

Newsletter



Fall / Winter
2011

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Alexandra's
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From The Founder*Dear Treasured Friends,*

This year has been a transitional one. I would say the prior 17 years, which are those encompassing Alexandra's life and death, and the founding and growth of this mission, were ones where we often were asked to drink deeply from the Cup of Sorrow. This was truly hard where many times we felt as if we were thrown into a storm-tossed sea in a paper boat and abandoned. Then late last fall with such rapidity we began receiving one blessing after another in multiple forms and from unexpected sources, that we could not deny these were the arms of God the Father offering us an endless embrace of love. It was so wonderful that we told Him we wanted more. And He has given. We now enjoy the bliss of drinking deeply from the Cup of Love.

We have learned that far beyond the story of sorrow, our apostolate is a story of love. Not love that the world offers that is uncertain and often fleeting but one that is inexpressibly beautiful. It is a love where one is able to set their personal fears and desires aside for another for a greater purpose. We are helping to build a Culture of Love.

We live what the Great John Paul II wrote about - and also lived. He wrote extensively and beautifully about the meaning of suffering, especially the kind we live here with our babies and their families every day; which is less a physical suffering but more an anguish of the soul. He says this suffering unleashes love in the human person and that this unselfish love stirs the heart into action.

In our last newsletter our parents shared their experiences of this heroic love for the babies they lost and the hope that overcame fear when they conceived again. In this issue we continue contemplating this Culture of Love and how it is manifested through service. You will find this movement comes in many forms.

*continues on page 2***From The Friends of Alexandra's House**

Dear Friends and Patrons,

It is with a joyful heart that we say "Thank You".

Your kindness, generosity and commitment to Alexandra's House made this year's Bow Ties for Babies Gala our most successful to date. The Friends of Alexandra's House was able to present Patti Lewis with a check for \$40,000.00!

It took a lot of hard work and faith from our small group of individuals. We hope many of you will join our committee, bringing with you new ideas, which will help us become even more successful.

Currently, we are planning next year's Gala. Our committee is looking into expanding our auction capabilities by setting up a site on the Internet where you will be able to see and pre-bid on silent auction items. We are starting our search for a guest speaker who shares the message of Alexandra's House and Patti Lewis. Any help from you would be appreciated, especially in the areas of advertising/publicity/corporate sponsorship and endowments. Each dollar we raise provides Alexandra's House with the funds needed to reach out and help a family in need.

Our Fourth annual Bow Ties for Babies Gala will be held on October 6, 2012 at the Carriage Club of Kansas City.

We hope to see all of our supporters and, hopefully, some new faces too. Let's make this great journey with Patti together.

With Gratitude,
The Friends of Alexandra's House
913-780-2510

PAR'S STORY

Dear Friends,

In the early part of 2011, a very dear friend asked if I would go over to a young lady's house in Belton to interpret while she and Patti at Alexandra's House spoke on the speakerphone. This young lady speaks limited English, was pregnant with her third child and living in the United States without her husband. Needless to say, she was feeling very much alone. Not only was she alone but she also learned that when her baby was to be born, the child would be stillborn or die shortly after birth. However, she made the decision to carry her baby to term.

Before I left my home, I had asked my Lord to please help me to do this for them and be able to make her understand what Patti wanted to say to her. Patti and Helen from Alexandra's House wanted me to tell her that she was not being punished in any way and that they would be there for her now and when the time came for the baby to be born.

I translated every word as best as I could, even though I don't speak Spanish fluently. She seemed to understand most of what was being said but, only by the grace of God, the Lord heard my prayer and got me through it.

I had no idea how difficult this was going to be - not the language part but the emotional side of this visit. She cried and I cried and I was thinking, how did I ever let myself get into this situation! It really broke my heart to see her in such pain.

I guess the saying is true; God works in mysterious ways, because he picked me to be his messenger. I became attached to this sweet lady and her family. When I left her house I knew this wasn't the end of it. I just couldn't go back to my life as if this family didn't exist. I said, "OK, Lord, you got me now. Now tell me what to do and how can I help this young lady?" I started calling her and stopping at her house to deliver food whenever I could. We would talk awhile and she managed to smile and hug me and always said "thank you".

