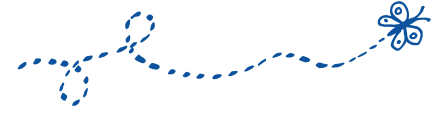


St. Ann's Center for Children, Youth and Families

2022 Spring / Summer Newsletter



Our Theme: Journeys and Transformations



Disney princesses visit on Easter!



Gonzaga Day of Service Project



Floral Centerpiece at Hope Blossoms

Melody's Story: From Trauma to Healing and Hope



As a survivor of childhood trauma, sadly, when Melody had no familial or social supports she was placed in Maryland's foster care system. When she became pregnant, she moved again, this time to St. Ann's Center's Teen Mother-Baby Program.

(Continued on Page 6)

Table of Contents

- 2** Letter from CEO
Sister Mary Bader
- 3** Hope Blossoms
Highlights!
- 4** Mental Health
Awareness Month
- 6** Melody's Story:
From Trauma to Healing
- 7** Activities, Updates, and
Giving Initiatives
- 8** Upcoming
Events!

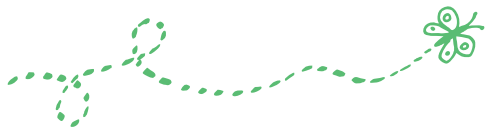


Dear Friends,

There is a phrase which you may have seen in recent years on fridge magnets, bumper stickers, and even within children’s books:

“Just when the caterpillar thought the world was over, it became a butterfly.”

This simple, one-line parable seems particularly relevant for the times we are living through. It is also a perfect metaphor for the mission of St. Ann’s Center, as we continue to welcome new families into our programs and help them grow and develop the “wings” which will help them reach their future goals.



In just the past few weeks, we have welcomed four new families into our transitional housing programs. Each family has unique situations, needs, and perhaps even anxieties as they begin this brave new chapter in their lives. Each family also has inherent strengths, skills, and assets which help them thrive in time.

Within this newsletter you will find several stories of mothers whose futures have “taken flight” thanks to their commitment to their children and to themselves. As always, thank you for making these beautiful transformations possible.

Sister Mary Bader
Sister Mary Bader, CEO



FY 2022 Milestones

4



Healthy Babies
Born at St. Ann's

10



Successful Transitions
from St. Ann's Programs

New!

A Minute with Sister Mary

Want to read more from Sister Mary? Visit www.stanns.org and enter your email address to receive Sister Mary's monthly reflections, along with other newsletters, resources and exciting updates from St. Ann's!

St. Ann's Center Reaccredited!

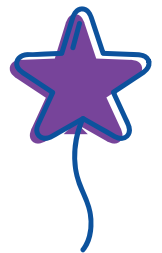
In March 2022, St. Ann's Center achieved national reaccreditation from the New York-based Council on Accreditation (COA), an international, independent, nonprofit human service accrediting organization.

COA accreditation demonstrates excellence in the management of resources, sets standardized best practice thresholds for service and administration, and increases organizational capacity and accountability by creating a framework for ongoing quality improvement.



COUNCIL
ON
ACCREDITATION

ENGAGE. EMPOWER. EVOLVE.



Thank you to our dedicated Staff, Leadership, and Board of Directors for helping us achieve this goal!



Thank You for Making Hope Blossom!

Hope "Blossomed" on May 11 at Columbia Country Club, where over 300 guests gathered for St. Ann's Center's first in-person reception and awards ceremony since 2019! Here are the highlights:

