



Alexandra's House

www.alexandrashouse.com

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Satellite Branch of Alexandra's House Opening

We are pleased to announce the opening of a satellite branch of Alexandra's House for support group meetings in St Joseph, Missouri. This will make it more convenient for those of you living in this area. Please spread the word.

Alexandra's House Mother, Tonette Egelburger will host. Details are below.

LOCATION

Brookdale Church in the Student Ministry Building.
203 South 31st Street, St Joseph MO.

WHEN

Last Tuesday each month, beginning April 24th, 7-8:30pm

QUESTIONS/ RSVP ATTENDANCE

teagleburger@yahoo.com



A refuge for unborn-newborn babies and little children who will die and those who love them

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2018

EDITORIAL

Dear Friends of Alexandra's House,

I've spent much of the last few weeks, trying to be there for a close friend who has had a nervous breakdown. A brilliant and charming Parisian, she has an excellent husband and four lovely young children, the youngest just 2 months old. She is desperate to be well again, but, from the depth of illness, it's a long road which she has to travel. My friend lives in far northern Scandinavia so there's little practical I can do to help, except listen and counsel, and hold her in prayer.

So in short, I've been thinking a lot about vulnerability recently and how we connect with those who are in that place of intense suffering, especially mothers, whose very strength is not invulnerable to the demands and pressures of life. And in that context, I've come across Brene Brown, professor in social work at the University of Houston, whose TED talk – the Power of Vulnerability- has had a staggering 30 million views.

Brown presents it as a truth of human nature that 'our capacity for whole-heartedness can never be greater than our willingness to be broken-hearted'. In other words, she says 'we can only love and be loved as much as we are willing to have our heart broken.'

That's quite a statement. Our willingness to be vulnerable is our capacity for empathy. Empathy, not sympathy, mind. Sympathy says 'too bad' and carries on its way. Sympathy doesn't reach down. It doesn't become vulnerable.

Empathy stops and goes right down into the trenches, and stands alongside. Empathy imagines just for a little what it might be like to walk in someone else's shoes, hampered and haunted as they may be.

But the further truth is this. We are only able to hold another's pain insofar as we ourselves have been held during our times of need – insofar as we

have allowed ourselves to be held. Without that gift of being held, would we have the imagination, the emotional maturity, the courage to revisit our own pain, in hearing of and entering into another's? Could we even go there? Lean in rather than turn away?

Alexandra's House is a place where mothers (and fathers) are held and heard, where, at their most vulnerable, they are 'carried'. It is a place of deep compassion not superficial sympathy; empathy is a language its servants understand and live day in, day out, need after need, crisis after crisis.

And because of what it is and does, the ripple effect goes out. Those whom it serves find it in themselves to help carry other people in their times of great need. A brother, as the Bible says, helped by a brother is like a walled city. So also a mother, and a father and many more besides.

Mother's Day comes again this May, and is rightly celebrated, with flowers and sweet treats. But, more importantly still, let's do what we can to strengthen the mothers we know and those we don't know personally, especially when their strength falters and fails them. As they carry life and nurture their children, sometimes in difficult even tragic circumstances, we all have to do our part in carrying them.

—Hilary Stroh



Aaron & Suesan

People find Alexandra's House in all sorts of ways, not all through personal experience. Aaron and his wife, Suesan have been great supporters from afar for many years, and we are immensely grateful for their dedicated contribution. Here Aaron tells about their connection.

Aaron, I understand you and your wife are New Yorkers? Have you ever been to Kansas City? Do you have personal or family connections with the place?

My wife was born in New York City and has lived here for her whole life; I've lived here since 2001, but am originally from Michigan. I THINK that I was in Kansas City for a wedding more than 20 years ago, but I'm not certain; Suesan has never been there.

How did you first find out about Alexandra's House? And about when?

My wife read about Alexandra's House in a New York Times article a long time ago (2005 or so?)

Did its work surprise you - had you come across the idea of a perinatal hospice before? It's a comparatively new phenomenon. There didn't use to be formal support for those whose children had life-limiting prognoses.

Yes, we had never heard or even considered such a thing.

There are so many good causes out there to support; what in particular drew you to the work of Alexandra's House? Was there anything that moved you or your wife personally, something that invited you to think deeply?