One time I asked her if she needed rides to the doctor and also when the time came for her baby to be born. She said no but didn't know what she was going to do. When I got home, I called the leader of the Hispanic Community at St. Sabina Church. He gave her his home number and cell number to arrange the rides. I was so happy that she now knew someone to whom she could converse with and truly understand.

I worried about her because she was still working and standing on her feet all day and she wasn't ready to give birth just then. The inevitable happened, her baby was born and I wasn't there. Patti from Alexandra's House was there, going back and forth to the hospital until the baby was born.

Speaking of this year... I would like to take this opportunity to invite you, no, to plead with you, to join us on a really unique journey toward 12-12-12.

There is such an interest in our modern culture regarding numeric sequences like the calendar dates of 10-10-10 and 11-11-11. The next date of interest - 12-12-12 - does hold great significance to our Alexandra's House for two, non-superstitious reasons: 1) It will be the 10th anniversary of the dedication of this House in Westport (after initially founding it in my home) and 2) 12-12-12 would also be Alexandra's 18th birthday.

Historically, a Pope may declare a Holy Year dedicated to God the Father, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, or others. I am no one of that importance but as Mother of this mission, I would like, rather than celebrating with a social event, to declare a year of prayer for Alexandra's House and ask you, our cherished friends, to join us on a spiritual pilgrimage for a whole year. Would you be willing, beginning on December 12, 2011 and ending on December 12, 2012 to every day offer a small (or big) prayer - from the heart, on our behalf? Would you pray for a breakthrough for us to expand into the greater fullness of our mission along with the growth of a consecrated community? May we, at this year's end, be able to more greatly glorify God with our lives.

I thank each one of you for your interest in our little hidden Alexandra's House and for being a part of our community. While we may not tangibly affect the masses in our day-to-day work, our babies, in their docility and surrender, complete an enormous mission for the whole Body of Christ. It is they who will help transform and heal our land...and we, all together, are their servants. What a privilege! God bless you!

Your Patti

Without reserve we appreciate everything and everyone who has come to our aid over these past years because each act is freely offered. There is no worldly reward, the babies won't grow up and name buildings after anyone, and most of what is done here is virtually hidden. In purely natural moment-moment circumstances, though, sometimes something extraordinary happens.

Emily's Story

At the beginning of the summer I sat down at the computer and started thinking of places I could volunteer to meet my requirements for school. For some reason, Alexandra's House popped into my head. Knowing almost nothing about the work they do, I decided to give it a shot, and e-mailed Patti. I was surprised at how quickly she responded and after emailing back and forth, it was decided that I would start volunteering in the middle of June. I couldn't believe how quickly I fell in love with this place.



Emily Holland

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I didn't know a lot about the ministry of Alexandra's House. I had heard some about them from my parish; Holy Spirit (Overland Park, KS) that donates some proceeds from their annual garage sale to them. I soon came to learn that their services provide so much help and comfort to so many people.

My first day there I quickly came to learn about the help they provide families in dealing with the loss of a newborn child. I'm the oldest of six children and could never imagine losing any of them. I knew that these families were going through such a great loss, and so I felt in my heart that God was calling me to stay and help. However, it wouldn't be until my last volunteer day that I would realize my full purpose to be here. One day as I was helping to make birthday cards for the families of the babies, Patti came in and told us about a mom that wouldn't be able to care for her child when it was born. A few days after the call I decided to tell my parents about the situation. The three of us sat down and discussed the possibility of taking in the baby. We knew nothing of the condition, but they agreed to call Patti for more information.

We discovered that the baby was a boy and had a rare condition that affects mainly the baby's heart. He would have to constantly be on a feeding tube and he would never live to his first birthday. We also learned that boys have a higher mortality rate than girls, meaning the time we would share with him would be even less. My mom always talked about maybe adopting another baby, but how could we care for one that we knew would soon die? The thought scared me greatly.

