



LIFE *Lines*

Newsletter of Mother Seton House, Inc.
"Supporting Pregnant Women, New Mothers In Need"

Mother Seton House PO Box 673, Fryeburg, ME 04037 www.mothersetonhouse.com Winter 2016/2017 No. 12

Recognizing Those Who Make A Difference

Adapted from The Bridgton News, October 27, 2016, by Wayne E. Rivet, Staff Writer

FRYEBURG — Cyndi Broyer, Director of Mother Seton House, has been honored with the Mary Rines Thompson Award by the United Way of Greater Portland, recognizing those who make a difference in the lives of others. Cyndi, of course, credits others, saying she has been richly blessed with a supportive family and a rewarding career. "I have been taught to use these gifts in the service of others," she said. "I was humbled and a bit embarrassed (by the award). The work of Mother Seton House has always been a group effort. I prefer to volunteer under the radar."

"The many volunteers and donors, who support Mother Seton House, make a difference, providing hope and security to pregnant women in need, and providing their children a good start. Marion Edelman Wright said, 'If you don't like the way the world is, you have an obligation to change it, one step at a time.' That's what the volunteers and supporters of Mother Seton House do, every day."

"We serve many women, and the moms and babies at the house fill our hearts with joy," Cyndi said. "I thank each of them. It is a privilege to walk with these brave and determined mothers as they work to improve their lives and the lives of their babies. They have taught me so much about courage and perseverance in the face of challenges."

"We began in 2007. I had thought for a long time about pregnant women in difficult circumstances, who chose to give birth anyway. I wanted a way to support them. We were just an idea, and we had to ask for

donations from friends and family. I am still in awe of the faith folks had in our vision to give us money. I think people were surprised to learn that there were pregnant women in substandard housing, overcrowded trailers, couch surfing or homeless in our towns. The response has been overwhelming. Every day,



my car has donations in it; every week the mail has donations.

"It has grown to include a house, which we own debt-free, with a mailing list of over 750 supporters from as far away as Portsmouth, N.H., and Wells, Maine. Eleven women have lived with us in the past two years. We also distribute free diapers, clothes, equipment, books, toys and food a few times a year, reaching over 100 women."

"The most important thing we provide is a loving home, a safe haven for women as

they prepare to give birth and nurture their newborns, a place of comfort and learning and growing. Up to four women can live as guests at the house, under the guidance of volunteer resident managers, who promote healthy communal living in a supportive, loving atmosphere. This provides a chance to build confidence and acquire the skills needed to break the cycle of poverty."

"The role involves coordinating the activities at the house, interviewing potential guests, training and coordinating volunteers, fundraising and building support within the community."

"The most serious issue moms face is housing. Second is poverty, with lack supportive network, third. Maine has many excellent supports for the initial tough period, and to support them in education and career growth. Finding childcare for infants in our small community is a huge challenge. Some guests struggle with learning disabilities, mental health issues or addictions."

"For me, it is the growth of the moms — their increased confidence, their growing belief in themselves as people who matter, who count. Many young women grow up not hearing they are valued. Moms who live with us remark that they have never felt so loved and supported as they have at Mother Seton House. The house managers work hard to build supportive relationships. One mom recently wrote saying, '(The house managers) were so loving, helpful, compassionate, kind and openhearted.'"

"We have kept our mission simple, and moved forward in faith. God is most certainly in this work."

A letter from the director

Dear Friends,

This has been a very special year for us at Mother Seton House. While a typical stay for a guest has been four months, both at our house and in maternity homes nationally, this year two moms and their babies stayed for over nine months. The growth for each mom was tremendous, both in terms of personal and skills development.

Thank you

Many thanks to John Bliss, of Bliss and Associates, for donating a property survey. His generous donation allowed us to erect a privacy fence, adding security to our back yard.

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Cyndi Broyer



It takes time to create a relationship where a guest feels safe, safe to share and safe to take risks, safe to accept correction and safe to ask for help. Over time, as a shared history was created, I watched both moms achieve levels of comfort where they reached out to us, and to each other.

You can imagine the joy I felt when I witnessed each woman writing notes of gratitude to the house managers. You can imagine my joy when I saw examples of sacrifice and support for each other's children. My joy overflowed as I watched their parenting skills blossom.

