



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

## FALL/WINTER 2022 NEWSLETTER

### Editorial

To our Alexandra's House Family,

As autumn and winter comes around again, bringing us the little deaths of nature, the falling leaves, the withered flowers, we journey on, with hope as our companion, reminding ourselves that spring will come again. I recently came across some moving lines from Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran pastor and anti-Nazi dissident, who spent time studying theology in the U.S. in the 1930s before returning to Germany. He wrote this letter from his prison cell to friends on Christmas Eve, 1943, fifteen months before his own death by execution, explaining why God does not fill the emptiness left by the loss of a loved one.

*"There is nothing that can replace the absence of someone dear to us, and one should not even attempt to do so. One must simply hold out and endure it. At first that sounds very hard, but at the same time it is also a great comfort. For to the extent the emptiness truly remains unfilled one remains connected to the other person through it. It is wrong to say that God fills the emptiness. God in no way fills it but much more leaves it precisely unfilled and thus helps us preserve—even in pain—the authentic relationship. Furthermore, the more beautiful and full the remembrances, the more difficult the separation. But gratitude transforms the torment of memory into silent joy. One bears what was lovely in the past not as a thorn but as a precious gift deep within, a hidden treasure of which one can always be certain."*

These are lovely words on which to reflect upon our own hidden treasures, our children whom we have loved and lost in this world.

This season, we are especially grateful to Joni, Amy, Kyle, Marshall and Kelly for sharing their stories and perspectives.

Hilary Stroh on behalf of Patti Lewis

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Alexandra's House Family Reunion Christmas Party is planned for Saturday, December 10 from 2-4 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help. If you have not received an email yet, and would like to come, please contact Lauren at [ljungen@alexandrashouse.com](mailto:ljungen@alexandrashouse.com)

## Amy Reynolds's Story



*Amy and Tim Reynolds moved from Iowa to Kansas 25 years ago, and got to know Alexandra's House through their firstborn daughter Gracie. Amy tells her story here, and how she has transitioned from being the grieving mother, helped by others, to being a mentor of other moms in difficult pregnancies.*

We've been involved with Alexandra's House for 20 years. Twenty years ago, on March 4 of 2002, we said hello and goodbye to our firstborn child, Gracie. We had been trying to conceive a child for at least 4 years prior to getting pregnant with her. I had been told that it wouldn't be likely that I could ever conceive a child. The joy we experienced when we found out we were expecting Gracie was like none other. I thought that getting pregnant was the hard part. Nothing prepared us for what we were about to go through. At ten weeks gestation, we learned that Gracie had anencephaly. This news devastated us. She was our miracle baby and now we would not get to raise her. It was recommended that we terminate the pregnancy but this was the child God gave us and we were her parents. We were going to parent her as long as God would allow.

My faith was shaken and I was wondering how I could carry my precious baby only to lose her soon after I delivered her but that is what we planned to do. A friend saw an article in the newspaper about Alexandra's House and it was a godsend to us. It was such a traumatic event to deal with, especially without family in town. We met with other expectant parents and parents who already experienced the loss of their baby and found that we were not alone in bearing this cross. They provided a shoulder to cry on and a listening ear and many prayers.

At 28 weeks gestation, the Lord took Gracie home with him. I was putting off planning a funeral because it was the last thing I wanted to do. While I was in labor, Patti found a plot and casket and did some of the planning for me. After we laid her to rest, Alexandra's House was there for us every step of the way through the grieving process. We went on to have three more healthy children after that. One was even a surprise pregnancy after age 40! With Sarah, Lydia and Matthew in our lives, we are truly blessed!

Through the years, I've transitioned from a grieving mother to one of the moms that help counsel other parents now facing a similar situation. It's hard at times but I will never miss an opportunity to give back to this ministry. I will never forget how helpful and healing it was to have people who really understand this type of loss help you through it and I am honored to offer that similar hope to others.

I am also now honored to serve on the board of directors at Alexandra's House to help ensure that this ministry remains intact for the purpose it was created for years to come. It is so important for parents to have the support of this very unique perinatal hospice to help these very special babies and their very special parents through this most difficult trial.

