

Growing Branches



Update from *New Beginnings - A Home for Mothers*

Denver, Colorado

A Taste of Success

August 2003

By Rev. Doug Bode

She came to *New Beginnings* last fall. The road she traveled to get here was anything but easy.

She remembers nothing about her father except that he once tried to smother her. Memories of her mother are mixed — some fun times overshadowed by drinking and drug escapades. Now, with two children (one a recent newborn) she hears virtually nothing from her mother, who lives with her boyfriend in another state. Her father's whereabouts are unknown.

Her last formal education was the beginning of eleventh grade. Admittedly, she had no ambition to pursue further education, especially after the birth of her first child. She was too busy trying to be a good mother to her son; however, she had no role model to follow in doing so.

Then came the news of her second pregnancy. The father of her second baby wanted her to have an abortion or at least place the child for adoption. She desperately wanted a future with this man, but he didn't seem to share the same enthusiasm. She could no longer stay with him.

At a local pregnancy counseling center, she found a friend who took a special interest in her and brought her to *New Beginnings*. In return for helping her get a new start, she promised to do her best even though she admitted to not being motivated to do much of anything.

At *New Beginnings*, she was encouraged to take GED classes to

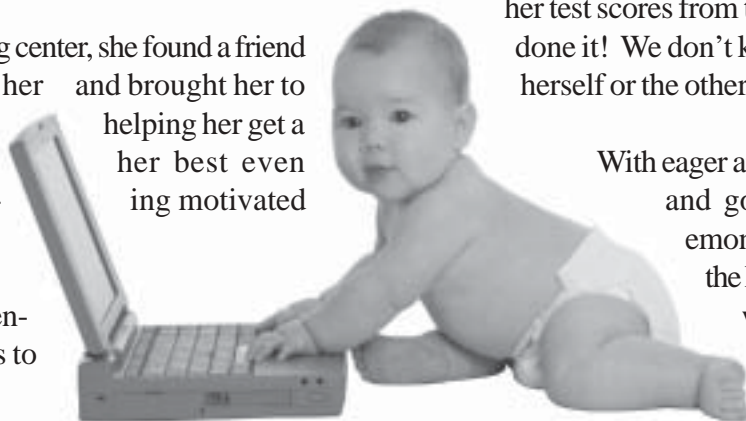
earn her high school equivalency certificate. It wasn't easy. It took persistent pushing and regular reminders to stay motivated to achieve her goal. Being pregnant, trying to parent her very active two-year-old son, and going to school left her little time or energy for anything else.

Despite her hardships, she attended school from December to May. Then, one day in May, she didn't go to class.

. . . The school gave her a special award for overcoming adversity in her life. The baby, her second son, came a week later.

Skipping school for no good reason raises a red flag for the *New Beginnings* house parents. She had that "cat swallowed the canary" look on her face as she made up an excuse for not being in school that day. A short time later, she brought two envelopes to the house parents that were to be opened at the same time. Inside the envelopes were papers showing the passing scores on her GED tests! She had taken her final test the day before and was able to get her test scores from the Internet that night. She had done it! We don't know who was prouder — she herself or the other residents and house parents!

With eager anticipation she ordered her cap and gown for her graduation ceremony. Part of the anticipation was the knowledge that her second child was due to come into the world at about the same time she



(Continued on back page)

A Place to Call Home

We're almost home now. It's okay, we're almost home.

She tries to comfort her fussy child in the back of our passenger van. We're heading home from the store, and it has been a long and stimulating outing for the infant.

In the front seat, I smile to myself. She has caught on to something that some days escapes even me. Despite the temporary nature of this resident's stay at *New Beginnings*, she still considers her small, modestly-furnished apartment here as home.

The women who come to *New Beginnings* don't have much to contribute to their apartment in the way of furnishings, other than some personal items. They may not know where they are going next once their time here is over. But one thing they do know: for now, this is home!

Even though my and my wife, Charlene's, stay is long-term, we house parents can't answer the question of where home is as quickly as our residents do. Is Apt. #5 at *New Beginnings* our real home? Or is "home" that house we bought (and where we plan to retire some day) in Aurora, Colorado?

You all know the saying: "Home is where the heart is." At *New Beginnings* we emphasize repeatedly that our spiritual home is with Jesus through faith in Him. Over and over again we point our residents to heaven as our eternal home as a reward of God's amazing grace through faith in our only Savior. This same emphasis is also applied to their children. Their children need to be at home with Jesus through a Spirit-worked faith in Him. They need to grow in their knowledge of Jesus and their faith.

Many applicants contact *New Beginnings* looking for a roof over their head. They may have just been kicked out from where they had been staying. Perhaps they can no longer tolerate living with an abusive husband or boyfriend. Sometimes they're even staying in a car because they have nowhere else to go. While we do furnish a roof over their heads, it can only be temporary. It is our prayer and our goal to point them to the permanent, eternal shelter in Jesus that He offers to them.

