this mission in such a compelling way as a volunteer and then as a Board member who saw such potential in the mission that I had to be a contributing part of it. I love the dedication and support of local and statewide partners like you, who have been there for Gianna House each step of the way.

This past year as Board President has given me the privilege of finding solutions to challenges and ensuring operational stabilization through right-fit staffing and development of policies and procedures that have strengthened our infrastructure. Working with a talented and engaged Board of Directors, as well as an impassioned and dedicated staff, Gianna House has come an exceptionally long way in realizing Sr. Diane Masson's vision.

My husband, Bob, and I plan to relocate to the east coast this summer to be near our children and grandchildren. It is with sweet sadness that I step down in May and hand the Presidential baton to Cindy Greening, our superlative Vice President, who will more than fill my shoes and help take Gianna House to new heights. Cindy has the full respect and support of the Board members and of the staff. Elizabeth Williamson will step into the Vice President role to complete the Officer ranks.

It has been such an honor and privilege for me to serve Gianna House. In God's love and for the privilege of helping to improve underserved lives, I thank you.

Mary Alice Simpson, MS, RN  
Board President and Friend to Gianna House



## For those who choose life ...

Why did you get involved with Gianna House? What moved your heart? For me, as a woman who once was a single mother, it was the indisputable belief that if we are going to ask women to choose life, then we should be there to give them a hand when they do – to put our money where our mouth is, so to speak. Not a handout, but a hand *up*. Not creating a lifetime of dependency, but providing young mothers with the emotional and educational resources to become good parents and self-sustaining, contributing members of our community.



There is a huge gap between middle and upper income families and those who are raised on the margins of our society - the ones who are too often judged to be *less than*: less motivated, less educated, and somehow less worthy. But Jesus said, “Whatever you do for the least of these, you do for me,” and from that, one woman, Sr. Diana Masson, planted the seed that is Gianna House Pregnancy & Parenting Residence. Now it’s up to you and me to water and nurture that seed to bring Gianna House into fullness of life.

So let me ask again: Why did you get involved? What moved your heart? Was it finding out that government programs leave many women falling through the gaps? Was it seeing how Gianna House is successfully bridging those gaps? Maybe you’re a healthcare professional who knows how high the infant mortality rates are for underserved women and children – and make no mistake, teens are still very much children, pregnant or not. Maybe you’re in a social work environment and you know that the only way to build healthy communities is through building strong and healthy families.

Whatever put Gianna House on your personal radar, please be sure to keep it there and in focus. We are at a critical juncture in our growth, as we come up on one year as a licensed residence for pregnant teens, and continue our outreach program, now in its fifth year. Our annual Spring Appeal is in process and your support is needed now more than ever. The annual Golf Outing is scheduled for August 14; golfer and sponsor letters are on their way.

But we know that we cannot sustain and grow Gianna House on donations and fundraising alone. Far from it. So we have put together a dedicated team of grant writers who have been trained, and a robust process has been put into place with a single-minded focus on continuous submission of grant applications. There are a lot of private, state and federal grants available, and we are going after those grants.

There are a lot of dynamic projects in the works, including a soon-to-be-appointed team of experienced facility managers and builders who will develop plans to renovate the other wing of the building to accommodate additional mothers. These are exciting times and we will keep you posted.

Whatever your reason for giving your prayers, support and resources to Gianna House, God bless you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cynthia D. Greening".

Vice President, Board of Directors



Cynthia Greening-Board Vice President

# LOOKING BACK ----A JOURNEY OF FAITH

One year ago Gianna House became a licensed residence for pregnant teens, and many of you celebrated with us at our ribbon cutting. Ten years before, Gianna House was simply a vision in the mind and heart of Sr. Diane Masson – and what a journey of faith we have walked!

Initially there was only a dream – no building, no funding. The search for a suitable residence had a lot of ups and downs, but Gianna House at last opened in the former St Veronica convent, whose pastor, Fr. Stan Pachla, became our champion. The challenges seemed endless as we strived to bring the building up to code and ready it for occupancy, not the least of which was funding. Thanks to the diligent and creative efforts of so many, our number of donors increased, state grants were awarded, the necessary renovations were completed, our license was issued, and our faith was rewarded.

