

THE BRIDGE

THE O'CONNOR HOUSE NEWSLETTER

"I was truly at rock bottom before I came here"

A Heartfelt Thank You from Jazlyna



Jazlyna was so cold living in her car last February that she thought she might die from hypothermia. She was pregnant and hadn't eaten in two days. She decided she HAD to find a shelter. Jaz called every shelter in Indianapolis she knew of but they were all full due to the extreme cold.

Thankfully, however, one of the shelters told her about The O'Connor House. She called and met with The O'Connor House Director and was thrilled to be accepted into the home.

When she arrived last February she was surprised it was a real home. *"I have lived in shelters before and they are very institutional like. The O'Connor House was so nice and so big! I have never lived in a house this nice before."* She also shared that she loves having her own room.

Things have changed dramatically for Jaz over the past 5 months since her arrival!

When Jaz was 2 years old, she began living with her grandparents because both of her parents were drug addicts. Her grandfather also struggled with drugs. So when her grandmother became very ill, Jaz began caring for her, as well as her younger brother. *"I'm a good cook because I started cooking when I was so young,"* she shared.

At 17, she decided it was time to move out and live on her own. Jaz worked as a janitor at a hospital and had a baby boy with her boyfriend. They stayed together a few years but when she became pregnant again, he beat her, and she ended up in the hospital as a patient. She was placed on bedrest due to her injuries. And it was after being discharged, that she began living in her car.

Jaz reflected on her time at The O'Connor House so far, *"I have learned to be on a schedule here. It is comforting to have a schedule and a plan to be productive. There is more peace having structure, which I never had before."*

In May, Jaz had a baby boy who she named Jadon.

She is currently taking classes at The Excel Center, and plans to complete high school. *"I would love to someday have a good job and to live in my own home. And have a golden retriever!"*

“Before I came here, I was truly at rock bottom... and it taught me to be grateful. I want to say thank you to the donors of The O’Connor House for giving us a place to call home, and access to so many resources. I’d also like to say thank you to all the volunteers who help out, especially the drivers.”

What is Theology of the Body?

by Kris Brussick, Co-Founder



Good Question! It really is another way to say, *“We are made in the image and likeness of God.”* Pope John Paul II delivered a series of talks between 1978 and 1984 in which he unfolds in great detail that the body is not only biological, it is also theological. It tells of a divine story! Our bodies make visible what is invisible, the spirit & the divine. He termed these talks *Theology of the Body (TOB.)*

One of JPII’s great insights is that God inscribed our vocation to love right in our bodies, by creating us male and female (Gen 2:24.) He explains that the way we understand and express our sexuality points to our deepest-held convictions about who we are, who God is, the meaning of love, the ordering of society and ultimately the mystery of the universe! He points us to God’s word and declares what Christ teaches that the meaning of life is found by loving as he loves (Jn. 15:12) and his mission is to restore the order of love in a world seriously disordered by sin.

What does this deep stuff have to do with the moms at TOCH? This past year, I have had the privilege to offer a bible study titled *“YOU, Life, Love and the Theology of the Body.”* This DVD series is specifically designed for teens and young adults and sets out to open the hearts and minds of students to the fact that God, who is love, created them out of love and calls them to love. No matter who you are or where you come from this study provides HOPE!

I have found this series to be a great way to connect with each woman about some deep truths such as:

- God designed us for union with him and others.
- Our bodies have been created by God and are good.
- The effects of original sin have love often confused with lust.

I have learned so much through this teaching and it is a joy to share it with others. My prayer for each woman who attends the TOB study is that she learns what a gift she is and that her inherent dignity lies not in what she does, but who she is, a child of God.

Jaz, a current resident, summed it up best when she said, *"I now have a different view of myself, and how I view my body and how I should be loved."* To that I say AMEN!

*PARTNER WITH US
DURING OUR 2019 SUMMER CAMPAIGN*

GIVE TO HELP THEM GROW!

*Give homeless women a safe environment
to grow and to thrive*

AND

*Give toddlers and babies the resources they need for
healthy development at a critical period in their lives!*

WILL YOU CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION?

[Click Here to Donate](#)

Angela Borden and Her Friends from Northview Church Create a Happy Mother's Day for Others

Angela Borden, a blogger for Northview Church, met with O'Connor House alumni mom Cassie a few months ago to hear her story of how The O'Connor House was a refuge to her in her time of crisis. Angela then wrote about The O'Connor House and about Cassie in her blog for Northview.

It was through this meeting that Angela got the idea she wanted to support some of the moms who had transitioned out of The O'Connor House and are currently living on their own, working hard to make ends meet. Angela reflected that someone had made a meal for her on Mother's Day in the past when she was a single mom, and it meant the world to her to receive such kindness. Angela decided to enlist the help of other women from her Church to take a meal, flowers and a special treat on Mother's Day to recent O'Connor House moms who are now living on their own.

Angela and her friends delivered SEVEN meals, flowers and treats all over the local area and the city of Indianapolis! They hope to make this an annual tradition.

Thank you to Angela and her friends for their loving deeds!



*Help from Mentor Cyndy Bailey,
Along with Perseverance from Mariah,
Leads to Success!*

"I was always the quiet one, and the responsible one," shared Mariah when recently reflecting about her life growing up. She lived on the Eastside of Indianapolis with her mom and 5 sisters ... *"and several brothers."*

Even though test taking was difficult for Mariah, she worked hard and graduated from Lawrence Central High School in 2016. Soon after, she got a job and moved into her own apartment.

"My mom was proud of me." she said.

One day while she was at work, her apartment caught on fire. A neighbor had left a space-heater on. All her things were ruined. She sadly recalls, *I lost everything."*

Along with being pregnant at the time, her life was becoming very difficult.

Her mom wanted Mariah to get her life back on a good path and told her about The O'Connor House. Mariah also wanted to change her path, so she contacted The O'Connor House and was thankful to be able to move in. She delivered her baby boy Terrance Jeremiah on Oct. 27, who is lovingly called TJ.

Mariah is currently employed at ManorCare Summer Trace in Carmel as a housekeeper. She's thankful to have a job and to be living with TJ at The O'Connor House and saving money for their future.

In the past, Mariah took the test to obtain her Driver's Learner Permit, but she failed several times. While at The O'Connor House she was able to enroll in a driver's training program. For two weeks, Mariah went to work and then to her driver's training class from 5-7:30p.m. **The classes, plus studying together with her Mentor Cyndy Bailey,**



helped her to finally pass the test to get her permit.

Cyndy shared, *"I am so proud of Mariah and her perseverance. She is working hard to get her license and to save money. I had tears in my eyes as we walked out of the BMV!"*

Mariah was thrilled when they told her at the License Branch that she passed! *"I was so happy to pass the test. I felt it was a big step forward for me. It was a big step towards getting my license."*

"My goals are to be a good mother to TJ, continue working, save money, get my license, and someday get a car." She added, "Being at The O'Connor House taught me about budgeting and saving money. This has been helpful! Someday I hope to work as a CNA in someone's home."

Mariah shared that she feels like her mom is proud of her again. *"Coming to The O'Connor House brought us back together. And TJ brings us together also. I'm very thankful to all the supporters for providing this home!"*

***Thank You
for Making a
Difference!***

**PLEASE
DONATE
HERE**

www.theoconnorhouse.org