

Growing Branches



Update from *New Beginnings - A Home for Mothers*

Denver, Colorado

December 2003

No Room at the Inn

By Rev. Doug Bode

Mary was weary and anxious as she arrived in Bethlehem with Joseph. The journey had taken its toll. The couple's pained looks were evident to the innkeeper who had to tell them there was no room in his inn for them that night. Mary, however, was hopeful. Eventually they found a place of shelter in a simple stable, there on the night Jesus was born.

Another young girl, pregnant, nervous, and alone, arrived for her interview at *New Beginnings*. It was a big step for her to make it here. Her life was pressing on all sides, and she was ready to make some positive changes in her life for the child she was carrying. After her meeting at *New Beginnings* she was put on the waiting list since there were no apartments currently available. She, however, was hopeful. Eventually the call came that promised her a place of shelter as she waited for the birth of her baby.

There is quite a distance between Bethlehem, the ancient city just south of Jerusalem in the Holy Land, and Aurora, the modern city just east of Denver, Colorado.

Yet, there is one thing that both cities hold in common that has spanned the centuries — the quest for a safe haven for a young, pregnant woman. In biblical times, Mary and Joseph arrived in Bethlehem, pressed with responsibility, yet eager for the fulfillment of the Lord's plan. Here, in modern times, young mothers come to the Denver area seeking a place where they can turn their

lives around and get a “new beginning.”

At times, however, mothers who apply for residency at *New Beginnings* also find there is “no room at the inn.”

Mary and Joseph did find a manger where the Baby Jesus could be laid at His birth. Mary's modern counterparts, the young women seeking shelter at *New Beginnings*, need to put their names on a waiting list until an apartment opens up for them.

A week hardly goes by that there isn't a waiting list at *New Beginnings*. These young women are already approved by our admissions committee to become part of our program. When they are placed on our waiting list, they are not promised a definite time when they can move into our facility. Openings aren't always guaranteed since each resident admitted into our program can stay up to a year after the birth of her baby.

Like the stable for travel-worn Mary and Joseph, our simple accommodations are a welcome option for these women during a long and difficult journey.



We find that more and more residents are staying the maximum time they are allowed. They settle into everyday life at *New Beginnings* and seem to find an environment where they can grow in their faith as well as in their ability to raise a child by themselves. Some use their time here to make the crucial decision whether to parent their child or place him/her for adoption.

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Crafting Gifts from the Heart

Normally, craftiness is a trait that should not be cultivated. However, there are times when we at *New Beginnings* actually encourage and promote “craftiness” in our residents. We even set aside special time for residents to be “crafty.”

Obviously, we’re not talking about some kind of deceitfulness, but rather taking time to do craft projects with our residents. For instance, Charlene helps each interested resident to learn tole painting. Other volunteers come in to teach the residents to do framing, stamping, and scrapbooking. This “craftiness” encourages the residents to make some inexpensive, special, and meaningful gifts for their family members and friends. They have made such things as Christmas nativities, candle boxes, special picture frames, and handmade cards.

While these craft nights are a special time of fellowship for these women and their children, there are lessons to be learned as well. The residents are asked to think of special ways to show thoughtfulness to others — instead of thinking only of themselves.

Since the residents don’t normally have much money to spend on gifts during the holidays, they are taught they don’t have to spend much money to be able to give a special gift. They begin to understand that handmade items show even more thought because of the time and loving effort put into them.

Teaching basic stewardship principles is very important at *New Beginnings*. The Lord has given each Christian cer-




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tain talents that need to be cultivated. Sometimes they just need to be discovered first before they can be developed. Although not all residents are gifted in the same way, our craft classes have uncovered some wonderful talent that can be used, not only in remembering loved ones, but also in making some decorations for their own apartments.

The time of growth and learning at *New Beginnings* often forms a foundation for these women when they are on their own.

We hope that later on these residents will remember the times when they learned to put others first and discover new creative skills. Perhaps no one ever took the time to show them how to put together craft projects. When they open up their hearts to others and their creative side to new projects, beautiful things are crafted together!

