

Fall Newsletter

Father Taaffe
Homes

October 2009

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Fr. Taaffe Homes Advisory Board

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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,

Do you believe God wants you to be happy? I do. Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full" (John 15:11).

Aristotle taught that human beings have a moral responsibility to pursue happiness, our own and that of others. He went on to say that freedom and wisdom are prerequisites for happiness.

We all know that experience is an excellent teacher, but without wisdom there is a tendency to confuse what is really good with that which only appears to be good. At Catholic Community Services we believe the path that leads to wisdom, freedom, and happiness begins by living responsibly in a caring community, in a home you can call your own. That is what we mean by the Forever Home dream.

Father Taaffe once described the typical girl that comes to our door as one whose biological father abandoned her and her family. One whose mother may have tried hard to hold the family together but eventually gave in to drugs or bad relationships. A girl who was looking for a young man who would make her feel precious but instead found someone incapable of true love.

It is very easy to see how these young women might unwittingly continue the vicious cycle they inherited from their moms and dads. Our goal at Father Taaffe Homes is to break the cycle of neglect and abuse.

House Mothers teach the girls to not only protect and nurture their unborn child but also help them sort out what will be best after the baby is born. The girls who decide to parent can continue living at the Father Taaffe Homes until they are ready to provide a Forever Home for themselves and their baby. In this way the vicious cycle can end and the happiness cycle can begin.

Sincerely,

Event Calendar

Sunday, November 8th, 5:00 p.m.
Father Taaffe Benefit Dinner
Annual Steak and Salmon Dinner
Sacred Heart Parish Hall in Gervais
\$30.00 per ticket.
Phone Jack (503)390-2987,
Bonnie (503)792-3448,
or Susan(503) 393-2843

Coffee & Doughnuts Fundraiser

Blanchet Catholic School faculty is sponsoring a coffee and doughnuts table before and after Sunday Mass. All proceeds benefit Father Taaffe Homes.

Sunday, November 1st, St. Joseph's Parish, Salem
Coffee and doughnuts will be available after the 7:00, 8:30 and 10:00 am Masses

Sunday, November 8th, St. Edwards Parish, Keizer
Coffee and doughnuts will be available after the 8:15 and 10:30 am Masses

A Letter from Joshua Graves

Senior Program Director

Dear Friends of Father Taaffe,

This last week I went to pick up my daughter from her elementary school. As I was waiting with all of the other proud parents a bell sounded and a swarm of life erupted from Candelaria Elementary.

Excited children flowed out of the school. I looked down trying to pick out Mackenzie and remembered once again how precious these little lives are.

What was I seeing? Would one of these children invent a vaccine, develop a new technology, become President or lead important social change? Who knows.

I realized that I was looking out on the future. In that moment, I suddenly felt very proud to be a part of what Father Taaffe started. Today we work so hard to maintain and ensure his dream.

Our future is precious, fragile and yet resilient. It is reflected on the face of every child. At Catholic Community Services, we understand that each mother and child we help has a role in our community's future.

I personally appreciate your continued support and ask that you keep the moms and babies of Father Taaffe Homes in your thoughts and prayers.

Joshua K. Graves

Senior Program Director

Youth and Family Services

Catholic Community Services

jgraves@ccswv.org



Board Chair Bob Thomas visits with Kayla at St. Monica earlier this summer.

News from St. Teresa Home



I want to share a story with you from Candi, a teen girl who needed a stable, loving atmosphere to raise her son.

Hi, I'm Candi, I'm 21 years old. I have a son, Matthew. He's one. I'm also expecting on December 24th my daughter, Jasmine.

My childhood wasn't easy. My parents barely got along and I was so fed up I left home just after my 18th birthday. I stayed at friends' houses for about three months and managed to go to school. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough. I didn't graduate. That's when I found out I was pregnant.

Fifteen months later, I graduated. I also had an infant to take care of, but I had no place to stay, so I went back to couch surfing. Matthew's grandma was concerned about the safety of her grandson and asked to take care of him. I made one of the hardest decisions of my life and gave him to her. I now was alone, scared and without my son. I found St. Teresa's and I called and met with Tonya. Tonya was understanding, supportive and most importantly, accepting of me – she gave me a home, for me and my son.

Since we've lived here I have learned so much. I now know how to get my baby on a healthy schedule, and to cook. I've also learned how to be more independent and not to expect people to take care of me or help me get to work and to go places. I was beginning to build a new life for me and Matthew. But it's funny how life is full of surprises. I found out in April I was having another child.

My dream is to have a stable, healthy home for my children. Matthew's dad and I have been in a relationship for over two years now. We finally made a commitment to raise our two kids together. On September 1st I started school to earn my certification at the Academy of Hair Design so I can help provide for my children.

I just want to thank the Housemothers at St. Teresa Home for the home they provided for my son and me. My family couldn't have come to this place without them.

Candi

Thank you for making this experience of home possible for Candi 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

Would you like to help assure that Father Taaffe Homes continue serving pregnant or parenting teen girls as long as there is a need in our community?

As you design your estate plan to care for those you love, please consider including Father Taaffe Homes in your will, trust, or life insurance. For more information, please contact Susan Roberts at (503)393-2843 or by email at sroberts@ccswv.org

News from St. Brigid Home



I can't believe summer is over and one of my favorite seasons – fall – is here!

