



New Heights

TRANSFORMATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

DEB STONER'S JOURNEY FROM book club volunteer to being the impetus behind St. Vincent Catholic Charities' Sensory Integration Therapy Room showcases the transformative power of our agency.

Deb was immediately interested in volunteering when she heard her friend talk about the book club held at the STVCC Children's Home.

"One of the reasons I volunteer is that we're asked to be the hands and feet of Jesus," Deb explained. "I've always wanted to work with kids."

Each week, Deb joins a group of dedicated volunteers who bring snacks, share their lives with the young people, and find a common language as they explore the choices fictional characters face in the books they're reading.

"A lot of the situations the characters in the books come up against are very applicable to everyday life," she explained.

The relationships forged in those sessions prompted Deb and her husband Don to become more deeply involved in STVCC by joining the Guardian Society.

While the Stoners' financial support is important, Deb says she gets the greatest satisfaction from building relationships with the teens at the Children's Home.

"The relational side is very important," she explained. "I don't think it would mean as much to me if I did not have a relationship with the people served."

"I've grown in my faith. Seeing these kids who have to deal with very adult situations, I pray that they will seek out God and find true peace in a relationship with Him."

The Stoners provided the funds to build the Sensory Integration Room, which provides a setting for specialized therapy to help children grappling with sensory integration disorder.

An estimated 5% to 15% of children suffer from



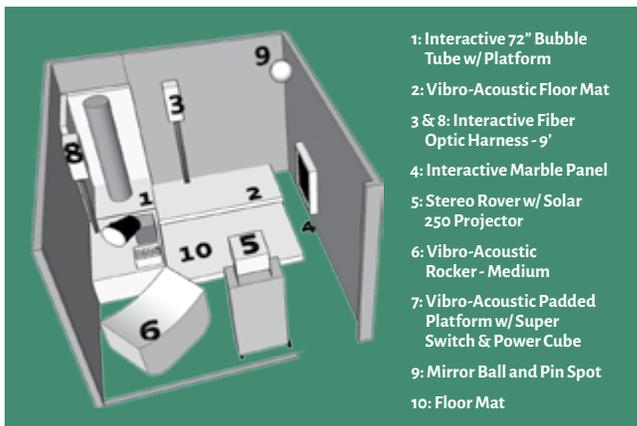
the inability to process normal sensory stimuli. For children from abusive or neglectful homes, the percentage is thought to be much higher. If not treated, the disorder can interfere with a child's ability to read and cause other learning problems.

"Not too many facilities have a sensory room," Deb explained. "We thought anything that would help the kids would be beneficial."

"I volunteer to be the hands and feet of Jesus."

Although the Stoners will be relocating to Atlanta, they are grateful to leave a lasting legacy at the Children's Home.

The project will remain a tribute to their commitment to STVCC and the young people they came to know as volunteers and donors.



- 1: Interactive 72" Bubble Tube w/ Platform
- 2: Vibro-Acoustic Floor Mat
- 3 & 8: Interactive Fiber Optic Harness - 9'
- 4: Interactive Marble Panel
- 5: Stereo Rover w/ Solar 250 Projector
- 6: Vibro-Acoustic Rocker - Medium
- 7: Vibro-Acoustic Padded Platform w/ Super Switch & Power Cube
- 9: Mirror Ball and Pin Spot
- 10: Floor Mat



Dear Friends,

Emerging from a Lenten season of reflection and repentance, I hope you enjoyed a Happy Easter as we joyfully celebrated the resurrection.

The first months of 2017 have been a trying time for St. Vincent Catholic Charities, particularly for our refugee resettlement program. Although our agency has continued to welcome arrivals of new refugee families, the amount expected during this year is significantly less than what we had anticipated. It is in this work of following our mission of welcoming the stranger where we have our greatest needs.

This newsletter features the stories of those who have helped to meet our needs and better our agency. We measure our results in the lives that we help transform, and each success and gift helps to achieve those results.

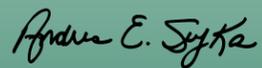
I'm excited to share the generosity of Deb and Don Stoner, who provided the financial contributions to make our state-of-the-art sensory integration room a reality at our Children's Home. Equally touching is the story of Carol Prahinski and Flemming Mathiasen, who unfortunately found themselves navigating the complicated and scary journey of the U.S. immigration process. Through the help of our Immigration Law Clinic, they ultimately were able to find happiness.