Both moms have moved into independent living with their babies. Let's all beam with pride at their accomplishments: jobs, course work,



Thoughts from a Donor

As we travel through this world we take on many roles. For some of us fortunate enough we become parents.

I can divorce my spouse, leave my religion, renounce my citizenship, but the one thing that I can never erase once a child has been brought forth from my conception - the fact that I am a parent. Raising children in a two-parent household is very difficult, indeed. With most families having both parents working, time developing parenting skills is a daunting task. Raising a child in a single parent household is an heroic act. Being a single parent means that you do not always have a safety net nor an outlet when it all becomes too much and you get too scared.

There are dozens of clinics available if you want to end your pregnancy but sadly few outlets available if you want to do God's will and bring your child into this world. Where do you turn to learn the coping skills, the organizational tasks and the mechanics of raising a child alone? In Western Maine we are fortunate to have a resource called The Mother Seton House.

As an advocate and donor for many years now, I have had the chance to see young women learn the skills and find the



driver's license, improved physical health. These moms were able to give their babies the good start they deserve, in the home that you provided.

In Faith, with Hope,
Cyndi Broyer
Director



resources necessary for raising a child from the kind and supportive staff at Mother Seton House. They hold no judgement and respond to each resident's needs with support, so that these women can raise their children with dignity and respect in a world that can be harsh to them. Please think about joining me as we watch these children get the same chance we have given ours. Open your hearts to Pope Francis' call to be a people of Mercy.

Dave Spada
Naples, Maine

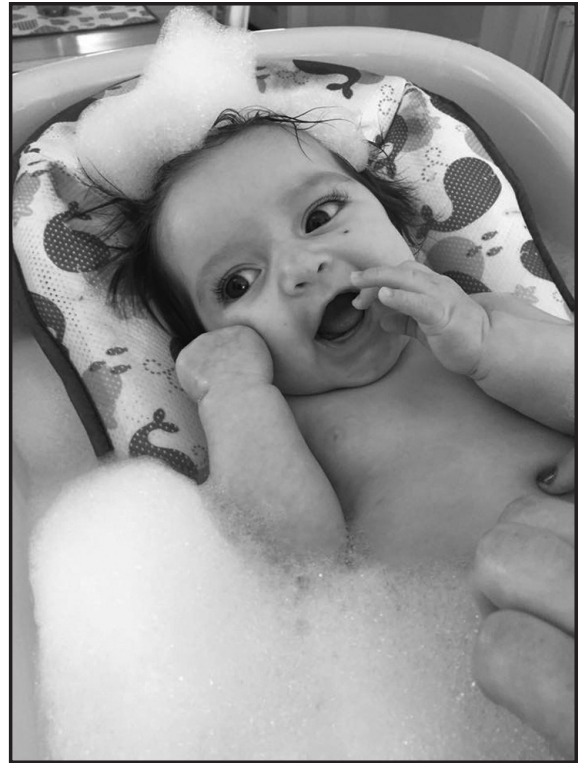
As a *Ripple* On The Water...

"When we focus our energy toward constructing a passionate meaningful life, we are tossing a pebble into the world, creating a beautiful ripple effect of inspiration. When one person follows a dream, tries something new or takes a daring leap, everyone nearby feels that energy and before too long they are making their own daring leaps and inspiring yet another circle." – Chistine Mason Miller

From the first hand held out to a new mom, the ripples of love and kindness continue to expand. From Ossipee, NH, to Patten and Bangor in Northern Maine, and down to Westbrook and Biddeford, ME, we are now reaching more and more moms and babies beyond just Mt. Washington Valley and Western Maine. The much-needed support for these increasing needs is also expanding. Twenty families received donated items at our recent distribution

for moms and babies, coming from as far away as Sanford, ME. Among many contributions, we received beautiful new clothes and other substantial items brought by Ann Bechan from Ascension of the Lord Parish in Southern York County, for the house and the distribution.

Help comes in many forms, organizations and individuals with financial and material support; Brownies, Girl Scouts, Molly Ockett Middle School and Fryeburg Academy students giving their time and efforts to help with the grounds of MSH and fundraisers; along with many volunteers with hands-on service. We now have a mailing list of 766, and 13,000 people reached on a recent Facebook post.



"Some of us will make tiny ripples and others will send waves crashing, but each one will change the surface of the water forever." – Robin Dance



It's easy to donate to *Mother Seton House*

On our website, www.mothersetonhouse.com, you can make a donation through Paypal or First Giving.