We do find other craftiness — and not the good kind — evident in our residents from time to time. Perhaps that is the natural sinful consequence during this time of growth and learning as well. The kind of “craftiness” we do encourage, however, promotes a Christian effort of taking time to remember others, sharing ideas, offering compliments, and working together. 

If you have any craft project ideas to offer, or supplies that could be donated, they would be greatly appreciated.

Please keep in mind these special projects that enhance our ministry!

You may contact Charlene at 1-800-720-MOMS or at nbdenver@comcast.net

How Do They Hear About Us?

An interesting question was posed to us recently: How does *New Beginnings* effectively advertise its services while guarding the privacy of the residents?

As you may know, *New Beginnings* uses a post office box address to receive our mail. But we rarely give out our actual physical street address. We are not in the yellow or white pages under *New Beginnings*. There is no sign on the front of our building. We understand that some residents want and need their privacy. They may have escaped an abusive situation, and they don't want their whereabouts known.

So how do people in need of our services hear about us?



Awareness of *New Beginnings* is promoted through the numerous pregnancy counseling centers that are affiliated with WELS Lutherans for Life. We receive referrals through these centers, as well as through the many congregations and pastors who are aware of the ministry at *New Beginnings*.



Some learn about us by surfing the net and accessing our website at www.HomeforMothers.com.



By far the majority of the contacts we receive come from local social agencies, medical centers, or doctors' offices. We attend meetings of the JPSN (Joint Pregnancy Services Network) and make our services known through this network.



Word-of-mouth advertising has its place too as former residents sometimes recommend *New Beginnings* to friends and family members. You, as readers and sharers of this newsletter, help spread awareness of our ministry as well.

No matter how we become known to potential residents, we stand ready to listen to them and conduct an interview with them. We try as best we can to qualify and place them on our waiting list, hoping to provide an apartment when one is available.

We protect their privacy yet offer information to anyone who needs to know about our unique Christ-centered ministry.


Picture Gallery: Meet Kira!



Hi! My name is Kira. When I was born 1½ years ago, I weighed in at a whopping one pound, twelve ounces. I guess I surprised my mom when I came into the world three months earlier than expected.

As you can see from my picture, I do have some problems because of my early birthday. I have been on oxygen since birth, and I do have some hearing problems. I have undergone several surgeries since I was born, but I am a survivor. I spent three months in the hospital before I was allowed to go home. The nurses there told my mom and me that I am a fighter, because I have a will to live.

Although there are lots of things that can still be discouraging, I have learned that the best way to face all these things is to smile and laugh. Besides, I like to show off my teeth! I still don't weigh as much as I should, but I am gaining on it! I also like to crawl and stand up and walk along chairs and tables. (I've also been known to get into a little trouble with my mom now and then!)

I want to thank you for helping give my mom and me a home to live in when we had no other place to go. It's been great living at *New Beginnings*! The greatest thing was that I became a child of God through holy baptism. I know I can face anything now! 

*God's blessings and Happy Holidays
from the staff at New Beginnings!*



Rev. Doug and
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(No Room at the Inn . . . continued from front)

It is not unusual for us to have a waiting list of up to seven potential residents. Sometimes those who have been accepted and placed on our waiting list aren't able to wait for two or three months before an apartment becomes available. Many applicants are in need of immediate housing and go elsewhere when they find there is "no room at the inn" at *New Beginnings*.

For those who reside at *New Beginnings*, we offer them more than just shelter and a safe haven. We offer them spiritual guidance in life's frustrating journey. Like the stable for travel-worn Mary and Joseph, our simple accommodations

are a welcome option for these women during a long and difficult journey. We can introduce these women and children to (or help them become better acquainted with) the One who entered our world in a humble manger in Bethlehem. He did this in order to make a difference in their lives. He is the reason they can turn their lives around! They can find hope, not only for this life, but much more importantly, for the life yet to come.

For them and their children, that is something truly worth waiting for!

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?

Yes, I (we) would like to make a contribution to help **New Beginnings**:

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Mail to: **New Beginnings - A Home for Mothers**
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