



Shepherd's Watch

Spring 2021

Our Mission

In response to the call of Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, to help those in need, we connect children with families and keep families connected.

Good Shepherd's Maternity Shelter: Where New Lives Begin



The path that leads new mothers to the Good Shepherd maternity shelter is not usually an easy one; there are often years of traumatic events and struggle before they walk through our doors. But once they lay their heads down in their rooms, the mothers soon find out they've discovered a place of safety where they can heal, prepare for successful parenthood, and celebrate new life – both their baby's and their own.

These are the stories of Chavi and Kaylin, two women who bonded as they both gave birth during a pandemic and chose to work toward happy, healthy futures for themselves and their children with Good Shepherd's help.

Tell us about becoming a mom.

Chavi: My baby was born early and spent the first two months of her life in the NICU. She weighed less than 4 pounds and had a feeding tube. I was scared to even pick her up.

While we were in the hospital, my grandmother lost her house and I didn't know what my options would be. You can't take a baby home if you don't have a place go.



My aunt and I decided Good Shepherd was the best fit for me. They were there at a time when I was really scared and felt the whole weight of the world on my shoulders.

Kaylin: I didn't really care about taking care of myself before I had a baby and I hit rock bottom while I was pregnant. I'm not trying to be dramatic when I say that – I almost didn't make it. My baby saved my life. From the moment she was born, I knew I had something to live for. I had something to fight for.



What are some of the important things you've learned while being at Good Shepherd?

Chavi: I've calmed down since I became a mom and I have matured a lot. Being here has given me structure and stability that I didn't have before. My mom died when I was 12 and I basically raised myself. I didn't have anyone to guide me in the right direction and show me how to live a normal life. I've learned how to treat people and about time management, which I'm still working on.

I've learned that there are people here who actually care about our wellbeing. I felt that absence when I was in the hospital with my baby all alone.

Kaylin: I've learned that everything I do now affects my baby. I can't react the way I used to. I can't say certain things. She's going to be looking to me and her dad for everything. Every action has a consequence, and it has an impact on her life.

I've also learned about accountability. We're not in high school anymore. And I've learned about how doing things like chores is for the greater good. I try not to make excuses and I've learned to be open to feedback. That wasn't normal in my everyday life.

Kaylin and Chavi have filled the hallways of the shelter at Good Shepherd with original artwork. Visit the blog on our website to see more and to read their full interviews.



Octopus, mixed media, created by Chavi in 2021

Tell us about your little ones.

Chavi: My baby is really chill. I was told she would be a little slower developmentally because she was born early, but I've been able to spend all my time with her and she's caught up. She has an attitude sometimes... she's opinionated! She's started copying me and mimicking me.

Kaylin: She was 6 lb 10 oz when she was born and she was perfect. She had problems with her hearing at first and we found out she had fluid in her ears. That's been taken care of now. She's had personality since day one and had all the nurses fascinated. I love my little baby.

What is something you'd want other new moms to know?

Chavi: I would want a young mother to know that she is strong enough to do it by herself if she has to. A baby needs its mom, and you're their total life support. You carry them for nine months and you're the most important part of their life.

Kaylin: Good Shepherd is so much more than just a shelter. Once you're here, they'll have your back. They're helping me find my own housing, helping with my job search and how to get childcare. They helped me get my original birth certificate, health insurance for my baby, prescription glasses, and a dentist appointment.



Scan this QR code to visit the Safe Keepers Giving Club page on the Good Shepherd website, where your gift can help us provide the basics while keeping moms and babies safe.

[Goodshepherdstl.org/get-involved/safe-keepers/](https://goodshepherdstl.org/get-involved/safe-keepers/)



"I know what I want now... To be financially and mentally stable, to heal so I don't project anything on my baby. I've learned happiness has to come from within. You have to take time to find it and to find yourself."

- Kaylin, new mom who's working with Good Shepherd to create a positive future