



FRONT PORCH

NEWS | Summer 2017

Jenna's Journey



You can hear the pain in Jenna's voice as she describes her childhood. She lost her mother at a young age and her father was abusive. She bounced among her family members and never received the nurturing that all children need as they grow up.

Jenna did her best to get her life on track, but with two small children and one low-paying job after another, she was unable to make ends meet. Soon she was facing eviction. Depressed and discouraged, Jenna talked with a friend who recommended that she call the Central Access Point which is a hotline for people on the brink of or already experiencing homelessness.

Since Jenna was not already homeless and did have a job, she was accepted into the BHS Shelter Diversion Program and began working with case manager Watoiya Williams. Shelter Diversion programs help families identify immediate alternative housing arrangements while connecting them with the services and financial resources needed to achieve permanent housing.

Jenna learned life skills that had an immediate impact on her family. She learned to budget, save money and find safe and affordable child care which enabled her to work full-time.

Jenna sums up her experience with Bethany House saying, *"It helped me get my life together – it forced me to grind and do what I needed to do. I know how to keep my apartment, and my kids and family are happy. This program helped me a lot. My case manager was helpful. My depression has decreased because I'm busy and I have a great job with room for better opportunities."*

Kidz Zone Promotes Resilience

UC Urban Health Project Partners with BHS

Resilience – the ability to cope, adapt or bounce back after enduring stressful life circumstances or events.

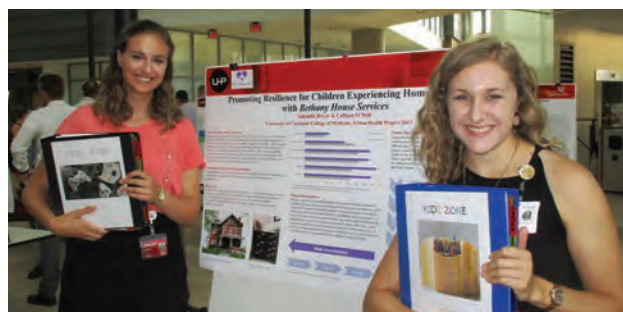
Who needs resilience more than a child experiencing homelessness?

As part of the Urban Health Project at the University of Cincinnati, two medical students, Amanda Beyer and Colleen O'Neil, developed a curriculum titled "Promoting Resilience" for the almost 800 children per year who stay in a Bethany House Shelter.

During their summer internship, Amanda and Colleen researched and developed lesson plans that taught the children the importance of goal setting and problem solving as well as how to manage emotions such as anger and frustration. The children also had the opportunity to develop their own activities and lesson plans which strengthened their self-confidence.

Bethany staff and volunteers generate a caring and encouraging environment for the children through active listening and by acknowledging and respecting their emotions.

Would you like to promote resilience in the lives of our children? Volunteers are needed to work with trained group leaders **Monday-Thursday 6:00PM-8:00PM** at Kidz Zone. Contact Lisa Siegel at lsiegel@bhsinc.org or 513-557-2403.



▲ From left: UC Med students Amanda Beyer and Colleen O'Neil presented their Resilience Project to faculty and fellow students.

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OUR MISSION Bethany House Services empowers homeless and at-risk families with the solutions to achieve housing stability and long-term self-sufficiency.

OUR VISION To live in a community where all families have a place to call home and no one spends a night without shelter.

CORE VALUES Respect, Empowerment, Integrity, Excellence, Collaboration and Hospitality.

Kim Baird Receives Beacon Award

H. Kim Baird is the 2017 recipient of the Beacon Award, presented annually by Bethany House Services to honor individuals who have been a beacon of light and opportunity for families experiencing homelessness.

In presenting the award, Executive Director Susan Schiller said, "Kim accepted a call to service when he was asked to help with raising funds to meet the needs of an ever-growing number of homeless children and their parents. Kim has spent a large portion of his life volunteering in many areas but his commitment to the homeless families has been steadfast."

Kim first joined the Bethany House Services Board of Directors in the late '80's, and today serves on the Executive Committee, the Investment and 401K Committee, and is chair of the Development Committee.

In accepting the award, Kim said, "Homelessness is not a concept that most people personally encounter in their community. Most of us rarely get out of our bubble. The suffering is real and the need for solutions is great and growing. Bethany House Services, through the hard work of many, many wonderful employees, donors and volunteers, has always been there providing solutions to the homeless to find stable housing and achieve self-sufficiency. I am honored to receive this award, and I encourage all employees, donors and volunteers involved with Bethany House to turn up the intensity of their commitment and choose 2017 to become fully invested in this mission. We are making a difference!"



