

opening doors

Fall 2022



resident spotlight

Amber DeGrate Lewis

I remember it like it was yesterday. I arrived at Angela House on Friday, August 20th, 2021. It was game night. What a fortunate stroke of serendipity. Prior to getting to Angela House, every night was game night of the street life I had been existing in for 25 years. That game looked like this: promiscuity, drug addiction, homelessness, illegal activity and repeated incarcerations.



The name of this game is insanity and recidivism. There were no get out of jail free cards and I was the biggest winner, or loser, depending on how you look at it. I was completely exhausted from it. My decision was made. I didn't want to exist like this anymore. I knew what I was doing was not living. I was deluded into thinking that drug use was my only problem, and I wholeheartedly believed that. Every day at Angela House begins with morning meditation and every day I repeated "I just don't want to smoke crack anymore." I still do that today, 15 months later. I had to have a complete overhaul and mental shift from my repetitive thinking. I learned about recovery. I knew I needed to change not just my drug use but everything I thought I knew. With the help of the staff, each of them instrumental in their own way, I was able to transition into this woman who I am now becoming. There was no magic potion.

It took the grace of God and me being honest, open minded and willing. I suffered a lot of childhood trauma and domestic abuse and had not ever attempted to deal with the thinking errors these created. I was required to get a sponsor and work the 12 Steps. I participated in spiritual health classes and recovery work. As a result of this program and my tenacity, I have rechanneled my thinking. I am a completely different woman. Today, I am disciplined, I communicate effectively and I am responsible. I have integrity and I practice accountability. Most importantly, I am sober. If love could have healed what was broken inside of me, the love of and for my children would have done it. I needed to love me. Today I'm learning to do just that. I'm very grateful for this program and the opportunity I was afforded to live a new life.



Now it is game on!



from the executive director

Kristin Guiney

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Every meal, every night of rest, every class, every step forward at Angela House starts with your generous heart.

At Angela House, we believe all women should be given the chance to heal from their trauma in order to break free from the cycle of incarceration. We provide transformational trauma-responsive programs for women who have been incarcerated to promote healing and empowerment, and break the cycle of incarceration for themselves, their families, and their communities. We help them heal, love and thrive through and after trauma, equipping, encouraging and empowering

them with the necessary skills, tools and resources to transform their lives and provide economic self-sufficiency.

Women in Texas prisons are released back into the communities where they did their crime with \$50 and a bus ticket. Studies show that two out of three people released from prison are rearrested, and more than 50% are incarcerated again within three years of being released. For 21 years, Angela House has been helping to stop the cycle of incarceration by providing opportunities for personal growth and healing. We know that creativity, effective communication and community-building skills can give previously incarcerated women and their families a chance to start a new life of benefit to all Texas communities.

Angela House cannot do this work alone. We have great partners working with us to facilitate real change in the community. As we continue to fight against recidivism and provide life-changing assistance, we look forward to establishing many more relationships in the coming year.

The most rewarding part of any day is to see a woman confront her past while recognizing her own true worth. Hannah, one of our youngest residents, has struggled with being away from her young children. She was having trouble managing a new job and the programming requirements of Angela House. Recently, Hannah was invited to speak to a large group of prospective Schweitzer Fellows about her experiences. With grace and fortitude, Hannah left the students speechless with her honesty and insight. Most importantly, she walked away feeling empowered and confident. Changes like Hannah's are possible because of the support we receive from our community of supporters. Thank you for changing lives.



from our board chair

Stephen Loftin / Board Chair

I am deeply honored that I have been chosen to serve as the new Chair of the Board of Directors for Angela House. For my inaugural newsletter article I want to start by honoring the phenomenal leadership of Maureen Graf over the past several years. I am truly not worthy to fill her shoes but I will endeavor to my best. On behalf of all of us at Angela House, thank you Maureen for your past and continued service.

As a brief introduction, I joined the Angela House board of directors in 2015, having been introduced to it and its founder Maureen O'Connell by George Bement, who was then serving at Healthcare for the Homeless-Houston and who worked with Dr. Andrea Link, a physician who was in turn sharing some of her time and talent at Angela House serving the women residents through the Healthy and Whole program. This was a true six degrees of separation type story. I was very honored to be asked to join the Board of such a life changing organization. Since joining Angela House's board I have served in various roles, including the chair of the Governance Committee and most recently as member of the Executive Committee. I have been blessed to be associated with Angela House and I am exceedingly grateful for the opportunity to serve in this new role for the next two years.

In thinking back about my time at Angela House I was reminded of my very first Board meeting I attended where we had the pleasure of hearing from a current Angela House resident. She was going through what all of the women at Angela House experience – how to break the cycle that has led them to jail or prison and dealing with those struggles daily. This wonderful woman blessed us

all by sharing a poem she wrote that expressed where she was in her journey which I think speaks volumes to the kind of impact that Angela House has had and continues to have on the women it serves. That poem is reprinted on page 5.



This is but an example of how the services that Angela House offers are tailored to address both the past (helping the woman deal with their trauma in a healthy way) and the future (helping the woman learn to lead a healthy lifestyle) of the residents. Through the programs available at Angela House, the women are given the tools necessary to improve their spiritual, mental, and physical health to allow them to return to being active and productive citizens. One of the most recent additions to the services

provided by Angela House is an after-care program through which Angela House will keep in touch with its graduates and help them stay connected to the Angela House family. Angel Phillips has joined Angela House to help run that program and recently held the first Angela House alumnae event which was a rousing success. Welcome to the family Angel and well done!