During the years it took to renovate, God was leading us to respond to needs beyond housing pregnant teens - the needs of pregnant and new mothers who were struggling to provide for their little ones. This led to the formation of our Community Outreach Program. Despite this not being part of the original plan, the Outreach Program has grown into a vibrant and growing ministry that has served hundreds of women and children on the margins through educational classes such as parenting, childbirth, personal growth, nutrition, sewing, and finance management. Additionally, as donations of baby items began pouring in, we distributed those as well through an “Earn as You Learn” program. Mothers earned “Baby Bucks” for attending classes that they could use to “purchase” baby clothes, diapers, etc., giving them a hand-up rather than just a hand-out. Classes also afford much needed social support.

God provides, and we have received unsolicited offers from nurses, social workers, public health educators, lactation specialists, therapists, reading specialists, music and movement teachers, a family issues lawyer, educators from MSU Extension and CARE of Southeast Michigan, Great Start leaders, behavioral therapists, and instructors of yoga, sewing and crocheting all offering to teach classes! And many other volunteers support the Outreach office in reception, data entry, and child care while moms are in class. How greatly blessed this faith journey has been!

During 2019 alone, we had 1,136 mother visits; they attended 978 classes; and they received over 4,000 baby items. On average, our Outreach mothers are in their 20s and 30s and come from 21 cities throughout the tri-county area. One of our regular attendees shared what draws her to Gianna House:



*Community Outreach Director, Sr. Theresa Mayrand & Kahty Przybysz, Volunteer Thursday Receptionist*



***Alissa made a hat for her son during sewing class at Gianna House. Read more about***



***Carmen & her son– Community Outreach Program***

“My name is Monique and I have a beautiful daughter, Serenity, who is 15 months old. I have been attending Gianna House since the beginning of my pregnancy...they are a support group and family. The classes they offer here are the classes I need to be a better me and to be as good a mom that I can be. I also meet some other mothers here I can relate to...here we don't judge each other no matter what. We try to build one another up. I can honestly say I am happy that Gianna House came into my life when it did, and I'm happy that I met the wonderful moms who come here as well. Thank you for everything that you do for us and will do for us. We truly appreciate you all here.”

- *Monique, Community Outreach Mother*

It has been quite a faith journey that birthed Gianna House as both a residence for pregnant teens and an outreach to mothers in need. We give great thanks to our loving God for blessing us so richly.

Sr. Theresa Mayrand, Community Outreach Director

## Alissa & Bennett

I have been attending Gianna House for almost one year taking classes that have helped me obtain resources, knowledge, new skills, and confidence to prepare me for motherhood. Gianna House really cares, and wants to see each family thrive.

In taking classes I earn Baby Bucks that can be redeemed for diapers, wipes, toiletries, clothes, toys and so much more. I have received baby shoes, socks, crib mattress pads and sheets, maternity clothes, and canned food. And, in season, from the Gianna House garden, there are fresh herbs, fruits, and veggies. Because of Gianna House, I am able to provide everything my baby needs.

The classes I have attended were fueled with free information from professionals that would be difficult to get on my own on topics such as infant safe sleep, toddler oral care, debt reduction and improving credit, nutrition on a budget, prenatal & infant care, and parenting self-care. Enrichment classes, like sewing and crocheting, are fun and rewarding and I made many items for my child such as a hat, bibs, burp rags, pants, and a quilted Christmas stocking. I also really enjoyed the Christian Yoga and scrapbooking classes. And I so appreciated the warm and trustworthy volunteers who watch our children while we are in class.

When I was newly pregnant, sick, and overwhelmed, I came to Gianna House. I had no money, my spirit was broken, and I could barely work. Gianna House was a healthy step in the right direction for my mental health. It was wonderful being surrounded by other women going through pregnancy, already mothers, and volunteers who view children as a blessing. Gianna House is a safe space for women to go and get the emotional support they need. Vision Quest, Love Compassion and Forgiveness, Personal Growth, and A Spiritual Journey were the classes that built my confidence and spirit up the most. Set up as group discussions where we are allowed to express ourselves freely and through positive messages, they often conclude with personal goal setting.

Gianna House has been a Godsend for my family. I have gained everything including community. I would recommend it to any mother who wants a well-rounded education in parenthood or who is struggling to make ends meet. I would also invite those who have gently used baby items to donate, to do so to this organization because it will be put to good use! - *Alissa, Community Outreach Mother*



Monique & Serenity



*Baby Bennett*



7th Annual

# Sr. Diane Memorial Golf Outing

**Friday, August 14 ~ Greystone Golf Club  
67500 Mound Road, Washington, MI 48095**

We hope this message finds you and your loved ones safe and healthy. As we adapt to a new normal and a way of life that has been upended, we need to get back into action on our careers, education, and the community service projects that must continue to be funded for society's most vulnerable citizens.

