



Shepherd's WATCH

GOOD SHEPHERD CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

FALL 2026

A Safe Place for Every Child, Every Night

As we welcome fall, I am grateful for the continued collaboration that defines our work as the Children and Family Service Line of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of St. Louis. Together, Good Shepherd Children & Family Services and Marygrove continue to strengthen our programs and expand support for children, youth, and families.

At the heart of our work is a shared commitment: every child deserves a safe place for every night.

Through our collaborative approach, we are connecting youth who have experienced trauma, foster care, or homelessness with specialized therapeutic and psychiatric support. We are also working together to create safe, welcoming, and homelike environments for young people who might otherwise have nowhere to go. Places where they can feel supported, valued, and safe.

Good Shepherd's Safe4ANight campaign captures this mission so well: ensuring that every child has a safe place to call home, every night.

This fall's newsletter highlights two powerful examples of this commitment: our maternity shelter, providing safety and stability for mothers and babies, and our foster parents, who open their hearts and homes to children in need.

Different programs, one shared purpose: creating a safe place where every child can be cared for, valued, and given the opportunity to thrive.

I am grateful to the dedicated coworkers, foster parents, volunteers, donors, and community partners who make this work possible. Together, we are helping make a safe place for every child, every night a reality.



With gratitude,

Kathy Fowler,
Executive Director



One Safe Night Can Change Everything

When Caitlyn* arrived at the Maternity Shelter of Catholic Charities ministry Good Shepherd Children & Family Services, she was 15, pregnant, and had just entered state custody. She felt alone, unseen, and unsure whom she could trust. But from her first day, something began to change.

"We poured so much positivity into her, so much attention," said Theresa Brown, Good Shepherd's Maternity Shelter Manager. "I think that was all she needed. She needed someone to show her that they really cared."

Now 16 and the mother of a baby boy, Caitlyn is flourishing. Once unmotivated in school, she now earns As and Bs. She has grown more confident, learned to advocate for herself, and become a loving, responsible mother. She has earned the trust to spend time away from the shelter and recently received her own cell phone, a significant milestone in her journey toward independence.

She's also connecting with extended family members who she didn't know well but could become an important support system for both Caitlyn and her son.

Caitlyn is one of the young women Good Shepherd serves through its Maternity Shelter, which provides pregnant and parenting teens facing homelessness with much more than a place to sleep. Young mothers receive parenting and life-skills education, healthcare connections, counseling, educational, spiritual, and employment support and, perhaps most importantly, stability.

This is what #Safe4ANight makes possible. (See story on page 2.)

"A lot of our young ladies are living day to day just to survive," Theresa said. "Sometimes all it takes is just one night for them to say, 'Maybe I can be safe for another night. Maybe I can make my child safe.'"

And for Caitlyn, one safe night did become another, and ultimately, the opportunity to begin a new life.

**Name changed to protect privacy.*

MEET Taylor Cook, Donor Engagement Manager



Taylor Cook brings nearly a decade of nonprofit experience to Good Shepherd and Marygrove, spanning direct service, leadership, board participation, and development. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from Missouri State University and a master's degree in public policy administration from the University of Missouri–St. Louis.

"My goal is to ensure every donor sees the real impact they're making and every individual we serve knows they have a community behind them."

Having worked as both a shelter advocate and foster care case manager, Taylor believes the strongest agencies are those where programs and administration work hand in hand to create lasting impact. Her experience as both a shelter advocate and foster care case manager gives her a unique perspective, helping ensure every partnership stays grounded in the realities of the populations our ministries serve.

Born and raised in St. Louis' Dogtown neighborhood, Taylor feels deeply connected to the communities served by Good Shepherd and Marygrove. "The best fundraising happens when we lift up the people behind the mission," she says. "My goal is to ensure every donor sees the real impact they're making and every individual we serve knows they have a community behind them."

Outside of work, Taylor enjoys traveling, exploring nature, practicing yoga and settling in with a TV series that's too good to stop. She's working toward becoming a registered yoga instructor and has a goal of visiting every U.S. National Park. Whether building relationships or planning her next adventure, Taylor values connection, curiosity and finding joy in the everyday.

Help Vulnerable Women and Children be #Safe4ANight

For 24 hours this October, friends of Catholic Charities ministry Good Shepherd Children & Family Services will come together with one goal: helping young mothers and their babies find safety, stability, and hope.

#Safe4ANight returns from 2 p.m. Wednesday, October 21, through 2 p.m. Thursday, October 22, with a goal of raising \$250,000 to support Good Shepherd's Maternity Shelter.

But #Safe4ANight is more than a day of giving. Supporters form teams and rally their friends, families, coworkers, and other networks to join the cause. With a ready-made social media toolkit, teams can spread the word, inspire others to give, and engage in some friendly competition along the way.

And this year, every gift can go even further. Thanks to generous benefactors, donations will receive a 4:1 match. Eligible donations of \$1,000 or more may also qualify for tax credits.

Funds raised help provide shelter, meals, round-the-clock care, and other support to young mothers and their children as they work toward greater stability and independence.

Last year, the Good Shepherd community surpassed its \$235,000 goal. This October, we're ready to do it again and help even more moms and babies stay **#Safe4ANight**.



