

# Pro-life community opens Howard County homes for unwed pregnant mothers

Pregnant, homeless and sleeping in her boyfriend's car after his mother evicted them, 18-year-old Raquel and her baby, due in January, faced a bleak and terrifying future a few months ago.

Thanks to the generosity of Howard County homebuilder Michael Pfau and his wife, Mary Therese, Raquel is one of the first three residents of Mary's Home in Maryland, a new Howard County refuge for unwed pregnant mothers and their children.

Trinity Homes, Pfau's company, built and donated two upscale four-bedroom suburban houses that are Mary's Home in Maryland, the couple's latest contribution during their long commitment to the pro-life cause.

Archbishop William E. Lori blessed the Howard County homes Oct. 11.

"We ask God's help to be with us in the beautiful work of affirming life," Archbishop Lori said before blessing each house, room-by-room, with holy water.

In a brief prayer service prior to the blessing, Monsignor Joseph L. Luca, pastor of St. Louis in Clarksville, where the Pfaus are parishioners, read from the Book of Deuteronomy: "I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the Lord, your God, obeying his voice, and holding fast to him."

Raquel and two other women, each expecting their first child, are the first residents of this haven. Their future is brighter because they can live here for up to two years - as long as they commit to and follow a program designed to prepare them for work and independent living. Pregnant women with children are also accepted.

The residents are expected to pursue education - newly arrived Raquel is hoping to

do online training – and to be employed or do volunteer service.

“Each mother must receive counseling, parenting, pursue daily living skills, and be willing to work towards independence and self-reliance,” according to the Mary’s Home website.

“They come in voluntarily,” Kimberley Roche, director of the new home, told the Review. “They have to be motivated to make changes and motivated to care for themselves and their pre-born child.

“We are registered as a group home and can take a woman with one or two small children. We have two master bedrooms that can accommodate a mom and a toddler.”

For the Pfaus, the opening of the homes is the culmination of years of pro-life work that began when, as parents of young children, they took into their home pregnant, homeless women, part of a 35-year commitment to the Columbia Pregnancy Center.

The Pfaus’ fourth child was two weeks old when a pregnant girl moved into their home, Mary Therese Pfau told the Review.

“The girls who came to us had a certain brokenness,” said Pfau, noting that often, “they got ditched by a guy and needed a place to come. They needed love. They were tough.”

She added, “They got to see healthy parenting – something different from what they grew up with.”

“Each girl brought a different gift to our family,” she said of the years-long commitment. “We always gave them ‘family’ jobs. One did the laundry.”

She recalled a girl who was told she could not watch soap operas. The girl then wanted to take the television into her room and was denied permission. The girl’s response: “This is the craziest family I have ever seen.”

Monsignor Luca said of the Pfaus’s work, “This is putting pro-life into action in a very proactive, effective and inspiring way.”