



St. Mary's
Services

ANNUAL REPORT FY 18-19

A YEAR OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS



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stmaryservices.com



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Palatine



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Who We Are



Mission

St. Mary's Services builds stable families that result in stronger communities. We open our hearts and arms to everyone, treating all with the dignity and respect they deserve. We ensure the well-being of children by providing holistic support for the adoption journey both pre- and post-placement; delivering teen parenting programs; and offering counseling services for any parent experiencing an unplanned pregnancy, postpartum depression, grief over the loss of a pregnancy, and/or difficulty in adjustment to parenthood.

Vision

Every Child Deserves a Good Home.



Joanne Bratta | Executive Director

It is my distinct pleasure to introduce you to the world of St. Mary's. St. Mary's was founded in 1887 by the Episcopal Sisters of St. Mary, where they assessed the community for its needs and based services on their findings. We have had many transitions in service, but all of them surrounded the help that both women and children have proved to be essential to their well-being. Since the 1950's, St. Mary's concerned itself with Adoptions which we carry on to this day with grace, experience, and compassion.

We are following in the footsteps of the Episcopal nuns in meeting the needs of the communities that we serve. We are a child welfare agency and take pride in all of the aspects of our work. We follow the philosophy of relationship building in all that we undertake. We build and foster relationships through all of our counseling and educational programs, which include; adoption, options, prenatal/postpartum anxiety, depression, pregnancy related grief and loss, adjustment to motherhood, and teen parenting. Women and teens who start working with us are all afraid of the unknown. Our Hopeful Beginnings programs, offer a way to communicate that there is light at the end of the tunnel, that they can begin their lives again with hope and change. We try and provide a meaningful relationship with each client that we touch. When the woman heals with our counseling and/or education, their lives become joyful again. Their children feel this change in mood and attitude of their mother, the birth mothers find hope in seeing their biological child through our open adoption, and the grief and loss is replaced by acceptance and memorializing the lost child. The teen parenting program has the teen mom finish her high school education, while learning how to be the best mother she can be! There will be "hopeful beginnings" even during the darkest hours for our clients. All of our services for women are free of charge, no questions asked. Many of our clients do not have health insurance and if they do, counseling may or may not be covered. By offering our services free of charge, it ensures us that the healing can begin as soon as possible without a wait time. This is our calling and our reason for being.

We thank our communities, our partner agencies, our donors, our participants in our events, our incredible staff, and you! Together we can change the life of a child, one at a time! Please feel free to call us if you know anyone that needs us!

Sincerely,

Joanne Bratta

Executive Director

What We Do

Maternity Counseling Program

St. Mary's Services' professional counselors serve many women, whether they are facing an unplanned pregnancy, looking for options counseling, experiencing prenatal anxiety/depression, postpartum anxiety/depression, having trouble adjusting to motherhood, or dealing with a pregnancy related loss, we are there for them. With professional counseling, women are able to navigate their journey of darkness to one of light and hope, which positively impacts their children's lives. We remain a support system for many years to many of our clients.



A Brighter Future

Hala's* Story



We received a call from a young woman, originally from Jordan, named Hala. She was referred to us for needed support by one of the social workers from one of our community partners. Hala came in looking forlorn and downtrodden as she had just delivered a baby 2 weeks prior and was having trouble connecting with him. She was a single mother, all alone in the world. She had no one in the area that she could call a friend nor any supportive network. Hala opened up that she was raised in an orphanage in Jordan, where she experienced physical and mental abuse on a daily basis, along with other trauma. She came to the United States to look for something more and met a man who took advantage of her. Shortly after meeting him, she became pregnant and he started to mistreat her. She decided to leave the relationship as she didn't want her child to grow up in a turbulent environment. She considered returning to Jordan, but because she was a single mom, she knew that she and her child would be persecuted due to her marital status. She had anxiety all throughout her pregnancy and after delivering her son as she never had any role model in becoming a mother. Hala began working with our social worker, Allyson, week after week, never missing a session. Weather or other circumstances never interfered with her time here at our office. In the beginning, she looked so sad, she was almost invisible waiting for her session to begin. Her growing child even looked sad in his little car seat. It was clear to Allyson that Hala had postpartum depression, anxiety, and trauma from her past. She connected Hala with other agencies that would address the domestic violence and other painful memories that she had in her heart.

