

Lazarus House Love Letter

Luke 16:19-31

WORKING TOGETHER TO OFFER HOPE AND A FUTURE

Summer 2007

Volume X

Issue 2



Message from the Executive Director

Ten Years of Blessings

Tuesday, May 8th was a red letter day in the history of Lazarus House because we broke ground on the addition to the Women and Children's Day Center. We opened the Center last October and it has been a wonderful daily blessing, providing a warm, nurturing home environment for our women and their children during the day and evening. The one hitch has been the crowded conditions. We knew the space was tight, but the location was so perfect we couldn't say "no". With the addition of two 12' x 17' four season sun rooms, one upstairs and one downstairs, we will alleviate the majority of the overcrowded conditions. How grateful we are to be able to offer this wonderful home to our 20 women and 19 children. Thank you to everyone whose generous support has made this possible.

It hasn't just been the expense of purchasing, renovating and adding onto this home, but it has also been the expense of operating and

staffing a second site 16 hours per day, 7 days per week that has hit our budget hard. Additionally, we have been struggling with helping our families cover day care expenses while they await the approval of a subsidy. Currently the cost of helping our



Please join us as we celebrate Ten Years of Blessings at our Open House Saturday, June 23, 2007 10 a.m.-2 p.m.



families with day care is topping \$750 each week. We are hopeful some of this money will be reimbursed with a retroactive subsidy, but there is no guarantee. Without day care, our parents cannot work. And without a job, our families have no hope of improving their future. If you would like to help us meet these increased expenses, please consider sending us a gift. A one time gift in any amount is most welcome (and tax deductible), as are

monthly gifts. In honor of our 10th anniversary, please consider a gift of \$10 monthly, weekly or daily.

On Saturday, June 23, we will celebrate our 10th anniversary with an open house from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. If you haven't had the opportunity to visit Lazarus House, or if you haven't visited in a while, please consider making time to stop by for a few minutes on June 23rd. We would be most pleased to give you a tour, including a look at our newly expanded Women and Children's Day Center.

God has blessed us beyond our wildest dreams these last 10 years, and we have complete confidence that He will continue to bless us as we move into these next 10 years as long as we continue to honor and serve Him and His people. Thank you, my friends, for standing with us in caring for our neighbors in need. May you too sense His presence in your home and may you too be blessed beyond your dreams.

Serving Him with you,

Darlene Marcussen



Upcoming Events

- **LAZARUS HOUSE 10 YEARS OF BLESSINGS OPEN HOUSE**
SATURDAY, JUNE 23
10 A.M.-2 P.M.
- **ELLEN'S EXCELLENT SALE**
FRIDAY, AUGUST 3
8 A.M.— 4 P.M.
SATURDAY, AUGUST 4
8 A.M.—1 P.M.
- **RUN FOR HOPE**
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22
- **TRI CITIES CROP WALK**
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21
1 :15 P.M.

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Celebrating



Years



Luke 16:19-31

CELEBRATING A MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY

A look at Ten Years of Blessings

Ten years ago, Darlene Marcusson was bearing witness to a great happening that a countless number of people were about to discover: God was at work in St. Charles. He was working through her to create a home for people in need, a ministry, as well as hope and a future. God was creating Lazarus House.

Ten years later, His work with us is still not finished; it continues to grow, to improve, to touch and transform lives.

On the next few pages (2-4), we'd like to share some recollections from a handful of people who have witnessed God's amazing work and grace in the creation and early life of Lazarus House. You will see that one thing rings true throughout: no matter where we traveled, placed the mattresses, or served the food, Lazarus House has always had a permanent home in God's hands.

Memories shared by Darlene Marcusson, founder and Executive Director of Lazarus House

Memories about early days:

Bananas and kiddie pools are some of my earliest memories. In the beginning we frequently ran out of things like milk and bananas, and it was common for me to stop at the store every couple of days to pick up a few needed items. Our resources were very limited, and I remember wondering what we were going to do when our collective resources and my personal ones were depleted. By God's grace, that has not yet happened.