To that end, Gianna House is pleased to announce its **7th Annual Sr. Diane Memorial Golf Outing which will be held at Greystone Golf Club on Friday, August 14, 2020.** We hope you will consider joining us this year for a great day of golf. Registration begins at 8:00 a.m. with a 9:30 a.m. shotgun start. The format will be a four-person scramble. The cost this year is \$125 if you register before July 15 and \$150 thereafter. The price includes driving range service, 18 holes of golf with cart, continental breakfast, hotdog grill with a beverage on the turn, plated filet and chicken dinner with a 2 hour premium bar. Silent auction, raffle and prizes will also follow the scramble.

This event is one of our major fundraisers. Please join us and help continue to make Gianna House a reality for those young women most in need of a residential care facility to bring their unborn baby to a full and healthy birth. Gianna House has delivered community outreach programs and services for four years and was licensed in May 2019 with the State of Michigan to open as a safe residence for pregnant teens and their newborn infants. All of these services are available at no charge and we rely heavily on the generous support of individuals and businesses to help the underserved.

Donations for silent auction items and raffle prizes are also being accepted. Some ideas include gift certificates for items or services, memorabilia, sporting event tickets, themed raffle baskets, golf items - anything you would like to receive as a prize.

Please check the golf registration form included in this newsletter for a variety of sponsorship opportunities. If you are interested in golfing, a sponsorship opportunity, donating items for the silent auction and/or raffle, or making a donation for this worthwhile cause, complete the registration form and mail with your check or credit card information to Gianna House. If you are not a golfer, join us for the dinner and reception! You can also register online at [www.giannahouse.org](http://www.giannahouse.org) (noting "golf" in the comment line). A letter confirming your donation will be issued on receipt of payment. Please note that for tax purposes, Gianna House,

**EIN #30-0703625**, is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

If you have any questions, please contact Cynthia Greening, Golf Outing Chairperson, at [cynthiagreening1@yahoo.com](mailto:cynthiagreening1@yahoo.com) or 586-549-5879. The mothers and children we serve are deeply appreciative of your generous support.

God Bless You,  
Gianna House Board of Directors

# Happy Anniversary

It's hard to believe it has been a year since Gianna House opened as a pregnant teen residence. To date, we have been blessed to have served 13 young teens and two beautiful babies in a safe, nurturing, and educational environment. Many of our teens have had to face tremendous obstacles prior to coming to Gianna House. Many, until they arrived, had never even received prenatal medical care. But with the help of caring, supportive and dedicated staff our teens are learning personal and financial independence to help them eventually launch their path to success and a better future for themselves and their child. Our teens are continuing their high school education while learning budgeting and banking skills, nutritious meal planning and preparation, life and relationship building skills, all while receiving physical and mental health support. It's true what they say, "it takes a village to raise a child" and we couldn't do it without all of our dedicated staff at Gianna House.

Jennifer Brubaker, Executive Director

## *Gina Hill shares why she loves being the GH House Mother*

I opened my home to teenagers many times over the years before coming to Gianna House. Some years ago, a friend gave me a plaque that echoes what I believe God instilled in me. It reads:

*In my heart, I believe in second chances,  
I believe in grace and mercy,  
I believe in saying, "I'm sorry",  
I believe in hugs,  
I believe in family,  
But most of all I believe in love,  
God's love.*

My time at Gianna House has given me ample opportunities to express this every time a young mother arrives at our door. Each girl is unique in her circumstances, her relationships, her history, and her expectations. Each girl is also the same, because she has opened herself up to allowing me to assist her with the most exciting and the most trying time in her life.

There is a sense of satisfaction that, while she is learning about her new baby's development, feeling her grow and move inside her, and making plans to care for her, she is not neglecting her academics or health. Helping her to navigate being a new mother, becoming more mature, and growing healthy emotionally is all worth the work, in my opinion. I share her joy when her baby first rolls over or pulls herself up! There is nothing like it!

The challenges that arise are generally minor compared to the rewards. We have all had to adapt and adjust because Gianna House is a new a program. We try one thing that works with one girl and learn it doesn't work with another. But it's all good! When young mothers come to Gianna House, there is work to be done by all of us. Usually our new residents have experienced hard knocks causing layers of anger, frustration and mistrust of others. Through patience, acceptance, and listening without judgment, I endeavor to establish trust between us. Hopefully, she will sense acceptance and security here.