I so look forward to the abundant leaves falling in St. Brigid's yard, and teaching the girls to play with their toddlers in them. We have some great crafts planned for them as well.

This season also brings our annual pie party. We invite the moms in all three Father Taaffe Homes to bake two pies each, print out their recipes and exchange them. Our table overflows! We also make hand prints with mom's and child's hands side by side. Fun, fun, fun!

This time of year exemplifies, for me, the feeling of home and family, so we make sure to do some activities as a family. We recently witnessed the reunification of a young girl and her son with her family. She made a plan with her family that if she stayed in school, did well in the program, and was here for the first six months of her son's life to help get her mommy legs, they would discuss her coming back home to live. She was a straight-A student all last year and even attended summer school to catch up on what she missed the year before. She is a very natural and nurturing mother. I'm ecstatic to say that in September she got to move back home.

We also had another success, a young mother-to-be was able to move out on her own a few months ago. She is doing very well and has made friends with another young Father Taaffe Homes mother living in the same apartment complex. They have made their own support system through their common experience of living in the homes.

How much more fulfilled in this calling could I feel with stories like these? Success is measured in lives here. Our waiting list is full. With God's grace and your continued support and prayers, we can keep meeting these girls' needs of home and support, positive encouragement, family, hope, and direction in healthier relationships.

I hope this season brings you lots of family time, enjoyment of the crisp mornings to come, and a healthy winter! God bless you and yours, from all of us here at St. Brigid's.

Danna Jones
Head Housemother
503-585-7213 djones@ccswv.org

News from St. Monica Home



Hope you all have had a wonderful summer and great plans for the fall. I especially want to thank those who helped support our Booth at the Oktoberfest this year. Father always enjoyed meeting new people and old friends on this four-day weekend traditional event. We are very fortunate to have such dedicated and talented people support our work.

Working to make a difference in our young mothers' lives is so rewarding for me. Some teens do not have the love and support of their family. Father always cherished the love of family and said "With new life comes immediate family." For me, I can say hearing that was my beginning. To imagine worrying about 'Where am I going to live tomorrow?' must be the loneliest feeling imaginable. And yet, this is just one of life's challenges our young moms face.

When we meet our new moms for the first time we give them a tour and a realistic idea of what our homes would be like to live in. The response is always wonderful. When they see first hand what our homes offer, they can imagine a new beginning.

My favorite time of the year in our homes is the fall. So many holidays to celebrate during this time, but most importantly, it's during

this season that many family traditions are made and kept. I have learned that by providing simple activities that make those memories, the impact lasts forever. One of our traditions in the home is to have a Harvest Party. All three Father Taaffe Homes gather and make faces on their pumpkins, make carameled apples, eat and visit. Later in the season we'll have a Thanksgiving dinner with all the trimmings together. These are the moments I enjoy watching unfold for our young mothers.

I know I could write forever but will save more for next time and end by saying: God bless you for the wonderful person you are and the wonderful things you do! We are extremely grateful and could not be successful without you. Have a wonderful day and good holidays to come.

Sincerely,
Lynn Ramey
Head Housemother
(503)371-1019 lramey@ccswv.org

Notes from Susan

Octoberfest 2009

Mount Angel recently held its 44th annual Oktoberfest. Father Taaffe Homes have had a food booth at this family friendly festival for almost twenty years, selling bratwurst sausages, pretzels and beverages.

Father Taaffe looked forward each year to the Oktoberfest. He loved the chance to talk to everyone and thank them for their support of St. Brigid, St. Monica and St. Teresa Homes.

Our Oktoberfest booth depends on the generosity of many, many volunteers. A very big thank you to Lori Simpson for volunteering to organize and run the booth this year. A big thank you to Lee Prantl and his crew for cooking over one thousand pounds of bratwurst. Thank you to Jack Gander, Keith Ramey and Jim Grassman for their invaluable help in set-up and take down. To Rich Westerlund and the young men from the Catarino Cavazos Center for cleaning the booth and moving equipment to and from Mount Angel. And, a very big thank you to those volunteers who worked in the booth.

Open House Tour and Luncheon

The second Thursday of every month Catholic Community Services hosts an open house during the lunch hour. They include an exciting overview of many programs of Catholic

Community Services including Father Taaffe Homes. Lunch is provided and you will not be asked for money. Please come as my guest and do bring a friend with you. Call or email if you are interested in attending.

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

Father Taaffe Homes
Post Office Box 20400
Salem, OR 97307

I now have the pleasure to connect directly with Father Taaffe Home supporters to say thank you. Through my twenty years with Father Taaffe I have come to know so many names and faces and look forward to hearing your thoughts, suggestions and comments. You may contact me by phone (503) 393-2843 or email sroberts@ccsvw.org.

Susan Roberts
Resource Development Coordinator
Catholic Community Services
503.393.2843
sroberts@ccsvw.org

Catholic Community Services

of the Mid-Willamette Valley & Central Coast

P.O. Box 20400
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Father
Taaffe
Homes

*Nurturing homes for teen girls who are
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Help us stay in touch with you more cost efficiently

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