There were so many other details to think about as well. Where would he sleep? How would we pay for another child? What would my younger siblings think of him? How could we give him as much care as he needed with six other kids? My parents and I knew we would love him immediately, but that was the problem. How could we get over the loss of someone we would get so attached to?

Right now we still have time before he is born. Although nothing is final on whether or not we will be caring for him when he is born, my parents and I continue to pray and ask God if this is the right path for us.

I believe that God sent me to Alexandra's House for this reason. I have learned so much here about putting my trust in God and letting Him show me what His plan is for me. They have given me so much more than I could have ever given to them. Although I realize the impact this little baby will have on my family's life, I have never felt so strongly that this is what God wants.

Soon there will be no more time for me to volunteer at Alexandra's House. However, I know my work here is not over. God has shown me such wonderful loving people who work tirelessly to help others. They have shown me what it means to be selfless and work hard for Christ and that all life is sacred and should be cherished. I love everyone I've met at Alexandra's House so much, and I will miss spending my days volunteering here. Yet even though I have come to the end of physically coming to Alexandra's House, I know in my heart that this is really just the beginning.

Volunteering there also helped me to decide that I want to become a nurse. I want to work in the maternity ward with labor and delivery. I have seen such joy in new life, and I can't wait to witness that every day. I believe that I can be a much better nurse because of my experience working at Alexandra's House. Although I began volunteering to help those at Alexandra's House, the experience has helped me much more. I have learned the joy of giving my time and effort to help others as well as the happiness in discovering my future profession. I have become a better person because of my experience there, and I'm so grateful for the opportunity to be a part of Alexandra's House.

The funeral came and everything happened so fast yet it felt like slow motion and I could tell this sweet lady was in a lot of pain.

When I visited her again, she told me how pleased she was with the gift from Alexandra's House, a beautiful white bear with an urn for the baby's ashes being held by the bear's paws.

I still keep in touch with this very strong young lady and she knew she had to be there for her boys.

In August of 2011, Alexandra's House asked if I would deliver this Mother a portrait of her baby. I said, of course I would. On my way to deliver the portrait, it hit me that I was going to be bringing back old and painful memories of that day. I started praying in my car, "Oh Lord, please give me the right words to say and the strength to handle the situation, whatever it might be". As I was walking up to her house, my heart was beating so fast but, again, my Lord was with us. As I was taking the picture out I began to explain about this kind volunteer at Alexandra's House (Maureen Noonan) that does a portrait for all the families going through this same crisis. I could see the tears were about to come but, as the Lord would have it, they were tears of joy. She must have seen the look on my face, which was total panic. She stood up, smiled and hugged me. Her sister-in-law and mother-in-law came in and looked at the portrait and were all very thankful. On my way home, I felt kind of guilty that I was getting all this glory when all I did was deliver this picture.

I would like to say to Alexandra's House, what beautiful, compassionate and loving spirits all of you have. Also, to the artist, wow, God has truly blessed you with such talent and, most of all, has led you on His journey to lessen the pain for all these families with your beautiful art.

I thank my Lord for allowing me to be a small part of all this. I am only the messenger, but, wow, what an honor and blessing for me.

I remain the messenger,
Love, Par

Not everyone would or could take a baby into their home but a team could be organized at your company, church, civic organization, or within your family to help us serve even more effectively. We would like to see groups who would work in the neighborhoods where they live. A group could, like Par, make home visits to a pregnant family to take a meal, mow a lawn or shovel snow, take kids for a play date, drive a couple to an appointment or just offer encouragement. Other needs include packing Wee Care Packages and delivering them to area hospitals. We could also use tech support, social media management, writers, and artists. If any of these activities interest you, or any of the stories inspire you, please call us at 816-931-2539.



Holdyn teaches kids soccer drills

Kickin' It With The Kids Sporting KC Soccer Program

By Kim Hitchcock

When Holdyn Halperin was just 4 years old, his beloved grandfather died. Holdyn was so upset and did not know how to manage his emotions so he kicked his preschool teacher and was almost expelled before school ever began. Years later, his mom experienced the loss of his unborn twin siblings, and his Stepfather passed away at the age of 42. Pain and loss were no strangers to Holdyn and he wanted to help other kids find a way to feel better during these difficult times.

