Thoughts From The Director

**one team, one dream**

I have had the honor of being a part of the team at Mother’s Refuge for 16 years now. As I think back on my humble beginnings, hired to only work a few hours a week as office help, I am grateful for the opportunity that God has given me. I joke that there was never a week I only worked a few hours except for on vacation, but the truth is, when you are part of a great team doing amazing things, the work becomes a part of who you are. Mother’s Refuge is part of the fabric of my identity.

I have been blessed to work in every position over the years, and now when I think about the honor of becoming the Executive Director, I am humbled by the gift I have been given. It’s a gift to lead a team of dedicated and life-giving staff, volunteers, donors, and young mothers.

A team is a group of people with different skills and different tasks, who work together on a common goal. Our common goal is to provide a safe home with comprehensive services for homeless, at-risk, pregnant and parenting young women so they can make successful decisions for themselves and their babies. Each role is important and vital to the success of the organization and more importantly to individual lives.

We have all heard the saying it takes a village to raise a child, but I would go one step further and say it takes a committed team, working together, doing their part – small or large, to make a positive difference in the young lives we are blessed to serve. Every person reading this is part of this amazing team, and I sincerely thank you for doing what God has laid upon your heart for the beautiful young moms and precious babies that call Mother’s Refuge home.

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**THE IMPORTANCE OF Mother-Infant Attachment**

Did you know the largest amount of brain growth happens most rapidly between birth and age three? Infancy and early life is a time of brain vulnerability, as development of the brain is activity dependent. The higher levels (complex thinking areas) of the brain slowly develop as an infant is exposed to and influenced by environmental experiences, such as human interaction. The parts of the brain that are not activated by a specific experience are eliminated, while activated parts of the brain are activated. Early childhood trauma and neglect can negatively impact the brain of a growing child at a disproportionate rate. Unhealthy attachment between the mother-infant dyad in the first three years of life significantly disrupt a child’s stress hormones and regulatory systems.

Attachment is the emotional connection that an infant has with an adult caregiver as concluded from the infants desire to seek out the individual when he or she needs support, comfort, or protection. Forty percent of infants do not form a secure attachment with their caregiver. Early life nurturing is the KEY for developing healthy mother-infant attachment and appropriate social-emotional functioning for the infant. Relational opportunities, increased positive communication, and increased levels of physical comfort and love create the strongest pathway for healthy growth and development.

At Mother’s Refuge we strive to create opportunities for healthy and nurturing mother-infant attachment. It is our goal to ensure each mother and baby is given the tools and time they need to learn about each other and create a love-based relationship, which is unlike what many of the young women knew themselves.

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**SAVE THE DATE**

Cookies & Cocoa Open House

{a time to help us gift our moms & babies}

**THURSDAY, DEC 13TH, 5-7 PM**

**SUNDAY, DEC 16TH, 1-3 PM**
WORKING TO CHANGE the heartbreaking statistics

Pregnant young women are one of the fastest growing homeless populations in Kansas City. According to the Missouri DHSS, the rate of teenage pregnancies in 2016 was 35.9 of every 1,000 females in Jackson County, compared to the Missouri rate of 27 per 1,000. Prenatal care is decreasing, with less than 50 percent of pregnant women under the age of 19 receiving early prenatal care in Jackson County. We know that teen pregnancy increases the rate of high school dropouts, which leads to limited future employment options for single, young mothers.

The question is—what can we do to be the change for this vulnerable population? At Mother’s Refuge, we ensure each young woman has a prenatal appointment within 72 hours of arriving at our home. Education is a valued component to our program, and each mother is required to either finish her high school education or work towards her GED after moving to Mother’s Refuge. We believe in empowering each mother to reach her full potential.

BUILDING Self-Esteem IN TEENAGE MOTHERS

At Mother’s Refuge building our moms self-esteem is a top priority. Self confidence is vital for our moms to be successful when they move out on their own. From the first day they move in until the day they leave we are teaching them three core beliefs...

You have worth. You are strong. Your life has a purpose.

Our program is built upon the premise that every life counts and has intrinsic value. It is our goal to equip young mothers to believe these truths about themselves. When Tia came to us one year ago she felt broken and did not believe her life had purpose. Through the classes and support she received from our staff, she now believes she has the strength to be a good mom to her baby girl. When she thinks about her future now she is excited because she believes in herself. Tia recently shared, “Because of Mother’s Refuge I smile when I think about our future. I used to cry, but now I have hope.”

Facts & Fears FOR HOMELESS MOTHERS

At Mother’s Refuge, many young women come into our home with countless fears about their present and future situation. Many have been suffering from some type of abuse, whether physical, sexual, mental, emotional, or substance. Naturally, many enter Mother’s Refuge fearing what is to come. Will I have a comfortable bed? Will I get enough food to eat? Will I be respected? Will I be able to receive the assistance and resources I need to build a successful future for myself and my baby?

The answer is yes and always. Our staff and volunteers strive to create a home of healing comfort and consistency. It is a fact that the young mothers who walk through our doors immediately become FAMILY. Family gives unconditionally. Family eases fears and instills hope. Family meets needs and exceeds expectations. Family is home. Family is Mother’s Refuge.

Will you extend your arms, open your heart, and become part of this family?
Taste of Compassion 2018

Join us to celebrate, honor, and support homeless, pregnant & parenting young moms & babies!

Friday, October 26, 2018
Adam's Pointe Conference Center
1400 NE Cornado Drive
Blue Springs, MO 64014

DOORS & AUCTION OPEN 6:00 PM
DINNER SERVED 6:45 PM
PROGRAM BEGINS 7:30 PM

$35 per ticket | $350 for a table of 10

Purchase at www.MothersRefuge.org/events/toc

You won't want to miss Lindsay Shively from 41 Action News as Emcee, Comedian Amy Barnes, and music by Alexa Kriss!

Our Current House Needs:
- Toilet paper
- Breastmilk storage bags
- Preemie Clothing
- Diapers - preemie, newborn, size 3, 4, and 5
- Baby monitors
- Sound machines
- Gift cards - all types
- Baby Wipes
- New Pack-n-Plays
- Humidifiers
- Leggings & Yoga Pants
- Dresses
- Jackets & Hoodies
- Bras & Underwear
- Hair and skin products
- Women's Shoes
- Deodorant
- Batteries - AA and D
- Paper towels
- Trash Bags
- Dishwasher Detergent
- Shower cleaner
- High Efficiency Laundry Detergent
- Laundry stain remover
- Toilet bowl cleaner
- Rolling storage tubs for under the bed
- New bed pillows
- Twin sheet sets
- Bath towels
- Hedge Trimmer
- Weed Eater

Donations can be dropped off M-F during business hours at 3721 Delridge, Independence, MO. Please contact Kimberlee Peppers at 816.800.0456 to request a drop-off outside of regular business hours.
Mother's Refuge

October 2018 • Fall Newsletter

Mother's Refuge
14400 E. 42nd St. S., Ste 220
Independence, MO 64055

Empowering young women to make successful life decisions for themselves and their babies.

WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Phone:
816.353.8070

Website:
www.MothersRefuge.org

Office Location:
14400 E. 42nd St. S., Ste. 220
Independence, MO 64055

Social Media:
Facebook- Mother's Refuge
Twitter- @MothersRefuge
Instagram- Mothers.Refuge

Mother & Baby Photography
by Keisha Pietz

Invite a Mother's Refuge representative to speak at your business, event, or meeting by contacting Lindsey Chadwick at 816.800.0453.