

Greetings

from our house to yours!



January/February 2015

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A MESSAGE FROM MAUREEN

The holiday season began with our *Annual Reader's Theater* under the direction of our loyal volunteer Diane Andrews. It was such a delight to have a full audience with adequate performing space and room to entertain afterwards.

On Dec. 12th members of The Agape Theresians, led by Rita Ferguson, elf extraordinaire, arrived with a spectacular Christmas Tree and decorations for the community room and reception area. The scene was set and we were into holiday mode.

As the month progressed many, many generous friends brought gifts and opportunities to celebrate the season. One evening Duchesne students with Sr. Karam, Kathy Manning and Robbie Miller brought cocoa, cookies and carols. Robbie was joined by her Bible Study Group from Sugar Grove Church of Christ who brought personalized gift bags for each resident. The women were thrilled to receive their very own copy of "Jesus Calling".

In addition to parties, plays and festivities, we have also been about the business of Angela House. We recently welcomed our newest board member, Stephen Loftin and anticipate the addition of more members in the coming months.

As we embark on our Strategic Planning Process, we continue to focus on the future and our desire to make the best possible use of our new space. None of this would be possible without the care, concern and generosity of our many supporters. Please know that each of you hold a very special place in our hearts and prayers.

-Maureen O'Connell, OP, Executive Director



Healthy and Whole

Healthcare for the Homeless Houston's Healthy and Whole program isn't just about yoga classes and running 5K's - did you know we also offer a way for the women to see what their future can be through our "Lunch with a Graduate" program? Every quarter we invite an Angela House graduate to tell us her story while we all share a meal together. The graduate talks about how she found Angela House, what challenges she faced while she was here, and then how life has been since leaving the house. The rationale behind this program is to have a graduate describe to us what it has taken to totally change the course of her life, because we all have something to learn from that. But this is especially meaningful to our current residents because they can hear straight from someone who has walked in their shoes, that truly, there is a future for them. The luncheon also allows us to celebrate the graduate because it is so important to honor that kind of hard work and commitment to change. Lunch with a Graduate has rapidly become an important part of the women's time here at Angela House and is a critical component of Healthy and Whole's emphasis on peer support.





A Decision to Change, by Dee

My name is LaDeana and as a little girl I was so happy. But one day my life was turned upside down; I remember thinking “why is this happening to me?”. I didn’t know how to handle the bad things that were happening in my life, and I turned from a happy little girl into a hurt and distraught woman. I lived that way for a long time. Then one day I finally made a decision to change my life and try to get that happiness I lost so long ago back. I had a choice to make, and I made the best choice I could, by coming to Angela House. It hasn’t been easy, and I’ve had a lot of rough days, but it’s working out. I am finding myself here. Although sometimes I get frustrated, I realize I must give myself time and with that time, those frustrations will ease up. I now have the environment, resources, love, care and concern Angela House provides to thank for that. Angela House truly is a blessing.



Success Stories

The mission of Angela House is “To successfully transition women into society after incarceration.” We see beautiful transformations here at Angela House every day; some small steps, some large life changes.

Our recent graduate Kandra has moved on, working full time in the community. Currently 7 of our 14 residents are employed; one is going to school while taking classes at a local community college.

Our women show remarkable resilience and put in hard work to achieve these changes, but they could not happen without your interest, time, talent and material support. We are so grateful to you, the faithful community of Angela House supporters!



St. Pius X High School students share their time, talent and treasure with Angela House. St. Pius X High School juniors joined us at Angela House for several hours before their Junior Retreat. They organized our clothing room, fixed our storage closet so we can actually get in and out of the door, and even got our TV to behave (a talent we older people do not possess!). They also interacted beautifully with our residents; their kindness and respect impressed us all very much. A few short weeks later, we were invited to St. Pius X and presented with a donation; this was above and beyond all our expectations! The young people were wonderful guides and ambassadors, and we hope to spend time with them again in the near future. Our thanks to the entire St. Pius X High School community.





Volunteer Spotlight - Maggie Corcoran

Maggie started her volunteer career at Angela House answering phones, but wanted more interaction with the residents. In August she began tutoring women who needed help preparing for their GED test, worked one-on-one with residents to polish up resumes, helped with interview skills... anything our residents need, Ms. Maggie is there to share her time and prodigious talents. We love Ms. Maggie and are so grateful to have her here at Angela House.

From the Board

The Board and Staff have launched the preparation of a new strategic plan for Angela House. Why?

First, it's been three years since the prior plan was developed. And, second, the major accomplishment from that plan (to acquire a permanent residence) has been achieved, giving Angela House a new reality from which to envision its future.

The most straight-forward definition of "strategic planning" is: setting goals; determining actions to achieve the goals; and mobilizing resources to execute the actions. Simple to say - harder to do. And so, to that extent, the Board has hired Sterling Associates to assist us. More specifically, Kimberly Sterling and Loubel Cruz Galik are the primary account executives working with us.

The initial phase of the project is well underway: accessing our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (often abbreviated "SWOT"). To organize this phase, we are looking at ourselves by the major components which are essential in making Angela House work: the facility; finances; human resources; development (fund raising); and governance (board). Once all the parts are completed, the Board will spend Saturday, March 28 in a full-day retreat to create the final plan. So, stay tuned. In a future newsletter we will feature the salient points of the new plan. And, maybe, we'll be so sophisticated that we can share an electronic version of the entire plan, on request.

-Willy Kuehn, Angela House Board of Directors

FotoFest

The women of Angela House have embarked on a photography journey of the heart. We focused on portraiture and setting intentions for the new year in our latest project. Each of the women had the opportunity to sit for a portrait and took turns helping each other look their best in the lighting setup.



We spent time analyzing magazine ads and we discussed the difference between what was real and what was photoshopped. With the new year approaching, we spent time choosing a word for the year rather than making resolutions and we wrote about how our lives might be different and better if we focused on our words. All the women spent time making some photographs with the cameras provided by the Literacy Through Photography program. Each woman selected one image to overlay onto their portrait along with their word of the year as a reminder of what they can accomplish for themselves when they set their intentions and follow through to completion: their hard work shines through.

-Angie Donier, Resident Artist, FotoFest Houston





Angela House
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Houston, TX 77087
www.angelahouse.org



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The mission of
Angela House:
*“To successfully transition
women into
society after incarceration.”*

www.angelahouse.org

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

OUR WISH LIST

Gift Cards

- Kroger, Fiesta
- Walgreens or CVS
- Metro Bus Cards

Miscellaneous

- Postage **STAMPS** (*Forever*)
- Women's cotton underwear
- Shampoo and Conditioner
- Umbrellas
- 25-40 Gallon Trash Bags
- Bathroom Tissue
- Copy Paper
- Multi-Fold Paper Towels
- Pump hand soap

If anyone has a washing machine that needs a new home, we will welcome it with open arms!

You can also check our website, www.angelahouse.org, for links to some of the items we need.

THANK YOU!