

FROM 1998 TO 2023

Celebrating our 25th Anniversary!

Milagro House began from the heart....

In 1998, Renee Valentine, inspired by her own journey, started Milagro House as a work of love from a place of passion and understanding. As a single mother of two, Renee knew firsthand the obstacles that single mothers faced while trying to provide for their children and get ahead. She had also worked with mothers experiencing homelessness and saw many of the programs available as short-term solutions, or paths to low-wage employment options. **Renee wanted to start a program that would lead to financial independence and create a path out of poverty.** Renee knew education was the answer to freedom from poverty and a successful future for mothers and their children. "Education is a game changer, you have to have that slip of paper in hand." Renee believes that **"Given the opportunity to earn an education, we can all rise."**

Twenty-five years later, our mission has remained unchanged. Milagro House's early years set the foundation for the strong and sustainable organization it is today. Christina Duncan, Milagro House's current Executive Director remarks that **"As we enter our next 25 years, we are positioned for even greater impact.** With our planned expansion on the horizon, Milagro House will continue to provide a safe and supportive place for even more women and their children to grow and thrive." She added, "Our commitment to empower women with the tools they need to build a bright future for themselves and their children is evident. In recent years, our focus has been on programmatic growth in preparation for expansion of our physical footprint."

Milagro House believes in the power of collaboration and has formed partnerships with other nonprofits and with local business leaders to support the goals of the women in our program. **"It is clear Milagro House's impact has a ripple effect in our community,"** Christina remarked. "I have no doubt that all of us have interacted with a Milagro House graduate in our day-to-day lives. They are members of your community, parents of your child's classmates, teachers at childcare centers and schools, and small business owners that support the local economy. They are the nurses and medical professionals that care for us when we are sick and the customer service representatives at our industry leaders. They are paralegals, chefs, managers in manufacturing and many, many more," she points out.

Today, we can see that Renee's inspiration to start Milagro House and focus on education as a catalyst to poverty alleviation provided a strong foundation for our mission. It was her passion that created Milagro House and the unwavering commitment, talent and support of many that have led to our success and allowed us to impact the lives of hundreds of women and children in the Lancaster community.



Early Supporters

The longevity and success of Milagro House, the significant ways in which programming has impacted the lives of hundreds of women and children in the Lancaster community, is thanks to many supporters – volunteers, advocates and donors. Following are snippets of the experiences of three early supporters who continue to stand by our mission today.

DR. FREDERICK CHAIRSELL, one of the founders of Conestoga Oral Surgery, was a member of our Board of Directors for twelve years. He first heard of Milagro House through long-time Milagro House champion, Ken Stoudt. Ken, who passed away last September, was a former Board Member and Board President and an integral part of Milagro House's history and current success. After being introduced to Milagro House, Dr. Chairsell was inspired to get involved and support our mission due to experiences he had as an oral maxillofacial surgeon. He treated patients who needed reconstructive surgery due to injuries resulting from domestic abuse. **He knew that a program like Milagro House could provide women, like his patients, with a safe place to live and a road to long-term independence.**



KIT SLAUGH, former volunteer and board member in the early 2000s through 2015, believed in the mission of Milagro House and saw it as a way to have a long-term impact on the lives of the women and children served. She describes our programming as **“a real road to success.”** She also wanted to support a local cause, where she could see and be a part of “the difference that’s being made.” Kit was an integral part in planning and orchestrating some of our first Evening of Miracles events - our signature annual event to this day. When asked why she originally started supporting Milagro House and what has inspired her to continue supporting us many years later she stated, **“When women make the commitment to Milagro House, and they stick with it, they can change their lives.”**



OF MILAGRO HOUSE



GREG KILE, President of Waterford Management, began his involvement with Milagro House thanks to his mother, July Kile (a long-time supporter and former volunteer). In 2002, he had recently earned his real estate license and helped with the purchase of our current location, 669 West Chestnut Street. In 2004, Greg was convinced by then Executive Director, Renee Valentine, to join the Board of Directors. After sitting on the Board for several years, Greg stayed actively involved with Milagro House and played an important role on our property committee. This year he returned to the Board of Directors and is serving as the Vice President. When asked why he has continued to support Milagro House over the last 20 years he replied, “Because of the mission, the comprehensiveness and long-term impact of the program. **Milagro House is not one-size fits all. Programming is tailored to meet each mom’s needs and experiences. It is a unique, powerful and effective model – there is nothing else really like it in the region.**”