There is a truth found in Scripture that I stand by and encourage each girl to embrace:

*"For I know the plans I have for you", says the Lord,  
"plans to prosper you and not to harm you,  
plans to give you hope and a future."  
Jeremiah 29:11*



*Eugenia Hill– House Mother, celebrating a resident's birthday.*

## The Unsung Heroes of Gianna House

During this pandemic, companies and organizations world-wide have taken time to recognize their essential employees. At Gianna House we know all of our employees are essential. We honor our monitors, Sr. Dorothy, Earlene, Sandra, Jennika, Margaret, and Techreshia, who come to Gianna House every day to share their love and care with the residents.

Along with administering medication, maintaining daily schedules, assisting in meal preparation, and supervising chores, during eight hour shifts, our monitors spend quality time with our residents. Often the residents and the monitors are seen together watching a movie or hanging out chatting in the “Bubble Gum Room.” Our monitors take time to hear our teens and encourage them to be and do their best.

Monitor Margaret, shared that Gianna House is her family now. She said she spends more time with her GH family than her own. Recently, the group gathered for an Easter Dinner feast! Birthday parties are also a big part of the Gianna House family.

Thank you, monitors, for all you do every day to help make Gianna House a home and a family.



***Sr. Dorothy Korie,  
Residential Monitor***

## ***Meet Our New Board Member***

The Board warmly welcomed Christine Nathman-Parisi as our newest voting Board member in March. Christine will become Board Treasurer as Tom Masson returns to Board Secretary. Tom graciously assumed the role of Treasurer in May 2019 while the Board sought a CPA with finance, tax administration, internal audit, and risk management expertise. The Board remains focused on fiscal responsibility and transparency in accounting and reporting and will leverage its newest member’s skills. Christine’s energy is infectious and her laser focus on planning Board member education and operational efficiency are the hallmarks of her unanimous approval to join the Board.

Employed as Manager of Plant Controlling at Detroit Diesel Corporation, a subdivision of Daimler Trucks of North America, Christine joins the board with over 20 years of diversified business experience and progressive executive decision-making expertise.

As its newest Board member, Christine was drawn to Gianna House for its mission to support teens and women who have chosen life for their unborn babies. She is driven by a desire to support and improve society’s at-risk citizens by reducing poverty.

Christine lives with her husband, Bernardo, in Grosse Pointe Woods. They have raised 6 children and enjoy 2 grandchildren scattered across Oregon, Montana, and Nevada. Her hobbies that help her decompress from a demanding job include tennis, travel, gardening, and cooking.



***Christine Nathman-Parisi—Treasurer***



## A CONVENIENT WAY TO SUPPORT GIANNA HOUSE



Gianna House is participating in the Kroger Community Rewards Program and we invite you to choose Gianna House as your charity. It works through your Kroger Plus Card purchases. If you don't have a Kroger Plus Card, stop in at any Kroger customer service counter and ask for one.

If you have a Kroger Plus Card, simply go online at <http://krogercommunityrewards.com>. If you don't already have a Kroger Plus Online Account, select **CREATE AN ACCOUNT**. Enter all relevant data for your account.

Once you have a Kroger Plus Online Account, select **SIGN IN** and enter your sign-in ID and Password. Then select **ENROLL NOW**. Enter your organization number **37049** for Gianna House and select **SEARCH**. Next select Gianna House and select **ENROLL**. That's all there is to it. If you are having an issue with your password and or email address, call 1-800-KROGERS, press 5 for customer service, then press 5 to speak to a customer service representative.

**Thank you to those who shop Kroger and designate Gianna House on your Kroger Rewards account. From this program, GH receives a small donation from Kroger for each dollar you spend — at no cost to you. This designation must be renewed each year so re-enroll in your Kroger rewards.**

Did you know that you can now support Gianna House with every purchase you make on [Amazon](#)? Make sure you are on the [AmazonSmile](#) page and select Gianna House Foundation as the charity of your choice. 0.5% of your purchase goes straight into our bank account and it adds up!



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## A commitment to Our Donors

### 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 underserved women in our programs.

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



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 to be our partners and work to maintain long-standing relationships with each. Our goal is to match your wishes for impacting mothers, children and our communities with appropriate services and programs. We are all about families at Gianna House. We welcome all donors and partners as part of that family.

*Unsubscribe– If you wish to remove your name from our mailing list, please email*

*[info@giannahouse.org](mailto:info@giannahouse.org)*