



# LifeLine



A Quarterly Publication of SOLVE Maternity Homes - Saving Our Lives Volunteers Everyway

*Serving Mothers and Babies Since 1976*



## Gala Provides Anchor of Hope

Surrounded by artfully-arranged nautical items of fishnets, lanterns, and anchors, over 500 guests filled the grand ballroom at the Hyatt Regency in Sarasota on February 18th. The dinner, underwritten by generous donors, was delicious and beautifully presented. However, the main focus of the evening was on the ministry of SOLVE, including those who serve, as well as those who are served. Dr. Patricia Dixon, Psy.D., moderated the program once again. This year, she provided an "insider's view" of SOLVE on three separate stages:



Maria Houston is the first person each resident meets at SOLVE, and she explained the image of SOLVE she tries to project during that important first conversation. Resident Abigail told the audience how she felt hopeful and loved unconditionally during her time with Maria.

On stage #2, Dr. Dixon explored the impact that SOLVE has on the families of the residents. One couple, parents of a former resident, spoke very articulately of their past and present journey with their daughter and granddaughter. SOLVE was successful in their case, because of the excellent structure which is built into the program, a structure that continues to help their daughter today, long after she and her baby left SOLVE.

For the finale, Dr. Dixon interviewed Donna McGuire, one of SOLVE's Christian counselors. Donna explained in depth her own Christian walk, and how she engages the residents to know Jesus and His love for them. Anastasia, a current resident, told how the Spirit led her a long distance to SOLVE, and her great need for spiritual guidance and foundation for her and her baby.

All those at SOLVE serve as "anchors of hope" to those who come to their door. Those who attended the Gala learned how they can serve as anchors, as well. Proceeds from this year's gala will provide close to one-third of SOLVE's operating expenses for our four fully-functioning maternity homes which will serve 65+ pregnant women and their babies this year. SOLVE thanks everyone for their support and generosity.

## Kathie's House Unveiled

The SOLVE home located in south county will now go by another name: "Kathie's House". Kathie Magerchin served as SOLVE Englewood's first full-time, live-in House Mom from 2008 - 2009, and stayed on to serve SOLVE South County in many capacities until her retirement in 2013. Kathie's love for the women of SOLVE led her to recount her year as House Mom as "one of the best years of my life." Her loving care and compassion for mothers and babies in need, fierce drive to get things done, never-say-no approach, and passion for life have left a lasting legacy upon SOLVE, and the many women and babies she nurtured.



On Saturday, March 25th, Kathie's legacy to SOLVE was honored at the home re-dedication in her name. Guests were treated to a BBQ lunch and a tour of the refreshed home as they celebrated life and Kathie's love for SOLVE.





## Directors Corner



### The Call

This morning, I spent my time making calls and thanking those who helped to make the Babies, Blues & BBQ (Ms. Kathie's House Home Dedication) event on Saturday March 25th a success. It was a morning filled with delightful laughter and celebration—until a phone call came in that broke my heart. A young woman who resided at SOLVE three years ago called in desperation. "Ms. Peggy, I need help! I don't know what to do and I feel like giving up...I just can't do it on my own...I have no help. Something told me to call you." Hearing the angst in her voice as she sobbed on the phone, my advice was how can we get you here to talk in person?

### The History

While I waited for her to arrive, I remembered back to this young woman's time here. She was focused and funny. She learned to relax here, but was always very hard-working. She completed a CNA class and licensing, gaining employment immediately. She worked hard through her pregnancy and returned to work just three weeks post-birth. She thrived under the structure that SOLVE provided and wanted to go on to nursing school. She applied to a couple of transitional homes for mothers with children, but none of the programs in a 40-mile radius had any openings and the waiting lists were long. The fear of traveling at the age of 19 all the way across the state was terrifying, and so she went to live with a grandparent which was less than an ideal situation, but one she was feeling pressure to follow. Within a year, that ended and she moved into an apartment by herself.

### The Tragedy

When "ST" arrived, her face was tear-stained, she was very thin and disheveled. We welcomed her with hugs and she was safe for the moment. She could breathe, she was among family here at SOLVE. Through sobs, her story came out: she had not been able to afford her \$900 per month rent for her 2 bedroom apartment, so she let her boyfriend move in to help make ends meet. He ended up taking advantage of the situation, was not working nor helping to pay the bills anymore. Now she was going to be evicted, she's eight weeks

pregnant, trying to keep her job going, but not able to take care of it all. Now he wants her to have an abortion because he doesn't want the responsibility and she doesn't know where to turn. There is no "real" family support and she is all alone.