- **Sister Mary Bader, CEO**, delivered welcoming remarks and thanked **Pam and Dennis Lucey**, our event co-hosts, for their months of work on this event. St. Ann's Board of Directors and Staff were also recognized.
- **Wilton Cardinal Gregory**, Archbishop of Washington, offered the opening prayer. Cardinal Gregory remarked, "I am deeply grateful for the work of St. Ann's, which for 160 years has served mothers and children in the Washington, DC area by imitating the love of Christ and by extending his compassion."
- The **Hon. Michael Steele** emceed the program. Steele was adopted from St. Ann's as an infant. "You all bless us with your commitment to supporting the mothers, children and families of St. Ann's," Steele said.
- **A'ja**, a current resident of St. Ann's, shared her testimony, citing her son as her greatest inspiration: "I wouldn't be where I am today in my goals without him."
- **Msgr. John Enzler**, CEO of Catholic Charities, DC, served as "chief fundraiser." He received help from **Tonya Sharpe**, St. Ann's Board Chair, who auctioned off two Live Nation VIP ticket packages to winners totaling \$34,000.
- Attendees and those watching our livestream then joined our sponsors and supporters in helping St. Ann's raise over \$500,000!



- Hope Blossoms concluded with awards presentations: *The Michele Heidenberger Volunteer Award* was posthumously awarded to **Steve Heidenberger**; *The Mary McGrory Advocacy Award* was presented to **Judy and John Ritz**.



Mental Health Awareness Month at St. Ann's Center

How Clinical and Social Work Services Supports Mothers' Emotional Health Concerns

When vulnerable young mothers arrive at St. Ann's, most have experienced trauma of some sort in their lives. Often, these mothers have experienced physical or emotional abuse, are raising their young child (or children) on their own, and lack adequate housing and employment opportunities.

These factors often impact young mothers' emotional well-being and can affect their relationships with others. Past traumas and cycles of foster care involvement can also result in mothers not having a secure attachment to their children.

St. Ann's Clinical and Social Work Services (CSWS) team helps address these and other needs within a holistic *Model of Care* - developed to help mothers heal, grow, and progress towards positive life-long outcomes.

This trauma-informed, strengths-based, developmental *Model of Care* was piloted by **Shaneen Alvarez, LCSW-C, LICSW**, Director of CSWS, all under the umbrella of *reflective practice*.

Shaneen and her team - Interns, Case Managers, Social Workers and Clinical Consultants - practice this *Model of Care* by providing services to address various emotional and mental health concerns. Services include: *assessments; individual, group and family therapy; and crisis management and intervention.*

"New mothers and their children will stay at St. Ann's for thirteen months on average," says Shaneen.

"During this time, our agency-wide goal is to provide opportunities for these young mothers to connect with their infants, build healthy relationships, heal from trauma and thrive, and do so in an environment that is safe, culturally responsive, instills trust, and is empowering."



St. Ann's Model of Care: A Reflective Practice Lens for Residents and Staff

Shaneen has worked together with Director of Residential Programs, **Jeanette Chittams**, and **Dr. Joy Kasset, Ph.D.** to develop, refine and train St. Ann's staff on the *Model of Care*.

As a result, Residential Programs staff can utilize the same developmentally-focused *reflective practice lens* to help understand what residents are communicating through their actions, language and behaviors.

"Monthly group supervision of staff ensures that St. Ann's Model of Care continues to provide a consistent, supportive environment for mothers in our programs, whether they are working on their goals with CSWS staff or Residential Program staff," says Jeanette.

Residential Staff are supported through yearly training and regular individual and group supervision based in the *Model of Care*. Meanwhile, CSWS offers developmentally-focused therapy, crisis intervention, and after-care services to create a continuous and nurturing environment.

"A reflective practice approach considers the whole individual (mother) as it relates to her trauma history, functional strengths, and her developmental stage," says Dr. Joy.

(Continued)



Mental Health Awareness Month at St. Ann's Center

“All while helping her to self-reflect, so that she can in turn, reflect upon and be curious about her child’s needs,” says Dr. Joy.

Through agency-wide support based on the *Model of Care*, mothers are able to securely bond with their children, and ultimately with others. Healthy relationships foster emotional stability – a skill that remains helpful long after residents transition from St. Ann’s.