The services the women benefit from are concepts that most of us take for granted: housing and regular meals, job training, access to mental health services, training and instruction on how to live a healthy life, and perhaps most importantly, a loving community that many of the residents have never experienced before. All of this is made possible by the gracious gifts from our individual donors and foundations, for whom Angela House is deeply appreciative.

\$15,000 HELPS PROVIDE
TRANSITIONAL HOUSING AND
SUPPORT SERVICES FOR ONE
FORMERLY INCARCERATED
WOMAN FOR ONE YEAR

3,790 SAFE NIGHTS
WERE SPENT AT
ANGELA HOUSE IN 2021

4546
VOLUNTEER
HOURS

“It’s not how much we give but how much love we put into giving.”

— Mother Theresa

Little did I know eight years ago when I walked into a barber shop for a haircut, I would leave with a life-long friend. Jeff Armstrong, owner of Doug’s Barber Shop in the Heights, has shown me by his living example, the true definition of what it means to give so much more than you receive. During one of our many conversations, I mentioned that winter coats were always a high need for our women at Angela House. That winter, and for the last four winters since, Jeff has purchased new coats for each of our residents. Giving them the gift of comfort and warmth. As a non-profit, we do not always have the budget for outside entertainment for 16 women. Over the years, Jeff has never hesitated to contribute money to take the women to the movies, bowling or to order pizza for our game nights. In addition to all this, he offers free budgeting classes to our graduates. I am honored and blessed to call him a friend. We are grateful he loves the mission of Angela House as much as we do. If you happen to be in the heights area, swing by Doug’s Barber Shop and met this amazing guy!



Party Sober Partnership

Having fun and staying active in recovery is so very important. It has been proven that recovery thrives when you recover out loud and as a community. That is why we are so thrilled that Angela House is one of the many organizations that forms Party Sober Partnership. PSP is a collaborative organization whose mission is to provide fun, sober social events for those in the recovery and mental wellness communities to promote connection and long-term success. Sarah Mabry, our Angela House Case Manager, serves on the board of PSP. Over the past year, the women of Angela House have participated in a chili cook-off and attended several private movie screenings with others from the Houston recovery community. In October, we joined over 1100 people at the PSP Houston’s Rally for Recovery to celebrate sobriety. For more on PSP check out their website at www.partysober.org



The Lie You....Believe, Bought, Live, Like and Love

By Latoya Richard

There is a lie we believe amongst us today.
If I have a lot of money, everything would be okay.
There is a lie we've bought and hold on tight to.
If I stay high, I can make it through.
There is a lie that we live by so faithfully:
to work is to die and I going to take the easy way.
There is a lie that we like and no one better take it from us.
I'm just me, I cannot change.
These are just excuses and ways to block the truth.
I've believed, bought, lived, liked and loved the lie for so long that I refuse to look at the proof.
Which goes...
Dammit I'm not happy....nothing seems to help.
I don't like you and I really hate myself.
No amount of money seems to solve this problem.
The more I have, the sadder I am and I can't get high enough to deal with the drama.
Cars, clothes, money, men and woes...
At this point I can't even see there's something the devil stole.
I gained the whole world only to lose my soul.
I've gained nothing, absolutely nothing, let the truth be told.
Jesus is the way, the light and the truth,
no one comes to the Father but through him.
And the truth is that this is not your battle,
so without Him you won't win.
Joy, you'll never find in sin.
So that lie you believe, bought, live, like and love...
That lie you can't shake, break, push past or shove.
That lie was created to destroy you and that's just what it does.
The truth you've never done.
The truth is something new.
Try that truth for a little while and see what it does for you.
Peace that surpasses all understanding
When he gives it.
That you won't lose.



Emily A.

Angela House has shown me stability and the importance of self care. Being here has shown me that I am not alone. The support system here is outstanding. I am now working at MOD PIZZA and fulfilling my goals, for myself and my children.



Lanae J.

There are no words to explain the emotions that I went through upon my arrival at Angela House. They provided me with everything I needed to get back on my feet in sobriety. Since being here, I have gotten my ID and Food

Handlers card. I just got hired at Katz's Deli. We attend a lot of sober events, I am building up a sober community that I can call upon.



Stephanie P.

I have been at Angela House a week now after being in prison for 5 years straight. I am so very blessed to have been accepted here. I do not know what I would have done or where I would have gone if there wasn't a place like Angela House. I am now in a safe and structured place to learn how to re-enter society and gain the tools I need for a sober future.



Other Needs

Toilet Paper

Body Wash

Paper Towels

New Underwear

13 & 45 Gallon Trash Bags

New Ankle Socks

Bath Towels

Make-Up

Bathroom Cleaning Supplies

Laundry Soap

Cleaning Supplies

Wash Cloths

Save the Date!

Opening Doors Luncheon

Benefitting Angela House

Tuesday, April 18, 2023

The Junior League

1811 Briar Oaks Lane

Houston, Texas 77027

We look forward to seeing you!

For more information email

admin@angelahouse.org

Donate Today

www.angelahouse.org

Gift Cards

Amazon, Kroger,
Target, Walmart

Amazon wish list

<https://a.co/dM5UwzX>

A LEGACY OF GIVING

WHAT IS YOUR LEGACY?

ANGELA HOUSE ESTABLISHED A SOCIETY TO RECOGNIZE THOSE WHO HAVE INCLUDED
ANGELA HOUSE IN THEIR ESTATE PLANS.

THROUGH THESE GIFTS, YOU ENSURE THE FUTURE OF ANGELA HOUSE AND HELP CONTINUE THE LEGACY OF
SUCCESSFULLY TRANSITIONING WOMEN INTO SOCIETY AFTER INCARCERATION.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT KRISTIN GUINEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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