Suesan and I knew that we could not have biological children of our own, and the thought of a family losing a child during or shortly after he/she came to term struck us deeply tragic. The courage that such families had to resist the culture of death impressed us. That Alexandra's House provides support to such families strikes us as a necessary aspect of the respect for life that we are called to have.

How do you keep up with its news and developments?

We get and read the newsletters!

Have you met Patti, or just connected over email/phone?

We only had to call about a cancelled check :-)

I know we'd all love you to visit Alexandra's House, if you haven't already been!

And in the future, we'd love to visit you...but we don't know when this will happen!

Take care and God bless...

Celebrating Chance & Cai Miller, 5K Run/Walk

Saturday, June 23, 2018

8:00 a.m.

**Highland Community College Wellness Center
Highland, Kansas**

All proceeds to benefit Alexandra's House

For more information, go to the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/Celebrating-Chance-Cai-Miller-5k-RunWalk-1473724159512337/>

Bridgette's story (cont'd.)

You've reached, I understand, a stage in the journey where you've received hope and peace and acceptance. I can only imagine that this newly abundant peace is hard bought. Tell us a little about where you are at the moment, about the riches and fruits drawn from unimaginable levels of personal suffering.

For me, I think asking God for guidance and believing He will show you the way is paramount to this struggle. I feel like fertility challenges can shake people to their core, not only physically and emotionally, but spiritually. My faith hit rock bottom and I can recall screaming at God in my head one day in church on Sunday. I stared up at the cross, asking why I was being made to bear this cross. I felt so hurt, so abandoned, and in such a dark place, trying to reconcile this instinctual desire to be a mother and facing loss after loss. What came next was a spiritual awakening that I believe was part of my life's work. To know and accept God as ever-present in my life, to talk with Him about my needs and desires, to ask for guidance and to give thanks. Through the support of my husband, the help of Patti and Alexandra's House, the Jewish mothers I spoke of, and the prayers and support of others closest to me, I was able to heal up enough to see God's light again and ask for the souls of my future children to find their way to my husband and me.

Tell me about how the path to adoption became clear to you both.

I can't say I was always the noble person who approached adoption with an open heart, feeling that was God's plan for me. I had heard well-intentioned family members and friends tell me "you should just adopt." I also couldn't imagine that I could love another child as much as those whom I grew inside of me for two to three months, each. While I had family members who were adopted whom I loved dearly, I couldn't get out of my own way to accept adoption as a path for me. And, I was too hurt to accept this as a possibility. However, during my spiritual healing period, I met others who experienced similar losses, including my dentist turned dear friend who invited me into her life as she adopted her first and second child following multiple losses, including a premature infant son. I witnessed her see light again and I selfishly yearned for even an ounce of that joy.

My husband wholeheartedly agreed to start our adoption journey when I broached it with him. It took me months to complete the paperwork as I had to reconcile my grief, anger, and anguish during this process. I wasn't sure what the future would hold, but I did let go and let God and was reminded by my sweet Jewish mother friends that I merely needed to ask for guidance to be connected with my future children and that God would help me find the way.

In January 2016, our adoption agency called to say a woman had seen our profile on the agency's website and knew that we were meant to be the parents of her unborn child. When we met her that following week, she shared with us that she felt that the reason she was pregnant and placing her child for adoption was that she knew the child was our daughter--that her soul was merely looking to find a way to us. When we met our daughter, less than two weeks later, immediately after her birth, the gaping wound in my heart healed and I'm beyond grateful to share that having our daughter has given me immeasurable gratitude and exuberance for life. We can't imagine loving any child more than we do our daughter. We are together, at last, and my heart rejoices.

Novena to Mary, Queen of Hearts

O Mary, Queen of All Hearts,
Advocate of the most hopeless cases;
Mother most pure, most compassionate;
Mother of Divine Love,
full of divine light,
we confide to your care the favors which we ask of you today.

Consider our misery, our tears,
our interior trials and sufferings!
We know that you can help us
through the merits of your Divine Son, Jesus.
We promise, if our prayers are heard,
to spread your glory,
by making you known under the title of
Mary, Queen of the Universe.

Grant, we beseech you,
hear our prayers,
for every day you give us so many proofs of your love
and your power of intercession to heal both body and soul.

We hope against all hope:
Ask Jesus to cure us, pardon us,
and grant us final perseverance.

O Mary, Queen of all Hearts, help us,
we have confidence in you. (3 times)

