



NON PROFIT  
POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT 15  
HUNTINGTON, WV

**Do you pay West Virginia state taxes?** You can qualify for a tax credit with your donation to Golden Girl Group Home. Find out how to take advantage of the Neighborhood Investment Program today by calling Nikki Thomas 304.939-5726 or email [nthomas@gggh.org](mailto:nthomas@gggh.org).



*Don't miss out!*

GET YOUR  
TICKETS AND TABLE  
**TODAY!**

**Saturday, April 25 | 10am**  
**Guyan Golf & Country Club**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT NIKKI THOMAS 304.939.5726 | [NTTHOMAS@GGGH.ORG](mailto:NTTHOMAS@GGGH.ORG)

# GOLDEN GIRL GAZETTE - HERALD

*Golden Girl Group Home | Summer 2025*

## *A letter from our Executive Director, Renee Harrison*



It's the small notch at the top of her ear that breaks me. I'm on a Golden Girl camping trip when I hear a knock and my camper door opens. I'm shocked to see Vivian standing there, as she didn't come on the trip. Without greeting, I say, "It isn't true." Her eyes begin to fill, she nods, replying, "It's true." I grab her, hugging her tight as she whispers, "After five years, your baby girl's leaving the nest, Mama Nae." Emotions clog my throat, hearing the old nickname. When Viv first came to us I was a new grandmother. Rather than "grandma," I chose another moniker. In typical southern fashion, our twin grands picked their own version and I became "Nae Nae." Only Viv calls me Mama Nae, adding to the list of things I will miss.

We sit down close, holding hands. Almost 18, Viv has decided to move in with her new friend's family. They've been best friends for less than a month, but the mother invited Viv to join their large family. Over the years, she's declined other foster families' requests, choosing to stay at Golden Girl. She tells me that this is a perfect match, she's almost an adult, it's a real family and her new best friend is amazing. This isn't her first BFF. Viv changes best friends as often as I buy new shoes. Yet, her desire to be part of a "normal family" has never wavered. Isn't that what all teens want, to be normal, accepted, to fit in? No child chooses to become a foster one.

Her recently colored black hair falls in her face. I take a strand and place it behind her right ear, noticing for the first time, a small part missing at the top, like a notch. I'm surprised I've missed this, asking if she was born with it. As if reciting a trivial fact, she informs me that her Mom made the cut when she was a baby. I wonder how it happened. Was it an accident, a type of neglect or was she marking her like livestock? She manages her life so well, an honor student with a job, I sometimes forget her painful past.

Changing the subject, I chastise her about her current hair color, covering her natural red. I used to wonder if it was the same shade of my granddaughter's Judy's hair. A few years ago, I saw Viv and Judy (then 4) standing together, their backs to me, confirming their hair was indeed the exact vibrant shade of red. A bit darker than spun gold but lighter than a ruby stone and just as precious. Viv chuckles, hearing the familiar words.

Feeling a sharp pain in my chest, I wonder, have we done enough? Does she know how much we love her? Will she forget us? I ask her if she's told my husband, Robert, she's leaving, adding he'll be in his office. She answers, "I'll see Pop Pop tomorrow before I go to work." A zing to my heart at another nickname, coined by our grands. A montage of memories assault me-- Viv grinning at me wearing those same, worn out cowboy boots she insists match everything and all seasons. I picture Viv squealing with delight while tubing behind the boat, each laugh getting louder the bigger the bounce. Viv's daily complaints about any and everything now more habit than true complaint. Viv, defending another I love, against nasty rumors and false accusations, exclaiming, "It's all a damn lie", adding the swear word for emphasis, not caring about the dock in her allowance. We share cell phone numbers, just another step to her departure. My last words are rushed and jumbled repeating that I love her and she will always be a Golden Girl, a part of our crazy, dysfunctional family, and she can always come back and we will always be here for her. One more quick hug and she's gone.

In the silence, I know we've impacted her life, helped her overcome her past and loved her towards adulthood. I think of that little notch on her ear. How had I missed it? The dam bursts and with a quiet sob, I begin to cry. Awhile later, I've pulled myself together and glance at my phone. A new message pops up. ***I will keep in touch. I love you bunches, Mama Nae!*** She's going to be fine. We both are going to be just fine.



## Join the Golden Girl Staff: Now Hiring!

We'd like to ask you to take a moment and reflect on your teenage years – the ups and downs, emotions, awkward phases, navigating friends, family, school and wanting to be independent while still needing support. Now, think back to that time, and remember, who were the adults that made positive impacts on your life? Consider the ones who made it possible for you survive those challenging years, made you feel cared about, supported your dreams, helped you grow into the adult you are now, and hopefully gave you some good moments that turned into memories you cherish today. What if you were a teen in need of that adult, and had to navigate adolescence without that much needed support? Now, consider, what if you could be that caring, crucial adult that makes a positive impact in the life of another teenager?