▲ H. Kim Baird, Beacon Award Winner and Susan Schiller, Executive Director, Bethany House

Bethany House Welcomes New Board Members

Working to advance the independence and housing stability of homeless families, Bethany House is honored to welcome:

Jamie Easterling, *Executive Director, TriHealth*
Catherine Kitchin, *Director, Ohio Program, CSH*

and welcome back previous board member:

Terri L. Williams, *Vice-President, Banking, Capital One Commercial Card Business Development*

Lights! Camera! Action!

It's time to view two new Bethany House videos. Please visit our website to see "The Faces of Homelessness" at www.bethanyhouseservices.org/TheFacesofHomelessness to learn more about the impact of Bethany House's work in Cincinnati. We are grateful to Patti McGeever, Gail Myers, Michael Benedic and Robin Wilhoit for their time and expertise in producing this new video.

Don't miss "Meet Monique," a new United Way campaign video featuring a former Bethany House client. Monique tells her story about homelessness and how she overcame challenges to become independent and self-sufficient. See www.bethanyhouseservices.org/uwvideo.



The Cost of “Affordable Housing”

“Affordable housing” is housing that costs no more than 30% of a family’s income - and it is hard to come by in Cincinnati. The City has about 42 affordable housing units for every 100 persons in need.

Bethany House provides 24 very important units of affordable housing at **Bethany Homes**. Thanks to the **PNC Foundation** and **First Financial Bank Foundation**, apartments and common areas have been updated to ensure comfortable and secure housing for struggling families while keeping the rent at an affordable level. Residents are primarily single moms who know the value of well-maintained rental units and appreciate the activities for the children and other benefits of living in Bethany Homes apartments.

The *Affordable Housing Study, Cincinnati, OH 2015* report, produced by the Affordable Housing Advocates and the Greater Cincinnati Homeless Coalition, states that the fair market rate for a two bedroom apartment in Hamilton County is \$769/month, not including utilities. A worker earning the state minimum wage of \$8.10/hour would have to work **73** hours per week, 52 weeks per year, to be able to afford the apartment. Rent for the same apartment at Bethany Homes is \$525/month.

Introducing Bethany Ambassadors

Meet Alexis Suer, Connor Cleves, Kelly Blackburn and Christopher Ventura - a group of energetic young professionals focused on changing the lives of Cincinnati families experiencing homelessness. Their goal is to engage the next generation of leaders, professionals and philanthropists to promote and support the mission of Bethany House.

To fully understand the mission, you need to see it in action, which is why they are busy recruiting friends, co-workers and other young professionals to join them at Bethany House. Get involved by joining this fun group when they prepare and serve breakfast on the weekends for the families in our shelter.

For more information about the BHS Ambassadors Young Professionals, please contact Alexis Suer at alexis.b.suer@gmail.com or www.facebook.com/groups/BethanyHouseAmbassadors.



▲ BHS Ambassadors Leadership Team from left: Alexis Suer, Connor Cleves, Christopher Ventura, and Kelly Blackburn.

Families Helping Families

Julie DiBlasi lives by a code — she calls it the “Clarecode” — it’s a way to spread love and kindness in honor of her daughter, Clare, who was born into heaven (stillborn) two years ago. Julie says, “My family and friends have found many ways to bring a little piece of heavenly love here to earth. Once I found out there was a need for meals at Bethany House, I reached out to the amazing families I know in my community and within a week, I had people signed up for every month. I called it **Families Helping Families**, and many times it was adults and kids making dinners and serving them at Bethany House. When it was nice outside, we brought bubbles and sidewalk chalk to play and my daughter Addie loved getting a group of kids together to play Uno while we set up dinner. It’s taught all of us so much and given us gratitude, compassion and love.”

Want to be a part of **Families Helping Families**? Contact Lisa at 513.557.2403 or lsiegel@bhsinc.org to find out how your family can bring meals to Bethany’s families.



▲ From left: Elsie, Julie, Addie, Grace, and Nick DiBlasi. Baby Stella arrived shortly after this picture was taken!

I’m Thankful

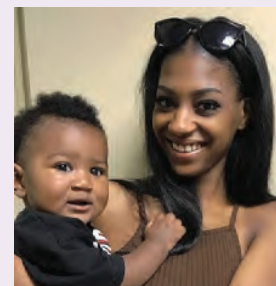
Dear Bethany House,

Staying in Bethany House really meant so much to me.