MEET OUR NEW STAFF



Susan Fisher
Education Facilitator



Anastasha Lebron
Family Advocate

Evening of Miracles



Save the Date
October 6, 2023

Our 2023 Evening of Miracles event will celebrate the last 25 years of miracles, and those yet to come, with an immersive experience of the past, present and future of Milagro House!

FOUNDRY 48
event venue

100 W Millport Rd, Lititz, PA 17543



Become a
Sponsor

Become a sponsor and be a part of the miracles we witness each day as women realize their dreams and build brighter futures! Contact Kristy Gismot for information regarding sponsorship opportunities – Kristy@milagrohouse.org, 717-509-1401 ext. 104.

Where Are They Now?



Meet Amanda '11 Milagro House graduate!

GRADUATE
Spotlight

Amanda walked through the doors of Milagro House in 2010 with her one-year-old son and pregnant with her daughter. They were facing homelessness after being evicted due to the frequent violent episodes of her then partner. The domestic violence she faced at home from her partner was not unlike that which she had suffered while growing up. As a child, she often sought the safety of her grandparents' home. When she was ten years old, the only stability she knew was shattered when her grandfather passed away and her grandmother moved out of state to be cared for by another relative.

Milagro House was a safe haven. After moving into the house, staff helped her file a protection from abuse (PFA) order against her former partner to help ensure her safety. She took advantage of having access to counseling services at Milagro House, which helped her to begin healing from the emotional toll of the trauma she experienced throughout her life. She was also able to take parenting classes and receive additional support and services for victims of domestic violence.

While at Milagro House and in the aftercare program (now Beyond Milagro House), Amanda completed her degree at Harrisburg Community College. Milagro House helped her find housing and provided furniture and household necessities to help her settle into her own apartment. After completing her Associate Degree, Amanda went on to complete her Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice at Central Penn College. She had planned to join the military after high school, but was unable to realize this goal as she discovered she was pregnant with her first child shortly before graduation. When deciding what degree to pursue, she chose Criminal Justice as it felt similar to the military and she wanted to help people. **She felt her personal experiences would allow her to serve people in her community with empathy and support.**

Today, Amanda is a Senior Probation Officer for Lancaster County. She states "I have my own home, my own car and a safe home for my children." She feels her personal experiences allow her to connect and effectively serve her clients today. She strongly believes that mental health awareness and trauma-informed practices are essential to the ability of the criminal justice system and other service sectors to successfully serve individuals who have endured traumatic experiences. She stated "helping

people change is what will help our community, not just judging or punishing them."

Both in and out of work, **Amanda dedicates her time to giving back to others impacted by trauma.** She has spoken with various groups about how trauma affects people's lives and is developing workshops focused on trauma-informed care and resources for victims of violence. Amanda states that she started at the bottom and was able to work her way up to where she is today. She wants to inspire and encourage others to do the same. **"Milagro House is the rock and foundation of the life I have today. The staff pushed me to keep going and to do better for myself and my children."**





Presenting the first ever Milagro House Mother's Day Garden!

This spring, more than \$14,000 in donations to support Milagro House were made by many in honor – or in memory of – mothers (or others) who have made a difference in their lives. Each one of these generous gifts bloomed on the lawn of Milagro House on Mother's Day weekend in the form of a hand-painted wooden flower, many personalized with the name

of those honored through those gifts. With the success of this year's garden, we plan to make this an annual Mother's Day event! **This project was made possible by the generosity of donors and the efforts of our staff and volunteers! Thank you to volunteers from Clark Associates for help with painting and for the donation of a portion of the supplies from The Home Depot on Fruitville Pike.**

Over 10 Years of Service Mike Joseph



Over the last year Mike Joseph has been our handyman extraordinaire, dedicating 10 to 15 hours of his time and skills to Milagro House each week! It seems he has painted, installed, rigged and improved just about every surface at Milagro House. Mike's service started around 2010 when he volunteered with a group of students and staff from Franklin & Marshall College to help with interior painting. Since this time, he remained the volunteer to call, always coming through when a room needed to be painted or a household task needed to be completed in a pinch.

