



Spring 2017 | SRShelp.org

## St. Raymond's Opens 4th Home

In August of 2016, former Chairperson of the SRS Board, Shauna Balk, and her family moved from Jefferson City to Concord, CA to follow a calling of God. Shauna's husband, Ben, was hired as the president of New Hope Academy in Concord and New Hope Church offered a special opportunity to the Balk's. The pastors of New Hope Church are originally from Jefferson City and had toured the SRS House there. They knew an older house on the New Hope campus could be restored to serve as St. Raymond's fourth location. Pastors Joe & Teena Skiles were committed to the mission of SRS and knew the need was great in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The house was serving as an administrative office and needed to be remodeled. God works in mysterious ways - miraculously Shauna was given a referral to Grateful Gatherings, an organization that furnishes rooms for foster and transitional homes. It just so happened that the Director of Grateful Gatherings (and former HGTV producer) had a major cancellation on March 13th. If we could be finished remodeling the home by that day, they would come in and furnish and decorate the entire home! Additionally, they committed to bring 50 volunteers to rehab the back yard!

In less than 1 month, with the help of multiple church volunteers, which included licensed contractors, the team met the deadline. On opening day, a crew of volunteers from Grateful Gatherings (in collaboration with Chipman Relocation and Logistics) showed up on their bus at 11:00 sharp and completely furnished and decorated this home from top to bottom in less than 4 hours flat. Every detail was considered and the transformation was overwhelming.

That same day, 4 families were welcomed into their new homes, HGTV style of course! As the women and children entered their new home, we overheard a precious young voice saying, "Now we have a bed!". Tears of relief streamed down their faces with peace in their hearts. They finally have the opportunity to become self-reliant and prepare themselves to give their children the security of a stable home.

After a quick deadline and an abundance of blessing, the 4th St. Raymond's Home is now open and serving very beautiful and deserving families! Follow the events on FB @straymondssocietyNorCal



Your SRS House is Supported  
by Your Community!

Each House relies on the financial and volunteer support of its respective community. As SRS grows and opens more homes to support more mothers who choose life, be assured that your donations will remain with your local house.

# PARTNERING WITH MOTHERS, PROVIDING RESOURCES, PROMOTING SELF SUFFICIENCY

## ST. RAYMOND'S IN YOUR COMMUNITY

### Volunteer Spotlight

Jeff and Angela Carson are "Friends of SRS" in Columbia, Missouri. This dynamic duo, also new to the area, has made an impact at the St. Raymond's house by volunteering to take care of much needed yard work and going the extra mile to tend to the property's garden beds with the help of local students involved with Missio Dei. Missio Dei is a campus ministry at the University of Missouri. Their mission is to multiply disciples of Jesus at Mizzou, for His glory, for the good of the campus and the world. Jeff Carson, a graduate of Mizzou, along with his family, moved to Columbia in 2016 to lead Missio Dei. Along with their desire to see college students come to know and love Jesus, they also have a passion for families and children in foster care. Having adopted their youngest through foster care, it has opened their eyes to the deep need for followers of Jesus to love and engage hurting and struggling families in our community. They hope to raise up a generation of disciples who live out their faith in every area of life, seeking to bring God's love to places that so desperately need it. Jeff and Angela find St. Raymond's Society as a mission worth fighting for to continue to make an impact in the lives of mothers and children most at need.



### Program Profile

St. Raymond's has officially kicked off "ALPHA"! ALPHA is a weekly spiritual development program for residents which empowers them every Thursday night to grow deeper in their spiritual journeys. Time spent in fellowship and a shared meal is followed by a thought provoking video series and group discussion. Already this facet of our program is bearing fruit, as the women report they are growing in their understanding of each other and enjoying discussing their faith lives with their peers. Special thanks to our Columbia staff and Executive Director Mike, who are generously sharing their Thursday evenings to help our residents grow in their relationship with the Lord. We also thank our SRS family and volunteer team for providing childcare to allow the moms to engage "distraction free" every Thursday night.