At the same time as we are trying to upgrade their spiritual knowledge, we keep trying to upgrade the apartments our residents call home. It was five years ago this fall that *New*

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The residents' apartments come completely furnished and equipped with everything necessary for housekeeping, including a baby crib and changing table. We even provide sheets and pillowcases, towels, and washcloths. The apartments are furnished with donated items and they are adequate, but we are constantly trying to upgrade them. New refrigerators were purchased for each apartment when the building was purchased. Two evaporative coolers (swamp-coolers) were added to help us "keep our cool." Charlene sewed valances for each bathroom window and purchased bathroom rugs to make at least part of the apartment feel a little more homey. Some of our more immediate needs include the replacement of the roof as well as installing functional windows and screens throughout the building. Each apartment could also use better mattresses and microwaves, and some need a reliable vacuum cleaner.

These apartments may be modest, and they may be temporary. But, as our residents have shown, they appreciate this apartment unit as home, if even for a short while. Many leave this place realizing that home is more than roof and walls, it is a spiritual home in Jesus. As these women and children strive to turn their lives around, they will never forget their stay here at *New Beginnings* — their "home sweet home!"



Rev. Doug and
Charlene Bode,
House Parents

Going Places at New Beginnings



No cars at New Beginnings? Why not?!!!

Such is the incredulous question we sometimes have to scrape out of the phone when talking to a prospective applicant to *New Beginnings*. The answer we give is simple and straightforward: “If you can’t afford a roof over your head, how can you afford a car?” With our “no-cars” policy, we are trying to help residents save up money for when they will again be on their own. They need money for rent and other monthly expenses. Cars are notorious for swallowing up more cash flow than a resident may realize with insurance, maintenance, repairs, registration, gas, etc.

Our society is so accustomed to having wheels to get around that *New Beginnings*’ policy is a difficult adjustment. After all, transportation is a vital thing, especially with young children and busy lifestyles. Transportation is needed to get to and from school, work, church, the grocery store, doctors’ appointments, etc.

How are residents able to get around?

There *is* transportation available at *New Beginnings*. We are only one block from a major bus route. Residents become quite proficient at finding their way around Denver, and seem to pride themselves on being able to help a new resident find the best way to get wherever she wants to go.

There are times when we do provide transportation to or from a destination. Charlene often takes residents to initial doctor visits or appointments at the county human services department to arrange for public benefits. There are times when several residents may go together to the grocery store and need a ride back with all their groceries. We understand how difficult (if not impossible) it is to struggle with a

baby, stroller, groceries, etc. on the bus. When an emergency situation arises, or a resident unexpectedly goes into labor, we provide transportation to the hospital, even in the dead of night! On cold, wintry mornings, we work with the residents to get them to work or school and avoid having their young children stand at the bus stop. Offering transportation services is appreciated by the residents, and it is another way we can help and encourage them as they face the challenges in this phase of their lives.

Most importantly, we also offer transportation to and from church on Sunday mornings. We are happy and thankful the residents regularly worship with us. We know they need the power of God’s Word to help them turn their lives around. We will do everything we can to allow them exposure to God’s saving Word.

How are we able to provide transportation for a group of residents and their children?



Residents loading up for a trip to church

We have an eight-passenger van and a van that accommodates twelve. Our larger van is quite old, and space is often cramped. When the residents travel together, along with car seats and diaper bags, it doesn’t take long to fill up. This vehicle doesn’t have air conditioning which can quickly become uncomfortable for several expectant mothers and small children. Still the residents make the best of the situation

and learn from the experience to be grateful for the assistance.

Thank you for your prayers and donations to be able to assist our residents with some of their transportation needs during this transitional aspect in their lives. We sincerely thank you!

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(A *Taste of Success* . . . continued from front)

was supposed to walk across the stage to get her GED certificate. The graduation came first (even though the gown by now was a very tight-fitting one). Along with the certificate, the school also gave her a special award for overcoming adversity in her life. The baby, her second son, came a week later.

She is motivated by the taste of success in her troubled life and wants to do the best she can to turn her life around. She always dreamed of becoming a personal fitness trainer. On the Internet she found a school that offered courses leading to that goal. Undeterred by the fact that the school is located on the other side of town, she leaves *New Beginnings* very early in

the morning four days a week for the two+ hour bus ride to get her children to daycare and then herself to school. Coming home in the late afternoon leaves her little time for anything but child raising and studying. She wants in the “worst” way to finish her next level of schooling, get a good job, and support her family.

All *New Beginnings* residents are encouraged to further their education, learn important life and parenting skills, and build a strong foundation of faith for themselves and their families. Your prayers and support are essential to the success of our mission. We are blessed to share this story of sweet success with you. The taste is truly satisfying and exhilarating!



New Beginnings - A Home for Mothers is a Christ-centered home for single mothers and is affiliated with Christian Life Resources, Inc. 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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New Beginnings appreciates your prayers to our gracious God on our behalf. We also appreciate your gifts. Would you consider helping us out?

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