PayPal

 **FirstGiving**

For speedy access to our donation webpage, use your smart phone or tablet to scan our QR code.



Sign up for AmazonSmile. It is a simple and automatic way for you to support Mother Seton House every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate .5% of your purchase price to Mother Seton House. Simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. Select Mother Seton House, Inc. in Fryeburg as your charity.

Or you can send donations to:
Mother Seton House
PO Box 673,
Fryeburg, Maine 04037

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*We have received a generous contribution
to the Mother Seton House in honor of*

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*This gift will be used to help support
pregnant women in need who have
said yes to life.*

(inside card)

Celebrate Commemorate Contribute

A memorial gift is a wonderful way to honor a deceased loved one, a baby's birth, a birthday, an anniversary, or any special occasion.

Available only from Mother Seton House, an elegant Thomas Merton Madonna linen textured card will be sent to the person you specify.



clip & send

Your Name: _____

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The Occasion: _____

Send Card To: _____

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Amount of donation: _____ (check or money order please)

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*All donations are gratefully accepted. Mother Seton House is a 501(C)3 corporation
supporting pregnant women, new mothers and infants in need.*



A Letter from a Guest

When a mom moves out, we have mixed feelings. We're so happy that she has achieved her goal of independence. And since we've come to love them, we're sad to see her and her baby go. Happily, moms often stay in touch. Here are some notes from Kayla, whom you met in the Spring 2016 newsletter.

"Hello Cyndi, we are doing good. We have settled in to our apartment. Steven takes steps while holding my hand. He also eats finger foods on his own and says DaDa and buba and gaga. I took my first test towards my diploma. Rob got the senior assistance warehouse position at work and starts full time very soon."

"Day care down here is full so I'm going through another program where I go a couple hours a week and Steven goes with me. I passed my reading test. One down four more to go then I'll have my diploma. A visit would be nice. Keep me up to date. I miss all of you."

"What I am Thankful for!

- (1) My beautiful children
- (2) My boyfriend
- (3) My Friends and Family
- (4) Cyndi Broyer and the Mother Seton House.
- (5) warm clothes
- (6) Food and water
- (7) my apartment
- (8) Love
- (9) The many opportunities for schooling
- (10) To just be alive and well.

Happy Thanksgiving all."

And finally, the note she wrote to me when she moved out. I will treasure it all of my life.

"Dear Cyndi, Thank you for accepting me to the Mother Seton House and for always believing in me even when I did not thank you for showing me more love than my own mother has. I will truly miss your smile and warm hug that only a mom could give. I promise to keep in touch! I will miss all the talks we had and your encouraging words."



Kayla and Steven are on their way to a bright future. We look forward to watching and cheering them on.



Time
&
Talent

Our Volunteers

Karen Toohey is engaging and engaged with her work and those she works with. However, her focus in life is "not primarily to be a human doing, but a human being." This represents Karen very well.

In her work as a Nutrition Educator for the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service, Karen works to be fully present in each setting, to share something of herself, to build relationships, to empower those she works with through education and encouragement to make decisions.

We, at Mother Seton House, first came to know her when Cyndi invited her to help our young mothers learn more about feeding themselves and their babies well on limited budgets, using the fresh veggies

donated by Sherman Farm.

Karen works through a project called Eat Well!, but she does not arrive with a program ready to serve. She usually has a tasty dish or a simple recipe to share while she chats about food favorites, their children, her children, and asks, "What do you want to know?" She likes to observe and listen carefully, more apt to give information than advice. She has been

very responsive to our mothers' requests.

Over time, discussions have centered on how to read food labels, how to prepare fresh baby food, how to encourage babies to try new foods, and why putting a bit of honey on a pacifier may have risks. She is quick to say that she is "not the food police," but can give moms the information and

**"...not a human
doing, but a
human being."**



skills they need so that they have choices. She is practical in terms of procedures, time and budget, and focuses on common sense and expanding horizons. She sees that some ideas are accepted more readily, but knows that she has given a good basis for acting "when they are ready." Because she has such an authentic respect for our guests, they are always ready for another visit from Karen.

Mother Seton House
PO Box 673
Fryeburg, ME 04037



*Drawing by Thomas Merton. Used with
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Bellarmino University.*



Every Baby Deserves A Good Start!