Have you ever wondered if working with teenage girls could be the right fit for you? Golden Girl Group Home is pleased to announce that we have flexible positions available that will provide you with rewarding opportunities to make a positive impact, while allowing for a work-life balance.

We will provide in depth, in-person paid orientation training, give you the opportunity to shadow experienced workers on all shifts to help you see how you can make a difference and prepare you for your new role at Golden Girl. Once you join us in working directly with our girls, we offer a \$500 bonus after you have worked 500 hours and a \$1000 bonus after your 1000<sup>th</sup> hour! We offer paid time off, a variety of schedules to meet your needs, affordable medical, vision, dental and life insurance policies, generous retirement contributions, and educational assistance along with additional bonuses that increase in value throughout your time with us! In addition to these benefits, each shift has its own perks with meals and snacks provided and a variety of recreational opportunities, all free for our staff on shift!

Check out the flexible options we have for you:

- ♦ How would you like to get a full time work week, in just three and a half days, allowing for more free time in your personal life? On our weekend shift, you can get 40 hours in between Thursday at 2pm and Sunday at 2pm, leaving you with plenty of time off without the daily rush to relax and refresh, and do whatever you choose on your down time!
- ♦ Need most of your weekend off? On our weekday shift, you can get 40 hours of work time and still have Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday until 2pm free, giving you plenty of time off for friends, family and weekend travel!
- ♦ Do you prefer having your days and evenings more flexible? Consider working our midnight shift, where we ask that you stay awake throughout the night to provide supervision, ensuring our girls sleep feeling safe and secure, while you take care of some light cleaning responsibilities. Are you a college student looking for a job to work with your school schedule and allows for some extra study time on the clock? On this shift, you start the morning waking the girls up with breakfast and a smile, setting the tone for them to have their best day!
- ♦ Does your life not allow for full time employment but you still have some time to offer? Reach out to us with your availability to see if this might fit with our part time needs.
- ♦ If your work life is already full, and you are interested in finding a way to touch the heart of one of our girls, consider our volunteer and mentoring programs, giving you the opportunity to find the right level of investment for you!

***Our mission is to give hope to young girls in our care, by counseling, educating and mentoring them in a safe, nurturing environment.***

To join our mission, please complete an application on our website at gggh.org. Please call 304-453-1401 for any questions, in person applications and open interview times.

We look forward to finding where you can fit on our team!

*\*In order to best protect our girls, we ask that you be at least 22 years old, with a valid driver's license and willing to complete a background check to work at Golden Girl.*



## Congratulations Graduates



We are thrilled to congratulate all of the amazing young women in our care who graduated from high school this year! When our girls come to live with us, they are often facing significant academic challenges-many are at least two years behind in school. But with hard work, determination, and the unwavering support of our compassionate team, they've defied the odds. Each graduate's journey has been a powerful reminder of what can be achieved through love, patience and perseverance. Their success is a reflection of the resilience within them and the nurturing environment around them. We are so proud of all they've accomplished, and we can't wait to see the bright futures they are building. These young women are not only catching up-they're moving forward with confidence and purpose, pursuing the bold and beautiful visions they have for their lives.

Congratulations, graduates! Your story is just beginning.

To sponsor a girl on her journey please contact Nikki Thomas at 304-939-5726 or [nthomas@gggh.org](mailto:nthomas@gggh.org)

# Class Of 2025



**CHELSEI**

Graduated with high honors. Plans to move into Golden Heart Apartments and attend Cosmetology school. She as been working at Golden Treasures Boutique.



**ALEXIS**

Her plans are to move into Golden Heart Apartments and study Mortuary Science.



**SHI-ANNA**

Graduated with honors and dual credits for high school and college. Plans on doing something in the medical field.

## Hope for a Fresh Start: Help Us Equip Our Girls for School

It's hard to believe the school year is already here! For most children, it's an exciting time filled with fresh supplies, new clothes, and the thrill of learning. But for the girls who come to live with us at Golden Girl Group Home, the start of school can be overwhelming. Due to the trauma and instability they've experienced, many are at least two years behind in school. Thanks to the generous support of our friends at Northwestern Mutual, each girl is starting the year with a backpack filled with school supplies, but our work doesn't end there. **The need for supplies continues all year long**, especially as new girls arrive throughout the school year-often with nothing. You can help our girls catch up, heal and thrive.

Your donation of school supplies-whether a pack of pencils or a set of notebooks makes a real and lasting impact.

**Please consider donating** by visiting [gggh.org](http://gggh.org) or contacting Nikki Thomas directly at 304-939-5726.