The second half of this newsletter provides opportunities for you to help us meet our needs, such as joining our Legacy Society, volunteering, or organizing a collection drive.

As we enter the season of rebirth, you too can make a difference in the lives of those we serve.

On behalf of everyone at St. Vincent Catholic Charities, thank you for making it possible for us to Provide Help, Create Hope and Transform Lives!

Sincerely,



Andrea E. Seyka
Chief Executive Officer



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“Through your joyful witness and service, help to build a civilization of love. Show, by your life, that it is worth giving your time and talents in order to attain high ideals, it is worth recognizing the dignity of each human person, and it is worth taking risks for Christ and his Gospel.”

— Pope Francis —

POWER OF LOVE

Just six weeks before their wedding, the love Carol and Flemming shared was tested in a way they had never predicted. Flemming, a Canadian citizen, was denied the visa that was necessary for them to marry.

The beautiful wedding ceremony at the church where Carol grew up was canceled. Shocked, shattered, angry and emotional, they didn't know where to turn.

Steered towards the St. Vincent Catholic Charities' Immigration Law Clinic, they met Melissa Indish, one of two attorneys who work exclusively in the complex and ever-changing field of immigration law.

“I had no idea this would ever happen to us,” Flemming said. “I've always allowed myself to go with the flow and I never thought God would put us on this path. But I had to have faith and I wouldn't have survived without it.”

Through Melissa's efforts, Carol and Flemming were able to marry in 2011. First, in a legal ceremony at East Lansing's Dublin Square. Then, later that year, in a ceremony in the church Carol grew up attending in Chevy Chase, near Washington D.C.

“Having Melissa help us in this journey, because it was a journey...we had to walk this and even though we know God is there, he still has to work through somebody. He does the miracles through others,” said Flemming.



None of it would have been possible without assistance from St. Vincent Catholic Charities' Immigration Law Clinic. In 2016, they helped 936 clients with a 99% approval rate on closed cases.

The clinic works on a sliding scale, offering help to anyone who needs it.

“We have the resources so I didn't mind paying the full fees,” Carol explained. “But for someone who doesn't, it's so important to support the work they do.”

“Even though we know God is there, he still has to work through somebody. He does the miracles through others.”

At Christmas, Carol and Flemming made a significant donation to the clinic, their way of saying thanks for the long journey so they could be together.

Read the full version of this story at stvcc.org/carol-flemming.

MISSION

The mission of St. Vincent Catholic Charities is the work of the Catholic Church, 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

4,494 CLIENTS *Transformed* BY STVCC IN 2016



CHILDREN'S
HOME

126



COUNSELING

1,090



ADOPTION &
FOSTER CARE

437



REFUGEE
SERVICES

1,878



IMMIGRATION
LAW CLINIC

963

ANNOUNCING THE STVCC *Legacy Society*

For many years, STVCC has received gifts from estates of people in our community and notices that many of our friends have included STVCC in their estate plans. To recognize these contributions, we are happy to formally announce the Legacy Society.

The Legacy Society recognizes those who include STVCC in their future plans through a bequest, in a will, trust, life insurance or life income gifts. You may become a member of the Legacy Society simply by notifying us that you have named St. Vincent Catholic Charities in your will or estate plan, and by completing a 'Statement of Support' form, obtained from the STVCC Development Office.

Gifts to the Legacy Society are acts of hope for the future. Through your thoughtful commitment and generosity, STVCC will be well equipped to serve our community for generations to come.

The rewards of giving in this manner are plentiful. For many of us, we give our treasure today to bless others in the future. The challenge of the work we do here at STVCC is that the needs are endless. Abuse and neglect never take a vacation; persecution persists. The work we do helps people heal and gives them the tools to lead productive lives. Your gift today helps secure the future for those who come to our doorstep in the years to come.

For more information about the STVCC Legacy Society and gifts through your estate, please contact Cindy Herfindahl (517) 323-4734 ext. 1201 or by e-mail at herfinc@stvcc.org.



ADRIANA TRIGIANI BOOK SIGNING

MARK YOUR CALENDARS – St. Vincent Catholic Charities will be the recipient of the proceeds from bestselling novelist Adriana Trigiani's East Lansing appearance on Wednesday, June 28 at the Kellogg Center from 7 – 9 p.m. A STVCC Children's Home Book Club favorite, Trigiani will be speaking about and then signing copies of her latest novel *Kiss Carlo*.

