

HOMEtown News

The Official Newsletter of the House of Mercy and Encouragement

Winter 2015



From the Director

"We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But if that drop was not there, I think the ocean would be less by that missing drop." – Mother Teresa



Fall has been very busy at the House Of Mercy & Encouragement. I am humbled by the wonderful response to our fall fundraising efforts and letter campaign. More than ever before, we have needed your help, and you have generously responded! Praise God! Our numbers are increasing and the challenges are growing. But I am encouraged by **your** support! I am also reminded by Mother Teresa's words, "We can only love one person at a time, serve one person at a time." It is easy to be overwhelmed when so many children and families need help. But together we can make a difference!

I would like to acknowledge in this newsletter the wonderful people we have on staff as contract service providers. All are top professionals in their field. I can honestly say they are not giving their time and talent for monetary reasons. They are here because they are compassionate, nurturing individuals who find joy in helping others. I am so thankful for each and every one of them:

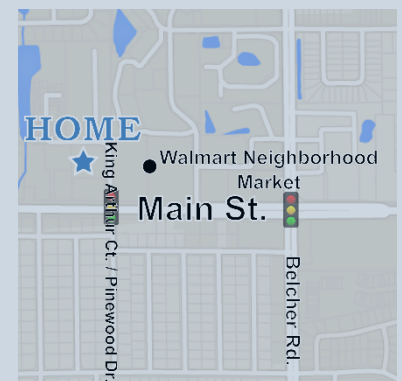
Lindsay Chatleain, Office Administrator. Lindsay is very well organized, pleasant and can answer your questions about any of our programs, finances, insurance, and scholarships. She is a joy to work with and is very knowledgeable. She works long hours and she is dedicated to helping those who call find the help they need.

Sam Lima, MHI: Sam is a retired Marine veteran who enjoys working with people of all ages but particularly with teens, couples and adults. Sam demonstrates strong therapeutic skills and understands the unique challenges of families. Sam facilitates our Lego Mindstorm (STEM) social skills groups for middle school age and up. Sam is bilingual and speaks Spanish fluently.

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2030 Main St.
Dunedin, FL 34698



From the Director (continued)

Demetria Arriaga and Kerri Garrett: are Board Certified Behavior Analysts who are very knowledgeable in the field of behavior modification. They co-facilitate our Tuesday night brain gym and social skills group. They are passionate about helping our children and they both have had much experience in working with developmentally delayed and those on the autism spectrum. They have also had experience working with many other children who are considered socially or behaviorally challenged.

Laura Vincenti: Laura is a very talented local artist. You can find her studio in downtown Dunedin at the Sterling Art Center. She has had experience in conducting children's art classes for Clearwater Recreation Center and the Salvador Dali Museum. She also serves on the board for the House Of Mercy and Encouragement. She also facilitates art projects with our youngest group of children.

Vickie Sboukis, LMHC: Vickie is well versed in the field of mental health and school guidance counseling. She is very talented and has many gifts that she shares with our children. Presently, she is facilitating the social skills group on Saturday mornings with our youngest group of boys and girls. She also sees clients on an individual basis. She is bilingual and speaks Greek fluently.

Shannon Knight, MHI: Shannon holds an M.S. degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and works with children and adults. She has experience with addiction counseling and trauma resolution. She is providing individual sessions as well as helping to facilitate groups.

Sharon Gardner and Allison Hackett: Both Sharon and Alli hold Masters Degrees in education and are certified teachers in the state of Florida. They are **invaluable** in helping children to meet their grade level expectations and to coach the children who need motivation. Both work for Pinellas County Schools but we are fortunate to be able to call on them when help is needed.

My deepest gratitude to each and every one for helping to make the House Of Mercy and Encouragement a place for children and families to come to find comfort, peace, and a sense of well-being.

In His Peace,
Dolores

WITH DEEPEST APPRECIATION to PINELLAS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

The House Of Mercy and Encouragement is pleased to announce that a \$7,000 grant has been awarded by the **Faith Mission Christian Fund of the Pinellas Community Foundation** to be used for tutoring, counseling, social skills and group scholarships. We are thrilled to be able to extend our services to many more children and families! Thank you to all who were involved in the decision making process. This award is a huge blessing to our families!



My Story

My story is a regular feature of the House Of Mercy and Encouragement. It is usually about how HOME has touched the life of someone who has come for help. This issue is a little different. With the permission of Jered and his parents, they have allowed me to publish a story that Jared told in the sand tray. He requested that I use his name. It has inspired me greatly and I know it will inspire you, too! I am very proud of him. My deepest gratitude is extended to Jared and his parents for allowing this publication.

A SAND TRAY STORY

Once upon a time there was a little girl named Bella. She was walking in the grassy fields when she spotted a box by the willow tree. She walked up to the box and saw engravings on the box that said, "This box holds the meaning of life." The only way to open it was with a key. She looked all over around the willow tree, in the ground and even in her pockets. But she couldn't find the key. She decided to walk back home to her mother and her father when she suddenly bumped into an old man. She asked the old man if he knew where the key was hidden to the box that held the meaning of life. The old man said, "If you want to find the key, you need to cross the most dangerous desert, the most dangerous seas, and climb the highest mountains. Once at the top, you will find the key. So Bella crossed the most dangerous desert, the most dangerous seas and climbed the highest mountains. When she was at the top, she found the key! With the key she crossed the most dangerous sea and most dangerous desert and finally reached the box. She took the key and opened the box. Inside the box was a note that read, "The meaning of life is up to you. So it is for everyone. Everyone has a purpose. So **you** hold the meaning of life."

