



Part of the
Catholic Charities of St. Louis Family

Shepherd's Watch

Fall 2022



Good Shepherd Maternity Shelter: A Safe Haven for Pregnant Mothers

Alyssa* is 19 years old and mothering her toddler daughter while expecting a son by the end of the year. She has experienced a lot in her life – especially during the last two years – and needed a place where she could feel safe and heal. She’s found comfort at Good Shepherd and is working hard to build a positive future for herself and her children. This is her story.

Can you tell us about your path to Good Shepherd?

I met my babies’ father in 2020 and he became my best friend. I had been the victim of a sexual assault earlier that year and felt very vulnerable, so I closed myself off. He was there to hold me, to comfort me, even to laugh with me. I like the man he is.

He and I wanted to have a baby, but I was young and I wanted to be close to my mother while I was pregnant. I wanted to learn all she had to teach me, and we would have coffee, have dinner, and talk.

Once my daughter was born and just a few months old, I was accused of crimes I didn’t commit. I was jailed, and she was placed in foster care with a nice family. I had to fight the state to get her back, which I did earlier this year. The state apologized when all charges were dropped, but that doesn’t make up for the precious time I lost with her.



After her father and I got through those tough times together, we decided we wanted more children because we didn’t want our daughter to ever feel alone. We started trying again and found out earlier this year that we would have a little boy. During this time, he has been injured by gun violence while playing basketball, we lost our car during the floods, and both of us needed to move out of the places we were living.

**Identifying details have been changed to preserve client privacy*

What were your options at that time?

I've had some tough times with my family, and I didn't have anyone to turn to. I still really don't but am learning to be ok with that. I was scared, but I try to be the backbone of our little family. We could have been sleeping outside, spending our days walking around in the heat.

What was it like coming to Good Shepherd?

I couldn't really smile when I got here. I had gone into a deep depression when I lost my daughter. I always wanted to keep her safe, and I felt like I hadn't been able to.

I didn't have my daughter's birth certificate, didn't have a social security card for me, didn't have a driver's license. They've helped me with everything. I can honestly say there are a whole lot of things that are good now.

I've learned to be at peace with myself while I've been here. A lot of the people who work here have been in situations in their lives and they've shown me that if they can get through it, I can too. I think the mentoring and the mental health services are what's helped me the most, in addition to having somewhere to stay and just get my feet under me.

How has your life changed?

I see all the things my daughter knows – she's so smart – and I know I taught her a lot of it. She's in school now and learning. I've been able to feel good, take care of myself, take care of my mental health, make sure my daughter is healthy.



"I want my children to know I overcame all these things. I'm doing it for my daughter, my son, and for our little family."

I'm looking for a place of our own and working my behind off to get us there. I've rehabilitated myself. I've chosen to be the woman and mother my family needs.

What are your plans for the future?

I was a straight A student and graduated early from high school. I've wanted to be a nurse since I was in kindergarten. I'm going to college and I want to work in a mental health facility. I'm a young mom, but I don't feel like it. I'm ready to begin my life. I want to be a role model for my children. I want to be able to get them the things they need. I want my children to know I overcame all these things. I'm doing it for my daughter, my son, and for our little family.

The Good Shepherd 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.*



Save the Date October 27 & 28 for Good Shepherd's #Safe4ANight virtual campaign: Will you consider supporting Alyssa and many other moms and children in our Maternity Shelter? Scan the QR code to make a #Safe4ANight lasting donation. Thank you for being a critical part of our mission.

Adoption | Foster Care | Treatment Foster Care | Pregnancy & Parenting Support | Maternity Shelter