Some of her other popular works include *All the Stars in the Heavens*, *The Shoemaker's Wife*, the *Big Stone Gap* series, the *Valentine* trilogy and *Lucia, Lucia*.

Visit stvcc.org for more details.

As a tribute to those who have taken the step to support STVCC through their future plans, we recognize:

- Pat Andrews
- Rae and Margaret Behren
- Barbara Boger
- Robert and Marie Brown
- Robert Burgess
- Florence Chubb
- David and Noel Closs
- Curtis Trust
- Marion G. DeWitt Trust
- Dorothy A. Doyle
- Chester and Marie Esch
- John Forte
- Lynn and Mary Harvey
- Grace Hoffer
- John J. Kelly
- Joseph and Shirley Lacchia
- Nancy S. Passanante
- Mary Lou Phillips
- Michael and Kathleen Rhodes
- Rhynard Estate
- Joseph Sanger/Marjorie Hahn Trust
- Edna Schaefer Living Trust
- Mary Kathryn Siwek
- Wayne J. and Elaine M. Thelen
- Donna Verleger
- Russell Wensick
- Jean S. White

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: HELEN HAGENS

"When a St. Vincent Catholic Charities representative visited the East Lansing Women's Club, Helen Hagens was immediately excited and intrigued by the opportunity to help her local community. She was surprised to find out about the many services STVCC offers. "We've lived all of our lives in this area, and we had no idea that we settled that many refugees here in the Lansing area," said Helen.



With Helen's help, the East Lansing Women's Club began collections for items such as clothing, household supplies and personal items for the refugee families at their monthly meetings. However, her desire to get involved stretched further than organizing collection drives.

In the past, she taught English as a second

language overseas. As someone who has experienced the feeling of being an outsider in a foreign country, she felt her experiences would help her relate to refugee families. Helen mentors a single mother and four children originally from Eritrea in Africa. They arrived in Lansing from Egypt, which followed time spent in Sudan.

This opportunity has been an incredible bonding experience for Helen and the family she has taken in. "These are my other grandchildren now," she said with a smile. Caring for the children while their mother is at work means doing fun activities such as going to the park and baking cakes. "We are having some fun too. We did trick-or-treating in our neighborhood. The three oldest children came with me to my daughter's house for Thanksgiving and the entire family went to church on Christmas Eve and then came to my house for supper and presents."

One of the most important parts of being a refugee family mentor is teaching families basic life skills. Helen believes that "[these are] things anybody could do and [can] help people with if [you're] just slightly aware of the fact that they come from such a different background."

THANK YOU TO PAST DONORS

It's been a busy first quarter for our Development staff with many third party collections and donations. From warmth & comfort donations to those who provided financial support, we want to thank all of the local groups, businesses and organizations who participated in collection drives and made donations.

OKEMOS CHICK-FIL-A RIBBON CUTTING

On March 30, STVCC was the recipient of a donated book house and children's books at the Okemos Chick-Fil-A ribbon cutting. The book house now resides in the lobby of our Service Center to be used by the children in our child welfare, counseling and refugee resettlement programs.



LANSING COMMUNITY COLLEGE FLEECE BLANKET DONATION

Lansing Community College employees, students, and community members from the Catholic Community of St. Jude helped "Blanket The Neighborhood" by making and donating 97 fleece blankets. These blankets will be used by our refugee services, foster care and children's home programs.



UNIVERSITY UNITED METHODIST DONATION

University United Methodist Church (UUMC) – MSU donated \$3,815 from their 2016 Christmas offering to our Refugee Services program, in addition to several bags of household supplies and sets of twin bed sheets.

Pictured below is Bob Ulrich of UUMC, Refugee Services Director Judi Harris, and Refugee Services staff.





St. Vincent Catholic Charities

PROVIDING HELP. CREATING HOPE.

2800 W. Willow St. Lansing, MI 48917

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

TRANSFORMATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

A MESSAGE TO OUR FRIENDS

ONLINE

www.STVCC.org

Convenient

Safe and Secure

SHARE



When you

LIKE our

Fan Page

and share our posts,

you help us spread

the good news

about **STVCC**.

There are
approximately

13,000

**Michigan children
in foster care.**



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to help a child
in need.**

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