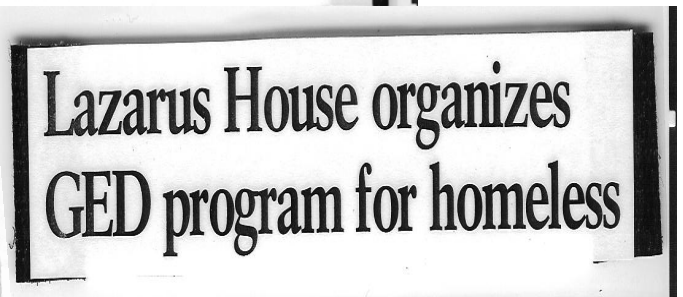
The kiddie pool was part of our earliest bathing experience. Since we moved from church to church our first year, and our host churches didn't have showers, we rigged one up using a length of hose we attached to a bathroom sink, a camping shower we bought at the army surplus store, and a kiddie pool with a hole strategically cut in the bottom that we placed over a bathroom floor drain. God bless those ministry partners who gave the homeless homeless shelter a home.

How has Lazarus House grown? Beyond my wildest dreams! God has done more in 10 years than I ever expected would happen-- ever!

What surprises or amazes most? I am no longer surprised but constantly amazed and humbled to see all the ways God shows up here every day.

How have you seen God at work? Daily in ways both large and small. God is our founder, director, provider, counselor, best friend and constant companion. From the milk and extra bratwurst that shows up just at the right minute to the larger gifts of our transitional living wing and women's center, God has continued to provide and care for us daily.

My wish for the future of LH: that this will continue to be God's house, and a blessing to all.



Memories shared by Pastor John Nelson, pastor of Hosanna! Lutheran Church

How long have you been a friend of Lazarus House?

Since the beginning. It was about 10 years ago that I had a front row seat at watching God work in Darlene Marcusson. You could see her heart bending and redirecting her service. She was active at Hesus House, but a new fire was burning within her. She was being directed to begin a ministry for those who were homeless in our community. The reason I had a front row seat was because Darlene served as secretary at Hosanna! Yes, it pulled her away from some of the administrative functions, but I believe you cannot argue with God as God will always win. God did win, and many others have won ever since.

How has Lazarus House grown? I believe God planted in Darlene His vision for care for those who are in need. First of all Darlene would never have had the perseverance to serve the way she has if not for that vision. I believe that there is more growth ahead. God is not done serving through Lazarus House to care for those in need in our community. The Bible passage that directs Darlene's heart, [Matthew 25:40](#) "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, **whatever** you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' has no limit to it. When there is a person of need, reach for them and care for them. As the resources become available, I am confident that Lazarus House will continue to expand both its reach and its services.

Memories shared by Derin Fowler, pastor of Free Methodist Church in St. Charles

How long have you been a friend of Lazarus House?

I have been a friend of Lazarus House ever since I first met Darlene Marcusson. I believe we first met sometime in the Fall of 1997, which was during my very first year as Senior Pastor in St. Charles. At our initial meeting, I was made aware of her desire to have a full time/year round homeless shelter. The rest, as they say, is history!

Memories about early days: Only one shower! Spending the nights in the hallway as an overnight volunteer. Remodeling with the wonderful Mr. McMahon. Seeing God meet the needs of Lazarus House in big and small ways. A beautiful new refrigerator!

A memory that stays with me: One night, early in its existence, as an overnight volunteer, I happened to meet a woman who had come in with her daughter. I recognized the little girl but couldn't remember where. I soon realized, that the little girl was in my daughter's class at school. It really hit me that night how glad I am for a place like LH where people can come who need a place to stay!

My wish for the future of LH: Lazarus House! You've been going strong for 10 years. Here's to another 10 years of wonderful ministry sharing in our community. Thank you for your wonderful example of Christ's love to us!

CELEBRATING A MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY: A look at Ten Years of Blessings

Memories shared by Liz Cloutier, Lazarus House Staff, One of our First Volunteers

What was your first role at Lazarus House? Overnight volunteer. I attended a meeting where Darlene was recruiting volunteers. Before I went for my first night, I wasn't sure what this would be like: "I am going off to sleep with a bunch of stranger's in a gymnasium. Do I really want to do this?"