Celeste Wallace, MSW, Social Work Case Manager, works directly with new clients in St. Ann's *Hope House* and *Teen Mother-Baby* programs to let them know that individual therapy is available, along with other supports.

“Some do accept [therapy services], and some don’t, based on their trauma and cultural history,” she said. “When this happens, I focus on listening to them to learn more, and this becomes therapeutic for them. It really helps to promote mental health awareness.”

As Celeste, the Social Work team, and Residential Staff communicate and connect with mothers through their *reflective practice lens*, St. Ann's continues to see an increase in residents seeking out mental health services and other emotional supports.

Supporting Mothers Beyond St. Ann's

Once mothers have successfully transitioned from St. Ann’s programs and have had time to reflect on their experiences, they frequently emphasize the value of having access to therapy services and consistent emotional support while at St. Ann’s.

Katina, who recently transitioned with her son to independent housing, advised mothers like herself:

“Use every opportunity here at St. Ann’s... I want to shout out ‘therapy’ – it’s free here and can benefit everyone, especially moms who have experienced trauma. I have also learned in my therapy with Dr. Joy that it takes time to become comfortable. Once I became comfortable, I reached some real epiphanies and insights that helped me.”



Joselyn, a mother of three who has thrived since transitioning in 2020, shared:

“One thing I have learned being a mom is that I am still healing from my own childhood. Therapy has been very helpful for me and I am a huge advocate for seeking therapy now.

“[My experience at St. Ann’s] has... made me view therapy in a new light. That was the best therapy I ever had. Just want to give a big thank you.”

Therapy and emotional supports are part of the many wrap-around services that help mothers prepare to write new futures for themselves and their families after St. Ann’s. However, the *Model of Care* doesn’t end when families transition.

“Our staff reinforces the message that support is still here after the mother and her child transition out,” says Shaneen. “This includes limited case management services for up to a year, including therapy and child care for their child, as we work to connect them to experts in the community.”

Like the mothers they serve, St. Ann’s CSWS staff and Residential staff continue to adapt and thrive as they refine and deliver their emerging *Model of Care*.



Melody's Story: From Trauma to Trust and Healing

(Continued from Cover)

When she first arrived at St. Ann's, Melody was extremely distrustful of everyone and exhibited depression and social withdrawal. On one occasion during her first months, she even returned to an old habit of harming herself. Melody was sure she wanted to leave St. Ann's.

Over time and with constant, collective care from St. Ann's Clinical Social Work Services and Residential Program staff (operating within our emerging St. Ann's Model of Care), she began to trust.

Melody first allowed a long-standing Residential Programs staff member into her life. Gradually, as she realized she was in a safe environment physically and emotionally, she began to engage with social workers and therapists, who helped her process the trauma she had experienced in her young life.

She began to believe that maybe she could nurture healthy relationships. Slowly, she widened her circle of support and even repaired relations with some of her family members.

This gradual transformation was possible in part because of Melody's commitment to her daughter.

We offer safe and service-enriched housing, including:



Parenting support



Parenting education classes



Mental health counseling services



Life-skills classes



Education and employment assistance



Financial literacy education



Affordable, licensed child care



Supportive case management

St. Ann's Holistic Wrap-Around Services

Melody was always an attentive mom, and with guidance from St. Ann's life coaches, she learned how to take care of an infant and how to help her baby develop and thrive.

While at St. Ann's, Melody returned to her studies and graduated high school while her daughter was cared for in St. Ann's developmental Child Care Program. Following this milestone achievement, Melody has successfully transitioned from St. Ann's to a new, stable home. She is now attending college and envisions a bright future for herself and her toddler.

St. Ann's Center in the News!



In Spring 2022, St. Ann's Center's mission was highlighted in several media outlets including: *Global Sisters Report*; *National Catholic Register*, *NBC4 Washington*, and *The Washington Post*. Thank you to the journalists who made these stories come alive!

