



Catherine's House

A Sisters of Mercy Ministry providing Transitional Housing for Homeless Women and Children • Spring 2015



Volunteer Hazel is holding the youngest resident at Catherine's House during her shift at the front desk.

New Face of Homelessness

by Volunteer Hazel C. Stewart

After retiring from 32 years of public service with the Federal Government, I was bored out of my wits. My neighbor suggested that I volunteer at Catherine's House. Living in New York City for most of my life, my view of the homeless was somewhat stereotypical. I frequently saw homeless people in subways or on the streets, often with substance abuse problems. I heard that medical/psychological facilities were randomly discharging occupants who had no resources. I was told and believed that many of these displaced individuals would rather live on the streets than in substandard shelters. It is at Catherine's House where my views began to change, and a greater sense of gratitude for God's blessings became present in my life.

First I met resident Miranda, a statuesque and striking woman with sandy blond hair whose appearance reminded me of the wealthy women that lived on Fifth Avenue. Miranda was down to earth with a warm sense of humor, and enjoyed working in the gardens at Catherine's House. She became a resident after her husband left her for another woman. Within months at Catherine's House, she was hired by a major retailer and found permanent housing.

continued on page 2

Ruth Reunites with Faith and Family

This month resident Ruth moves into her own apartment and looks forward to reuniting with her children. Ruth has much to celebrate now, but she didn't always. In the process of leaving an abusive husband and being hospitalized for severe depression, other living arrangements were made for her children. Ruth, unemployed and homeless, found short-term solace in a new relationship that also turned violent. After finding refuge at the Domestic Violence Shelter in Gastonia, she was referred to Catherine's House.

With "tons of encouragement and love from the staff," Ruth created a plan focused on emotional healing in addition to economic independence. She attended individual and group therapy sessions, started a new job, opened a savings account and saved enough money to buy a car. Ruth said, "I learned relationship skills, time management, and budgeting. I was helped with transportation to doctor appointments and the expense of medication, but I also learned about myself. I began to believe that I could make it on my own. Most importantly, I was able to reconnect to my Christian faith which I previously gave up for my husband."

continued on page 2

CALLING ALL RUNNERS!

SAVE THE DATE:

Community Foundation Run
Saturday, April 18th
Downtown, Gastonia, NC

INSIDE:

- Car Raffle Winner.....2
- Run for Funds.....3
- Catherine's House Booth.....3
- You Cannot Make Someone Love You...3



Resident Franklin poses with Belmont Mayor Charlie Martin and Sister Carmelita Hagan after pulling the winning car raffle ticket.

Car Raffle Winner

Cathie Stout of Arden, NC won the Honda Civic raffled to raise funds for Catherine's House in 2014. Cathie said, "I bought the raffle tickets to support the great work that Catherine's House does for women and children in crisis. I never expected to win a car! I value the services that Catherine's House provides to struggling women and families, and I am happy to support them."

The annual car raffle raises approximately one fourth of the operating budget at Catherine's House. Special thanks go to sponsor McKenney-Salinas Honda.



Raffle winner Cathie Stout picks up her new Civic at McKenney-Salinas Honda in Gastonia, NC.

New Face of Homelessness

by Volunteer Hazel C. Stewart, continued from page 1

Then I met resident Kim. Kim was married to a prominent figure in her community; however her marriage ended in divorce. She relocated to this area with a promise of a job, but the job did not materialize. I enjoyed our brief conversations and was delighted when she found a job in her field and a home of her own again.

Resident Mary Lou was grounded spiritually. She was a tastefully dressed woman who once owned several franchises. After her businesses failed, she believed that God was sending her a message. Mary Lou said her stay at Catherine's House motivated her to regroup and work as hard as she could to regain independence, and so she did.

Although these women moved from Catherine's House a while ago, their impression on me has been long lasting. Their spirits, as bright and beautiful as their appearance, did not fit the stereotype. It is heartwarming to witness how these women, with the help of a caring staff, are able to get back on their feet again. Volunteering at Catherine's House is truly a blessing. Every week I realize how fortunate I am to be retired on a pension, and I'm reminded not to take God's blessings for granted.