### Offering Comfort

Ms. Maria and I spent the afternoon drying her tears, encouraging her spirit, feeding her leftover comfort food (Thank you Darrell's on Venice Island for catering our event on Saturday because there is nothing better than chicken and homemade macaroni and cheese when you are hungry, tired and emotionally drained), providing towels (thank you Lakewood Ranch Women's Club for your White Donation), clothing and toiletries (thank you to all of our donors who drop these off) for a shower and a respite of momentary peace for her situation. We then began making calls on her behalf to see what services might be available to her.

### The Reality

Unfortunately, her situation falls outside of the criteria of the many programs we called. They can help if you are pregnant, but not if you have a child. They can help if you have a child, but not if you are pregnant. They can help if you are under the age of 18, they can help if you are over 22. They can help if you are pregnant, between the age of 18 and 24, and have a child, but your child has to be less than 2 years old. And on and on it goes. I get it, programs have to have parameters...after all, SOLVE does too. While we try to help ladies to the best of our ability, sometimes this includes assisting them to locate safe placement for their child so they can benefit from the programs we offer. But SOLVE is a one-time only program that works to help women avoid recidivism...therefore a resident cannot come back for a second time. Some of our women are ready to leave us sixty days post-birth. Some need a longer period of assistance to complete more education, so they can better provide for their family without having to depend on a "sketchy dude" as my husband has termed it.

This describes ST's situation accurately. Hard worker, but not enough education to pull her out beyond the \$8 - \$10 per hour job that is not life-sustaining. Along comes the sketchy dude to save the day, but he turns out to be a sketchy dud. As I write this tonight, God has re-affirmed in my heart that the time is NOW for our EVOLVE Transitional Home to become a reality for Manatee / Sarasota County...and the sooner the better to secure lives for stronger futures! This young woman "ST" would have been a PERFECT CANDIDATE



for our VISION of transitional housing and programming...focused specifically on EDUCATION to break the chain of poverty. Allowing women who have successfully completed the SOLVE Maternity Housing program AND who are educationally-minded, maintain a stable living environment while they complete the necessary full-time enrollment in school that will take them from minimum-wage-earning employment to a sustainable income to support their family. This investment in our moms on the front side will eliminate the need for these families to be dependent upon a lifetime of government services, thereby saving taxpayer dollars.

### The Vision

If EVOLVE had been available, TS would likely be nearing the completion of her desired LPN program at Manatee Technical College and on her way to a promising career as a nurse. She would have been living in community with other young mothers focused on education as well. She would have developed strong friendship bonds with like-minded single moms. She would have had stable and secure housing while she parented her child and continued to grow in life skills and experience as she planned for their future. She would have remained part of a faith community which would envelop her family with Christ's love. **She would have been calling me today to save the date for her graduation in June.**

### Your Invitation

God has orchestrated the vision, helped us to raise some seed funding, and gathered a handful of believers who want to help bring this vision to reality. Will you join me today, to consider how God might be leading you to become involved with EVOLVE? So that soon, a day like today will be a distant memory. For more information, to lend your talents, or to join our task force, please call me."

*For Every Life... Peggy*

## Jessica's Story Her Own Words



"I came to SOLVE in 2012 after living at a domestic violence shelter where I found out I was pregnant. I did not have family support and I did not know whether I wanted to keep the baby. The staff at the shelter recommended SOLVE. I was scared and unsure when I made the call that changed my life forever!

"My life was shattered when I first arrived at SOLVE. I first met with Ms. Peggy (Executive Director) and Ms. Maria (Client Services) who opened the door with loving arms. I couldn't understand

how these ladies could love someone like me, because prior to arriving at SOLVE, I was an addict and had lost custody of my daughter. I had no support from my family nor a spiritual upbringing, but the first case management session with Ms. Debbie changed all of that. It was during that very first session that I prayed and asked God into my heart and have walked God's path from there forward. It was like something just hit my heart, and I never went back to my old ways or habits. Being able to meet with the SOLVE staff Christian Counselor, Ms. Donna, helped me find myself. She also helped me to establish a relationship with God.

