



Father Taaffe  
Homes

# Summer Newsletter

June 2009

## In this issue:

Letter from Jim Seymour  
*page 1*

A Conversation with  
Marypat Hill  
*page 1*

Letter from Joshua Graves  
*page 2*

News from St. Teresa Home  
*page 2*

News from St. Brigid Home  
*page 3*

News from St. Monica Home  
*page 3*

Notes from Susan  
*page 4*

### Fr. Taaffe Homes Advisory Board

*Bob Thomas, Chair*  
*Cheri Crocker*  
*Jack Gander*  
*Bob Gooley*

## Father Taaffe Homes

*Nurturing homes for teen girls who are  
pregnant or parenting their babies.*

a program of

**Catholic Community Services**

## A letter from Jim Seymour

*Executive Director*  
*Catholic Community Services*



Dear Friends of Father Taaffe,

This morning I read the story of Joseph in the Book of Genesis. Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery but later Pharaoh made him a ruler over all of Egypt. His brothers were afraid Joseph would take revenge on them so they begged for forgiveness. Joseph said to them, "Fear not... you thought evil against me, but God turned it into good, that He might...save many people."

For me, the faith lesson is that I must not only accept God's forgiveness, I must also extend it if I want to help save many lives.

Saving lives is exactly what we do every day at the Father Taaffe Homes for teen mothers. We have one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the nation right here locally, so the need for Father Taaffe Homes has never been greater.

Many of you gave generously right after Father Taaffe's death last year and we are very grateful. We will end our 2008-2009 fiscal year on June 30th in the black and have enough funding on hand to get us through July and August. But we need your ongoing support to keep Father Taaffe Homes strong. Please consider becoming a *Friend of the Father Taaffe Homes* by pledging to give a gift of support each month. You will help save lives.

Sincerely,

## A Conversation with Marypat Hill

Marypat Hill learned of the Father Taaffe Homes from a childhood friend who worked at St. Monica Home. As a school district Prevention Intervention Resource Teacher and former probation officer, Marypat saw immediately why Father Taaffe Homes work well for young moms.



The teen pregnancy rate in Marion County is twice that of the nation as a whole, and many teen girls are keeping their babies. "Today, it seems there's even more social baggage to contend with than when Father Taaffe first began his work on behalf of teen mothers," says Marypat. "Besides poverty and homelessness, many young families are also

*continued on page 2*

## A Letter from Joshua Graves

*Senior Program Director*

Dear Friends of Father Taaffe,

Abuse, violence, drugs, homelessness, teen pregnancy – all cycles of distress that need to be broken.

In social services, talk about “breaking the cycle” can almost become routine, a kind of cliché. But without intervention, generations of children will continue to suffer from abuse, neglect and violence. This often affects their adult relationships, and many go on to repeat the cycle themselves.

At the Father Taaffe Homes, we support those we serve in breaking their cycle of distress, whatever form it takes. In my nine years of work with Catholic Community Services, I’m most proud of those who have risen above these challenges to become healthy, thriving adults.

By providing a home and support to a pregnant or parenting teen, the Father Taaffe Program fosters success. Our compassionate, skilled, and dedicated housemothers model life based on God’s love and the teachings of Jesus. They literally hold an outstretched hand to pull young women away from the life that has entrapped them, often since birth.

Ultimately, the young women we serve have to make their own choices, invariably with great difficulty. But by coming alongside, we can help them see a path that leads to a bright and promising future for themselves and their babies.

Our work is truly blessed. Your prayers and support help continue Father Taaffe’s devotion to helping these young women during this critical time in their lives. You help us to make a difference that doesn’t last just a lifetime. It affects generations to come.

Joshua K. Graves

*Senior Program Director*

Youth and Family Services

Catholic Community Services

[jgraves@ccswv.org](mailto:jgraves@ccswv.org)

Continued from page 1: A Conversation with Marypat Hill

plagued with the damage of meth and other drug addiction, domestic violence, and gang influence.

“Father Taaffe and his homes are wonderful examples of how to spread the word of God through daily work,” Marypat continues. “A healthy mother creates a healthy baby. Healthy babies grow up to create healthy communities.” Though not as simple as it sounds, caring for fragile families has the potential to break the cycle of neglect, addiction, and crime. “It’s prevention in the midst of intervention,” she says.

For years, Marypat and her husband Bob attended the Father Taaffe fundraising auctions and supported the homes. As a member of the Catholic Community Services Foundation board of directors, Marypat is enthusiastic about the homes becoming part of CCS. “With Father Taaffe Homes and a continuum of care offered through CCS, our teen moms might never have to be alone and unsupported,” says Marypat “...as long as we all remember how to help those with the most to lose.”

## News from St. Teresa Home



I want to share a story with you about Annie\*, a teen girl who wanted nothing more than to be loved. She thought she had found it when she heard the words “I love you” from a boy.

Then came the news: “You’re pregnant.” Annie was thrilled. But when she told her boyfriend, he got angry and wanted her to terminate her pregnancy.

Instead, Annie found St. Teresa, a place where she could focus on her pregnancy, complete her education, and find the unconditional love she had been looking for. A place she could call home for herself and her baby.

As soon as she was shown around St. Teresa Home, Annie knew that she wanted to live here until she could get on her feet and find a home for herself and her baby. She received her high school diploma and is now taking college classes.

Annie stays in contact with us regularly. She has her struggles, but she knows she has our continuing support.

Thank you for making this experience of home possible for Annie and the many other young girls who need our help. We could not do this without you.