The End

Story by Jared Herman, 6th grade

A word about sand tray: Sand tray is a specialized method of therapy used with adults and children. The benefit is that small items and figures are used to represent meaning. The previous story was created as items were being placed in the sand. The story is remarkable and I think we have a very creative author that is blooming! Thanks again, Jared. **You're the best!!**



ART Exhibition in Support of the House Of Mercy and Encouragement

Friday January 8, 2016 — Sterling Art Studios is sponsoring an art exhibition called "*The Creative Spirit –Creating from the Heart.*" There will be a reception for the artists and all who would like to attend. Refreshments, awards and silent auction will be available from 5:30pm – 8:00pm on Friday January 8th. Awards will be announced 7:00pm. A call to artists is ongoing until December 28th. [Friends, family, and community members are invited to attend this special event to benefit HOME.](#) **All** are encouraged to **submit your artwork**. Art will be on display January 1st – January 30th. Contact Laura Vincenti for more information at vincenti_laura@yahoo.com.

Looking Ahead

The House Of Mercy and Encouragement is teaming up with Our Lady Of Lourdes Parish in Dunedin to sponsor "A Celebration Of Mercy: Family Life Conference." Since we are all part of the family of God, **all** are invited to attend to be encouraged, inspired and supported! **Saturday March 12, 2016** from 9:00am – 1:00pm in the Conmy Center. Exciting professional guest speakers will be presenting just some of the following topics:

- Communication in Marriage: The 5 Love Languages
- Behavioral Challenges in Children 2-12 years old
- How to Forgive Myself and Others
- Music: The Ability to Touch Your Soul
- Boost Your Brain Power: All Ages and Stages
- Clinical Aspects of Depression and Anxiety
- Caregivers: Meeting the Challenge
- Spirituality of the 12 Steps
- Compassion Fatigue: Be Kind to Yourself and Others
- Why Won't My Teens Listen to Me? Empowering Parents Through the Teenage Years.
- Who Will Dry My Tears? Grieving the Loss of a Loved One
- Many, Many, More Topics from which to Choose!

Coffee, ice tea and refreshments will be provided. Babysitting is available. Special activities for middle schoolers and high schoolers to participate. *Watch for further information forthcoming!*

Upcoming Groups

Call Lindsay at the HOME office to find out the dates and to register: 727 786-7951

[SOCIAL SKILLS, IMPULSE CONTROL, UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS](#): Children 2nd grade through 5th grade; Tuesday nights from 6:00pm – 7:30pm

[ART SENSATION](#): An art therapy class specially designed with the social and emotional needs of young teenagers in mind, Saturdays 11:00 am-12:30 pm

[SOCIAL SKILLS, IMPULSE CONTROL, and UNDERSTANDING EMOTIONS](#): 4 years old through 1st grade, Saturday mornings from 9:00am – 10:30am.

[LEGO® MINDSTORMS® Social Skills Class](#): Thursdays 5:00 pm- 6:30 pm; 6th grade- 10th grade Students; The focus of this class is on problem-solving, communication, and cooperation though an introduction to robotics using LEGO® MINDSTORMS®.

Fundraiser Update



is now



Our fall fundraiser was held in September at Galley's Pizza (now under new ownership).

A HUGE THANK YOU goes to an anonymous sponsor who have been long time friends of the House Of Mercy and Encouragement. All expenses were paid and all sales tickets from the event were given to HOME. This was a tremendous help and we are grateful to all who attended, donated items and those who were unable to attend but donated funds to keep our doors open and provide services for our children and families.

We made approximately \$8,000 which is deposited for direct services. Our deepest gratitude to our sponsor, to Tim and Angela – owners of Caesar's and their crew, and **to each and every one of you!**

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE DONATED TO THE FALL FUNDRAISER AND THE LETTER CAMPAIGN!

Neal & Dee Brown	Sherrill Milnes & Maria Zouves
Jim & Judy Buck	Allen & Dolores Mortimer
Mary & TJ Butcher	Lou Ann Nash
Michael & Shelley Delorenzi	Kathy & Guy Ostrom
Elizabeth Bristle Bosco	Frederika Peebles
Linda & John Castorino	Charles & Charlene Pitt
Gladys Carignan	Carolyn Schilling
Stephen & Christine Foley	Toni & Chris Salemi
Michelle & Dennis Gallagher	Rose Shamro
Mark & Sharon Gardner	Phil & Cindy Signore
Joe Garrison	Ned Smith
Robbie Garrison	R. Joyce Stiles & Frank Dunkleberger
Sharyn Gildea	Francis Stronski
Laura Guttery	Rosemary & Julian Trexler
Richard & Dorothy Guntli	Laura & Len Vincenti
Bob & Sharon Jill	Doris Visalli
Tara Kiesel – Quiet Light Wellness Services, Inc.	Bob & Judi Warner
Ann & Joe Kirst	Jim Warren
Logan Kushner (In His Memory)	Mari Jane Zimmer
Peter & Lisa Mansfield	

If you don't see your insurance please contact us. We also offer a sliding fee scale and scholarships. Please call for more details.

BayCare • Cigna • Humana (Lifesynch)
MHNet Behavioral Health • New Directions
Tricare • ValueOptions • Vocational Rehab

Currently a Provider for:

Need Help??

Our vision is to compassionately serve as a resource for those children and families who are affected by mental health, learning, emotional, or behavioral issues. We are a faith-based provider who believes in the God given dignity of every child and family. All families are treated with respect and kindness.

HOME is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization dedicated to helping children and families.

Website:
www.houseofmercy-fl.org
Email address:
info@houseofmercy-fl.org

Phone: 727-786-7951
Fax: 727-786-7951

2030 Main Street
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*play therapy, counseling, tutoring
help for children and families*

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