

The JOSEPH HOUSE



Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary

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Dear Friends of Joseph House:

We are happy to announce that **the Joseph House Workshop** will celebrate its 10th Anniversary this month! The time has passed so quickly we can hardly believe it, but it's true.

The story of the Workshop is one of transformation. It started as a large empty building next to the Joseph House Crisis Center, and the question, "What would God like us to do with it?" The building was being offered to us from Mountaire Farms, the owners. From the outset, Sr. Mary Elizabeth wanted to use it to serve the needs of homeless men. These were people close to her heart who typically did not have many services available to them.

There was talk of starting a program to train men to refinish furniture, and a pilot program ran for a while that taught bicycle repair. In the end, a clear purpose emerged: the Workshop would teach life skills and prepare homeless men for independent living.

Mountaire Farms, Inc. was our dedicated partner in this project. Without their generosity and help, we never could have rehabilitated the building into the Workshop we know today. The cold empty space of the former warehouse was transformed into comfortable living quarters for up to ten residents. A classroom, computer room and kitchen completed the picture. The building became not just a residence, but a home.

On September 17, 2005, five homeless men entered the Workshop to begin their own transformations. They were the first to take advantage of the services and support offered by the program. Since then, dozens of other men have followed and taken their first steps toward a new life.

Dr. Art Marsh is the current Director of the Workshop. **Rudy Drummond** is the Resident Program Manager. Both have been with us for a couple of years and we are pleased they are part of our family. Here is an update from them about the program and the men:

"The Joseph House Workshop is a residential program for men who are homeless and unemployed. They live together in a therapeutic community for a period of up to two years.



Unless the Lord builds the house,
the builders labor in vain.

Psalms 127:1



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O Lord, hear my prayer:

“Men in this category usually have other life-impacting problems: addiction to alcohol and other drugs; little or no ties with family members; a history of making bad choices; self-destructive behaviors and a lifetime of negative self-image.

“Residents in the program learn life skills to prepare them for employment and for being productive citizens. They can develop self-confidence and belief in a God who loves them. Graduates of the program have new hope for the future.

“For example: one recent graduate was able to restart his construction company and reestablish contact with his children. They have been living successfully together for the past year. A second resident was able to obtain subsidized housing and full-time employment and continues to have periodic contact with the Workshop. Two other graduates are now employed full-time at Habitat for Humanity; one has since married and the other is soon to follow suit.

“Some residents who did not fully complete the program have nonetheless benefitted from the life skills they learned. They continue to do well living independently in the community.

“All of our graduates have extreme gratitude for their experience at the Workshop, and those that can, come by repeatedly to remain in touch with those of us here.”

The Joseph House Workshop takes a comprehensive approach in helping these men develop their abilities and flourish as they navigate life. It complements **the Joseph House Crisis Center**, which helps individuals and families in their immediate needs. Here are a few recent clients:

Stacy is 23 and works full-time at a discount department store. She has two children, a son and daughter. Their father sends \$50 a month for child support. Stacy and her kids did not have a permanent home. The high cost of renting a place kept her from getting settled. She finally became eligible for subsidized housing, but the move-in cost was \$746 (for the deposit and first-month’s rent). Stacy was too poor to afford this benefit for the poor! The Joseph House contributed \$200 so Stacy and her children would not be homeless anymore.

Luke and **Andrea** were another homeless family. They have a twelve-year-old daughter. Their trouble began when Luke lost his job as a construction worker. He was promised more work in a month or so, but Luke was living by his weekly paychecks. He and his family were evicted from their apartment for non-payment of rent. Another landlord was willing to rent to them, but he required \$300 in advance. The Department of Social Services denied Luke’s request for assistance. The Joseph House was his family’s last resort. We called the landlord and mailed him the \$300.

Annabelle, 56, operates a day-care center from her home, located in an impoverished neighborhood. She is also raising her three grandsons. Their mother is not involved in their lives (drugs), and Annabelle said their father is a bad influence; she keeps the boys away from him. The day-care center is Annabelle's means of support. The income it provides is meager. Annabelle came to the Joseph House because she did not have the money for her latest gas bill. If the gas was turned off, she would lose her license. We sent \$200 to the utility company.

The Joseph House is a collective effort. Many people make our ministries possible. They give their time, their skills, creative energies, prayers, money, and other donations. A community is being made, one that each day grows closer to the Kingdom of Heaven.

We humbly ask God's continued blessing on the Joseph House Workshop; may He give guidance and strength to the men in the program and to those who walk beside them on their journey. And may God bless you, for being a faithful friend to us and to the poor.

With our prayers and gratitude,

Your Little Sisters of Jesus and Mary



When Jesus encounters people, He touches them at practical, emotional, and spiritual levels; He is concerned with the whole person.

If we hope to bring Jesus to people, we must do so in a way that deals with the person as a whole. Before we can preach the Gospel in words, we must preach it by our actions. It is difficult to listen to the Gospel on an empty stomach!

**The Sacre Coeur Center for Healing
and Spirituality**

