

LOVE to SHARE

Others will not care how much we know until they know how much we care.

Volume 40 No. 3 Sharing and Caring Hands Fall / Winter 2024

FROM MY HEART

My Dear Friends,

I am so excited to write to you because I have many things to tell you about. I want to thank all the volunteers that have been coming to Sharing and Caring Hands to serve meals in the morning and afternoon, faithfully committed to serving God's poor. And many are dropping off food which really helps us keep going over here. Your care and concern to feed the hungry has really brought a hopefulness to the people. When the people stand in line waiting for their warm meal, they see the volunteers, and really feel the love from your presence. Through the meal they feel that people care about them. This gives them hope and when people find hope they also find peace. **To the world you may be one person, but to that one person you may be the world.** I wish I could name each and every volunteer but cannot. So if you are reading this may God abundantly bless you for your commitment, compassion, love, and time of service. Here is a BIG thank you and BIG hug for you.

I want to share a beautiful moment with you, one that I wish was recorded for you to see. Every day I go to Mass in the chapel at Mary's Place early in the morning. After Mass, as I leave, the children that are waiting for their school buses, run up to me for big group hugs. Just the other day, one little boy came into the chapel while I was praying. He wanted a hug so I gave him a big hug. The pure happiness, joy, and smiles that these homeless children have absolutely touches my heart. They tell me all the time how happy and safe they feel to now have a roof over their head, food, and clothes. I will never forget the children that told me they "finally slept through the night," how "the nightmares have gone away," and how they "no longer worry about tomorrow." What a feeling to know they have finally found hope and peace. And you are part of that. **For hope is not a wish but a promise that nobody walks alone.**

With the holiday season here, please do not forget how hard this time is, especially for families. Hundreds of families will be counting on us for a beautiful Christmas. You have always been extra generous during this time of year, so I know I can count on you to be a bright shining Christmas light to all those in need of some cheer.

May God shine His light upon you today and always, just as you have done to others. For "whatever you did for the least of my brothers, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40) - you, my friends, are truly wonderful servants. May you have a happy and holy Christmas and blessed New Year. As always, I will keep you all in my heart and my prayers. Until we meet again, God love you always, and may His blessings be upon you now and forever.

Yours In Christ,
Mary Jo Copeland
Founder & Director of Sharing and Caring Hands

P.S. We still need donations of kitchen pots/pans and sheets. Many people have been coming needing these basic household items.





END OF SUMMER FUN

With your generous financial donations, we took the Mary's Place children on fun field trips to the St. Louis Park Aquatic Center, Eagles Nest Indoor Playground, Minnesota Children's Museum, and Dave & Buster's Arcade. They had such an amazing time that they did not want the field trips to end! The children also enjoyed our backyard - we have a playground, basketball court, and picnic tables. We also had our annual Backpack Giveaway sponsored by Rita Larson and her teams from the Culvers Franchise and the Schulze Family Foundation. And we used your donations to purchase brand new school supplies for all of the children. It was a wonderful end of summer at Mary's Place!





"To the world you may be one person, but to that one person you may be the world."

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: JOB SEEKERS PROGRAM

For over 12 years volunteers have been coming to Mary's Place to help the parents find employment. Many parents need help with creating a resume, cover letter, online job search, and interviewing skills. Many do not have the computer or writing skills to do these things on their own. They need one-on-one assistance and support. The volunteers help them create a resume, log onto job search websites, and apply directly to open positions. This has been a wonderful program for the Mary's Place parents.

Volunteer Laura T says *"I have been blessed to support the Job Seekers Program as a volunteer. Through this program, I have met many wonderful people looking for job search support. It has been very fulfilling to work with them to create their resume and plan the next steps in their job search. They are always appreciative of the help."*



Volunteer Patricia A (pictured above) says *"I have been volunteering as a job coach since 2012. It is by far one of my most rewarding experiences. I encourage you to share your time and talent. You will positively impact someone's life including your own."*



WINTER COAT GIVEAWAY



Thanks to you and Schulze Family Foundation, we have given out 400+ brand new winter coats to the Mary's Place children!