## Client Spotlight

When Rita first came to St. Raymond's she would describe herself as "lost in life." She knew what she wanted, and what she needed for her family, but she required support to put all of the pieces together. Taking the advice of a family member who told her that she needed "to start from somewhere", she made her next steps to start a fresh journey. That "somewhere" for Rita, would be the St. Raymond's House in Columbia. Rita joined us in November of 2016 and has made strides since her time dwelling with St. Raymond's. She contributes her recent success to St. Raymond's for helping her to finally put the pieces together. Rita is glad

to share her positive experience to anyone.

*"The support St. Raymond's gave me was more than I could ever have asked for...for people who didn't know me. The help I received allowed me to get back on my feet and allow my family to have our own house again. They were and are a true blessing. I learned about myself while there."*

Rita not only made personal strides during her time with us, she also positively impacted the other residents of St. Raymond's Columbia. Often referring to her as the "house mom", Rita was a role model and mentor to other clients - encouraging them to push hard to use this opportunity at St. Raymond's as a time heal, get stronger and prepare to handle life as amazing moms on their own. Rita, now an alum of the program, still participates every Thursday in our ALPHA series spiritual development study.



## Program Director Profile

Whitley Jones is our new Program Director for St. Raymond's – Columbia. A native of Chicago, IL she originally journeyed to the city to attend the University of Missouri and earned a Bachelor degree in Journalism with an emphasis in Strategic Communications. She has also completed a Master degree in Strategic Leadership at Stephens College and is a recognized Pinnacle Honor Society member. Whitley has gained invaluable career experience in both corporate communications, administrative operations, strategic planning as well as project and nonprofit management. She has produced a record of results for the

organizations she has served, most notably increasing grant and unrestricted funding for local organization's that are dedicated to empowering children, youth and families. Her work proves she has knack for "building efforts from the ground up" within a diversity of capacities. Whitley has a passion for helping others develop their God-given purpose in Christ. She would like to continue to empower and support "dreamers" to take the steps necessary towards success in faith and with perseverance to achieve all that God would have for them accomplish while making a positive, unforgettable impact on the world.

Community Involvement: Founder, Executive Director and Head Coach of Spirit of Excellence All-Star Cheerleading and Dance Academy; Licensed Minister, Teen Ministry Teacher, College Ministry Lead and Administrator at Urban Empowerment Ministries.

Family: Father (Ore), Mother (Vicki), two sisters Brittany (26) and Taiya (18) all currently reside in Chicago, IL.

Hobbies: Loves reading, serving in ministry, learning about history and different cultures, coaching, traveling and watching sci-fi movies.

Passion Goal: To travel and work in international missions helping women and children while spreading the gospel, building churches, ministries and leadership teams that will transform and restore the trajectory of their community.

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

It has been over a year since Shantel and her family transitioned from the SRS House to their own apartment. While at the house Shantel gave birth to her fourth child, Bentley, who was born with hydrocephalus. Throughout those challenging weeks following Bentley's birth, Shantel never lost her faith. Her strong commitment to her family has paid off, and she reports that little Bentley is "doing amazing! He is starting to walk and talk!" Bentley is growing normally and has had no shunt malfunctions, for which Shantel is very grateful! She plans to return to school in the fall to pursue a degree in Computer Information Technology. As an active SRS alum, she participates in our community activities and attending spiritual development classes.



## 2016 - MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A grand total of 16 women and 29 children resided in the two SRS Houses in 2016

- \*7 women obtained vehicles
- \*4 women received regular counseling
- \*11 women completed pre-natal or parenting classes
- \*8 women obtained fulltime jobs
- \*5 women were promoted to SRS House Leader position
- \*3 women obtained part time jobs
- \*4 women were able to move into their own apartments
- \*7 women delivered babies during stay
- \*3 women earned GED's or professional certifications
- \*3 women earned driver's licenses

77 total accomplishments/average of 5 self-sufficiency goals achieved per resident during stay. That is nearly double the number of goals achieved in 2015, which was 2.6. The increase is due to making the CC positions full time instead of part time and residents having longer stays in 2016 than in 2015.

Total number of women served outside of the two SRS Houses: 71 (a 129% increase over 2015)



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