Maximize YOUR Impact with a Missouri Tax Credit

Did you know your support for Catholic Charities ministry Good Shepherd Children & Family Services can also benefit you at tax time? Financial gifts of \$1,000 or more may be eligible for a 70% Missouri State Tax Credit, which is a direct, dollar-for-dollar reduction of the state income tax you owe. Combined with federal and state charitable deductions, your net out-of-pocket cost can be significantly reduced, sometimes to less than 20% of your original gift. Your generosity will continue to directly impact mothers, children and families across the Archdiocese and it can lower your tax burden as well.

For more information, please contact Courtney Noto, Senior Director of Philanthropy, at cnoto@gssstl.org.

Eligible donations of
\$1,000+ may get a 70%
MO State Tax Credit

SCAN TO DONATE



HOPE BEGINS with ONE "YES"

For Chasity, foster care didn't begin with a plan. It was more like a nudge. Years ago, she and her husband, Scott, briefly explored fostering, but when their home didn't meet requirements, the process stopped. The calling, however, didn't.

"I remember saying, 'God, if you want us to do this, you're going to have to send the kids to us.'" Ten days later, a child they knew needed a place to stay. Soon, his younger sister joined them. What began as something temporary opened the door to a life they never planned but came to embrace.

Today, their Sullivan, Mo., home is full of ten biological, foster, and adopted children.

"We work together as a team," Chasity said. "We love each other, and we take care of each other." That sense of belonging can be transformative for children who have experienced instability and trauma.

One young man came to their home after years of moving between foster homes and residential facilities, rarely staying anywhere longer than a few months. Initially, he seemed to fit right in. But as time passed, deeper challenges emerged. "He had experienced a lot of trauma," Chasity said. "You have to think through how you respond, how you talk to them. It's different."

There were difficult moments and crises that tested the family. But through Good Shepherd's Treatment Foster Care program, Chasity had a specialist alongside her. "She was my biggest supporter," she said. "She would listen, help me understand what was really going on, and walk me through what to do next."

That support helped Chasity look beneath behaviors to understand the needs behind them.

Eventually, safety concerns meant the young man could no longer remain in their home. At first, Chasity wondered if they had failed. Then she considered what had happened during his time with them. "He had never stayed anywhere longer than four months," she said. "He stayed with us almost two years."

During those two years, he built relationships, stayed in school, and held a job for more than a year. Today, he is living independently in his own apartment. "You don't always see it right away," Chasity said. "But you're planting seeds."

Foster care has reshaped Chasity's life, too. She left outside employment to focus on her family and returned to school to learn more about trauma and mental health. "This whole journey has been a God story," she said. "We didn't plan it. We just tried to be faithful."

For children who need stability, patience, and belonging, hope doesn't require a perfect family. Sometimes, it begins with a willing one – and one simple "yes."



GOOD SHEPHERD BOARD SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Anthony Guarino



Dr. Anthony Guarino is an interventional pain management physician who has served patients

across the St. Louis region for more than 25 years. His career has focused on helping people regain function and improve their quality of life through minimally invasive spine and joint procedures. He also served as Director of Pain Management at several hospitals and retired from Washington University after more than 21 years as an Associate Professor.

Dr. Guarino continues to consult on medical-legal cases and teach principles of responsible, evidence-based care. He and his wife, an advanced practice nurse, share a longstanding commitment to faith, service, and helping others.

He was drawn to Catholic Charities ministry Good Shepherd because its mission reflects values that have guided his own life: compassion, accountability, and excellence in bringing hope and support to mothers, children, and families in need.

Do you have a home where hope can grow?

Treatment Foster Care homes provide children with serious emotional issues a family setting and support conducive to healthy growth and development. If you are interested in becoming a foster parent, know someone who might be, or have questions, reach out to Deva Blackman, Director of Resource Development, at dblackman@gssstl.org.

"...it is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones be lost." – Matthew 18:14

#Safe4ANight Join Us!

2 p.m. Wednesday, October 21, through 2 p.m. Thursday, October 22, 2026

Collect-to-Connect CHRISTMAS DRIVE

Now through December 24

Make Christmas brighter for those served through Good Shepherd. Four ways to give:

- 1 Make a financial gift
- 2 Donate gift cards
- 3 Fulfill a client or family Christmas wish list
- 4 Host a collection drive at work, school, your church or organization.



Ready to help? Contact Erika Rodgers at erodgers@gsstl.org.

MISSION

To bring the healing, help, and hope of Jesus Christ to those in need with a compassionate, caring presence.

VISION

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of St. Louis will be a premier leader in community renewal and a visible catalyst for social outreach by connecting with people, parishes, and ministries committed to a meaningful communion of care to those in need across every square mile of the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

GOOD SHEPHERD PURPOSE STATEMENT

Connecting children with families and keeping families connected by providing pregnancy and parenting support, foster care programs, and adoption services.

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- Maximize YOUR Impact with a Missouri Tax Credit
- Hope Begins With One "Yes"
- Board Spotlight: Dr. Anthony Guarino

What's Inside



1340 Partridge Avenue • St. Louis, MO 63130

A MINISTRY OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES

CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

GOOD SHEPHERD