We encourage you to visit www.stanns.org, where you can find links to all of these stories and hear from the mothers whose experiences are highlighted within them!

'Love Is Inventive to Infinity': How the Daughters of Charity Have Adapted to Aid Mothers and Their Children at St. Ann's Center

The center is meant to feel like a community, says CEO Sister Mary Bader.





What Are You Passionate About?

Is helping vulnerable women and children one of those things? After you take care of your family's needs, consider making a gift to St. Ann's Center a part of your estate plans. You will create a lasting legacy of helping mothers stabilize their lives, secure a career, and help their families escape poverty.

Language such as this may be helpful to include in your will:

"I give to St. Ann's Center for Children Youth and Families, EIN #53-0204626, located in Hyattsville, Maryland, \$ _____ (or _____ %) of my estate."

Other ways to fund your passion include:

- Make direct gifts to St. Ann's. Support operations or a specific program, or honor a loved one by creating a named fund that can provide annual support for St. Ann's services.
- Make gifts of appreciated securities.
- Make a gift that can provide you with an income for life.
- Designate St. Ann's as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy, IRA, donor advised fund or commercial annuity.
- Add a "Payable on death" designation on a bank account or certificate of deposit or "transfer on death" designation on an investment account.



If you have already included St. Ann's in your estate plans, thank you. Please contact us to let us know so we can express our heartfelt gratitude personally, and recognize your generosity through our *1860 Alliance*, which recognizes those who include St. Ann's in their estate plans.

St. Ann's and our residents depend on you. If you are considering these or other special gifts, please contact Vice President of Development Susan Flaherty at 301-559-5500 or sflaherty@stanns.org.

Volunteers In Action!

Thank you to the many individuals and groups who have volunteered with St. Ann's over recent weeks! We especially wish to thank:

- **Gonzaga Fathers Club** (and sons) for re-mulching our playground on your National Day of Service.
- **The McCormick Family**, for hosting an amazing Spring Carnival for our residents.
- **Order of Malta, Federal Assoc.**, for organizing a special Easter party with Disney princesses.
- **Elise Lewis and 4 Food 4 Love 4 Life**, for hosting monthly Movie Nights in our Auditorium with pizza and snacks.



Volunteer supervising the Bouncy Castle during the 2022 Spring Carnival!



Join the Circle!

Thank you to St. Ann's Circle of Angels for your monthly/quarterly contributions. Your recurring donations enable St. Ann's to provide high-quality care all year long. For more information contact Carolyn Boyle at cboyle@stanns.org or 301-559-5500, ext #187. You can also sign up online at www.stanns.org.

Are you eligible for an IRA Roll-Over?

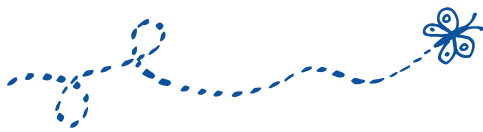
If you are age 70 ^{1/2} or older, you may now instruct your IRA custodian to transfer any amount, up to \$100,000, directly to St. Ann's Center for Children, Youth and Families. Check with your IRA custodian today to find out if this type of contribution is right for you. For more information contact Susan Flaherty at 301-559-5500 or sflaherty@stanns.org.



A Tradition of Caring

St. Ann's Center for Children, Youth and Families

4901 Eastern Avenue
Hyattsville, MD 20782-3301



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Date TBD

Fall Social

Our annual
Fall social.

*Date, Time and Venue
to be announced soon!*

Sunday, DEC. 4

Christmas Open House

Our annual
holiday celebration.

*St. Ann's Center
Hyattsville, MD
1pm to 3pm*

Wed., MAY 10

Hope Blossoms

Our annual reception
and awards ceremony.

*Columbia Country Club
Chevy Chase, MD*

Visit our website for additional details about these events and registration information:

www.stanns.org/events

CONNECT WITH US!



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www.stanns.org



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@StAnnsCenter

Tel: 301-559-5500 | Email: info@stanns.org