Over the years, Milagro House occupied a special place in Mike's heart. After retiring, he offered to volunteer regularly and we were more than happy to accept! Although 669 West Chestnut Street is a beautiful house, it was built in the 1800s and comes with its share of quirks – we would not be able to serve the women and children who live at Milagro House without his donation of time and skills!

Mike is an integral part of Milagro House, viewed as a part of the team by staff and a part of the lives of the mothers and children living here. He helps us make this house a safe and comfortable home for all we serve.

Thank you, Mike!

Giving Options that Maximize Your Impact!

When you support Milagro House, you are supporting an organization that has been serving women and children in the Lancaster community for 25 years.

While at Milagro House, the women we serve maximize their potential by dreaming big, aiming high and reaching amazing goals. These goals are achieved one step at a time with the help and support of many.

This support makes it possible for women to change their lives and the lives of their families forever. You can impact the lives of the women and children of Milagro House in much the same way – by maximizing the potential of your generosity. Here are a few ways you can increase the impact of your gift:

BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR.

Every donation, no matter the amount, helps us provide women facing poverty and homelessness in our community with access to educational opportunities while providing housing and supportive services for them and for their children. Through monthly, recurring giving, smaller donations add up over time to make a big difference. For example, a \$25 monthly donation adds up to \$300 a year – this gift would provide housing for one of our families for one week plus diapers

for a child for a month! Becoming a monthly donor to Milagro House is simple: visit give.milagrohouse.org, decide how much you'd like to give per month, and the amount is automatically (and securely) charged to your credit card for as long as you'd like to continue giving. It's that easy but the difference you make will be transformational!

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MATCHING GIFTS.

Did you know that with the help of your employer you may be able to double the impact your donation has on the lives of the women at Milagro House? Many companies have employee matching gift programs where the company will financially match charitable donations employees make to non-profit organizations – some will match dollar for dollar! Don't miss out on the opportunity to double the impact of your giving. Check with your employer to see if a matching program exists, and if so, how to take advantage of this opportunity.

CREATE A LASTING LEGACY.

Planned giving provides many options to make sizable gifts that maximize the gift's impact to a nonprofit – like Milagro House. Gifts made through planned giving vehicles are customized to meet the goals and wishes of the donor, while providing significant financial benefits to the nonprofit. These gifts are often made as part of a bequest that passes through a will, but they can also be structured to provide assets to a nonprofit while providing donors with a vehicle that allows them to earn income for a period of time during their life. A planned gift can be monetary, but can also include property and other assets such as stocks. Often called legacy gifts, planned gifts to Milagro House sustain our mission over the long-term and leave a legacy that extends into the lives of every woman and child served.

If you are interested in learning more about any of these giving options contact Kristy Gismot: Kristy@milagrohouse.org or 717-509-1401 ext. 104.

DELICIOUS WAYS TO

Support Milagro House!

Dine in at Marco's Italian Restaurant and Pizzeria in Marietta for dinner Tuesday evenings and owner Marco Sardi will donate a portion of the cost of your meal to support the women and children of Milagro House. Two other tasty options, eat at Park City Diner in Lancaster and Knight and Day Diner in Lititz (voted Best Diners in Lancaster County 11 years in a row!) and they will donate 10% of your bill to Milagro House through their Sharing Our Success (SOS) program! **Simply mention you'd like your meal to benefit**



Milagro House when paying the bill. Please help support these local businesses as they give back to non-profits, like Milagro House, throughout the community.



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2023

EXTRA[™] GIVE



On November 17th, Milagro House will be part of Lancaster County's community-wide celebration of giving! Join thousands of people across the community to support more than 400 local organizations in our region. Thanks to ExtraGive host, the Lancaster County Community Foundation, and presenting sponsors High Foundation and Murry Foundation, your contribution will make a bigger impact!



Support Milagro House
and make an Extra difference in the lives of women
with children facing homelessness in your community!



Milagro House

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