



The Open Door

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A publication of Genesis Home, a place where families with children and young people prepare for new beginnings.

Genesis Home works to end homelessness for families with children and for young people by providing housing and supportive services to foster independence.

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Genesis Home Celebrates its 20th Anniversary

Board of Directors embarks on strategic planning process.

"It was a labor of love on so many levels." *Quote from Nancy Rosebaugh - May 1, 2009*

Who could imagine that a house slated for demolition would become the core home to hundreds of homeless families over a twenty-year history? In 1986, Carolyn Rodwell Lontz offered a 4,500 square foot home situated on the Hope Valley Golf Course in Durham to the Genesis Home founders. "I was Pastor at Westminster Church," recalls Haywood Holderness, "and I got a call from Carolyn offering me a house for the backyard of our church. Well, we didn't have the room or the money to move that house. So, she called Joe Harvard, the president of DCIA and he accepted." Moving the structure from its current location would be only one of the challenges a dedicated group of volunteers faced in creating a transitional shelter for homeless families in Durham.

Indeed, the founders' vision and their work had begun three years earlier when Nancy Rosebaugh, Carlisle Harvard and Mary Milbourne recognized the need for a facility to serve homeless families. While there were other emergency shelters that served homeless individuals, there was not a program in Durham that could help homeless families whose numbers were on the rise. "Back in those times homelessness was just becoming evident in Durham. The faith-based community realized that we could not allow people to sleep on the street. We had to

reach out to the least, the lost and the left out," recalls Rev. Holderness.

Sharing that vision with Durham Congregations in Action (DCIA), the group began meeting weekly. Nancy Rosebaugh said, "We were do-gooders." As the group honed its mission and goals, they considered property options. Enter Carolyn Rodwell with the offer of a house! When DCIA members visited the home, there was an immediate consensus that this spacious house felt like a home, not an institution, and on December 12, 1986, the house was deeded by Carolyn Rodwell to the group.

Nancy Rosebaugh led the group in pursuing land and

funding options. The City of Durham agreed to sell the corner lot at Queen and Holloway, Genesis Home's current location, for \$36,000. At the same time, DCIA was given a municipal grant for \$36,000 with the proviso that the site be used for homeless and transitional housing. The land agreement was approved by City Council in October 1987.

Now the work of the house move was underway. Volunteer Bob Jackson contacted house movers, and Charlie Blake of Greensboro was selected for the project. The plan was to divide the house in three parts, move the sections and set them on steel beams while the new site was readied and the foundation

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Through the Window

A glimpse into Genesis Home Family Matters program. *April 7, 2009*

To the Genesis Staff,

Thank you to all who played a part in the decision of letting my son, Christopher and me to come live here. For the first time in a long time my son has stability and a home. You will never know how much each person and meeting has truly touched me and I thank God for each and every one of you here at the Genesis Home. Thank you so much for all your love and support.

Love, Courtney and Chris Cates

This letter was written a day after Courtney and Chris came to live at Genesis Home. It is fitting that Courtney would share her story about being a homeless parent just days after Mother's Day. She recalls, "I called Miss Betty every week for two months to see if there was a place for us at Genesis Home. A huge burden was lifted off of me the day she told me that we could move in."

Just five weeks into her stay at Genesis Home Courtney is feeling confident that she will get back on her feet successfully.

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Genesis Home Celebrates its 20th Anniversary *(Continued from Page 1)*

built. Donald Hughes was selected as the construction/site manager while Glenn Eason, a structural engineer, donated his services to design the foundation plan. Several months passed as the house was prepped for the move, the Queen/Holloway new location was prepared and the foundation constructed. Rev. Holderness recounts, "The house move took much longer than expected. There were times when I wondered if it would happen at all. Did it test my faith? Never!"