"While at SOLVE I obtained my GED and a certificate from MTC in Legal Administration. I also just recently received my AA in Paralegal Studies, and have maintained a job in a law firm in Manatee County for almost three years.

"I developed many relationships at SOLVE, but one special person became a motherly figure in my life. I met Kim through a small group that came to SOLVE from Bayside Community Church. She and her husband continue to be in my life and are Grandma and Grandpa to my children. Kim opened her home to me when I left SOLVE and I regained full custody of my daughter Sarah in 2015. I have maintained sobriety for over three years.

"I can't express the amount of gratitude I have for SOLVE, their volunteers and staff. God opened a door for me in 2012 that changed my life forever. I had lost everything and now with God's grace and mercy I have more than I need."

## Macaroni Kid Comes to SOLVE



Recently Macaroni Kid came to SOLVE with prizes and fun for our women to enjoy. The prizes were furnished by manufactures of items like strollers, snack food, water purifiers and so much more. Rhea Lana provided bags of additional items so each attendee left with a great prize. Food for the party was donated by Chicken Salad Chick on Cortez Road.

## Pregnant?

There is hope. SOLVE Maternity Homes is one of the **approved providers** for The Florida Pregnancy Support Services Program. For more information about available services, contact 866-673-HOPE or look online at [www.floridapregnancysupport.com](http://www.floridapregnancysupport.com)

## Stitched Together with Love



Knitting and crocheting are common hobbies, but there is something very unique and special about a local group of ladies who call themselves Loving Stitches. Meet Sonja Scirica, in her own words:

"I decided to serve in the Loving Stitches ministry because I've been gifted with the talent of crocheting and knitting and wanted to share it with others. We represent Our Lady of the Angels Church in the community and contribute our handmade items to veterans, hospitals, and hospice and cancer centers. We also make prayer shawls for our parishioners and community.

"As a part of this ministry, I go to SOLVE Maternity Homes in Bradenton once a week to teach the girls how to crochet or knit and provide them with yarn to make a blanket for their babies. I represent our ministry while doing this. These

young mothers have chosen life for their babies. I find fulfillment in their appreciation of my service and the love they have for their infants.

"If you're interested in joining Loving Stitches, and know how to crochet, knit, or sew—or are willing to learn how—and have a giving heart, we welcome you! We will teach you, if needed, and we will share the same sense of community in sharing our craft!" (Contact: Jan Morris at [jamor56@yahoo.com](mailto:jamor56@yahoo.com))

The women of SOLVE would like to thank Sonja for her weekly visits, and all that she shares with them. Not only is she passing on lifelong skills, but also sharing the love of Jesus!

# Thank You!

## St. Barbara's Orthodox Church

The women of this church held a baby shower for SOLVE residents.



## Lakewood Ranch Women's Club

This group recently held a "White Donation" of sheets, towels, mattress pads, pillowcases, blankets, and pillows. What a blessing!



## St. Joseph School

Recently St. Joseph Elementary School in Bradenton gathered items for SOLVE during Catholic Schools Week. Shown here is Michael John, the Religious Education Director, making the delivery. Many blessings to the kids who brought in diapers, toys and an assortment of items for the babies born at SOLVE!

## United Methodist Church Boca Grande

Holly Wade organized a Baby Bottle Drive to fill bottles with coins. Thank you!



Former resident holding her baby. Photo: Megan B. Photography

## All Who Support SOLVE

Whether you give financial donations, make baby items, mentor the young women, help maintain the homes and yards, contribute through rummage sales, teach Bible Study and other life skills, or participate in the myriad of ways people in our community find to show love and compassion to those who live at SOLVE, we are eternally grateful.

*Where your treasure is, there also will your heart be. (Luke 12:34)*

## Eligibility for Charitable Donations

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE TO GIVE A QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTION FROM AN IRA ACCOUNT? If you do not know and are interested in the Tax Benefits of meeting Required Minimum Distributions through a QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTION then please call Brian Kerwin at SOLVE at 941-527-6187 or speak with your financial advisor. Thank You for helping to move the SOLVE Mission forward!