Memories about early days

I remember the days of moving from church to church and not knowing what you would encounter when you arrived for the night. There was a lot of set-up work involved since nothing stayed at the site. When LH moved from St. Mark's to the Unitarian Universalist site in Geneva, I thought this would be wonderful and so cozy. Well, it was cozy alright! Everyone was on the floor in two small rooms. To reach the bathroom, you had to kind of walk through and over everyone.

How has Lazarus House grown? The first thing that comes to mind, of course, is the site. How great it is that there is one place where folks can come for help of all kinds. The change that seems the most meaningful to me is Lazarus House's ability to offer help with child care funding, transportation, rental subsidies, etc. If an individual is really ready to work their way out of a bad situation, all the help that is needed is available.

What surprises or amazes most? I am always amazed at how current guests make a new guest feel welcome. In almost all cases, people are sympathetic and helpful—answering questions about rules, bus schedules, bedding and bathrooms.

How have you seen God at work? Talk about amazing! God is at work continuously at Lazarus House. I can't tell you the number of times we have been almost out of milk and, behold, there is someone at the door with several gallons. One of our guests was saying that he didn't have a warm coat. The doorbell rang with a donation of several of them — one of which fit perfectly.

My wish for the future of LH: Peace, serenity, and ever-growing community support to continue its good work.



Memories shared by Steve & Lela Lowe, Volunteers

What was your first "role" at Lazarus House?

Steve was an overnight volunteer for St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Geneva. Lela got enthused when she was helping to organize the "Concerts for a Cause" series. Concerts for a Cause brought Christian artists to the Arcada Theater. It had the added bonus of bringing top named artists to the Fox Valley as well as letting the Fox Valley know about the ministry of Lazarus House.

What amazes you most about Lazarus House:

The guests are not just existing at a "homeless shelter" but they are being taught how to live and manage once they are able to leave Lazarus House.

How have you seen God at work? Not only in the love and care shown by the guests to each other but also the love and care shown by the staff and volunteers. It is very evident that God is part of the ministry of Lazarus House.



Luke 16:19-31

DECADE OF DREAMS: A DREAM COME TRUE

Thank you so much for helping make our annual fundraiser a SUCCESS! With your generosity, we were able to raise over \$65,000 of critical operating funds, enabling us to continue

reaching out to our neighbors in need. The first decade of partnering with you to provide services to this community has been filled with miracles. We hope you will remain on board as

we journey into the next decade of helping our guests realize their dreams! We are grateful for you!



Our thanks to Frank Christensen for sharing these photos.

DINNER/ AUCTION 2007 PHEASANT RUN





A fiscal year outlook: As numbers grow, our needs rise

Our current fiscal year hasn't ended yet, but already we've topped a major record. As of April 30 (10 months into the fiscal year) we have had 66 different children stay at Lazarus House. In the prior year we had 45 and that was a record.

At the moment of this writing, we have well over 15 children inside our doors and this seems to be the norm. We believe the increase in children is largely due to the opening last October of the Women and Children's Day Center. Moms and kids now have a place that feels and looks more like a home, complete with a small enclosed

outdoor play area.

As you might imagine, with more kids there are more costs. Daycare funding is a significant issue. (See Executive Director's mes-



“As you might imagine, with more kids there are more costs.”

sage, page 1.) We are spending more on education/enrichment programming for children and parenting classes. Additionally, we have experienced an increase in maintenance expenses to keep the facility safe.

As we look to the new fiscal year, we not only anticipate increased day-

care and operating expenses but we also know we will need to pay for medical costs. Despite the medical cards, \$4 prescriptions, free clinic visits and other benefits that we are able to secure for our guests, we still estimate about \$15,000 in medical expenses. The grants which we secured for medical expenses this year are running out and no new grants are in sight.

We ask you to help us financially, to whatever degree you can, so we can meet the diverse and ongoing needs of the less fortunate. If your employer offers matching gifts, please consider participating. We are a 401(c)(3) charitable organization and donations are tax-deductible.