## Joni Rauen's Story



*Joni Rauen's connection with Alexandra's House has spanned both decades and countries; now she is moved as she witnesses her youngest son begin his own connection.*

About 20 years ago, I began volunteering at Alexandra's House, making meals on a weekly basis for families. From the moment I heard about the life-affirming mission of Alexandra's House, I knew it would always be a part of my life. As the years went on, a women's volunteer organization of which I was a member, Soroptimist International of KC, became involved at my

*(Cont. on Page 3)*

## Joni Rauen's Story (Cont.)

suggestion. When I moved to Toronto for my husband's job in 2008, they continued to support the mothers and babies through donations and hands-on service, including tearing out a wall, rebuilding, painting, updating the electrical, and furnishing one of the rooms! I loved hearing about the good works they continued to do in my absence.

As a small gesture, I came back to KC for my 40th birthday party and asked all of my attendees to donate to Alexandra's House in lieu of gifts. This was also an opportunity to introduce them all to this very special place. Then one day, while still living in Toronto, after receiving an unexpected check in the mail, my husband and I called Alexandra's House to see if they had any needs for which we could provide financial assistance. An urgent need had arisen that very week and it felt like a miracle that God had called upon us to reach out to help. Just two days after completion, a family arrived from two and a half hours away in need of housing and Alexandra's House was able to say yes! A few years later, my husband and I added Alexandra's House as one of the beneficiaries in our will.

Now, back in Kansas City for good, the youngest of my three children, Finn, will be volunteering at Alexandra's

House. To me, this is the most meaningful chapter in my history with the House. Long ago, in 2009, I wrote this in an email to a friend:

"In a strange way, Alexandra's House gave me the courage to have a third child. I was always worried about pushing my luck. I had two healthy children, what if my third had something wrong? What if it was stillborn? What if it would only live a few days or a month? The more I read the stories about these precious babies and how valuable their lives were even for such a short time, the more convinced I became that a third child—whether healthy and strong, or weak and destined for heaven—was a blessing. And what really moved me is when Patti reminded me that Alexandra, who only lived for 40 days, only knew love. Only love, her whole short life. She never knew pain or heartache or the evil that people can do in this world. Only love. And somehow, Patti made that sound really beautiful."

Finn just celebrated his 15th birthday. It feels as though everything has come full circle as he begins his own history with Alexandra's House. And I can't help but wonder if he would be here at all if it weren't for the impact of Alexandra's House on my life.

## Kyle Herrington's Story



*Kyle Herrington, who first encountered the ministry as a high-schooler, talks about the profound influence it has had on him.*

I first visited Alexandra's House back in high school, around 2011. I had organized a service project for my school's pro-life group to come do some lawn work. I expected to do some lawn work, learn about Alexandra's House, and then move on. What I did not expect was for Alexandra's House to make such a powerful impact on me. For a ministry that deals with such painful experiences, the House was full of such love that it was palpable. You could feel it.

From then on, I have tried to stay close to Alexandra's House even though I have lived outside of Kansas City for most of that time. About a year ago, I came up with an idea to support the ministry from wherever. God's Grace is paramount in all of life, but especially in this ministry focusing on serving very special babies and their families. I wanted to organize a group to ask for God's Grace for Alexandra's House on a continuous basis while also storming heaven with prayers when they were urgently needed.

I created a prayer group to raise up Alexandra's House in prayer. Each Sunday, members of the group receive a weekly prayer intention in their email, asking them to remember the Alexandra's House community in their prayers, whether that be for families or for the staff and volunteers of Alexandra's House. Additionally, members receive special intention emails when urgent prayers are needed for a specific situation. The prayer group has given me and everyone in it the ability to unite in prayer for Alexandra's House and support the amazing work of this ministry.

If you would like to be added to the prayer list, feel free to email me at [kylher12@gmail.com](mailto:kylher12@gmail.com) and I can add you to the list.



## *Alexandra's House*

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