Holdyn, now 16 and a Junior at Olathe Northwest High School, received a scholarship from Sporting KC, our local professional soccer team, and with this scholarship, he designed a free, youth soccer program for the friends and families of Alexandra's House where his mom was a volunteer. His mission was to provide a positive outlet for kids of all ages to build confidence, overcome challenges, develop soccer skills and encourage a healthy and active lifestyle. The ultimate goal was to help kids improve their overall physical and emotional wellness, develop a love of sports that lasts a lifetime, improve agility, teamwork and soccer skills and most of all... to have FUN with other kids from Alexandra's House and their friends! Through his experiences of loss he wanted to share the knowledge that sports such as soccer can provide both health and healing.

The kick-off event was a great success and we had several families join in the fun. The

LOVE TRANSFORMED INTO SERVICE

The following are just glimpses of multiple other ways in which God's love has been made manifest through the kindness and generosity of others.

Spiritual Gifts:

Kami Clabaugh is one of the very important reasons we expanded our services to families who experienced an unexpected loss of a baby. Her full story soon will be added to our website. She will never deny the great suffering she and her family endured in carrying a seemingly healthy baby who then died in her womb. She would also say that the love that burns within her for her little Addison propelled her to do something special. As a result she is leading an initiative in Kansas City where families will be able to come together to remember their absent but never forgotten babies. Please note:

Save The Date!

The Angel Baby Project of Greater KC along with St. Joseph and St. Mary's Medical Centers will host the first annual Prenatal Bereavement Ceremony in April 2012 on the St. Joseph campus. Please follow The Angel Baby Project on Facebook to learn more about upcoming event details go to <http://www.facebook.com/TheAngelBabiesProject>

Dr. William Palma, a retired physician from North Carolina, learned of Alexandra's House after reading an online interview about the foundation of our apostolate in *Il Sussidiario* newspaper, which originates in Milan, Italy. Since then he faithfully, and most mysteriously, at moments of our deepest needs, sends us messages of encouragement and other helpful resources.

Intercessors Katie Schroeder, Kathleen Keim, and many others who are hidden and only known to God pray for the needs of our families, for those of us who serve, and the countless others who sustain us in many ways.

Two sisters from New England came to Alexandra's House recently for a private retreat. Anne and Maureen are prayer warriors. After spending their first night here, on their own they made a commitment to pray specifically for our Foundress. They have termed their team PIPPA – Patti's Intercessory Prayer PARTners and have returned to their homes, engaging a very holy priest as their spiritual director to guide them in this mission.

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Grants:

As we feel the love of God more and more, it seems He is transforming Alexandra's House into an even more beautiful place too. He touched the hearts of some special benefactors, who asked that their grants be used for physical improvements to or expansion of the House.

Friends of Alexandra's House and their love-driven activities have agreed that a portion of their gift this year will put into a special savings account to for a building fund, once we need a larger place. (See their letter on page 1)

Kelly Family Foundation – helped us with substantial structural repairs and beautification of Alexandra's House by replacing our roof covering, repaired and repainted the first floor porch, and interiorly repainted every ceiling throughout, a kitchen, bath and dining room and donated all new porch furniture.

Curry Family Foundation – supported the structural repair and repainting of the extensive exterior wooden surfaces at Alexandra's House including a second porch, repaired brick, and made sure the house was as weather and pest proof as possible.

Requests from the local community for help in burying babies who die from any cause are becoming more frequent for Alexandra's House.

Visitation Elementary School Junior Board – awarded Alexandra's House its largest 2011 grant to help us provide burials and headstones for more babies.

One fourth of the 2011 Bow Ties for Babies contribution to Alexandra's House will go toward burying babies too.

