AS A YOUNG BOY OF TEN, TIM HINE arrived at the Children’s Home in 1956 to stay for a few days until his grandparents could take him in. He was scared, but felt welcomed.

“First thing I received at the Children’s Home was a simple hug,” Tim recalls. “I’ve never forgotten that hug, or how it made me feel.”

Tim’s childhood was marked by upheaval. He attended 15 schools before graduating from Lansing Eastern, and didn’t think it was possible for a child to feel so low.

He raised his two children as a single dad, often with little more than his own ingenuity. One Christmas, he bundled the children into the car to leave to go visit Santa. He dashed back into the house saying he “forgot” something. Scooping up a small decorated tree and presents donated by a caring neighbor, he set them up in the living room before returning to his waiting children.

When they returned home, the children believed Santa had visited during their absence.

“They still talk about that,” Tim said. “It was magical to them.”

He and his wife Carol are one of 19 inaugural members of the Faith Keepers Society, a result of the blessings in his life. The couple recently celebrated their 25th anniversary.

“Today I am living my dreams from my youth,” he said. “I am conscious of God’s love and guidance and daily interaction with Him. I am constantly aware of all the miracles He has provided in my life and I am very thankful, which is why we give. Our children are our hope for a better today and future.”

The new Faith Keepers monthly giving society is a convenient, secure way to support STVCC’s efforts to provide help and create hope so people can transform their lives.

WHY WE GIVE

For Sean and Monica Fochtman, the headlines about refugees prompted them to set up a monthly donation dedicated to supporting resettlement efforts in the Lansing area.

“Setting up the monthly gift online keeps us committed and is honestly one less thing I have to remember on the first of each month,” Sean said. “I love the messages we get from STVCC every month thanking us for our contribution.”

WHAT YOUR MONTHLY GIFT CAN DO

$10 a month buys a new pillow for a child entering the Children’s Home.

$25 a month provides supplies for a group therapy session.

$50 a month gives a child, who comes to the Children’s Home with no personal belongings, a change of clothes and new shoes.

To join the Faith Keepers Society, visit stvcc.org/monthly-giving.
MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends,

With the start of the school year almost here, memories of back-to-school shopping and first days of school with my two sons come to mind. When I think of them, I can't help but think of all the children in the care of St. Vincent Catholic Charities who do not have the parents and support system necessary to help them through this stressful time of the year. As an agency, we do all that we can to help these kids.

In this issue, we provide moving stories about how STVCC has played a part in the transformation of those children and teens in our care. For someone like Tim Hine, although he only spent several days at the Children’s Home in his youth, STVCC has been a part of his life for decades. Now he and his wife are founding members of our Faith Keepers monthly giving society. We also share an update on a young woman named Miracle, who we wrote about several years ago. Miracle is transforming her life on a daily basis through her mentors and staff at the Children’s Home. Her on-going motivation is to provide a life for her daughter, Jordan, that she wasn’t able to experience.

This summer has been a busy time for us. Soon we’ll be completing Operation Backpack, where we equip every child in our care with the necessary school supplies to succeed academically – all neatly stored in that brand new backpack each student craves. I encourage you to flip through to see all the fun activities we’ve offered to our clients and the community this season.

After reading this issue, it should be obvious that your support is making a difference in the lives of those served at STVCC.

Sincerely,

Andrea E. Seyka
Chief Executive Officer

A MIRACLE IN THE MAKING

MIRACLE BRIDGEMAN’S MOTIVATION WEARS red high top sneakers and dozens of bright barrettes in her hair.

Her tiny little one-year-old daughter, Jordan, is all the motivation Miracle needs to complete the transformation of her life that began when she came to the St. Vincent Catholic Charities Children’s Home.

“I don’t want her to go through the things that I went through,” Miracle said, a clear resolve in her voice.

The young woman was just 14 when she and her six siblings were removed from their mother’s care.

“She just couldn’t take care of us,” Miracle explained. “It was just too much for her.”

With no available foster homes in Berrien County, Miracle came to the Children’s Home. Initially she didn’t like it. Rules about lights out, meal times and school attendance were all new to her. She learned to embrace the routine, eventually attending Waverly Public Schools where she played basketball. In time, the lessons from her mentors and staff began to stick.

“Learning how to ride the bus, look for apartments – I wouldn’t know how to do any of that without them.”

Her grandmother and an aunt help care for the little girl from 5 am to 2 pm. Miracle is working toward her associate degree in child development at Lake Michigan College. Once completed, she hopes to return to Lansing to attend MSU.

Miracle wants other children in the foster care system to heed one piece of advice: “Don’t let your past define you or stop you from achieving your goals. Nothing is impossible, and it’s all doable.”

Miracle is well on her way to transforming her life, thanks to the coping strategies she learned at the STVCC’s Children’s Home and a pint-sized bundle of energy who’s now part of the journey.

They really helped me become the person I am today,” Miracle said. “They really helped me become the person I am today.”

