

In memory of our late V.Pres. Barbara Primeau's support to make Fr. Ed's vision of a Holy Family Home for homeless women with children a reality, NACEPF will match donations up to \$250,000 through Pentecost May 28, 2023.

By the summer of 2022, daily life at the Holy Family Home had begun to resemble pre-pandemic times. While hand washing and sanitizing protocols continued throughout the residence, the outdoor play area had become a gathering place where mothers and children would gather at the end of the day. By the end of the summer, incredible friendships were evident among the residents. Some mothers greeted each other with hugs when they returned to the Home after just a few hours away. "I'm the grandmother," said one mom, as she hugged each child who happened to be in the foyer at the time. The children had apparently come to expect and even cherish such signs of affection, as they hugged the mom in return.

"If this were an Airbnb, I'd give it a 10," said one mom as she prepared to leave the home for her own apartment. "Thank you for being here and for keeping us ... and them... safe," she added, pointing to areas of the Home where other moms ("them") were going about their business. The comings and goings of the residents have been reminiscent of Norman Rockwell paintings of family life in mid-20th century America. On a Sunday afternoon, for example, several mothers could be seen pushing babies in strollers, their toddlers and older children skipping ahead in shorts and sandals or lagging a few paces behind, as an outing to the nearby Family Dollar



store became a simple and satisfying social event.

On a weekend in July, a number of mothers gathered at the annual St. Edward's Church Feast, where they enjoyed beef kabobs and rice and where their children were served hot dogs and French fries. One of the teenage children who went to the Feast described her time there: "I watched the children ... being children," she explained with a smirk, "while their mothers got something to eat."

Not willing to call an end to this festive weekend, several mothers returned to the Home through the main door, lifting strollers up the short flight of stairs into the main foyer, then across the foyer and down a flight of stairs out the back door, where they continued to gather. "We danced to the music," said one mom, recalling her day at the Feast. "Yesterday the music continued 'til midnight," she added, "but we had to be in by 9:00. That's okay," she nodded. "I opened my window to hear the music." Obviously respectful of the curfew imposed at the Home and grateful for the opportunity to enjoy the festivities, the mom's spirits had been lifted by the celebration.

The supportive environment for the residents of the Holy Family Home is often evident through the mothers' words and actions. While cooking dinner for herself and her daughter, one mom who had recently come to the Home listened to music on her phone. "When I'm happy, I play happy music," she offered as a rationale for the music that spread from the lower level to the second floor rooms. "I feel better," she added, referring to her placement at the Home. "My daughter feels better, too. We have a place, and it's a nice place." Thanks to the support of dedicated volunteers and generous donors, the Holy Family Home and its residents have emerged from a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic, one step closer to a life of independence.

Summer 2022

The outdoor play area was a highlight of the summer for families at the Holy Family Home this year. While the mothers relaxed on outdoor lawn chairs, the slides and swings and clatter bridge saw their share of activity. By climbing the rock wall and stepping across the clatter bridge (often from dusk to dark), the children developed large motor skills, physical stamina and also a sense of emotional stability, as is evident in their photos.

From Summer to Fall ...

The children were ready to usher in the Fall at a moment's notice. "Follow the leader," ordered the oldest child, as the group carried mums and pumpkins to a pumpkin patch in the back yard of the Home.

Before long, the questions and comments started. "Is that a scarecrow?" asked one child as she headed toward the patch. "That's a scarecrow," she announced, approaching the area.

The children were in charge of water-



ing the flowers and keeping the stems attached to the pumpkins. They were interested in learning that the stems play an important role in keeping pumpkins from rotting. "I'm going to eat one of those," one child laughed, adding another priceless comment to the activity...

A Special Thank You!

Thanks to a dedicated and caring parishioner, a beautiful painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Baby Jesus appeared one day in the entrance to the Home. Upon seeing the painting, one mother's response was complete-



ly genuine and instinctive. "Oh, how beautiful," she gasped, reaching out her hand as if to touch the Blessed Virgin Mary. The warm colors and gentle features in this painting seemed to wash away whatever was on this mother's mind before entering the Home, as she focused on the painting for some time. "That's so beautiful," she whispered, again, before turning away.

The Blessed Virgin Mary and Baby Jesus now watch over the residents as they come and go throughout the day and is a fitting reminder of the vision of hope and serenity upon which the Home was conceived.



A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

As you have read in this 2022 Summer/Fall edition of our newsletter, the Holy Family Home continues to shine forth as a beacon of hope to the homeless of our state. For the past 7 years, the Home has provided a unique loving environment to mothers and children in need of shelter. Supported by many dedicated volunteers and generous donors, we are able to provide safety and comfort to so many women and children. For your support, we are deeply grateful. Please know that you are always in our prayers of thanksgiving. Thanks to generous grants from local Foundations, the windows at the Home will no longer be drafty and cold. The decades-old windows at the Home will be replaced at the end of October.

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO "HOLY FAMILY HOME"
AND ON THE MEMO LINE RECORD "NACEPF MATCH". DONATIONS SHOULD BE MAILED TO:
HOLY FAMILY HOME, C/O 5 GIBBS STREET, NORTH PROVIDENCE, RI 02904.

May God bless you!

FATHER ED CARDENTE, PASTOR