

FEBRUARY 2022

GROWING BRANCHES

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF NEW
BEGINNINGS – A HOME FOR MOTHERS



The Unique Nature of New Beginnings

Written by Rev. Robert Fleischmann

In the early 1990s, a newspaper reporter argued that conservative Christians were good at telling people how to live but did little to help them do that. Taking this criticism to heart, in October 1993, we opened the doors to New Beginnings – A Home for Mothers in Aurora, CO.

Not a Maternity Home

People quickly assume New Beginnings serves as a maternity home. It is not. A maternity home is where a pregnant woman lives until she delivers her baby. Once the baby is born, she leaves the home.

New Beginnings is a home for *single mothers*. We welcome pregnant mothers who then deliver their babies, and they continue to stay with us to get their new life on track.

A Defined Audience

At first blush, you would think New Beginnings has a defined audience; single mothers. That, however, is overly broad.

As the founder of New Beginnings, I carry with me my own set of biases. I am white, I am male, and I am middle class. In the original vision for New Beginnings, it skewed towards serving white, middle class, single mothers. I quickly realized that there was a far needier audience for what we could do at New Beginnings. We refined our focus to serve generationally poor single mothers.

Simplistically, there are two kinds of poor people: the circumstantially poor, and the generationally poor. Circumstantially poor individuals are those who unexpectedly lose a job or face a catastrophic event; their



relatively comfortable existence is thrown into impoverished turmoil. The home must be sold, insurance policies must be cashed in, money must be borrowed from others to get by. In other words, they are plunged into circumstances unfamiliar to them.

While finding short-term circumstantial poverty painful, awkward, and uncomfortable, an arsenal of resources can be used – ranging from a diversity of employable skills, a family that might be able to help, and a resourcefulness that can be honed by pathways of a middle-class life.

The generationally poor lack most of those advantages. They are poor, their parents are poor, and so were their grandparents. Unlike the old “pull up the bootstraps and get working” environment of the middle class, the generationally poor often lack either comparable opportunities or upbringing to take control of their lives. All they know are the handouts that keep them going from day to day and the survival skills necessary to survive in poor neighborhoods using minimal resources.

A Hand Up

Some years ago, I presented on the ministry of New Beginnings. After the presentation, a lady scolded me for what we were doing. In her judgment, the ministry was just another handout to people who need to take control of their lives.

I was troubled by her words, yet I recognized some of the notions I also used to have. Being a resourceful person, I wrestled with why people don't take charge of their lives and make something of themselves. Sometimes people don't know how.

A former resident once said, “What I like about New Beginnings is not that it is a handout but a hand up.” What a brilliant description of what we try to do!

“What I like about New Beginnings is not that it is a handout but a hand up.”

Generational poverty is the result of decades of deprived circumstances. Undoubtedly, there were times in the past when people missed opportunities, settled for handouts, and lacked initiative. But, to quote an old song, “That was yesterday, and yesterday's gone.”

A Christ-Centered Ministry

New Beginnings is founded on the word of God. Christ is central in this home for mothers. We take to heart the teaching that to gain the world is failure if we neglect the soul (Mark 8:36). We direct lives to look heavenwardly, with an eternal mindset. That is no small task for mothers from a culture that must work hard just to daily get by.

A Learning Ministry

Since we opened our doors in 1993, we've seen

a wide spectrum of educational backgrounds. Some mothers had literacy obstacles. Others had great learning skills but no significant educational opportunities to nurture those skills. At New Beginnings we seek to assure that every mother has the kind of education necessary to function self-sufficiently.

A Training Ministry

A single mother's cycle of generational poverty is often defined by limited vocational skills. Often, their skillset limits them to the lowest paying jobs in the marketplace. At New Beginnings we work with schools and businesses to help mothers develop the skills necessary to earn a self-sustaining wage. We challenge generational poverty by helping mothers hone skills that pay good wages, so they can live in good neighborhoods, and provide for their young families.

A Patient Ministry

Generational poverty took years in the making. At New Beginnings, we soon discovered that this problem would not be solved in a few months or a year. Presently, the New Beginnings program is designed to permit a mother to stay with her child for up to six years after entry into the program. It takes time to have a "new beginning."

Finally, A Challenging Ministry

One of the first lessons we learned is that you must meet them where they are. Survival for the generationally impoverished sometimes includes learning bad habits. Truthfulness is often a skill yet to be learned. Humility, or thinking more of others than of oneself, becomes another learned skill. Sometimes, language used would make us uncomfortable. These are not disqualifiers as residents at New Beginnings, but rather challenges we face. This takes time and patience. We start

with where each mother is at in her spiritual, educational, vocational, and social life, and begin building from there.

A NEW New Beginnings

Despite the challenges, the hardest thing has been to say "No!" Our small, rented building can only handle four mothers and their babies at a time. Each week, we turn away mothers who want a new beginning because we do not have room. That must change. In September 2021 we purchased land on the northern fringe of the Milwaukee city limits. There we intend to build our own home for mothers that can house up to 12 mothers and their babies at a time. It will also house the necessary offices and program spaces designed to fit our needs.

We are just beginning the early phases of the capital campaign to make this dream a reality. In time we will reach out to everyone seeking their support in making it possible to give more mothers a new beginning. For now, your ongoing support is needed to serve the mothers and babies who currently live at New Beginnings. Your prayers tap into the godly Resource that makes this all possible.



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

☐ Yes, I (we) would like to help *New Beginnings*: ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ other \$ _____

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Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

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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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