Mothers of Young Children Annual Gift Gallery

The Gift Gallery is held each year in mid-November at Curé of Ars School. This one-day event brings together artisans and vendors selling unique and upscale items perfect for gifts, home and yourself. Funds are raised through ticket and vendor sales, corporate sponsorships, and a basket raffle. Since Gift Gallery began in 2003, it has generated over \$67,000 to benefit local children's charities. Alexandra's House is honored to be among those charities that benefit from this highly anticipated event.

Each year the Gift Gallery has gained momentum and become more successful. Vendors and shoppers are loyal to the show because of its intimacy and the unique shopping experience. In 2010 alone, it hosted 1,300 shoppers and generated over \$20,000 in donations.

To learn more and the 2012 date, go to: <http://www.giftgallerykc.com>

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session included some games, drills, and instruction on Soccer as well as nutrition. The kids received free t-shirts and water bottles and really enjoyed it!

The next session was cancelled because Holdyn was injured the day before. As starting quarterback for his High School Football team, he was carrying the ball in to score when two members of the opposing team tackled him, fracturing his ankle and tearing ligaments. Holdyn had to have surgery, will require an additional surgery and his recovery will take 12-16 weeks with the majority of that time spent in a cast on crutches. This ended his football season and delivered a devastating blow to both him and his team.

The night before his surgery, Holdyn was honored at the Sporting KC game for this program along with the other scholarship recipients.

Holdyn once again is experiencing loss and challenge, but at the same time, he is developing further his tremendous courage, character and commitment. He plans to continue the Kickin' it with the Kids program, although from the sidelines, and hopes to expand the program next year. While his injury has changed his current plans for the program, his desire is to pass along to the kids what he has learned from this experience and continue to be a model for these young athletes, even if it must be from his crutches.

For more information contact:

Holdyn at (913) 269-9882
or his mom Kim at (913) 481-3548



Holdyn (3rd from left) and others honored at Sporting KC game.



Kratofil Family

FIRST FRUITS

A Family Tradition

We first learned about Alexandra's House shortly before our oldest daughter Abbie's first birthday. She is now 5. The Mothers of Young Children group at our church, Ascension, was collecting donations for Alexandra's House at the time. We were really touched by its mission and by the stories of the families they serve.

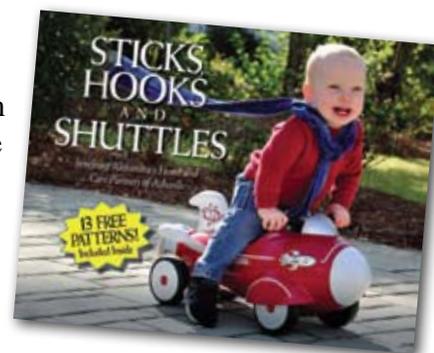
We felt so blessed to have had a happy, healthy first year with Abbie and wanted to do something to help the families of Alexandra's House. We asked all of our family and friends to bring a donation for Alexandra's House to Abbie's party instead of gifts. We had so much fun collecting and delivering those gifts to Alexandra's House that we wanted to do it again with our next daughter Caitlyn, who is now 2.

This tradition has carried on now through our son Jack for his first birthday this year. We had a Cat in the Hat birthday party for him. It was a lot of fun. This new family practice has been very meaningful for our family and we hope it has been some small help for Alexandra's House and those you serve!

Other anonymous private family foundations and private donors supported our general operating expenses and special programs, allowing us to sustain our mission.

Works of Their Hands

We met Flo Carlisle through an incidental phone conversation she had with one of our local volunteers Jerry Cheek. Flo worked for a North Carolina company called Pisgah Yarn and Dyeing Co., Inc., and home of Peaches & Crème Yarn.



Flo desired to create a 2011 calendar to serve as a fundraising tool for charities offering end of life care. After learning about Alexandra's House from Jerry, she chose us as a beneficiary of this project.

A self-proclaimed pragmatist, Flo hoped sales of the calendar would raise enough money to help us with some type of major structural improvement. About that same time, we were advised that our very large, 108 year old basement windows needed replacing.

Once all was settled, astoundingly, the amount of money Flo and her countless volunteers raised and contributed to us approximated the actual cost and installation of the windows! Everything works for good for those who place their trust in Him.

