

Leaving a Legacy of Love



Later this Spring we will bid farewell to one of our key leaders, Gloria Lee, Chief Program Officer, as she embraces retirement after 40 years of serving Our Lady's Inn. Gloria has seen and done it all! The generational impact of Gloria's legacy of love has touched countless lives!

How did you first get involved with Our Lady's Inn?

Gloria recalled that her journey with Our Lady's Inn began in 1981 when as a young woman, she prayed and asked God, "Where do you want me?"

At that time Gloria had been working full-time in the field of Disability Determinations for the State of Missouri and had been a member of the Community of Restoration, a Christian community affiliated with Sts. Peter and Paul Parish in Soulard. Many members of this community of faith volunteered assisting to open the Inn. Two members asked if she would like to be a live-in house mom and Gloria's prayers were answered. She moved in just before the Inn opened on January 22, 1982.

Describe the origins of OLI.

Loretto Wagner was one of the original founding Board members. She had

witnessed a man push a woman out of a car and shove her into an abortion clinic demanding that the pregnant woman "have abortion or else!" This incident greatly disturbed Loretto. Along with other pioneers in the pro-life movement, Loretto knew that many women were being forced to have an abortions because of pressure from the father of the baby or other family members. They needed a place where they could go to choose life for their babies.

What is the mission of Our Lady's Inn?

Our Lady's Inn Maternity Homes (OLI) serve as a safe haven for pregnant women and their children in need of housing and services. OLI's mission is to offer an alternative to abortion – supporting women in every possible way in their choice for life. In helping these mothers transition from crisis toward independence and stability, Our Lady's Inn opens the door to hope for a better life.

Describe your first experience on the job.

Smiling, Gloria shared that less than one week after Our Lady's Inn opened its doors, St. Louis was hit with the 'great snowstorm of 1982' where everyone was snowed in. Gloria recalled that they had to call in the National Guard to transport a pregnant mom just one block away to the old city hospital. Gratefully, both mom and baby weathered the snowstorm and did just fine. It was quite an opening week!

Tell us about the early history of Our Lady's Inn.

The original Our Lady's Inn was located in the former St. John Nepomuk convent built in 1899.

Initially, there were six single beds in a large dorm room and a large bedroom for the new moms with babies on the second floor. There were four family units and two staff bedrooms on the third floor, with a total capacity to serve 12 families.

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St. Louis, MO 63111
314.351.4590

St. Charles Inn

3607 Highway D
Defiance, MO 63341
636.398.5375

ourladysinn.org

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In 1995, with the Inn always full, Our Lady's Inn rented the former convent at St. Catherine of Alexandria Parish where an additional 12 single moms could be served. In 1997 the two homes were merged into one with the purchase of the convent at St. Anthony of Padua Parish in south city. This much larger location would serve up to 18 families.

As the need for services grew, how did you see God's hand at work?

When asked this question, Gloria cheerfully remarked "You can't out do God", and that OLI "looked for people who have faith plus heart" to help them purchase our property in St. Charles County. In 2005, our neighborhood bank and one of their key officers, Ron Moser, believed in our mission and made a \$1M loan. She stated that it was a miracle to purchase the property in December of 2005 and then open our doors to pregnant moms and children in April of 2006! She saw "God's providence at work" and the establishment of our second maternity home was "clearly meant to be"!

Describe your journey with OLI over the past four decades.

Gloria shared that she has served in variety of roles, ranging from being one of the first live-in staff members, to being an early director and case manager. For many years she was the bookkeeper and grants manager while working from home and growing her own family. In 1996 she returned as the Program Director and became the Executive Director in 1998 where she served until November 2011, when Peggy Forrest accepted the leadership role. Gloria then moved into the more client-focused position of Chief Program Officer, her current role.

Tell us about a mother whose journey has touched your heart.

With tears in her eyes, Gloria shared a story about Stephanie, an early client at the first home.

Stephanie had been severely abused physically and emotionally before she came to the Inn. Our Lady's Inn provided Stephanie a safe place to deliver her baby and start to heal. Many years later, unable to continue employment due to the residual physical problems from the abuse, Stephanie came back to the Inn to volunteer. Stephanie had since married a wonderful man. She confided in Gloria, "If it wasn't for Our Lady's Inn, they wouldn't have a new grandchild coming". God worked powerfully through the OLI team to help save the life of a mother, a child, and a grandchild – one life, one mother, one family at a time.

What is your advice for the future?

"Always trust God and be willing to take risks. God has abundantly provided for all of our needs for the last 42 years and He will continue to do so, because this is HIS work."

It is with overwhelming gratitude that we bid a fond farewell to a pioneer and legend. Gloria is the epitome of a servant leader. Her wisdom, compassion, and dedication motivate all of us to continue working toward building a Culture of Life.