Outreach Update: helping households in our community

Lazarus House continues moving forward with the third level of care for those most in need in our communities. Outreach services are in place to offer housing options for the future. These services are at times provided to those who live independently, but have recently faced a temporary economic crisis (the Homeless Prevention Grant from the Illinois Department of Human Services). We have also been fortunate to provide ongoing rent subsidy to households that had already been living in our communities, but have struggled with modest incomes like Social Security, the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) rent subsidy grant AND the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Samaritan Grant. In addition, we are blessed with the ability to subsidize those ready to

re-establish themselves in the community as they successfully leave shelter or transitional living (IHDA and HUD).

These past few months have seen our ability to deliver these services expand in exciting ways. **We have added Rick Almodovar to our outreach staff as a case manager.** He is a warm and caring person who also brings the gift of the Spanish language to our services. Additionally we have received notice that our HUD Samaritan Grant capacity will double in size (from serving our current level of three individuals, to serving six in the coming year). The IHDA grant has allowed us to subsidize 28 households since the start of the grant in early 2006. This began with subsidy only being offered in St. Charles. Early in 2007 this was expanded to include Geneva, and with the beginning of May, we are pleased to announce expansion now includes the Elburn / West Towns service area.

Lives are being changed with these offerings to the communities we serve, and we continue to be grateful to be a channel of their provision.

Upcoming Events

St. Charles Noon Kiwanis Club's Scramble Golf Outing

Monday, June 4

Whether you're a novice or veteran duffer, come and get your game on at this annual fundraiser that benefits many organizations in our area! The St. Charles Noon Kiwanis Club is looking for golfers, hole sponsors, auction and raffle items as well as volunteers for this special event, which will include an evening of Social Hour, Dinner, Raffle and Auction. For more information, or to make a donation, please call Denis Haggerty at (630) 209-0542

It's almost time for Ellen's Excellent Sale

It was a child's birthday money that helped launch Lazarus House and it is children's efforts that continue to keep the Lazarus House miracle alive.

Ellen Wildman, age 13, began a tradition when she was 10 years old that continues to make a real difference to Lazarus House. Ellen's Excellent Sale is no traditional garage and bake sale - it is an event for all ages that helps Lazarus House and our neighbors in need.

Ellen's Excellent Sale to benefit Lazarus House

Friday, August 3
8 a.m. - 4 p.m.
&

Saturday, August 4
8 a.m. - 1 p.m.



For information or to donate items, call Ellen or her mom, Amy at 208-7816

Get moving with Run for Hope

The Run for Hope 5K run and Family Fun Walk sponsored by Hosanna! Lutheran Church will take place on Saturday, September 22. Mark your calendars for a day of exciting racing and exercise for the whole family!

Registration for the race will begin in July. Check the Hosanna! Web site www.hosannachurch.com for details and entry forms.

All proceeds from the race benefit Lazarus House



Crop Walk to benefit Lazarus House

Get ready to put your best foot forward and join others in our community on a path to fight hunger during the 2007 Tri-Cities Crop Walk:

Sunday, October 21
Registration begins at 1:15 p.m.
Walk step-off starts at 2 p.m.
Batavia United Methodist Church

Last year, the Tri-Cities Crop Walk raised more than \$35,000, and provided 25% to local agencies including Lazarus House. For additional information please visit: www.tricityscropwalk.org or call Gail Simpson at 630-584-8492

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WWW.LazarusHouseOnline.com

We're working on some exciting changes to our web site, and hope you'll make it a point to visit us regularly for important updates and needs lists. Currently, our front page has been redesigned to include a new "HELP" section that will showcase our immediate needs. Please be sure to check in to see what our greatest needs for the day or week are. Thank you for helping our neighbors in need!



Please join us as we celebrate Ten Years of Blessings

Lazarus House
10th Anniversary Open House
Saturday, June 23, 2007
10 a.m.-2 p.m.
214 Walnut Street
St. Charles, IL

For more information, please call us at (630) 587-2144