Tonya Sorensen

*Head Housemother*

503-391-9349 [tsorensen@ccswv.org](mailto:tsorensen@ccswv.org)

\* These names have been changed to protect their

## News from St. Brigid Home



I have a photo my father took of his three girls sitting on the couch, Mom's arm around me and her other arm nestling my newborn, sound asleep on her shoulder. It had been very hot, and Kalyn and I were both fussy. Cuddling my sleeping daughter, my mom told me that babies feel the hum of their mother's emotions.

It's these motherly nuggets of advice and solace that all of us are grateful for. Even at 40, with Kalyn now 19, I still pick up that phone and ask Mom, "What now?"

So imagine being Amy\*. Sixteen and pregnant. Alone and scared. Your family lives in another city, and you have been told that you are no longer welcome at home. You have to start a new school, find new friends, and all kinds of changes are happening to your body.

Fortunately, Amy found St. Brigid's Home. The first time I took her to the doctor, an ultrasound was done. She was worried, tired and very angry at her parents. Then the nurse turned the screen toward her, and there was her son sucking his thumb. Tears ran down her face, and all we could hear was the heartbeat monitor and her soft sigh, "Oh..."

Today, both Amy and her son are happy and healthy. Within days of their coming "home" to St. Brigid, one of our housemothers heard the other girls offering advice and sharing their own struggles with the new mom. The new baby gurgled on queue, and laughter ensued – one of the small, incredible wonders we are blessed to witness in the course of our work.

The fragile souls that find their way to St. Brigid's learn that life is sacred and must be protected. We are privileged to help them through their struggles with past hurts and celebrate the obstacles they overcome. We hope you feel as blessed as we do to be part of this amazing work.

Danna Jones  
*Head Housemother*  
503-585-7213 [djones@ccswv.org](mailto:djones@ccswv.org)

## News from St. Monica Home



Angel's\* success story began the day she came to visit St. Monica's.

Pregnant with her first child, she was terrified. She and her mother had heard about our home from the pregnancy center. Scared that she lacked the skills to be a good mom, she grasped at the chance to make a difference for herself and her baby.

After her visit, she knew St. Monica's was the place for her and her baby. She felt blessed at the prospect of learning what she needed to know with the help of six housemothers. And once here, she read as many books as she could get her hands on about such simple tasks as how to bathe her newborn.

Still riddled with self-doubt, Angel signed up for parenting classes through a local agency. Afraid to attend these classes alone, she asked a house mom to attend with her for the first few classes. After three classes, she continued the 12-week course on her own.

Angel began to blossom. She radiated newfound confidence, which helped her through a fast and furious three hours of labor to deliver a very healthy baby girl. Even her doctors and nurses praised her for a job well done.

As Angel talks to her daughter and assures her that "mommy is here," joyous tears spring to our eyes. Truly, living in our home has given this young woman the love and assurance that she can be a good mom to her daughter, a goal she so feared on that first day when she arrived.

Our homes give young mothers like Angel expectations for a brighter future and hope that can last for the rest of their lives. Thank you for being part of this gift.

Sincerely,  
Lynn Ramey  
*Head Housemother*  
(503)371-1019 [lramey@ccswv.org](mailto:lramey@ccswv.org)

*privacy, but their challenges and successes are real.*

## Notes from Susan

We are pleased that all three Father Taaffe Homes are full. St. Brigid, St. Monica and St. Teresa Homes are fully occupied *and* have waiting lists. This is what Father Taaffe wanted – for each home to be utilized fully so young mothers and their babies could live in safe, stable and nurturing homes.

For thirty-four years we have been able to offer these homes. We want to continue as long as there is a need. And with your help and financial support we can. Please keep Father Taaffe's life work in your prayers.

**Help us save costs** – Would you help us save postage and printing costs? By receiving news about the Father Taaffe Homes through your email, you will help save about \$2.50 annually per newsletter.

Please send me an email at [sroberts@ccswv.org](mailto:sroberts@ccswv.org) to let me know.

**Oktoberfest** – Yes, we will have the food booth at the Mt. Angel Oktoberfest again this year. Four days! Over 400,000 people! It's a big job to organize and run this fundraiser. Lori Simpson, Program Director/Community Programs at Catholic Community Services, has generously offered to help. Lori is

known for being an efficient and enthusiastic organizer. Please give her the same great support you have always given to Father Taaffe and myself. We want our "seasoned" booth volunteers and our new volunteers to come and have a great time, just as always. I'm looking forward to working with you again this year at Oktoberfest.

To volunteer please contact Lori: [lsimpson@ccswv.org](mailto:lsimpson@ccswv.org) or (503) 362-2225 x 321.

Thank you for your continuing support. Let's make this O'fest the best ever!

**Address Change** – Yes, we do have a new mailing address:

Father Taaffe Homes  
Post Office Box 20400  
Salem, OR 97307

Susan Roberts  
*Resource Development Coordinator*  
Catholic Community Services  
503.393.2843  
[sroberts@ccswv.org](mailto:sroberts@ccswv.org)

## Catholic Community Services

of the Willamette Valley and Central Coast

P.O. Box 20400  
Salem, Oregon 97307

Father  
Taaffe  
Homes

*Nurturing homes for teen girls who are  
pregnant or parenting their babies.*

---

### Help us stay in touch with you more cost efficiently

Request to receive our newsletter by email, saving postage and printing costs. Just send an email to [sroberts@ccswv.org](mailto:sroberts@ccswv.org).

---