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A quarterly publication on the
ministry of *New Beginnings* –
A Home for Mothers located in
Milwaukee, WI

Growing Branches



What a Year at *New Beginnings*! by Brianne Hansen, Executive Director

With each new year at *New Beginnings*, I am amazed by the many blessings that God bestows on the mothers and babies in our program. *New Beginnings* continues to help strong women grow in ways that I could have never imagined. Since we began in Milwaukee, we have witnessed the blessing of seven baptisms! In addition, we have held over 450 devotions and 100 group education classes.

One of our mothers, Shaneka, has been in the program for a year and a half! She has entered into Phase II of our program and is still pursuing a degree in nursing. Her baby, Kiarra, has started to walk – we are amazed at how quickly she is growing! Kiarra is just over a year old and she never fails to say “hi” whenever someone walks into the room.

This year, we also saw a mother walk across the graduation stage and receive her HSED (High School

Equivalency Diploma). She went on to pursue higher education. After leaving *New Beginnings*, she secured stable housing and continues to attend school regularly with outstanding attendance.

Our resident, Kim, first opened a Bible at *New Beginnings* and enjoys reading Bible lessons with staff. She currently works part-time and is pursuing enrollment in school for Medical Billing and Coding. Kim’s positive attitude is contagious and we are so blessed to have her and her baby, Axel, as a part of our *New Beginnings*’ family!

The mothers at *New Beginnings* have succeeded in so many ways. I wish I could detail all of their stories and progress here. We pray that God continues to bless *New Beginnings* in 2017 as richly as he has blessed us in 2016! ♦

THANK YOU to our generous donors for your support on Giving Tuesday in 2016! Your gifts make a real difference in the lives of the mothers and babies at *New Beginnings*. We cannot thank you enough!

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It's Hard to Trust

by Brianne Hansen

As a Psychology major, I recognize the importance of trust in relationship building. Trust is the foundation of any healthy relationship, and healthy relationships prove vital in facilitating personal growth and progress. During my time at *New Beginnings*, I've found that often times the mothers who come into our program find it difficult to trust others. Many of our mothers have been used and abused by friends, the system, and even family members. Sometimes, even the people deemed the most trustworthy abandoned them. Justifiably, when mothers move into *New Beginnings* they believe that all actions are based on a desire to self-serve. As a result, staff is not viewed as trustworthy, and healthy relationships take work (hard work!) to form. especially during the first few weeks in the program.

Ultimately, it is scary to trust because there is always a risk involved when you open your heart to someone. Why? It all begins with perceptions. I've realized the stark difference between perceptions of relationships at *New Beginnings* between staff and residents. My perception of my relationship with the mothers is that of a genuine care and desire to help, coupled with the utmost respect for each mother's

background. The perception that the mothers often hold is that I am a staff member whose **job** is to help, but the assumption is that I don't really understand or care. What a sad reality! As a part of *New Beginnings*, it is vital that we show the mothers that we are a family and community rooted in Christ.

Our love for Christ is founded on mutual encouragement, love, and respect and we strive to emulate that love to others. As Christ Jesus tells us in John 13:34 NIV, "...Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." Trusting sinful humans is hard to do, but trusting Christ is uncomplicated because he always comes through for us. We can trust him because he loved us first. Once our mothers understand Christians' desire to "love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19 NIV), the *I-cannot-trust-you* mentality changes.

As a result of the spiritual guidance provided at *New Beginnings*, we have seen many mothers strive to love like Christ loved us. Once a mother recognizes God's love she often begins to succeed at *New Beginnings*; she begins to trust, grow personally, and put others first in her relationships. What a blessing to watch that transformation happen! ♦

What New Beginnings Means to Me

by Featured Volunteer: Julie DeNicola

New Beginnings is a special blessing to me! I pop in every other Monday night and lead a devotion, help with office work or cleaning, and “hold down the fort” for a few hours. The staff tells me I am a big help but to be completely honest, I feel like my heart and soul benefit the most! The mission of *New Beginnings* – to help single moms become self-sustaining, responsible Christian parents – is an awe-inspiring one, and I am so very glad to help in any way I can.