**Gloria leaves behind a "legacy of love"!
We will miss her greatly!**

From the Chief Executive Officer



I am thrilled beyond measure to share with you the exciting news that Our Lady's Inn has purchased a beautiful piece of property in unincorporated St. Louis County upon which we will build a new maternity home!

The site will offer our residents peace and privacy while allowing for ease of access to medical, educational, and employment resources. The search for the ideal setting and location was a five-year effort in which we faced disappointment and challenges, but we remained steadfast in the commitment to carrying out our mission of service to St Louis County women and children - allowing them to be supported within their own community.

In 2006, when the need to support St. Charles County residents in St. Charles County became evident, we opened the Inn in Defiance.

Over the last decade we have been serving increasing numbers of women from St. Louis County. So, intent on addressing the need in St. Louis County in a similar manner, we will build a beautiful home in which we offer acceptance, respect, and loving support for pregnant women and their children facing the risk of housing insecurity.

Much work needs to be accomplished between now and when we are ready to open the doors. So, I ask for your prayers and your support to help us prepare for the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peggy Forrest". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

What's Happening at OLI...



These precious babies were born at Our Lady's Inn between July 2023 and December 2023.

Amiah	Christopher	Harmony	Khy'el
Cairo	Daviana	Isaic	Rayne
Calcifer	Deshawn	Journee	
Chrishawn		Keegan	

welcome baby



2024 Trivia

Almost 400 friends of Our Lady's Inn enjoyed a fun night of Trivia at CBC on Saturday, January 27th. The 50/50 raffle winner received almost \$1000, we offered craft beer from local breweries, and we sold out at the amazing silent auction, which included a trip to Branson. The night raised funds and awareness for the moms and children we serve at Our Lady's Inn. A special thanks to our volunteers and to our sponsors.



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Luncheon for Life



We are grateful that the SOLD-OUT Luncheon for Life last September was a big success! Many new and old friends came together for a great cause. Thank you for supporting OLI while enjoying an afternoon of food and fun!

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Join us September 26, 2024
for the Luncheon for Life
Defiance Ridge Vineyards

Auction Support: Thank you to St. Clare of Assisi Ladies Auxiliary



Register Now!

ourladysoinn.org

Charity Golf Tournament

Greenbriar Hills Country Club
Monday, June 24th



Your donation may be eligible for a 70% Missouri Maternity Home Tax Credit.

To learn about eligibility for tax credits or to request an application please call Sandy Rustige at 314.736.1544.



Kay R. Adams
From: Andrew and Kathe Steele

William H. Ahrens, Jr.
From: Barbara Ahrens

Cole Anello
From: Dave Jockenhoefer

Sheila R. Birk
From: Ken and Mary Birk

Sr. Leo Ann Bub, CSJ
From: Leo and Susan Bub

Francis and Kathleen Burns
From: Mike and Gloria Burns

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From: Rosann Umhoefer

Mary Ann Capellupo
From: John Capellupo
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From: Don and Kathy Goedeker

Rosemary Childress
From: Anthony and Patti Sgroi

The Convey and McGovern Families
From: Melvyn and Mary Smith

Kara Cummings and Erin Cummings
From: Donald Cummings

Paula R. Deken
From: Jim Deken

The Deceased Members of the Deken and Pisoni Families
From: Mike and Joan Pisoni

George B. Desloge
From: Mary Rose Desloge

Marry Dobrunick
From: Regis Dobrunick

Catherine Doran
From: Bernie and Martha
Swaykus

Rosemary Dunn
From: Mike and Donna Regan

Barbara Dwyer
From: Terrence Dwyer

Mary Eichenberger
From: Bob and Sharon Schleinat

Sandy Ernst
From: Peggy Forrest

John H. Fahey, Jr.
From: Peggy Forrest
Don and Kathy Goedeker

Family and Friends
From: Mary Angela Tumulty

Linda D. Frazier Ford
From: Queen Esther Frazier

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From: Ron and Jess Faltus

Evelyn Goedeker
From: Rita Nonnenmacher

Holly Goodman
From: Lillian Goodman

Rachel Grady
From: Carl and Jill Kickham

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From: Dick and Lisa Roseland

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From: Mary Ann Kavouras

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From: Rosann Umhoefer

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From: Joe and Beth Viviano

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From: Janet Keller

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From: Peggy Forrest
Craig and Vera Weber

William Webster
From: Leona Bochantin

Mary Werth
From: Mary Laubengayer

Ken and Mary Wolf
From: Tom and Judy Wolf

Alice Yanko
From: Ron and Maryann Battelle

The Board, Staff, Volunteers and Families of Our Lady's Inn Offer our Sincere Condolences to the Families of...

