

St. Margaret's House Report to the 2006 Diocesan Convention

On September 7, 2006, St. Margaret's House was given a Special Recognition Award as part of the 2007 Leighton Award for Nonprofit Excellence. This is a very prestigious award made by The Community Foundation of St. Joseph County to recognize excellence in service and management in the nonprofit sector. The award came with a \$10,000 grant.

St. Margaret's House is currently staffed by seven employees and a volunteer corp. of 100. Many of our Episcopalian founders still hold vital roles on the Board of Directors and as weekly volunteers. St. Margaret's House continues to serve according to our foundational value of hospitality, serving over 1800 different women and children 17,000 meals in 2005. Our guests come to meet their basic needs (nutritional meals, access to showers, toiletries, clothes, telephones, and computers), attend classes and seminars to help them take their next best step forward, and to be a part of a caring and supportive community. We treat every woman as an individual as we help her to define herself by her talent and skills rather than by her problems. We serve as a gateway to other services in the communities in that we refer women for help that we cannot. In 2006, we were able to provide 300 children with basic school supplies.

Over the last year, we provided programs that helped women in concrete ways. Our parenting program designed and offered by our assistant director Pat Marvel helped women gain new understanding of their children and offered them alternatives to corporal punishment. In 2006, we have been offering this program to residents of Hope Rescue Mission. Our therapeutic art program continues to help women discover new talent within themselves and to provide the means to express it. We have begun a cottage industry with a core group of artists who have been making hand-painted silk scarves and handmade cards. Our *Fashioning Our Lives* luncheon and talent show was completely planned and put on by the guests of St. Margaret's House in 2005. Under the direction of our Guest Services Coordinator, Sheila Smith, the guests took part in a 12 week empowerment program that resulted in *Fashioning Our Lives*. **Fashioning Our Lives 2006** will be held at the Marriott Hotel in South Bend on November 16 at 11 :30 a.m. St. Margaret's House has been designated a pilot program site to hold a *Getting Ahead in a Just Getting By World* seminar. Currently seven guests are attending the twice weekly (45 hours of total class time) seminar. This seminar helps women to research and build their resources for a better life. We also have programs in the areas of health and spirituality

Winter Walk 2006 was a great success, raising over \$45,000. This is our biggest fund-raiser each year. We invite all to join us for Winter Walk 2007 which will be held on Sunday, February 11 at 2:30 beginning in the undercroft of the Cathedral of St. James.

St. Margaret's House was one of 93 agencies in Indiana awarded Neighborhood Assistance Program tax credits. We received \$35,000 in tax credits. Contributors who donate \$100 or more to St. Margaret's House are eligible to receive 50% of their donation in tax credits as long as we have them to give out. We expect they will all be given by the end of the year.

We are grateful to all who have supported St. Margaret's House throughout the years. You have helped us to grow and to continue to serve the women and children who come seeking our help. We invite you to stop in and visit whenever you are in the area.

Kathy Schneider, Executive Director

Nancy Brennen, Board President