

Almost Home



the advocate

BENEFITTING THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1993

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3200 St. Vincent Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63104
(314) 771-4663
(314) 865-4692 Fax
www.almosthomestl.org

“We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.”

Sir Winston Churchill 1874-1965

In spite of recently declining numbers of teenage pregnancies, 35% of teenage girls become pregnant at least once before they reach age 20, resulting in 850,000 teen pregnancies each year. (Kids Count Data Book, 2004). Teen pregnancy has serious consequences, not only for the young mother and our society at large but also on the young child born to the teenage mother. Low birth weight leading to infant death, blindness, deafness, chronic respiratory problems, mental retardation, mental illnesses and cerebral palsy are only some of the health related problems faced by the children of teenage mothers. Additionally, these children may be diagnosed as having dyslexia, hyperactivity or other developmental disabilities as they get older. Ironically, even though children of teenage mothers are at higher risk of serious health problems compared to the children of adult mothers, they receive limited and often times, sub-standard medical care/treatment.

Most of the young women served at Almost Home have experienced poverty, low levels of educational achievement and have had long-term dependence on public assistance. Their children are at higher risk of abuse and neglect due to inadequate/poor parenting on the part of the teenage mother. Given the importance of careful nurturing and stimulation needed by children, especially in the first three to five years of their life, the burden borne by babies with parents who are too young to be in this role is overwhelmingly great.

The Almost Home program offers support to such young mothers and their children, making it possible for mother and child(ren) to have a safe and healthy environment. While members are provided with resources for pre-natal and post-natal care, they are equipped with the necessary tools to become effective parents. The on-site life skills training program is tailored to teach the young mother about the developmental needs of her very young children. Members learn independent living skills, including employment skills, household management and financial management so they can build a positive future for themselves and their children in which they can offer stability and structure to their children. Counseling services and referrals to appropriate sources such as, Parents-As-Teachers, give the mother and child(ren) the necessary support to cope with their unique needs.

At Almost Home, our efforts are geared towards breaking the cycle of homelessness among teenage mothers and their children. Our services have a much needed impact on two generations of children – the teenage mother and her young child(ren).

Sheroo Mukhtiar

Sheroo Mukhtiar, MSW
Executive Director

“Making a Difference, One Family at a Time.”



ALMOST HOME

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New Board Member

Mary Beth Ortvals who is an attorney at Greensfelder, Hemker & Gale, P.C. joined the Almost Home Board of Directors in December 2004. Ms. Ortvals has practiced in the labor and employee relations area with experience in employment law litigation, and represents employers in all matters before the National Labor Relations Board, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Department of Labor. Ms. Ortvals has been with Greensfelder since 1994. During the course of her diverse career, Ms. Ortvals was an Instructor in Legal Research and Writing and an Assistant Professor of Torts at St. Louis University School of Law and Associate Director of Development at Maryville University. Ms. Ortvals served as an Administrative Judge for the EEOC. She also serves as a volunteer at BAMSL and Legal Services of Eastern Missouri.

Parents as Teachers Program

The **Parents as Teachers** program is designed to offer developmental information and support to all parents of infants and young children. The goal of the program is to help parents give their child the best possible start in life.

Parents as Teachers is currently providing Almost Home residents a weekly parenting class on Monday evenings. Here the teenage mothers learn about developmental issues and have an opportunity to discuss their parenting concerns. These classes are conducted by a certified parent educator who has had extensive training in early childhood development and the Parents as Teachers model.

Parents as Teachers also provides the opportunity for private visits with the parent educator. These are individual sessions tailored to the baby's age and development stage and address the teenage mother's concerns and questions. These sessions are available to any Almost Home resident upon making an appointment with the parent educator.

PAT will also provide a developmental/vision/hearing screening to any child over 6 months old upon the request of the mother. This would take place during a private visit. The purpose of the screening is to make sure the child is doing what is considered developmentally appropriate for his/her age. It serves as a "red flag" for any area that warrants further assessment.

Parents as Teachers is a free service offered through each public school district in the state of Missouri and is available to all Missouri families with children ages 0-3. Funding comes through the MO Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Services at Almost Home are being provided through the Blow PAT Center, Early Childhood Education Division, St. Louis Public Schools.

