Shining Stars

A message from Co-Founder, Steve Smith

“You’re a shining star
No matter who you are
Shining bright to see
What you could truly be”
- Shining Star by Earth, Wind and Fire

In this issue of the SRS newsletter you are going to be reading about women in our programs that are true Shining Stars. We recently had our annual SHINE event fundraiser for St. Raymond’s Society. It was a fun evening and raised a good amount of money. Sonny (Shine) and Cher (U. Money) even made an appearance lip syncing and telling incredibly bad jokes. The team that coordinated the event did an outstanding job and the whole night was amazing. The Shining Stars of the night, like every year, were the women who have made so much progress. We heard several stories of women who have transformed their lives from “what feels like death” to life. We heard about Tami who came to us broke and abused - and by broke I don’t just mean financially. We worked with her to put an abusing spouse in jail so as to not continually hurt her. She didn’t have a job and didn’t have an education. Now just over a year later this woman was accepted to an accelerated nursing program. She went to school 40 hours a week while working 40 hours on the weekend for a year. St. Raymond’s mothers are some of the hardest working people you will ever meet! She recently graduated from nursing school and has a job that pays a wage where she can sustain a life for her and her children. She’s a SHINING STAR! We heard of a woman who has lived with chronic pain. In her efforts to help others, while she was living with us, she became a licensed massage therapist. She is moving out, as well, with a full time job and the confidence to help her live a life she and her child deserve. Another SHINING STAR! The last story of the night was told of a woman who has been at one of our homes for just under a year. The part of her story that captured the hearts and minds of all who heard it was this part of her talk. “Moving into St. Raymond’s house was the turning point in my life. I was given this golden opportunity to become the person God created me to be, and I took full advantage of it. In less than a year’s time I went from a homeless, pregnant, part-time waitress to a breast-feeding mom, a college graduate employed in my field of study with a 401(k), a business owner, and most importantly, I became a baptized Christian”. You, young lady, are a SHINING STAR!!!

This is what your support provides and so much more. Thank you for your generosity! Blessings from St. Raymond’s Society and the women we partner with to make them see the SHINING STARS God intends them to be!
The Promise of Education

We are in the midst of a unique and incredibly exciting time at the Jefferson City SRS House. Never before in our history have we had every resident focusing on the same Component of Self-Sufficiency at the same time: EDUCATION! Visitors to the house may very well think they have stumbled into a college dorm with residents deep in study, textbooks strewn about, and laptops on the dining room table. Although each of our moms is working on her own unique degree, they share a desire to improve their opportunities for the future by advancing their education. When a mom is part of our “My Amazing Life” program, she sets goals in seven different areas that move her toward self-sufficiency. Education is often regarded as the most important of the seven because it provides the foundation for employment and financial independence. During the month of March, our resident Alexa received her degree in Massage Therapy from Metro Business College, and passed her licensing exam! Within a week she had her first job offer. In early April, resident Christina passed her High School Equivalency Exam after weeks of studying and tutoring sessions with a very special volunteer. She is beginning her job search now with a new-found confidence in her skills! In May, resident Tami will graduate from a highly competitive nursing program at Missouri State Tech. She is already working in her field and will be moved to full-time as soon as school is finished! We are proud of the diligence and commitment these women have shown on their journeys to reach their God-given potential.
St. Raymond’s kids are EARristible!

We don’t just focus on the moms at the SRS House because, at any given time, we could have as many as eight children living together under our roof! Our staff works hard to create a family-like atmosphere for all of them, and this includes planning fun activities for the residents to participate in as a group. Helping our St. Raymond’s families create happy holiday memories is some of the most rewarding work we do.

SHINE

This year’s annual fundraiser, SHINE, was a great success! Thank you to all who came to honor our Shining Stars!

It has become a tradition for our Co-founders, Steve Smith and Mike Hentges to provide an unforgettable finale. Meet Sonny “Shine” & Cher “U. Money,” pictured with Program Director, Mary Chen.

Our two Shining Star moms from the Jefferson City Program, Alexa & Tami. We are so proud of these moms who now have a college education and are ready to be successful and self-sufficient!

A great turnout! We can’t thank you enough for your support.

Columbia Program Director, Whittley Jones, introduces one of our Shining Star moms, Brooklyn, and her precious son, Boston.
2017 IMPACT REPORT

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TOTAL NUMBER OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN HELPED IN 2017 396

Average Number of goals achieved per resident: 5
Number of women advanced in employment or education: 36
Number of families prevented from homelessness: 149
Total Number of mothers served since program began: 444

St. Raymond’s Society
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