



A refuge for unborn-newborn babies and little children who will die and those who love them

NEWSLETTER

Fall 2017

EDITORIAL

Dear Friends of Alexandra's House,

As the holiday season approaches, we want to thank you once again for all your support for families who have called upon us over the past year. We have had so many opportunities to serve and to bring hope and comfort into very tough situations.

In this newsletter, we will hear about Jill and Darrel Pulliam's distribution of 1000s of care packages to hospitals in the region. We will read a moving letter from Sara Morrille, mother of baby Joseph Charbel. We will also hear from Lizzie Borntrager, a member of the Amish community in Missouri, who found a place to rest and recover in Alexandra's House as she went through a challenging fourth pregnancy, but one, which, thankfully resulted in a healthy, bouncing baby boy.

All of these stories are just small snapshots of the many wonderful people that we have had the privilege of serving, and coming to know. Thank you for sharing yourselves and your lives and your children with us: may you all be richly blessed this holiday season.

H. M. Stroh on behalf of Patti Lewis.

Champ Wee Care Packages: The Backstory by Jill Pulliam

Jill and Darrel Pulliam have been creating and donating care packages for families of babies with life-limiting conditions for 10 years now. Here Jill tells their story.

Jill, how did it all begin?

This story begins 10 years ago when God gave my husband and me, Champ Samuel. Our first born son was born and went to heaven in 2007. As an ultrasound technologist, I was enlightened by the fact that many parents go into the hospital thinking that they are going to come home with a baby in their arms, when some may not. Some families, tragically, go into the hospital and come out with their arms empty.

How did you come to set up Champ Wee Care packages?

My background and my experience prompted me to get hold of Patti, from Alexandra's House, and talk to her about having special boxes at the labor and delivery wards for those very instances. Together we came up with a list of what these boxes would contain in order for the families to know that they were not alone and to show them that they were loved, even through this tragic event in their lives.

So what do you the boxes contain?

These boxes contain a handmade blanket to wrap these sweet babies in, a hand print kit, a camera, fuzzy socks for momma, lip gloss, hand lotion, a crossword puzzle, a journal, and special notes of love.

How did you organize the whole project?

Over these ten years, families from Alexandra's House and students from a few local Catholic schools, have been a part of many box making parties. The hospitals, throughout greater Kansas City, have used more than 100 boxes a year. We have received donations from many wonderful people and organizations. Most recently the gala, which is held for Alexandra's House, has brought in the funds to help support the Champ Wee Care packages.

How did this help you on your own healing journey?

This has been a blessing to myself and my family. We have found healing and peace to be able to have the opportunity to give back to others after the loss of Champ. This has touched many lives, from those involved in Alexandra's House to the families who receive the boxes, as well as the nurses who give the boxes out. I am thankful that God called me to serve in this way. After 10 wonderful years, I am grateful to pass this on to another mother who also lost her precious baby.

So what is next for your family, Jill?

My husband and I home-school our two children, age 9 and 6. We have recently sold our house, bought a travel trailer and are going to travel around this great country that God has blessed us with. We are looking forward to going to the national parks and just living for God on the road. I am truly grateful to God and to all the people that He has placed in our lives. My prayer is that God will continue to bless Alexandra's House with all the wonderful people who make the house great!

A Letter to My Baby in Heaven by Sara Moraille

Mom Sara writes a moving letter to her baby, Joseph Charbel Moraille. Sara and her husband, Jacques, came into contact with Alexandra's House earlier this year.

My Sweet Baby,

It was such joy to find out we were expecting! What a journey it's been. We shared news of you with the whole family in a gift bag on Christmas Eve. Then springtime, with all its new life, brought news of your death. Your heart stopped beating inside me. I had expected to deliver a full-term, healthy baby, but God gave me the courage to say hello and goodbye to you in the same sacred moments. We anointed you with blessed oil – your forehead and chest bear the cross of Christ. I begged Him in the hospital, full of bassinets and lovely baby photography, *"Lord, put blinders on my eyes... that I may see only the path I must walk down... not the path that I wanted to walk."*



With all the love and creativity I had expected to pour into years of birthdays, graduations, and celebrations, we planned your funeral Mass and burial. On the tiny walls of your cradle-coffin, we placed sacred art so you would be surrounded by holy beauty. We tucked you in with your little blanket from Grandma, lots of kisses, and much love. The day of your burial brought torrential rain. I did not know how I would ever place my dear, sweet baby in the cold, muddy earth. But, God, in His great mercy, gave us a pocket of sunshine and peace, along with the grace needed to let you go; then the rain softly returned. I chose your headstone

with the greatest care. It has a little lamb holding a cross, because I have absolute confidence that through Christ, the Lamb of God, I'll be with you again. Yes, love can transform cold, hard stone into a sweet, welcoming place for rest. Love can make death holy.

I expected some happy well-wishes from friends and family upon your healthy arrival. I did not expect the torrent of love, prayers, and support that would literally hold us up during the most difficult time of our lives... saying goodbye to you. The love the Lord showered upon us is beyond description. *Blessed are they who mourn. They will be comforted.*

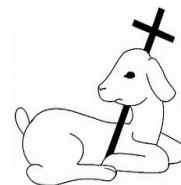
I expected to miss you and miss having a baby, but I did not expect the deepest sorrow of not knowing you. I did not expect to have an aching longing to know your soul. I expected to watch you grow, but I did not know that it would be through glimpses of joy in hearing how you touched someone in your very short time here. I expected Dad and I might need a date now and then to relieve the pressures of having a new baby. I did not expect that, instead of leaving you at home, our lovely date would take us to visit you in the cemetery where we would lie on a blanket beside you and watch the moon rise and stars begin to twinkle in the evening sky.