Wish List

Office Items

- Computers
- Laptops
- Printers
- LCD Projector
- Paper
- Filing Cabinets
- Three Ring Binders

Children's Activities

- The Magic House
- Chuck E. Cheese
- Zoo Parking
- Children's Zoo
- Ted Drewes
- Fast Food Restaurants
- Science Center Special Events

Gift Certificates/Supplies

- Target
- Walmart
- Schnucks
- Walgreens
- School Supplies
- Backpacks
- Lunch Boxes
- Diaper Bags



Please check out our website for updated lists



TRIVIA NIGHT

Best table decoration winners for the Almost Home Trivia Night: Laura and Steve Richer, Jim and Marillyn Web, Martha and Larry Cunningham, Pat and Bob Coleman.



Almost Home hosted its First Annual Trivia Night this past October with a twist. We had a Halloween Costume Party as well! Thank you to Co-Chairpersons **David Freese** for his due diligence in researching all the trivia questions and to **Steve Eckert** for getting all of us organized. A wonderful time was had by all. A special thank you to **Anheuser-Busch Companies** for their generous donation of a variety of beverages.

Mark your calendars... Our next Trivia Night/Halloween Costume Party and Auction/Gift Items will be October 22nd at Kirkwood Community Center. More details to follow in upcoming newsletters.



Kerber, Eck & Braekel, L.L.P Team as Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs



Mentoring Experience

“Teenage Mothers”

Sr. Sara Schmurbusch, FSM

After completing mentoring classes held at Nia Kuumba in spring of 2004, Cheryl Archibald was assigned a teenage mother residing at Almost Home. At an October meeting held at Almost Home to evaluate the mentoring program, Cheryl shared some of her experiences. Since Cheryl has her own children at home, her mentee, is included in their involvement with church activities, cultural events and service to needy persons. Sharing these family values helps her mentee to experience a good family setting, encourages her in various relationships and helps her develop social skills. Encouragement to continue her education is also present. This type of mentoring enhances both mentor and the mentee. It is a true example of giving and receiving.



Thank You

Merci

Köszönettel

Obrigado!

The **Incarnate Word Foundation of Missouri** recently awarded a grant in the amount of \$6,000 for Almost Home’s G.E.D. Program. Through this project Almost Home has been able to have an on site G.E.D. Program for its members, thus ensuring the quality of the education that is being received.

The **Saigh Foundation, Fischer-Bauer-Knirps Foundation, The John R. Goodall Charitable Trust and the Women Lawyer’s Association of Greater St. Louis** have generously awarded funding to Almost Home to support its program as related to *Sponsor a Family*. This program has clearly shown to have an impact on the lives of the vulnerable and underserved community that we serve: underage single-parent families.

ScroogeBusters of SBC recently awarded Almost Home with a grant to purchase baby supplies.

Chiara Corporation awarded Almost Home with a grant in the amount of \$20,000 to cover the kitchen repair costs not covered by insurance and for other kitchen improvements. In November 2004, Almost Home suffered severe smoke and fire damage in its kitchen.

We are greatly appreciative of all of our grantors.

We would like to say a special Thank You to some of the agencies who adopted Almost Home this Holiday Season



UPN 46 Intern Marquita Roberson, Sr. Sara Schnurbusch and Cassandra Cooke of Almost Home, Tammie Holland UPN 46

*1854 - 2004
First Baptist Cedar Hill*



Clayton Long from First Baptist Cedar Hill and Almost Home Member Jovon



Jingle Jam Volunteer Kena Ross

Almost Home Member Krystal and Daphne Terrill, Coventry Health Care



Maritz Giving Tree



12th Annual
ALMOST HOME



GOLF CLASSIC

Monday, May 23, 2005
Westborough Country Club

Almost Home depends on the generosity of its friends for the means to provide transitional housing for teenage mothers and their children who are homeless – the only program of its kind in St. Louis. I am asking you to join me as one of these friends by participating in the Twelfth Annual Almost Home Golf Classic.

Every golfer will have the opportunity to win some fabulous prizes. Westborough’s course is both challenging and beautiful, with club facilities that are well suited to this elegant tournament.

I look forward to seeing you at this great event on May 23!

Joe Hatleli
Chairperson

*Thank you to all donors recognized below who gave gifts
between October 1, 2004 and December 31, 2004.*

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We apologize for any omissions or errors.

Please contact the Development Department at (314) 771-4663 ext 6

Almost Home
3200 St. Vincent Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63104

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U.S. Postage
PAID
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Afternoon Tea

For the special women in your life!

Co-Chairpersons

Sally Key & Monica Ross-Straub

Sunday, April 24, 2005

11629 Conway Road

2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Your afternoon will include :



Tea Social



Live Pianist



Portraits taken by photographer Steven Straub



Hats and Gloves are encouraged

Reservations Required - \$40 per person

For more information call 314-771-4663

R.S.V.P by Friday, April 8, 2005