The staff really pushed me and helped me get back on my feet. I appreciate that Bethany House gave me all the essentials I needed

while staying there- such as diapers for my son and other supplies. Mr. Evan played a big role in my stay. He helped me to get my own apartment and Ms. Kierra was very helpful as well. She made sure I had everything I needed, was comfortable and made my stay fun whenever she was there. The house was very helpful and I appreciate all that they have done for me.

Sincerely, Precious



▲ Precious and 10-month old Keenan



Can you imagine living in a shelter...as a child...as a teenager?

Thank you!

Bethany House makes me so excited! Living here makes me so happy. I love Kidzone and the food. I enjoy getting stickers at Kidzone too.

From, Destinee

It is not easy for sure. If you are homeless as a child, the national statistics say that you are already behind 1-3 grade levels and that you are hungry and sick twice as often as housed children.

That is why summertime at Bethany House is not only a time for rest and relaxation for our children, but also an opportunity for enrichment and learning.

Children attend summer camps sponsored by two of our community partners, UpSpring and Project Connect, who both offer academic and enrichment programs to improve students' literacy and math skills as well as boosting their social, emotional and physical health.

Denise Hill, Child Parent Coordinator at BHS, also planned an array of summer activities starting with a "Springin' into Summer" party that saw our

shelter parking lot transformed into a giant playground with bounce houses, games, prizes, a dance contest and a cookout. Family field trips to Kings Island, Coney Island, the Cincinnati Zoo and the Center of Science and Industry (COSI) in Columbus offered unique bonding opportunities between children and their parents.

Being homeless as a child is stressful in many ways but it's also confusing, scary and unpredictable. Our goal is to provide as much stability as possible with some fun mixed in so the kids in our shelter feel just like every other kid.

If you'd like information about how you can impact the lives of our children, contact Lisa Siegel at lsiegel@bhsinc.org or 513-557-2403.

Dear Bethany House,

Thank you for the house you give me. Thank you for the food you give. Thanks.

Sincerely,
Casandra

Dear Bethany House,

Thank you for a home and thank you for the cool field trips we are going on and for the coooooooooooooool stuff!

From, Penny.

Sheila Gray Takes a Pie in the Face for Homeless Children

Local 12's Sheila Gray has been a long-time supporter of Bethany House Services and advocate for families experiencing homelessness in Cincinnati. So it's no surprise that on March 14, 2017, officially recognized as #Pi Day, WKRC-TV's morning news anchor took a pie in the face and in return was given 100 tickets to the Ringling Brothers Barnum & Bailey Circus for BHS families.

Thanks, Sheila, for always supporting Bethany House!



▲ Sheila Gray with Ringling Clowns and Lisa Siegel, BHS Office Manager.



▲ Children helping with nightly watering of the backyard garden.



▲ Examining an Early Switchboard at COSI in Columbus.



▲ Enjoying the Bounce House at Summer Carnival.



▲ Big Smiles at the Cincinnati Zoo.

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS AND GOLFERS

Mother Nature delivered a perfect day for our golfers as they hit the links at the 24th Annual Golf Classic held on June 19 at Maketewah Country Club. Special thanks to Funky's Catering for donating a delicious dinner, our Honorary Chair, Mike McConnell, iHeart Media for their amazing support and Geoff Torbeck Photography for capturing many fun memories.



Congratulations to all of our winners! Paula Comisar, Julie Heidt, Amy Holter and Linda Maier were the 1st Place Women's Team and the 1st Place Men's Team included Art Hathaway, Todd Johnson, Dave Mueller and Eric DeMichele.

Special thanks to our sponsors, golfers and volunteers who made the day a success and to our great committee: T.J. Davis, Mike Haverkamp, Annette Franke, Lisa Smith, Sean Mullins and Grant Cooper.



▲ Men's Winning Golf Team from Left: Art Hathaway, Todd Johnson, Dave Mueller, and Eric DeMichele.



▲ Women's Winning Golf Team from Left: Julie Heidt, Amy Holter, Paula Comisar, and Linda Maier.

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2017 UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN IS UNDERWAY!

Bethany House client featured in UW video

In 2016 Bethany House Services became a United Way of Greater Cincinnati Agency Partner joining 138 other agencies that are moving children and their families out of poverty and toward self-sufficiency.

