



Featured Sponsored Ministry: Marian House

Prayer Intention: Loving Father, in the name of Jesus, we thank you for the miracles you are working in the lives of the women who enter the doors of Marian House. We pray that each will reach her full potential and achieve the independence she desires. Give each woman the courage to break down the barriers that confront her in the future, especially those that threaten her physical health, her life. Bring healing of body, mind and spirit to each of these courageous women. Amen.

Marian House was founded in 1982 as a joint project of the Sisters of Mercy and the School Sisters of Notre Dame in response to the dire circumstances that befell some women in the city of Baltimore. Marian House is a holistic, healing community for women and their children who are in need of housing and support services.

It provides a safe, sober and loving environment that challenges women to respect and love themselves, confront emotional and socio-economic issues, and transition to stable and independent lives. What follows are the stories of two women who have benefited from Marian House programs.

Anna Davis

After four months of trying, Anna completed the application process and arrived at Marian House on July 19, 2012. She is grateful to her sister and her five children for their unconditional support, and that is why she is able to focus on healing herself.

Anna is a bright woman who graduated from high school in New York, earning a Board of Regents High School diploma with merit. She was five credits short of a marketing and finance degree from college when she decided to accept an opportunity to work in retail, where she participated in opening a local mall. Within a year she became pregnant and began her family, which would ultimately include five children. Today, her children are ages 27, 24, 22, 20 and 16. The youngest is in high school, the oldest is employed, and the other children are in college.



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Anna first tried drugs when she was 13 years old. During college, she experimented with stronger drugs, and it was around that same time that she was diagnosed with a mental illness. Although she took medication off and on, she chose to ignore the mental health diagnosis. Anna has shared that she didn't believe the diagnosis and chose instead to believe that she "was just someone who was very bright and thought outside the box." Today, Anna says that "being crazy" wasn't accepted in the African-American community. It was something that was "swept under the rug," and, over time, her diagnosis became the family secret. She continued to abuse different substances, and while working in retail, she was introduced to crack cocaine. "I was immediately addicted," she says.

Marian House is Anna's third attempt at treatment. She states: "I've been clean many times, but this is the first time I've tried recovery. It took me more than four months to get in here. The difference here is that I have everything I need right here. Recovery, individual counseling, every need I have is taken care of. Now I have the freedom to focus on me. My sister is giving me the support I need at this time. After all these years, now I have the desire to look into the mirror and I actually like the person who looks back."

Anna completed Phase 1 of the Marian House program in September 2013 and has moved on to Phase 2 of the program. She is now employed and on her way to full independence. She continues to receive unconditional support from her family.

Dawn Murphy

Dawn was on a destructive path of homelessness, drug addiction and incarceration before arriving at Marian House in April 2011. After giving birth to her only child, Dawn had been sentenced to two years in prison. As a result, she lost custody of her son, Joshua, and missed the experience of being his mother for the first two years of his life. When Dawn arrived at Marian House she had low self-esteem, issues of abandonment and an 18-year history of drug addiction.

At Marian House she took full advantage of the program services offered to women during their residency. She participated in weekly individual and group counseling to learn to cope with her addiction and improve her sense of self. She completed the Marian House Job Readiness Program, enrolled in General Education (GED) classes and received tutoring from Sister Sharon Brunier, SSND through the Marian House Education

Center. Dawn successfully passed her GED exam and has received her diploma.

While studying for her high school diploma, Dawn also worked on gaining custody of Joshua, attending to her own health issues, completing parenting classes and applying for permanent housing at Marian House.



Dawn credits the Marian House program for teaching her how to live a productive life and helping her to establish a parental bond with her son. She will tell you that once she sets her mind to achieve a goal she won't quit until her goal is reached.

Dawn gained full custody of Joshua in August 2012, and they are now living together in a two-bedroom Marian House apartment at Serenity Place. The two

of them have developed an amazing bond. In December 2013 Joshua turned 5 and Dawn celebrated four years of sobriety. Today, Joshua and Dawn have an incredible relationship and Dawn's story is an outstanding example of the transformation to true independence.