

# Joe's Place

A community partnership

NEWS & NOTES

September 2006

## Joe's Place Quickly Becoming A Reality

Thanks to the tremendous response received from the residents of the Maplewood Richmond Heights School District and the entire St. Louis community, Joe's Place is getting closer and closer to opening its doors to four young men who need a stable place to call home.



Since Joe's Place news first appeared in local media, the response from the community has been nothing short of amazing. The calls from caring citizens and experts in various fields who have lent their knowledge and the additional media opportunities that have followed have shown that Joe's Place is an idea with a bright future.

"We are excited about Joe's Place as an investment in not only the students of MRH, but in the

entire community," said Sherry Montford, president of the MRH Board of Education. "We know that Joe's Place will be a good neighbor in a community that is growing and thriving and gives at-risk kids a chance to succeed."

**Thank you to everyone who has already volunteered or donated to Joe's Place! You are helping make this dream come true!**

**If you'd like more information about how you can help Joe's Place, call (314) 644-4400.**

## Joe's Place Names Honorary Grandmother

The Joe's Place project committee has unanimously voted Marion Gannon as the official "Honorary Grandmother" of Joe's Place.

Marion, who is a lifelong resident of Richmond Heights, says she is "thrilled and astonished" to receive the honor. She was chosen for her lifetime of volunteering in the MRH School District. A 1937 graduate of MRH High, Marion was very involved in the district while her six children attended MRH schools.

Having served as a PTA president, room mother, Girl Scout leader, mother's club member and more, Marion can not even begin to list everything she's been involved with. In addition, her husband served on the MRH Board of Education for eight years and was president of the board many of those years.

These days, Marion still stays very busy helping others. She volunteers every week day at St. Mary's Hospital helping however she's needed. As for Joe's Place, she thinks the project will be a success and is a great opportunity for the young men who will live there.



## Joe's Place Updates

Joe's Place was granted official 501(c)3 **nonprofit status**, making it a separate entity that will be governed by a board of directors. Joe's Place has opened a bank account and is now able to accept tax-deductible donations.

The **MRH Board of Education** officially closed on the purchase of the Joe's Place house on August 15. The district's Building Corporation will now lease the property back to the district.

On August 8, the **Maplewood City Council** unanimously approved the first two readings of the waiver that would allow the house parents and students to live in Joe's Place. The council will hear the third reading at their next meeting on Tuesday, September 12. If approved, Joe's Place will have the full go-ahead from the city.

Members of the Joe's Place project committee are currently interviewing **potential house parents** as well as candidates who will fill the Educational Support Counselor position that is being funded through a state of Missouri Safe Schools Grant. The counselor will support not only the young men of Joe's Place, but all students in MRH's alternative education programs.

Committee members are also meeting with **potential fund raisers** to discuss potentially embarking upon a capital campaign (with the goal of purchasing the house from the MRH Building Corporation) and a major gifts campaign (to help the day-to-day expenses of Joe's Place).

Joe's Place organizers hope to have the program open and **serving students by mid-fall.**

# Turning Joe's Place from a House into a Home

In her career as an interior designer, Teresa Lunte often sees old pieces of furniture that are still in good condition replaced for newer models. Now, she's found the perfect outlet for some of those unwanted items.

Since first being approached with the idea of furnishing Joe's Place, Teresa has taken off with the idea. Her first step was to walk through the house and create the perfect layout for Joe's Place furnishings. From there, she started contacting her clients and looking for the perfect pieces. Now, she's already moved the first pieces of furniture in.

Armed with a small budget and a few items that have been provided by the MRH School District, Teresa is relying on the pieces she discovers through her work to make Joe's Place a home. "My goal is to get all the furniture we need for Joe's Place donated," she said.

Teresa is using a number of methods to get the job done. She has personally contacted her current and former clients in search of all the right pieces. She has also contacted other organizations to see if they can pitch in to help in other ways.

"I'd love to do housewarming parties for Joe's Place in the house itself," she said. "Those parties could help provide all the day-to-day things every household needs, like brooms, trash cans and more."

Teresa envisions a bridal registry-like list that potential donors can access to see what the residents and house parents of Joe's Place still need. The parties could be hosted by church groups, scouting groups, PTOs or other community groups who would like to help out.

Such a list will one day be available on a Joe's Place dedicated web site, but in the mean time, interested donors can check [www.mrhhsd.org](http://www.mrhhsd.org) for a list of Joe's Place needs.

For any interested donor who does not have furnishings that can be donated, Teresa has come up with another plan, a gift card campaign. She'll be contacting people about donating cards to places such as Target, Wal-Mart and Lowe's so that the house parents can purchase the essentials that make a house run every day. Such donations could be made by anyone and will be tax deductible as al-

lowed by law.

Thanks to the enthusiasm of Teresa Lunte and her many clients and friends, it's clear that Joe's Place will have everything it needs to feel just like home.



*Teresa Lunte takes a short break from her planning inside Joe's Place.*

*For more information on how you can help get Joe's Place up and running, please visit the MRH web site or contact Teresa at (314) 645-4622 or (314) 644-5670. Once Joe's Place opens, Anne Arias will be coordinating giving. She can be contacted at (314) 645-2516 or [juan-anne-arias@sbcglobal.net](mailto:juan-anne-arias@sbcglobal.net).*

## Joe's Place Creates Media Buzz

The positive article that ran in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch in late June was just the first of many splashes Joe's Place has made in the local, national and even international news.

A follow-up article, written by a reporter from the Associated Press, was picked up by media outlets across the nation and was published on web sites for news organizations including CBS News, FOX News, Forbes, the Washington Post, the Houston Chronicle and many more. Those articles have prompted a number of calls and emails from people across the country who are excited about the idea of Joe's Place and are looking for a way to help. The same article was even published on at least one web site based in the United Kingdom.

Other stories about Joe's Place have appeared as feature articles on the web site Educationworld.com and in the most recent edition of the School Board News, published by the National School Boards Association.

Those behind the camera have also shown great interest, as Joe's Place stories ran in June on local stations KSDK Channel 5 and KPLR Channel 11. All four St. Louis-area television news stations have expressed interest in doing additional pieces about Joe's Place as have national outlets such as Good Morning America and the CBS Evening News.

This publicity has not only helped Joe's Place in our community, but may potentially help this idea spread to students in need across the nation.

## Joe's Place Project Committee

Anne Arias, community volunteer  
Mark Ausbrooks, MRH School District  
Vince Estrada, MRH School District  
\*Victor H. Farwell, private-practice therapist  
\*Steve Findley, MRH Board of Education  
\*Jim Ford, Presbyterian Children's Services  
Chris Fisher, Crossroads Presbyterian  
Karen Gender, Special School District / MRH  
\*Josh Hager, Crossroads Presbyterian  
David Harris, MRH School District  
Linda Henke, MRH School District  
\*Mark Livingston, community volunteer  
Teresa Lunte, community volunteer  
\*Vivian McBride, community volunteer  
\*Nelson Mitten, MRH Board of Education  
\*Brian Q. Newcomb, Christ Church UCC  
\*Joe Pieber, National City Bank  
\*Andrew Vander Maas, Crossroads Presbyterian

*\* indicates member of the Joe's Place Board of Directors*