# A Special Thank You To Our 2017 Gala Sponsors

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# SOLVE

maternity homes

SOLVE Homes provides Housing and Specialized Services to pregnant women and teens who have chosen life. Through the expression of God's love, the lives of both mother and child are strengthened and transformed.

### SOLVE STAFF

#### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Peggy Kerwin

#### BUSINESS MANAGER

Susan Burgess

#### CLIENT SERVICES MANAGER

Maria Houston

#### DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Brian Kerwin

#### CLIENT CARE COORDINATOR

Kim Waugh

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Donna McGuire

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Judy Scott – Secretary

John Yaglenski – Treasurer

Bob Hedgepeth, Ray Penge,

Dr. Patricia Dixon,

Tom Kirkpatrick

#### HOUSE MANAGERS

Beth Wood

Wanda Stocks

Barbara Kralka

Roseanne Jackson

## Sheri Ketner - Thank You!



Recently, Sheri Ketner announced that she would be "retiring" from SOLVE, to travel more and to welcome the many friends who visit her from other states. Sadly for SOLVE, we will miss Sheri's effervescent personality, her ability to be in the middle of the action, and her contributions to the ministry of SOLVE.

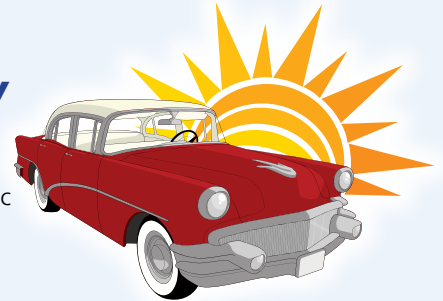
Sheri, pictured in the center of photo, was responsible for growing the social media presence of SOLVE, so important in reaching the younger generations. In addition, she helped SOLVE connect with many more volunteers in

the community. At any event, she could be seen snapping photos, and LifeLine owes her a debt of gratitude for all her contributions. Everywhere Sheri went, she spread her "light for Life", and succeeded in being an excellent ambassador for SOLVE.

Although Sheri was on the staff of SOLVE only two years, from February 2015 – 2017, she certainly moved this ministry forward in a myriad of ways, giving the glory to God. We will miss you, Sheri, but your legacy will live on. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

## Gamble Plantation Annual Car & Truck Show

On February 25th, over 200 awesome classic cars and trucks were on show at the beautiful Gamble Plantation State Park! The weather was lovely, music by Lance's Cruzin To the Hop set a fun mood, and great food was provided by Holy Smoke BBQ.



Bill Mergens, organizer

The fundraiser profits help SOLVE and the Gamble Plantation Preservation Alliance. Thanks to all who made this event possible, and all those who came for fun, food, & fellowship!

## Give the Gift of Life

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Visit us online at [www.solvehomes.org](http://www.solvehomes.org)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
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**YES!** I want to financially support SOLVE with a:  **Monthly** Pledge of \$ \_\_\_\_\_  **One-Time** Donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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Yes! We offer **AUTOMATIC WITHDRAWAL** service to our supporters. Simply call the SOLVE office at (941) 748-0094 to get started with this easy way to contribute. Whether \$5 or \$500, your monthly contribution is very much needed, appreciated, and well-used!!

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**“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you.”**

*Jeremiah 1:5*



11/26/16 (girl)  
**Hazel**  
 7 lb, 8 oz / 20" Long





Twins born 12/9/2016 (boys)  
**Daren Lee**      **Darius Michael**  
 5 lb, 1 oz / 17" Long      4 lb, 4 oz / 15.5" Long



12/22/16 (boy)  
**Elijah**  
 6 lb, 9 oz / 20" Long



12/22/16 (boy)  
**Jeremiah**  
 5 lb, 14 oz / 19" Long

 Adopted is another word for LOVE   
 Baby Girl Born January 2017



12/22/16 (boy)  
**Josiah**  
 7 lb, 2 oz / 21" Long



12/27/16 (boy)  
**Kenneth**  
 7 lb, 4 oz / 19" Long



1/11/17 (boy)  
**Mathias**  
 6 lb, 5 oz / 20" Long



1/19/17 (boy)  
**Benjamin**  
 8 lb, 15 oz / 21" Long



2/25/17 (boy)  
**Lucas**  
 8 lb / 21" Long