I know your short life will continue to produce the most amazing fruit, and that I'll catch glimpses of you in the years to come. I miss you greatly. My heart hurts deeply, but I am at peace, and I love you.

"Lord, put blinders on my eyes... that I may see only the path I must walk down... not the path that I wanted to walk." He has answered my prayer in beautiful, unexpected ways. I know you already know how amazing our God is, because you are there with Him now. I once expected that I would be here with you for a lifetime, welcoming you home again and again through the years. But, it is *you*, my dear, who now lovingly wait for me to come Home. I look forward to that day, my love, with the *greatest* expectation.

Love Always,

Mommy



An Oasis in the City by Lizzie Borntrager

For many of us city and suburban dwellers, the life of Yost and Lizzie Borntrager and their family seems idyllic. They are of the Amish community, and work a farm in Missouri. Their life as I had the privilege of seeing it several years ago is gentle and peaceful, in touch with Mother Nature. They have 500 laying hens (the eggs are delivered to Kansas City HyVee stores –those of you from the metro area might recognize the Stanberry Community Farm labels!). They have several pigs and around 40 head of sheep that lamb in the spring. Lizzie does all the sewing for her large family, as well as all the cooking and baking (cakes, cookies and bread!).

Their children are Rebecca 10, Sarah 8, Mary 6, William 4 and Jacob 22 months. The eldest three girls go the 2 miles to their school on a pony and cart. They got to know Patti and Alexandra's House, when health issues during Lizzie's fourth pregnancy necessitated a lengthy city-visit. Where could they turn in this unfamiliar place with all its noise and traffic? Lizzie wrote me a letter, telling their story. I leave her inimitable words intact.

Due to complications, I was told by local doctors I needed to be on bed-rest. The case was more than the local hospital could deal with so we got in contact with St Luke's in Kansas City, and we asked for a Ronald McDonald house or something

similar to stay in a week or so, as we would be 2 hours from home. Well, they tell us that R. McDonald house is full: oh my! What now? So we asked if there was any other place we could stay and the nurses looked at each other, not knowing what to say. I do not remember how we found Alexandra's House, but nobody else was occupying the upstairs at the time. Patti welcomed us so warmly and we were complete strangers!! But we



were not strangers long!

Here we were in the big city, away from our quiet farm life in the country, but we had all the privacy we needed. It was so great that Alexandra's

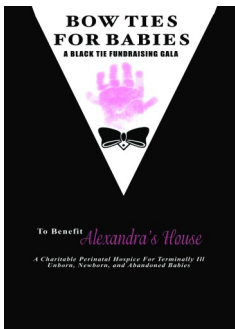
House has an upstairs porch where my husband spent quite a bit of time. A bathroom, shower, refrigerator, microwave, just everything made it very comfortable staying here. I remember quite well the fridge had some good stuff as they soon brought me a dish of mixed fruit, raspberries, pineapple chunks and watermelon and I don't know what all. But it sure was good!

Patti took care of us, and always wanted to make sure we had all to eat that we wanted. As we were not used to having a fridge, microwave etc., that made it especially 'fun' for my husband. He even made sure he got some cookie mix and baked some cookies to help pass time! My mother and mother-in-law each had a turn staying with us. And this was in the last part of August 2013 and the weather was oh so warm and humid, but you know with the air conditioning and fans, I couldn't wish for anything nicer!

On September 4th, we then had a healthy 6 lb.15 oz. son, William, at St Luke's hospital. Everything went well. We stopped by and saw Patti before heading home several days later. After staying there 2 weeks, it seemed like a second home to us. Our three daughters were happy to have their parents back and also a baby brother to cuddle. They had been staying with my sister and family most of this time, and yes, we also missed them.



Bow Ties for Babies



Our annual gala, Bowties for Babies, took place this year on 13 October at the Grand Street Café. It is always a wonderful occasion to support the work of Alexandra's House, to hear news of its updates, and, of course, to mingle among old friends and make new ones.

The committee writes:

Dear Patrons, Friends and Parents of Alexandra's House,

The 'Friends of Alexandra's House' wish to thank you once again, for your generosity and attendance at this year's event. It was an event blessed with joy in celebration of our babies as beautifully expressed by one of our speakers, Mr. Michael

Clement. It was also a salute to the immense work done in and by Alexandra's House and its devoted servants. Always an occasion with a very special atmosphere, this year in particular seemed to carry a palpable presence of 'agape' or super-love, which many people felt and commented on. It truly felt as if we were each other's family.

What an immense blessing.

On more pragmatic notes, we are pleased to announce that we have already raised \$44,000 in our preliminary count and are still awaiting future donations. We look forward to seeing all of you next year along with some new faces. May God's blessings be upon all of you.

The Friends of Alexandra's House.



Gala guests, Martha Hubbard, CoChair, Yve Rojas, our Auctioneer, and Joan Brisimitzakis, CoChair

The Volker & Courter Families gathered to honor Mallory & Julia Courter. Grandparents Peg & Ken Volker, Aunt Lyndy and Uncle Kris Volker, Parents Staci and Bob Courter and siblings, Merit & Grant Courter.





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