Featured this year in a United Way campaign video is Bethany House's former client, Monique Gilliam. You are invited to watch this great video at www.bethanyhouseservices.org/uwvideo to hear Monique's story and learn about the impact of Bethany House's work in the community.

Please **Live United** and support the United Way! You can learn more at www.uwgc.org.



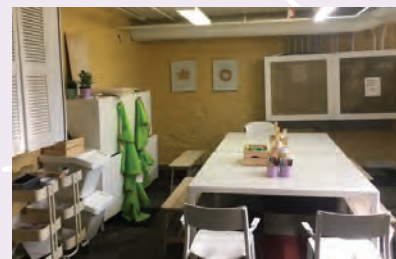
IKEA Playroom Makeover....

and the Power of Volunteers

Helen Keller said "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much" and that rang true when a group of amazing people came together to make over our children's playroom at the Fairmount Shelter. Special thanks to IKEA who donated furniture, lighting, artwork, bookcases, toys and craft supplies. The power of volunteers was evident throughout the project and included playspace designers John Noble from SHP Leading Design, painters from Hyde Park United Methodist Church, Eagle Scout Daniel Luongo who repaired floor tile, laid carpet and built wall cabinets and Tom Mahoney who covered the cost of paint, carpet and materials. After months of planning, Bethany House had a beautiful new playroom and a fully supplied craft room. Thanks to so many for making a difference in our children's lives!



▲ The playroom for younger children now has spaces for play as well as seating for moms to read to their children.



▲ IKEA donated an abundance of supplies for the older children's craft room.

Volunteers Making a Difference



▲ CareSource volunteers spent the morning at Bethany House organizing donations of linens and personal care items in the shelter supply closet. Thanks to Nicki Fleming, Hermietta Rowan, Stacy Turner, Mohamed Arhadin, Bill Walters and Emily Robertson.



▲ Matthew Schmitt, an Elder High School student working on his Eagle Scout badge, recruited friends and family to help build a huge addition to our existing garden faithfully maintained by the Western Hills Garden Club for several years. Hours of planning, loads of soil and a lot of muscle went into construction that today is yielding fresh fruits and vegetables for dinners at the shelter. From left: Brian Fesel, Matthew Schmitt and then Adam French.



▲ UC students Jamie Maier and Macy Meyer, both majors in Industrial Design & Fashion Design, wanted to work with children on their final class project. So they visited Bethany House and after seeing the many needs of homeless children, a class project has turned into a dream to share some creative love with our kids in shelter. Each child was asked to draw a stuffed animal they would like to have. Based on the drawings and conversations with the children, Jamie and Macy would create a one-of-a-kind stuffed animal for each child! Pictured here is Jamie Maier with one of the first creations!



▲ Kaitlyn Lott learned about family homelessness and decided she wanted to do something about it. At just 13 years old, she collected and donated 400 books for the newly designed playroom. As a dedicated Girl Scout, Kaitlyn decided to earn her Silver Award by helping Bethany House with our Back to School Grill 'n Chill at Parky's Farm the week before school started. Kaitlyn's summer was spent getting food donations, planning all the games, soliciting prizes and tons of school supplies, lining up volunteers and the list goes on and on. Thank you Kaitlyn for all your hard work and for being an ambassador for Bethany House!



▲ Student volunteer Jasmine Eubanks enjoyed her experience so much that after she completed her school service hours, she extended her commitment to volunteer throughout the year. Shelter Director Gwen Green said, "She lights up the whole shelter with her smile. She's so personable and everyone loves her." From left: Denise Hill (Child/Parent Coordinator), Jasmine, Gwen Green (Shelter Director) and Cynthia Kimber (Case Manager).



▲ L'Oréal interns are required to support a non-profit during their internship. After choosing Bethany House they decided to raise money for items on our wish list - specifically sheets. They raised \$891.00 with a bake sale, a scratch and dent sale and a March Madness bracket. HUGE THANKS to these ambitious engineers who have definitely made a difference in the lives of our BHS families! From left: T.J. McSwigan, Amanda Mares, Katie Feeney, Fernanda Fowela-Hulsinger, BHS staff Lisa Siegel, Chara Hood, Miranda Hileman, Angelica Dibble and Mick Morris.



▲ P&G has been a blessing to Bethany House for many years - in February a group from the Global Brand Franchise Organization came and deep-cleaned our shelter kitchens. In April the Cincinnati Chemicals Plant donated cases of toilet paper and in June a group of men from Product Supply Engineering tackled a long list of yard and maintenance issues at our Fairmount campus. August brought another delivery of paper towels and school supplies from our friends at the Cincinnati Chemicals Plant. Our thanks to everyone!



