

Golden Girl Gazette - Herald

Golden Girl Group Home \ Winter 2025



A letter from our Executive Director, Renee Harrison

It had been a miserable day. It had started bad and just seemed to be getting worse. My lower back ached and I had a headache the size of Texas.

There was a six inch high stack of papers that needed my attention. My floor was littered with Golden Girl tee shirts from girls trying to find the right size. My office was a mess. Of course, so was my house and my van. At home I knew I had at least a dozen loads of laundry waiting for me...I sat in my office wallowing in self pity. I just wanted to escape from everyone and everything. I wanted to go home, hide in my bedroom, watch some mindless TV and take a long, hot bath.

I knew this wasn't possible as I was already running late for our annual thanksgiving Dinner. As I drove to the local church who had donated their fellowship hall for our use, I knew that I would need to act happy and grateful. I didn't feel happy. I knew that after the dinner we would sit in a circle and tell what thing we were thankful for in our lives. As I parked my decade old van the brakes squeaked and there was a terrible grinding sound. I'd be thankful for clean laundry and a van with brakes that don't squeak. I walked inside wondering if it was possible my head would crack for my headache. I fake my way through dinner while glancing at my watch every ten minutes. I wondered if just this one year I could sneak out early and not participate in expressing my gratitude to the residents and staff. The girls were already in their seats and I realized it was too late to make a graceful exit.

One of our older girls said she would start. She said she was grateful for Golden girl and name some of our staff members who had helped her. The next girl talked about how thankful she was for her independence and her boyfriend. Sitting beside her was Alecia, new employee who had live at Golden girl ten years earlier. Alecia said she was thankful for her children and then began to cry. She expressed her appreciation to everyone at Golden

Girl for giving her a home. She looked across the room at me and with twin rivers of tears on her face said, "I love you Momma."

From that moment on the entire atmosphere changed. Girl after girl expressed their love and appreciation for their families, each other and Golden Girl. Many of them told of past abuse and neglect. Most of them said that they were thankful for their difficult past as this had made them a stronger person. Some spoke of struggling with substance abuse and expressed gratitude for their sobriety. Some spoke of lost family and loved ones. All of them spoke of the love they now felt in their lives.

One fourteen year old said she was grateful we had given her boundaries. This sometimes demanding, always dramatic, no-stop talker told us that she was thankful we told her no when she needed it. She said, "I may not act like it at the time but I know when you set limits for me you are telling me you love me. I've been in dozens of foster homes but this is the best place I've been."

I sat there in awe of the courage these young ladies showed in telling of their past and expressing gratitude for a home and someone that loved them. As one beautiful young lady told of a horrendous past and how she survived, I realized that the girls had been talking for almost two hours. This young girl ended by saying, "All of the rapes and beating were worth it because it brought me here. As she said these words I was filled with humility.

I drove home in silence, rehearsing in my mind all that had been said, I was overwhelmed with gratitude. As I drove into the driveway of my messy house, with a dozen loads of laundry waiting, the brakes in my van squeaked. As my husband, and kids greeted me asking if I brought home any food, I knew I was truly happy. Then I realized it. My headache was gone.





Hats Off

A TRADITIONAL DERBY BRUNCH



Derby Brunch Success

Our eighth annual Derby Brunch was once again a sold-out success! Guests enjoyed an unforgettable morning filled with delicious food, lively fun, and festive Derby flair. Stylish hats and stunning spring outfits set the scene, turning the event into a beautiful celebration of fashion and generosity.

This year also marked the third anniversary of our beloved Silent Auction. Thanks to the hard work of our dedicated committee and the generous support of local businesses and individuals, the auction raised over \$7,000! These funds will directly benefit the recreational programs that enrich the lives of the girls in our care. From one-of-a-kind items to thoughtfully curated gift baskets, the auction was a highlight of the day.



We are incredibly grateful to all who donated and participated. Planning is already underway for next year's event. If you would like to contribute an item to the 2026 Derby Brunch Silent Auction, please contact Kim Keffer at 606-694-5567. Your support helps create meaningful opportunities and lasting memories for our girls.



Meet Mariah



Mariah is an incredible girl whose journey reminds us why we need Golden Girl. From a very young age, Mariah faced challenges that no child should ever endure. After being placed in foster care due to her biological parents' inability to provide a safe home, she was victimized by her foster parents. Despite these painful experiences Mariah's strength never faded. When Mariah came to live at Golden Girl she finally found what she had been missing—a safe, supportive and loving environment where she could begin to heal and grow. Surrounded by her “new Golden Girl family” who believed in her, Mariah began to rediscover her confidence and her dreams for a bright future. Today, we are so proud to share that Mariah is graduating from high school and now has her sight set on a career in Social Work. Inspired by the compassion and care she's received, Mariah hopes to dedicate her life helping others who are facing difficult circumstances—just as she once did. If you would like to support Mariah on her journey please contact Nikki Thomas 304-939-5726.

Making Christmas Bright at Golden Girl

When we think of Christmas, we think of family, love, and the joy of giving. For the girls living at Golden Girl, the holiday season can be especially hard. Many have experienced deep pain from abuse and neglect before coming to us for safety, healing and love. That's why our Christmas Angels are so important. These generous friends help make the season brighter by providing gifts for each girl. You can become a Christmas Angel by requesting a wish list and enjoying a special shopping experience with your family, friends, or co-workers—or by donating \$200 to let us take care of Santa's duties for you. Together, we can show these girls that they are loved and not forgotten. To make Christmas brighter for one of our girls please call 304-544-7400.





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