500+ HALLOWEEN CANDY BAGS



Thanks to the businesses and churches who donated Halloween candy bags for the Mary's Place children!



LAURIE & FAMILY

Laurie and her 5 children (Isaac 15, Alexis 13, Elijah 12, Alivia 10, and Ezekial 9) write what Mary's Place means to them.

Laurie

Me and my kids have been homeless for a very long time. We have been staying with family and friends, sleeping on couches, and sometimes just on bed tappers on the floor. I have been struggling for 5 years to get on my feet to support us. The day we went to Sharing and Caring Hands was a heavy day. I was scared and my kids were scared. They said, What if Mary Jo says no? I said we have to try. When she said we could stay, we were shocked but very relieved! Since then my kids have been able to relax and are doing ok inside and out. We can finally take a breath. We have finally found peace. Mary Jo makes a big difference in so many people's lives. She means so much to us, we love her so much.

Isaac, age 15

Mary Jo means a lot to our family. She put us in an apartment when we had nothing. She gave us running water, beds, pillows, and blankets. I am extremely grateful and I hope God blesses her with riches not of this world but riches that only He can give to her in Heaven.

Alexis, age 13

Mary Jo is a kindhearted person and an angel in disguise. I am very grateful for her and all she has done for my family. She will forever be a part of my story.

Ezekial, age 9

Mary Jo is super nice and she is the best. She helps so much.

Alivia, age 10

1. Mary Jo is nice.
2. She is a good person.
3. She cares about other people.
4. She has a great personality.
5. She helps as many people as she can.
6. She has an amazing heart.

Elijah, age 12

Mary Jo means a lot to me. She always makes sure our family is ok. She is a very good person. She is very wise and very kind and very caring. She loves kids and is compassionate. What I love about Marys Place is we all get our own rooms. We have an oven, fridge, freezer, cupboards, and a sink. There is a playground and basketball court. There is a Teen Center with a bunch of games, air hockey, and pool. There are also elevators. Thank you for giving me an opportunity.





STAFF SPOTLIGHT : JOHN & GOKU

John (pictured below right) and Goku (pictured below left) are father and son and their family used to live at Mary's Place. Goku remembers meeting Mary Jo when he was a little boy and John remembers Mary Jo giving his family a chance when she let them stay at Mary's Place. Both now work at Sharing and Caring Hands. John helps give people bus cards, gas \$, and laundry \$. He also stocks the bathrooms and helps Goku receive donations. Goku receives donations, organizes donations, and cleans the basement level where our donations are. John says it means a lot to him that Mary Jo gave him "a purpose" when she hired him and Goku says Mary Jo is "a great person who helps so many people in our community." Mary Jo says both are hard workers and she is proud to have them here.

COLLECTING CHRISTMAS GIFTS & TOYS FOR THE CHILDREN

We are getting ready to bless 500+ children with an amazing Christmas and need everyone's help to make this possible so please help spread the word. Please donate new gifts and toys as early as December 1. Our staff will work countless hours to go through your gift donations and match toys to children. It will help our staff immensely if donations are on-site sooner than later. Thank you so much for giving these children a beautiful and wonderful Christmas.



CHRISTMAS GIFTS NEEDED

Please consider donating gifts for the 500+ children at Mary's Place and other local low-income families who come to us in need at Christmas.

This is a great way to get your church, family, friends, neighborhood, workplace, etc. involved in the holiday spirit of giving.

Gifts should be new and unwrapped and delivered to Sharing & Caring Hands starting as soon as December 1. Gifts can also be shipped directly to Mary's Place (401 North 7th Street, Minneapolis MN 55405) in care of "N. Lor." Wrapping paper & tape is always needed, too.

Some ideas for the children:

- *Babies/Toddlers- learning or pretend play toys, baby dolls & accessories, building blocks/duplos/magnetic tiles, playdoh
- *Girls- Barbies, arts & crafts, girl lego sets, little girl makeup & nail polish
- *Boys- action figures, hot wheels/remote control cars, arts & crafts for boys, lego sets, sports balls

Popular Toy Brands - Leap Frog, Vtech, Bluey, Paw Patrol, Disney Princess, Squishmallow, Marvel.