▲ Desiree Johnson, store manager at Harper's Point Ten Thousand Villages, has helped raise awareness about Bethany House and has asked her customers to support our homeless families. During the winter Desiree's customers donated hats, scarves and gloves and in May over 100 pieces of jewelry were donated so the kids in shelter had a gift to give their moms on Mother's Day.

How do we prepare a family for life after shelter?

With jobs...with education...with a safety net.

Did you know that Bethany House supports parents in their job search as well as their housing search while they are in one of our four emergency shelters? Evening classes at the shelter focus on Life Skills—money management, nutrition, parenting, resume writing, interviewing, and renter's rights and responsibilities—all critical for stabilizing a family in housing.

Our Children's Program makes sure children are enrolled in school and emphasizes the importance of education and regular school attendance, which is vital if the multi-generational cycle of poverty and homelessness is to be broken.

Our Shelter to Home program assists families with furniture and household necessities as they exit from shelter and Aftercare provides emergency assistance should a crisis occur in the future, jeopardizing the family's housing.

All of this education and support would not be possible without the many local foundations who partner with Bethany House. To each we say "Thank You" for helping us ensure that all of Cincinnati's families have a place to call home and no one spends a night without shelter.

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The SandAngel Foundation
TJX Foundation

SHELTER TO HOME AND AFTERCARE

Anonymous
James J. and Joan A. Gardner Family Foundation
SC Ministry Foundation

"What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others." - Pericles

With a legacy gift, you can make a difference in the life of a homeless child. For information, contact Susan Schiller at 513-557-2410.



Memorials and Tributes Support Bethany House Mission

Bethany House Services Memorials and Tributes allow you to express your support, respect, gratitude or love through a gift that honors an individual while furthering the mission of Bethany House Services. Gifts can be made in celebration of a special event, such as a birthday or anniversary, in honor of an achievement or in memory of a loved one.

When your gift is received, an acknowledgment will be sent in your name to the individual you are honoring or the family of the person remembered. All gifts will also be acknowledged in the Bethany House newsletter.

Memorials and Tributes received January 1, 2017 through July 31, 2017

IN MEMORY OF

Claire Boyd
Susan Eberle
Joan and Bob Cardoso
John Cardoso
Cecil Cerroni
Sarah Hammers
Matthew Clark
Eileen and Earl Kisker
Ken Czillinger
Fr. Harry Meyer
Jack and Ann Ellis
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Wendy Orman

Linda Wimmers
James Wimmers
Hal Wolfe
Gina and Christopher
Watkins
Lindsay Young
Alison Borchers

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SAVE THE DATE!

You are invited to Mercy Health's "Ales to Zinfandels" Wine and Beer Tasting on **SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2017.**

Enjoy fine wine and craft beers, food pairings and desserts, auctions and live music by Cincinnati favorites "The Mistics" at The Atrium at Mercy Health Home Office.

For information, sponsorship opportunities, tickets or to donate auction items, please contact Laura Johnson at ljohnson@bhsinc.org or 513-557-2214.



▲ Celebrating at last year's event, from left: Mike Brown, Master of Ceremonies; Erika Judd, Ales committee member; Nahamani Yisrael, keynote speaker and former Bethany Shelter guest; and Jerry Judd, Mercy Health Senior VP and Treasurer.

Thank You Mardi Gras Sponsors and Supporters!



It's not often we have 70 degree weather for a Mardi Gras Party in the middle of winter but that was only one of the reasons this year's party was special! Started 26 years ago by the Northern Kentucky Restaurant Association, this annual culinary celebration raises funds each year to feed homeless children served by Bethany House, Welcome House and Brighton Center.

A special thank you to the Bethany House sponsors listed below and to all of our guests, volunteers and auction donors for making Mardi Gras 2017 an overwhelming success.

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Heidt Family Foundation

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Driehaus Insurance
Dr. Rebecca Brown and Dan Jones
First Financial Bank
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Special thanks to Mercedes-Benz of Ft. Mitchell who returns for a 4th year as Title Sponsor in 2018 and to the Marge and Charles J. Schott Foundation for their generous \$10,000 sponsorship supporting homeless children at all three agencies.

Mark your calendars for Mardi Gras 2018
Fat Tuesday, February 13!