Ruth Reunites with Faith and Family

continued from page 1

Catherine's House is giving Ruth donated furniture and house wares for her new apartment that has enough room to accommodate her children. She said, "I can't wait to have a real home where I can re-create my own personal Catherine's House. I want our home to be for my children what Catherine's House is for me – a safe place where they will always be welcome."

As for her next steps, Ruth says, "I want to get more involved with my church, participate in mission trips, and I want to raise my children to serve Christ." Ruth is already making plans to volunteer and visit regularly once she is settled in her new home.



Run for Funds

Catherine's House is participating in the Community Foundation Run in downtown Gastonia on Saturday, April 18, 2015. This event is an important part of our fundraising effort as the Foundation matches a portion of the donations designated to Catherine's House. With your support, Catherine's House is able to assist our residents in meeting their goals for independence. Please consider supporting the Community Foundation Run to help the residents of Catherine's House by:

- Making a donation to the Run, naming Catherine's House as the beneficiary of your gift.
- Registering to run in the 5K race on Saturday, April 18th for a chance to win prize money for Catherine's House.

Visit www.cfgaston.org for donor and run entry forms.



Catherine's House Booth

Thanks to Emory and CJ Vandiver of Catawba River Antique Mall (pictured above) you can shop for antiques and support Catherine's House at the same time. Emory and CJ donated booth space to Catherine's House, and proceeds from the booth's sales will be donated back to the ministry. You can also donate antiques specifically for the Catherine's House booth by visiting the Antique Mall at 406 Catawba Street, Belmont, NC or by calling 704-825-2383. Catherine's House thanks Emory and CJ for their support!

"You Cannot Make Someone Love You"

by Program Director Jill Duszynski

"I've learned that you cannot make someone love you. All you can do is be someone who can be loved. The rest is up to them. I learned that no matter how much I care, some people don't care back. And it's not the end of the world."

I was struck by the poignancy of these words, found as a note under my door one day. It was written by a resident several days after completing her weekly meeting with me here at Catherine's House. Burdened by memories of her abusive relationships and the abandonment she had survived as a child, she was unsure how to move beyond her pain. In that moment, finding a job and securing transportation had suddenly taken a back seat to the matters of the heart. So, we talked at length in that meeting about her story – and her self-worth. Her words, written in red marker on plain white paper, were a sure sign of emotional healing.

At Catherine's House, we help our residents gain employment, manage their money and find a home to call their own. However, we also provide opportunities for individual self growth such as supportive counseling, a group called Living in Transition and training in the skill of mindfulness meditation. The focus of our program extends beyond practical needs such as food, work and shelter. It also seeks to provide healing of the heart and nourishment of the soul, which can lead to lovely changes, some of which are found in notes.....left under doors.

Prefer to receive the newsletter by email?

Send a request to jackimccarthy@catherineshouseinc.org.



Catherine's House

Non-Profit Org
US POSTAGE
PAID
Permit 1018
Charlotte, NC

A Sisters of Mercy Ministry Providing Transitional Housing for Homeless Women and Children

Post Office Box 1633, Belmont, NC 28012
www.catherineshouseinc.org



Franklin (right) and his sister take a playground break to pose for a picture. Franklin pulled the winning car raffle ticket in December.

Learn more about the car raffle winner on page 2.

Thank you for your support!

WISH LIST

Most Needed Items: Used Cars (safe & drivable)
Trash Bags (15 & 30 gallon) · Diapers (size 5 & 6)
Kleenex · Bed Pillows · Cleaning Supplies
Pine Sol · Clothing Hangers

Also Needed: Used Furniture (in good condition)
Baby Shampoo · Baby Lotion · Baby Powder
Hand Soap · Freezer Bags · Silverware · Dish Soap
Bath Towels · Dish Towels · Pots and Pans
Flash Drives · Gift Cards to Local Stores
(Wal-mart, Target or Grocery Stores)

Questions about our Wish List?

Call Sister Carmelita at 704-825-9599.