John Fahey, Jr.
Brother of Gloria Lee

Anthony Puzzella
Father of Board Member Ed Puzzella



All the Women who Chose Life

From: John and Cathy Dobrynski
Grant and Sharon Smith

Ben and Judy Barton

From: Tricia Barton

Jesus Christ

From: Michael Janitch
Carol Probert

Jim and Mia Cobb

From: Dan and Judy Schnitzmeier

Diana Dahl

From: Glenn and Mary Fox

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From: Janet Gaia

Dr. Dallas Dyer

From: Thurman Brooks
Todd and Julie Merrill

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Marge Haefliger

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From: Katherine Blackburn

Iskov Family

From: Bradley Hornburg

Dr. and Dr. Thomas Keeline, Jr.

From: Mark and Rebecca Niesen

Velda Mae Keller

From: David and Vicki Keller

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From: Jim and Rita Gibbons

Liz Dyer Kramer

From: Thurman Brooks

Lydia

From: Wade and Julia Collins

Ray and Mary Lou Maassen

From: Gary and Ann Maassen

Reverend Mark Madden

From: Tonya McEnery

Sister Olivia Marie, CSJ

From: Donald Wessling

Sue Moga

From: Jen Hogan

**Most Sacred Heart School -
Eureka**

From: Kristin Callahan

Mother Mary

From: Randy and Patricia Adolph

My Grandchildren

From: Sue Nash

Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Niesen, III

From: Mark and Rebecca Niesen

Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Niesen, Jr.

From: Mark and Rebecca Niesen

Gwynneth Joy Megahan Preston

From: Candace Megahan

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From: John and Patty Stang

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From: Seana Tetzlaff

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From: Barbara Ahrens

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JoAnne Shekleton

From: David and Colleen
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Sonshine Sisters

From: Marianne Russell

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Transom, III**

From: Chris and Kristen
Winkelmann

Kaaren Veatch

From: Jim and Mary Anne Hall

Mr. and Mrs. Gene Wagner

From: Jim and Mary Anne Hall

Happy Anniversary!

Lee and Pat Hanley

From: Ann Duer

Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Westoff, Jr.

From: Dan and Barb Eggering

Happy Birthday!

Gerry Deken

From: Pete and Liz Hogan

Kevin F. Jones

From: Chris Jones

Mary Carol Jones

Mary Joan Piontek

From: Agnes Piontek

Diane Snively

From: Ann Louise Kozminske

Thomas and Elizabeth Nickson

**Tallulah, my granddaughter's
birth**

From: Elizabeth Bell

Healing

Robert J. Garagiola's Continued

Good Health

From: Brad and Tina Ogle

Service

Our Lady of the Presentation

KofC Ladies Auxiliary 13270

service for twenty years

From: Knights of Columbus

Council #13270



Help Us Help Them

For over 42 years OLI has been blessed to serve pregnant women and their children in crisis offering them housing and support, hope and dignity for a new life and a brighter future. Your generosity helps this important mission continue.



Our Lady's Inn

MATERNITY HOMES

www.ourladysinn.org

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Our Lady's Inn

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Britney's story

It's amazing what can happen when you nurture life - that of a mother, a child, or a family!

Britney lived at Our Lady's Inn for 13 months. During that time, she took advantage of many in-house classes offered to her: Family Wellness and Parenting, Pregnancy and Childbirth, Nutrition, and Safe Sleep. She also participated in empowerment programs such as Project Strong and the Change Program facilitated by our Director of Counseling.

Due to the debilitating effects of a traumatic brain injury, Britney had many needs. Her case manager worked tirelessly to connect her with Goodwill Industries' Brain Injury Program. OLI's nurse referred her to Labor of Love Doula Services for advocacy support during delivery and SLU Physical and Occupational Therapy Services to assist with her mobility needs. Britney partnered with OLI's Child Advocate and Parents as Teachers to learn as much as she could about child development and parenting techniques.

Working with her case manager, Britney secured a housing voucher for permanent supportive housing, a program which offers long-term case management and resources. We are happy to share that Britney has now been living in her own apartment for 3 years.

Upon moving from the Inn into her own apartment, Britney joined OLI's Aftercare Program. Last year, she availed herself of support from Vocational

Rehabilitation Services to find employment, with her Aftercare case manager coaching her through the interview process. Britney enjoys her work and looks forward to "making her dreams come true" and "making a difference every day". She is already making a difference as she continues to volunteer at Our Lady's Inn's Twice Blessed Resale Shop, which she began doing during her stay at the Inn. She is setting a beautiful example for her son by paying it forward.

Britney is very proud of her little boy! She knows, as we do, that every life is a cherished gift from God—including her own. We are honored to continue our walk with Britney in the Aftercare Program as she embraces her future of stability and hope!

Congratulations, Britney! We are proud of you!



Britney, right, pictured with Twice Blessed Store Manager, Lucy Hannegan.