Devotion time is my favorite time. The moms and little ones come to the commons area where we have prayers and dinner. We read through our devotion and Bible verses and then discuss the “question of the day.” The questions I pose aren’t particularly deep, but they seem to spark some good conversation. I love to hear what these wonderful women think about our God and the world and their part in it. Some conversations make us laugh, some have made us cry, and some of them have given us an opportunity to share an experience that isn’t always a pleasant one. The world can be so difficult to navigate, but every time we meet, we realize again God is in control and always at our side – no matter what. That’s a message I love to share with these beautiful women, and I greatly appreciate them reminding me of how God has watched over me and blessed me, too.

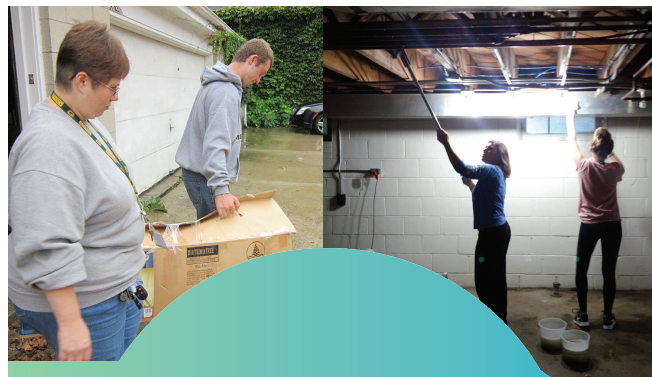
The staff at *New Beginnings* is an amazing group of women who share their God-given gifts freely. The moms are loving and caring, and they work very hard to make a “new beginning” for themselves and their children. The babies are truly God’s gift to this world. Please remember *New Beginnings* in your prayers, and consider helping in any way you can. You will see what a blessing it is for you, too! ♦

New Beginnings - A Home for Mothers is a Christ-centered ministry for single mothers and their children operated by Christian Life Resources. The home has been serving residents since 1993. It is supported entirely by the generous support and prayers of those who are committed to sharing Christ and reflecting his sacrificial love.



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Boutique Design Project

Our *New Beginnings* **Boutique Design Project** is under way! We are remodeling our basement into a boutique store where mothers can spend points on baby swings, toys, clothing, and other items. Mothers earn points by taking extra classes, participating in volunteer work, helping a fellow mother, and more. Our goal is to create a beautiful space that functions much like a store so that the mothers feel a sense of accomplishment each time they are able to “purchase” items for themselves and their child. Ultimately, the addition of this incentive program will teach responsibility, decrease dependency, and foster positive team building.

So far, through the help of volunteers, we have packed and moved all donations, deep cleaned the basement, prepared for painting, and painted the unfinished ceiling. We look forward to the next step of painting the walls, shelving, and floor. We are currently seeking volunteers who love to paint, organize, remodel, or otherwise beautify a space! If you are interested in helping with this project or would like more information regarding volunteer opportunities, email Christina Pritzlaff at christinap@homeformothers.com.

A special thank you to Degnan Design Builders, Inc. for their help in making the Boutique a reality!

New Beginnings appreciates your prayers to our gracious God on our behalf. We also appreciate your gifts.

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Free Family Fun Day! Annual Ice Cream Social Saturday, August 19 | 1:30-4:30pm



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Celebrating the Birth of Our Savior

We had a blessed Christmas at *New Beginnings*! We decorated the Christmas tree together, made Christmas cookies, enjoyed a beautiful meal as a family, and read about Jesus' birth. In the midst of the celebration, one of our mothers said, "I have never laughed so much in my life." Needless to say, we had a great time!

A big **THANK YOU** to those who contributed Christmas gifts to the mothers, babies, and staff at *New Beginnings*! We are so blessed to have your support; thanks for making Christmas more special for our mothers and their babies!



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