A low point of the project hit in the early summer of 1988 when project funds ran out. Like many building projects, the costs were much higher than anticipated and the complexity of the project brought unexpected complications. Construction was suspended, the task force regrouped and Nancy Rosebaugh redoubled her fundraising effort. Enough new money came in that construction resumed in

mid-summer 1988 with a new construction manager. "We were in over our heads from the very beginning, but somehow we always found help, or we were able to draft help. Each time we hit a roadblock, a solution would appear and we would continue. It was a labor of love on so many levels. We felt the safety of people's lives was in our hands," recalls Nancy.

Soon the task force secured a major United Way Suther Fund contribution and wrote the first HUD grant to receive federal funding. Genesis Home was incorporated as a separate non-profit agency on November 18, 1988. By this time those who were leading the project were ready to become autonomous but DCIA, while no longer the deed-holder on the property, remains an active and committed community partner to this day.

Barry Greever was hired as the first staff member in 1988 to begin program

preparation. With the help of a new volunteer, Jim Gifford, and of a final, seasoned contractor, Jim Poe, who came out of retirement, construction was quickly completed and Genesis Home began operation on February 1, 1989.

According to long-time volunteer and Board Member Bob Jackson, the name "Genesis Home" was selected because "Genesis" symbolizes a new beginning and emphasized the connection to the religious community in the development of the agency. "Home" was selected to stress a protective, familiar environment.

We are deeply indebted to the dedicated volunteers who recognized the need for a place like Genesis Home in the Durham community. We extend our gratitude for their strength and perseverance to those who served in the early years. 🙌



Through the Window *(Continued from Page 1)*

"I love the case managers," she says. "They are helping me set my goals — goals I know I can reach. They are so helpful at showing me all the resources that are out there."

Courtney talks about her short-term and long-term goals; "In six months I will have my GED — I'm almost there, one more math test — I will have a job and maybe even a car so I can get around. In a year I want to be in my own place. I want to take courses in medical transcripts. I have a computer, so I can work during the day and do that at home at night. I have the get up and go and if I work two jobs we can make it"

Alienated from her family at 18, Courtney and Chris slept in a car for sixteen months. Chris was just a year old when the cycle of homelessness started. The cycle of emergency shelter stays and homelessness continued for eight years. "I was getting desperate before Genesis Home. I would have slept in the street if I could find a safe place for my son. I had nowhere else to go," she says.

Courtney reflects on her journey; "You know, no one chooses to be this way. I once went to DC on a class trip and saw a homeless person sleeping on a

bench. Even though I was only in the fifth grade, I started making a plan about how I would help homeless people when I grew up. I never knew I would be one of them. Maybe there is a reason I had to go through all of this."

Chris arrives home from school and joins the conversation. He is a bright, talkative boy who is at grade level for his age — another testament of his mother's devotion. The first topic of conversation is the evening's homework. Chris talks about life at Genesis Home; "It is nothing like a shelter...it feels like a home. We have our own private place

and we can cook our own food." He talks about school and his dream of studying geology to become an expert in gems and making lots of money. When asked about what he will do with this "fortune," he says, "I'll give it to my mom for all she has done for me." The bond between them is very evident.

Chris shares his mother's interest in Egyptology. Courtney studies Egyptian history. "Egypt is my passion!" she says. "Did you know there is an archeological dig in the Valley of the Kings that would take twenty years to finish? I would love to be a part of that! Just to see it, just to be there for a summer." Courtney taught a class on Egypt to her son's second grade class. She beams. "They gave me a volunteer appreciation award. I am proud of that."

For now the task at hand is completing her GED, meeting with her case manager, finding a job and settling into the stability of Genesis Home. Looking to the future Courtney says, "The burden is being lifted. I was scared every day about what would happen to us. Now I have time to rest and relax. I am still anxious and depressed sometimes about all we went through but it will get better with time." 🙌



Courtney Cates
Photo courtesy of J. Kim Photography

Rising Need

I heard a joke the other day that served as a painful reminder as to the state of the economy.

Q: "What's the difference between a recession and a depression?"

A: "It's a recession when your neighbor loses their job. It's a depression when you lose yours."