Many teenagers are often over-looked and not shopped for (especially the teen boys), so please include them in your shopping.

Some ideas for the teens:

- *Girls- body wash, lotion, perfume, makeup, nail polish, hair accessories, hair styling heat tools
- *Boys- body wash, lotion, cologne, Bluetooth speakers, Nike/Air Jordan/Addidas/other name brand apparel
- *Earbuds & headphones

Thank you for your generosity to help make this Christmas extra special for those who have so little.



Though these letters are directed to Mary Jo and the staff, we share them with you to show the impact your love, generosity and caring love have on the lives of others.

LETTERS FROM THE MAIL BAG

Dear Mary Jo,

I am writing this letter from my heart and I often have trouble putting things into words out loud. I am not even sure where to start but I feel so compelled to tell you all the things that I have on my mind since coming here (to Mary's Place).

There truly are no words to explain how much I appreciate being here. But that alone is not all that I am thankful for. Before we got here, my heart and mind felt broken and hopeless. I was so terrified of how I was going to keep going and so scared of failing my children and how I was going to keep making sure that we were ok. I felt completely alone in this world and was losing more and more hope daily.

To know that my babies are safe and ok now is one thing, but again that is not the only thing I am thankful for. I actually feel LOVED and cared about! And that feeling to me is priceless and has restored my hope and my heart. It truly amazes me that I was just a stranger on the street and you made me feel loved and cared for when I had nothing.

My life has never really been very easy and I have experienced a lot of really painful losses. My mother passed away at the age of 44 from an accidental overdose of medication and alcohol and I have struggled with depression and anxiety ever since. The world is a very scary place without parents at any age, but losing her has made me even more sensitive to the idea of failing my children. It has also made me a lot more sensitive and appreciative of the people who have shown me and my family love and you will forever have a very special place in my heart because of this.

As a mother there will never be enough words to explain how much being here means. You have kept my babies safe and fed and most important of all you have shown them love and care.

I get tears in my eyes every time I think about the impact that you have made in mine and family's lives and I cannot say thank you enough. You will probably never truly realize how much I thank you but I wanted to at least try to put it into words.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you and may God forever bless you.

Signed from one grateful mother,
Amanda K (#315)





LETTERS FROM THE KIDS

Dear Mary Jo,
You are my best friend and the most important person in my life! I love seeing you in the morning – you always say a prayer with me, tell me to have a great day, and just make me like someone really cares about me – it is the best way to start my day! You just make me feel so good about myself. My whole family is just so thankful for you. Without you taking us in I just do not know where we would be. Thank you for not just helping us but everyone here. This place is a for real blessing.

Love, Thea (age 17)

Dear Mary Jo,
Thank you for,

1. Our warm apartment
2. The tv in our room
3. The backyard
4. The video games at the Teen Center

Love, DJ (age 9)



Dear Mary Jo,
Thank you for everything and thank you for helping my parents. You are the best person in the world. We are going to miss you a lot! God Bless You Always.

Love, Melany A (age 8)



ULTIMATE GIFT

Please consider a gift to Sharing & Caring Hands as part of your will or trust as you do your estate planning. Donations can be in the form of stocks, 401K's, insurance policies, or charitable remainder trusts. Talk to your financial advisor or call Mary Jo Copeland at 612-328-4290.

Regular donations are vital to our work, and many employers will match your donations, thus doubling its value. You can use your Visa, Mastercard, Discover, or American Express for donations to Sharing & Caring Hands. A donation of stock is also welcome and can have great tax advantages. We are a 501(C)(3) charity so all donations are tax deductible. May God bless your generosity!

Sharing and Caring Hands
525 North 7th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55405
612-338-4640



Business Hours:

M-Th: 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.



You can use your Visa, Mastercard, Discover, or American Express for donations to Sharing & Caring Hands.



We also have the option of Electronic Funds Transfer



Want to know more? Visit us on the Web!

www.sharingandcaringhands.org

info@sharingandcaringhands.org

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