My name is Shirley Smith and I am President of TonKaWa FCE in Shawnee Mission, Kansas. TonKaWa FCE is a group of 11 ladies who love to help others. We heard about Alexandra's House and, after talking with Patti and hearing of their love for these precious infants, that fiery love spread to us and allowed us to serve them through our handwork and/or buying items for their Wee Care Packages' wish list.

Every stitch of every eternity blanket and bonnet is made with love. Knowing that an infant will be wrapped with our love-filled blankets is so very special to our ladies. We finish one set, pick up our needles and start another set. What a joy it is for us to do this. We've seen pictures of these precious little ones and our hearts melted and we wanted to be a part of Alexandra's House and have felt blessed again and again to be a part of this program.

We have a few ladies that don't do handwork but when they purchase wish list items, they feel they are a part of this program too. We feel that God led us to this project and knowing these precious babies will be wrapped in our eternity blankets and caps and knowing that their parents

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will hold their babies one last time in items we made is a blessing that makes our day. God bless these precious little angels, their parents and God bless all who are a part of this wonderful program.

My sister is Jackie Wolf and she is also part of a group called "Soul Sisters" from Westside Family Church in Overland Park, Kansas. "Soul Sisters" is comprised of nine women who gather weekly to study God's word and one of their missions is to have a community project. When I shared with their group what ours does for Alexandra's House, they were all very interested in helping too. I got the list of items needed at Alexandra's House and they gathered items for both the hospital ER boxes (Footprints From Heaven) and the Wee Care Packages. They were able to fill five boxes for each program.

Our collective hearts are filled with love for these tiny ones, knowing that these items will bring some comfort to the parents of the most precious of God's angels. We keep you and all those associated with Alexandra's House in our prayers.

Friend of the family of baby Noelle Tilly Rhode (July 2011) Pat Lacalamito of Northland knew she wanted to do something to help. Giving money, she said, would be easy. She pondered this and then, throughout the summer, she practiced, honed her skills, and began crocheting little, snowy white blankets to contribute to Alexandra's House. As she began sharing this new passion with others, Blanch Weymuth joined Pat, stitching unique patterns into her blankets. Soon a group of senior citizens from Liberty – the Silver Stitchers – also made a promise to knit and crochet blankets for us as well.



Pat & Blanch

Holy Trinity Holy Threaders - For a number of years this Church group from Lenexa has been making blankets for Alexandra's House as well as sewing our little white baptismal/burial gowns. They come adorned with removable angel wings so the parents have a keepsake to cherish.

***To all, thank you!
Your generosity is motivated
by truly selfless love!***



Santa with Kelsey

JOY IN THE JOURNEY

Wonderfully our Alexandra's House Family is increasing in numbers both through new referrals and through the births of healthy babies after past losses. As such, our House is now proving too small to conduct some of our programs. One of the most popular is our year-end Family Reunion where we celebrate two things: Alexandra's incredible legacy and our beloved families.

In response to this need, the religious community, staff, and many devoted volunteers from Redemptorist Catholic Church at 33rd and Broadway graciously allow us the use of their John Sullivan Banquet Hall for this event. Not only this, they plan our celebration, lavishly decorate each room, donate all the food and drinks, and serve and clean up. They simply invite us to come, to play, to share, and drink deeply and purely from the Cup of Love. Assisting in their endeavors are local shops who provide donated items.

Then Santa John, with his special calling for sick children, makes his long-anticipated visit and gives all the children a chance to tell him their wishes. Blessed are we too, by the Charles and Jeanne Haake family who, as their collective family Christmas gift, purchases seemingly endless numbers of wrapped presents so Santa has something to give to each child who approaches his chair.

This year's event on December 10th will see an influx in volunteers from a local insurance company. This call to service was inspired by one of our Dads with whom they work. Wes Runnebaum and his wife Adrienne chose this opportunity to honor the memory of their baby girl Gabriella's first anniversary of her birth and death (December 2, 2010).

So for those past and present who have served us so magnificently and allowed our families to create new and everlasting joyful memories, thank you, everyone!



Loving Service - Volunteers