“I would never know how to do any of that without them.”

She left the Children’s Home after two years to attend a trade school and moved back to Benton Harbor. She graduated from Benton Harbor High School and was ready to head to Michigan State University when she became pregnant with her daughter.

“All the love of Christ by performing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. • Integrity

MISSION

The mission of St. Vincent Catholic Charities is to share the love of Christ by performing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

VISION

The vision of STVCC is with faith in God and love for all we aspire to create a healthier community.

VALUES

STVCC’s Core Values: • Compassion • Service • Faith • Stewardship • Integrity

Head to www.stvcc.org and help us save money by subscribing to the FULL COLOR online version of our newsletter!

If you’d like to learn more about the Children’s Home, visit stvcc.org/childrens-home
A BUSY SUMMER AT STVCC

GUARDIAN SOCIETY THANK YOU EVENT MAY 31, 2017

CHILDREN’S HOME FIELD DAY JUNE 5, 2017

ITEC TECHTRANSPORT BUS JUNE 12, 2017

WELCOMING THE STRANGER: 5K FAMILY FUN RUN JUNE 17, 2017

PEACE POLE UNVEILING AT ST CASIMIR PARISH JUNE 23, 2017

ADRIANA TRIGIANI BOOK PRESENTATION JUNE 28, 2017

SPARROW CAR SEAT DONATION JULY 7, 2017

OPERATION BACKPACK COMMERCIAL FILMING JULY 12, 2017

Make an Honor Gift in tribute of a loved one at stvcc.org

Are you inspired by STVCC’s transformational services?
**VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: BOB NIEMAN**

Fishing requires a lot of patience. When you take a 12-year-old who has never fished before, that certainly can be true. But for Children’s Home volunteer mentor Bob Nieman, providing new and valuable learning experiences to the young men he mentors is something he always looks forward to.

“I always take the approach that everyone is a child of God and everyone is here to be loved,” said Bob. “When I go into St. Vincent’s, there may be a lot going on, but the staff are angels for everything that they do for these kids. Helping these children is what we are called to do.

There is nothing more important for me than being here for these kids.”

Bob’s relationship with St. Vincent Catholic Charities (STVCC) started as a Guardian Society member with his wife Lynna. For several years they attended the Guardian Society Breakfast and learned of the need for STVCC in the community.

Later through some friends with the Knights of Columbus, Bob decided to grow that relationship further and began volunteering at the Children’s Home. Over the past year, he has worked with four young men. Activities range from fishing, playing basketball, taking a trip to the batting cages, or simply errands to the hardware store to learn about home improvement.

“Volunteering makes me feel good yet makes me feel unworthy, because I get so much out of it” Bob said. “The energy the kids have is contagious. They are always excited to see their mentors.”

**THIS IS HOME**

“THIS IS HOME,” NAEL AL SAEDI SAID, SITTING ON HIS couch in the home he purchased seven years after his family arrived in Lansing as refugees. Now, every member of the family is woven into the community.

His four children range in ages from 8 to 16. They are consumed with schoolwork, sports, and dancing. His wife has a full-time job, and his parents and brothers live in the area.

Al Saedi is a case manager in Refugee Services, the same agency that resettled the family in 2010 from Iraq, where he worked with the U.S. Army as an interpreter, then for a U.S. security company.

The job put him in a dangerous position. Yet he and his wife didn’t consider fleeing Iraq until a bomb went off outside their home.

About three years after applying for refugee status, a woman working in the U.S. Embassy fast-tracked his application. Nine months later, the family arrived in Lansing.

Now he gets to work with other refugees through STVCC, helping them navigate and understand the America he now calls home.

**CHILDREN’S HOME GOES CAMPING**

The children, in all their ingenuity, even took it upon themselves to construct their own homemade fishing poles out of sticks in an attempt to fish in the river.

Ultimately, just looking at the pictures is enough to sense the amount of joy felt by kids and staff alike!

This is Home

“America offers everything. First thing, our house. We worked hard to get this house. Kids in the schools,” he continued.

“This is my home and we have our hearts (here) and fulfill our commitments to our children and our community.”

Erin F. Wasinger is a freelance writer in Lansing. To read the full version, visit stvcc.org/lansing-refugee-story-home/.
A MESSAGE TO OUR FRIENDS

WEDNESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 27, 2017

REGISTRATION:
7:30 – 8:00 AM

PROGRAM:
8:00 – 9:00 AM

EAGLE EYE GOLF CLUB

RSVP BY:
WEDNESDAY,
SEPTEMBER 20

RHONDA ABOOD
517.323.4734 EXT. 1205
ABOODR@STVCC.ORG

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and share our posts,
you help us spread
the good news
about STVCC.

GUARDIAN SOCIETY
ANNUAL

BREAKFAST
PRESENTED BY

St. Vincent Catholic Charities
PROVIDING HELP CREATING HOPE.