



If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine in the hills and go in search of the stray? And if he finds it, amen, I say to you, he rejoices more over it than over the ninety-nine that did not stray. In just the same way, it is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones be lost. (The Parable of the Lost Sheep, The Gospel according to Matthew)

Conversations with mothers at the Holy Family Home can be inspiring.

“I wake up by 5:00 a.m. and stay in my bed ‘cause everybody’s sleeping,” said one of the moms. “Sometimes I read the Bible ...” she explained, describing her morning routine. “Wait” she said.

Emerging from her room seconds later and flipping through the Children’s Bible she found at the Holy Family Home, the mom talked about the messages she discovered in parables by Micah and Luke. Then, suddenly she remembered the Bible in the chapel of the Home. “Let’s go upstairs,” she commanded.

The Bible upstairs lay open to *The Parable of the Lost Sheep*, and she began to read aloud.

“If a man has a hundred sheep,” she read, “and one of them goes astray...”

“See,” she said, interrupting the passage and pointing to the words on the page. “God wants us to love everyone, even people who have hurt us. After a pause, she confessed, “It’s hard. We have to practice this part. I pray God gives me patience not to respond in a bad way to the person who hurts me.”

Reflecting on how she felt when she arrived at the Home a few months ago, this mother said, “I felt small and a little uncomfortable.” That she had to accept help was frustrating to her. “Everybody pays rent,” she explained. “Why can’t I do it? Why can’t I be on my feet?”

After a moment of silence, she added, “Most of the time, I’m the person who helps others. I’ve never been in a place like this or a program like this before.” Then, as if suddenly understanding why she came to the Home, she exclaimed, “Oh my God! He sent me here to feel protected, to stand up.” She added calmly, “God sends you to people who are strong so you can go through the situation you are in. When we feel strong enough, we can begin our life again.”

Choosing her words slowly and deliberately, she concluded with more wisdom: “If we are to be grateful and blessed, then we have to be children again. Only children forgive and love again.”

While the volunteers and staff are committed to enriching the lives of the Holy Family Home residents, we often find that these mothers and children enrich our lives in return. We pray every day that they will be able to forgive those who have hurt them and that they will become strong enough to begin their lives again.



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Most of All ... a Promise

When Iberia Airline, Flight 2626 made the seven hour journey from Boston to Barcelona earlier this month, a very grateful Holy Family Home mother and her two children were on board. Expected at the Barcelona Airport was her family - her mother, three brothers and their families, and the good friend she left behind nearly four years ago.



After giving birth to her second child, this mom lived at the Holy Family Home for several months. Then, for the next two years, she rented an apartment – three weeks of pay to cover one month’s rent. Food and daycare consumed most of what was left of her monthly income. Six months ago, she returned to the Home, as she had decided to return to Spain and needed to save money. “Everything I have been able to do is thanks to having been here,” she explained. “I have a lot to thank the people of the Holy Family Home for,” she added.

While this mom came to America in search of a better life, she discovered that she had everything she needed back home – an apartment, a nursing job, family and friends. While here, she also discovered an inner strength and life mission. “When I go back to Spain,” she began, “I promise to adopt a special needs child (with paralysis or brain injury) so my daughters will learn the same values of the volunteers at the Holy Family Home. My mother already knows about my promise,” she added.

Her older daughter apparently knew about the promise, too. “Can we get a boy?” she asked her mother. “I want a boy.”

Brushing aside her daughter’s silliness, the mom returned to the serious promise. “This desire was born **here**,” she said most emphatically.

Once home, this mother planned to make up for lost time, returning to the nursing job she left behind and catching up with friends and family. “Two days will not be enough time to tell about these four years in America,” she reflected. “I’ll never forget this experience.”

At the Holy Family Home, we will never forget this experience either. We are stronger for having shared in this mom’s journey and grateful for her influence on our lives. We wish her a life blessed with happiness. We will miss her.

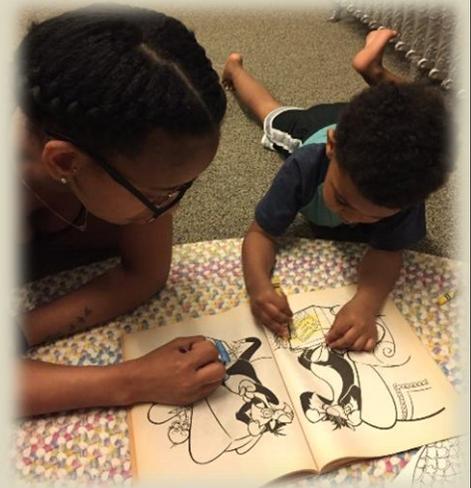


The Program



Participation in a weekly program continues to be a requirement for residency at the Home. Some children are in bed before the program begins at 8:00 p.m. – perhaps a reflection of one of the program topics, bedtime routines. In addition, most Wednesdays the mothers arrive on time to the session, demonstrating their commitment to the nightly curfew and program start time and, perhaps an expression of their

appreciation of this time to be with other adults in a fairly structured way. While the children are with volunteer ‘babysitters’ in the recreation room during the program hour, an interactive session with mothers and children is planned every few weeks. Making puzzles, reading books, creating crafts, coloring and playing games have all become enjoyable ways to spend the hour. An important part of these interactive activities is conversation, as the mothers realize that they are their children’s first teacher.



Sew for Love



Once again, a group of teenage girls from East Greenwich, Rhode Island has donated the proceeds of their sewing club to the Holy Family Home. Sew for Love started in 2016 when founders Anna and Ava were just 13 and 10 years old.

Acting on a vision to help others, particularly children in need, Anna and Ava and a group of friends started sewing flaxseed warming bags, lavender sachets and snap pouches on sewing machines at their home. The hand-crafted items are sold to friends and family and to patrons of Main Street Strolls in East Greenwich. Recently the girls toured the Holy Family Home and donated \$2100.00 from the proceeds of their sales. Holy Family Home is honored to be part of the mission of these incredible girls.

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

The Holy Family Home continues to shine forth on mothers and children who are homeless in our state. For four years now, this safe and caring environment has been made possible by over 50 dedicated volunteers and by contributions from friends and benefactors. We continue to be deeply grateful for your support, without which we could not provide shelter to these women and children. Please know that you are always in our prayers of thanksgiving for what you do to help the less fortunate. God bless you.

Father Ed Cardente

