



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

Their own experiences with single motherhood, and the desire to introduce women to the light of Christ led Doris Falkenrath and Karen Martin to a special volunteer opportunity at SRS. As part of our mission to move single mothers toward self-sufficiency, we recently added a spiritual development program known as ALPHA. Doris and Karen facilitate weekly meetings with our current residents and alumni, which feature a non-denominational video series that introduces the Christian faith. Each meeting includes dinner and a group discussion, and our volunteers are working hard to make it a night that attendees really look forward to! We are so grateful for Doris and Karen's service, and gladly share their thoughts on their volunteer experience with us:



Doris (pictured on right):

The St. Raymond's Society has provided a means for young mothers to care for their newborn babies in a healthy environment. I learned quickly the women were surrounded by a strong support system of people who love them and have their best interests in mind. Being a small part of that dynamic group has been a blessing; the women have touched my life more than they realize. I was also moved by the way in which the staff at St. Raymond's conducts their daily activities. They are like a family, and the volunteers have been welcomed like family. I pray that each woman who partakes of this opportunity will see the light of Christ.

Karen (pictured on left):

I have a huge heart for single moms since I am one myself. When the opportunity came up to do this, my natural response was yes, as God has been the missing Father in our home as I was raising my son. Because of all He has done in our lives, we have a family. Getting to know the residents as well as the alumni – these are amazing women who are trying to make a new life for their children and themselves – such courage and tenacity are evident in their lives.

Our 3rd annual SHINE event

Thank you to everyone who came out to celebrate with us. We set new attendance records and exceed our fundraising goals! It was such a pleasure to get to share the amazing stories of our graduates, Caroline and Rita. The grand finale for this special night was an unforgettable performance by our founders, Mike Hentges and Steve Smith, as the Blues Brothers!





Client Spotlight

Being a part of the St. Raymond’s program is all about moving forward. Pregnant, scared, and alone with her three year old daughter, Tami waited patiently for a spot to open up at the SRS House. When she and daughter, Shayla finally moved in, she slowly began the difficult work of severing ties with her abusive husband. Beyond the legal steps Tami needed to take, she and her daughter required the emotional healing that can only come with safety and security. When asked how being a resident of the SRS House has helped her, Tami explains, “I’m stable now. I’ve never really been stable. I don’t know that I’ve lived in a place for a year EVER”.

Once Tami and her daughter settled in and gained that all important feeling of stability, Tami knew Shayla needed some extra attention. “Shayla had some serious issues because of the turmoil in her past”, Tami shared. SRS Client Success Coach, Jessica Luetkemeyer, was able to pair Shayla with counseling services, and Tami participates in the process to learn new ways to parent Shayla effectively and help her learn to cope. Jessica is very excited about the changes she has seen in both of them. “Tami has made remarkable progress during her time at the St. Raymond’s House. She has made positive changes in her own life, as well as in the lives of her children”. In fact, Jessica explains, Tami’s parenting skills are an asset to our program. “Tami is a kind, loving mother, and sets a positive example for other mothers in the home”.

About four months after Tami joined our program, she gave birth to a healthy baby boy, Brysen, who is seldom seen without a smile on his little face! He especially loves watching his big sister, Shayla, who always seems to be entertaining him. In addition to parenting, Tami has worked hard on her program toward self-sufficiency. Through hard work and self-discipline, she was able to save enough money to purchase a car. She continues to hold down a job while studying for admission to nursing school and regularly attends spiritual development classes offered through SRS. According to Jessica, “Tami sets goals and achieves them repeatedly. Her continued commitment to her program will result in nothing less than positivity for her family moving forward”.

Easter Celebration

Spring has sprung at the St. Raymond’s House and we have had lots of fun playing outside celebrating Easter! What makes our SRS program unique is that our residents and their children have the opportunity to serve as a “family” for one another. The bonds they form while living at the SRS House often last long after they move out.



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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