With unemployment in North Carolina at close to 11 percent, those personally affected by the economic downturn are probably nodding their heads. While the trauma of a layoff or underemployment has obvious effects on families and neighborhoods across the country, local agencies working to address basic needs are dealing with the aggregate impact of an economic recession, rising unemployment, and foreclosures which are creating a spike in the demand for shelter, food, and clothing nation-wide.

Genesis Home is not immune to the trend. The agency has seen a huge increase in the demand for our family shelter services over the last year. The number of shelter nights (an indicator

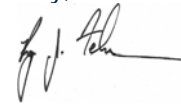
of occupancy) that we provided to our homeless families and young adults went from 8,333 in 2007 to 13,476 in 2008, an increase of 62 percent. This was in the same building with no expansion. Our Family Matters temporary housing program is currently just shy of full capacity, with a total of 30 men, women and children living on-site. Other local providers are reporting similarly large increases.

The co-occurring event that we're seeing in addition to the increased demand is a drop in unrestricted giving from individuals, businesses, and the faith community. While this is to be expected in an economic downturn, I know that many providers, Genesis Home included, are struggling to meet the greater need with fewer resources.

Recovery will require partnership between the nonprofit, private and public sectors as we all address the causes and consequences of the economic downturn. Recent changes to the federal McKinney-Vento legislation that increase funding priority for families with children is an encouraging

step in the right direction. While it appears that the federal government is doing everything it can to soften the blow, the reality is that local communities will play a major role in ensuring that basic needs are met. This is the time to do more — if not financially then with a donation of your time and talent. Food drives help. Civic involvement rebuilds communities. Volunteering changes lives. I hope that you'll decide to be a part of the recovery going on at Genesis Home and at local providers throughout Durham. We appreciate your support of our families, children, and young adults. Together, we'll get through this challenging time.

Sincerely,



Ryan J. Fehrman
Executive Director, Genesis Home 

Durham Gives to Genesis Home

Revolution Fundraiser

On January 13, 2009 Teresa and Jim Anile held their opening party of Revolution Restaurant in Durham. Guests kindly made a donation to Genesis Home and a total of \$2,833 was raised. Thank you, Teresa and Jim!



Jim Anile, Executive Chef and Owner of Revolution

You can help!

Throw a party, organize a race, gather your friends, colleagues and resources and create a gift for Genesis Home. You too can join the friends of Genesis Home and make a difference in the lives of families!
For more information call Mary McGuigan, Director of Development at Genesis Home at 919.683.5878 ext 22

Art Makes A Difference — The Seventh Annual MOMart Show

Art Makes A Difference — The Seventh Annual MOMart Show took place May 1-3 at Golden Belt. The charity art show and sale was hosted by Just A Few Friends. All net proceeds from the event were given to Genesis Home. The event began Friday evening with a preview party featuring local a cappella group, Stella. Through the efforts of dedicated volunteers and the generosity of the artists, \$7,500 was raised for Genesis Home.



Event Organizers: Tammi Brooks and Katherine Bliss

The Woodcroft Women's Club

The Woodcroft Women's Club (WWC) is a diverse and vibrant group of women in Southwest Durham who are united to serve the interests and needs of each other and the community at large. The WWC organizes several annual fund-raising events and then disperses the proceeds among local charities and organizations at the end of the club year. Genesis Home received a \$400 gift from the Woodcroft Women's Club on May 18.



Heather Hester gives a check to Genesis Home staff member Selma Johnson



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Genesis Home publishes
The Open Door to provide
our supporters and the Durham
community with information
about what's going on in
"the big yellow house."



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— Save the Date! —

The Path Home

Saturday, Sept. 26th
7-10pm

Bay 7 of the Historic
American Tobacco Campus,
NBC 17 Meteorologist
Bill Reh will MC

20th Anniversary Celebration

Genesis Home wants
to go green - saving the
environment and postage costs
with an "e-letter." Please
send your email address to
development@geneshome.org
and we will add you to our list.

For sponsorship details and ticket information, please call 919.683.5878 ext 22