Allyson treated her postpartum depression and anxiety through our free counseling sessions and Hala felt herself slowly improving. Our entire staff embraced her as a treasured guest in our home, as we do all of our clients. One day, Hala was at the door with her growing son carrying a birthday cake. She asked to share this important day, her son's 1st birthday, with the women of St. Mary's that she called, "her family." I asked everyone to drop what they were doing and come into the conference room to celebrate this little boy's life as well as her journey of healing. Her son smiled and laughed as Hala kissed him over and over and the group sung to him. We all had tears coming down our faces. The only one that didn't cry was little Yosef. He was clapping and laughing and enjoying his birthday with his mom and his new family, the staff at St. Mary's.*

What We Do

St. Mary's Services' Adoption Program

St. Mary's Services' Adoption Program has served couples and singles for many years, assisting them in creating families through adoption. To these candidates, we offer counseling, support, education, home visits, workshops, ongoing communication with birth parents, and post-placement support. If any of our adoptive family candidate's welcome a child 1-3 years of age into their homes, even greater support, care, and instruction is given in order that the adoptive family provides a nurturing, healthy environment for the child. The overarching goal is to provide good homes for the children in all situations.



Five families welcomed children into their loving homes in the 2018-2019 fiscal year.



Because She Was Loved...

Michael & Blake's Adoption Story



Blake and I were both so sure that we wanted to have a family that we talked about it on our first date. We both grew up in close families with many siblings, and family-life was something we valued. Being a same-sex couple, adoption was always an option for us, but we knew little about adoption and the process. When we moved to the Chicago area four years ago, we decided that we wanted to be foster parents and were licensed with DCFS. Our second foster placement was a baby girl, and while we were so happy to have her in our lives, working in the foster system was stressful, slow, and unpredictable. We knew we wanted to have more than one child, so we started talking about private adoption as the best path for our second child. This is when we discovered St. Mary's.

We'll both admit that our discovery of St. Mary's was due to geography. We live in Arlington Heights and the former office was not far from our home. When we first met with Allyson Stefani, our caseworker, we were amazed at how helpful, kind, and compassionate she was about our situation and goals. We were unsure of whether or not we would ever be able to adopt our foster daughter, and Allyson heard our story and answered our questions. After our first meeting with Allyson, Blake and I talked, and I remember how quickly we both agreed that St. Mary's was the right fit for us and that we were excited to work with such a wonderful agency.

Our experience with St. Mary's was positive, uplifting, and quite honestly wonderful from that moment forward. We met Joanne, Jennifer, and others on staff that were so helpful and supportive. We attended seminars and educational sessions and found each one of them to be filled with important information and made connections with other parents on the journey. We cannot say enough about how professional, compassionate, and helpful the staff and the whole organization is.

We found out that we had been chosen by a birth mother, Elly, in April of 2019. Just one day later, we met her and our new daughter Lucia, who had been born a week earlier. It all happened so fast that we hardly had time to process. The selfless and loving decision that Elly made and the joy that we experienced in bringing her home will always be with us.*

Lucia is a happy and healthy baby girl, now almost eleven months old. She loves her big sister and playing with toys, and is a calm, happy, and laid back baby. She smiles often and is crawling all around the house in the happiest state. We feel so fortunate that Elly chose us, and we love this little girl with all of our hearts.

We have recommended St. Mary's to others thinking about adoption because our experience was so positive, both in the process and in the adoption itself. The St. Mary's staff has continued to check in with us about our foster daughter and her process, and we're happy to announce that her adoption has been approved by DCFS and as I write this we prepare to go to court to have her adoption finalized tomorrow!

Adoption is a journey that has ups and downs and twists and turns like any journey, and we are thankful that we found St. Mary's to guide us along the way. We will always support this wonderful organization and recommend it to those interested in adoption and helping others. Thank you, St. Mary's!

*Name has been changed to protect the privacy of individual

What We Do

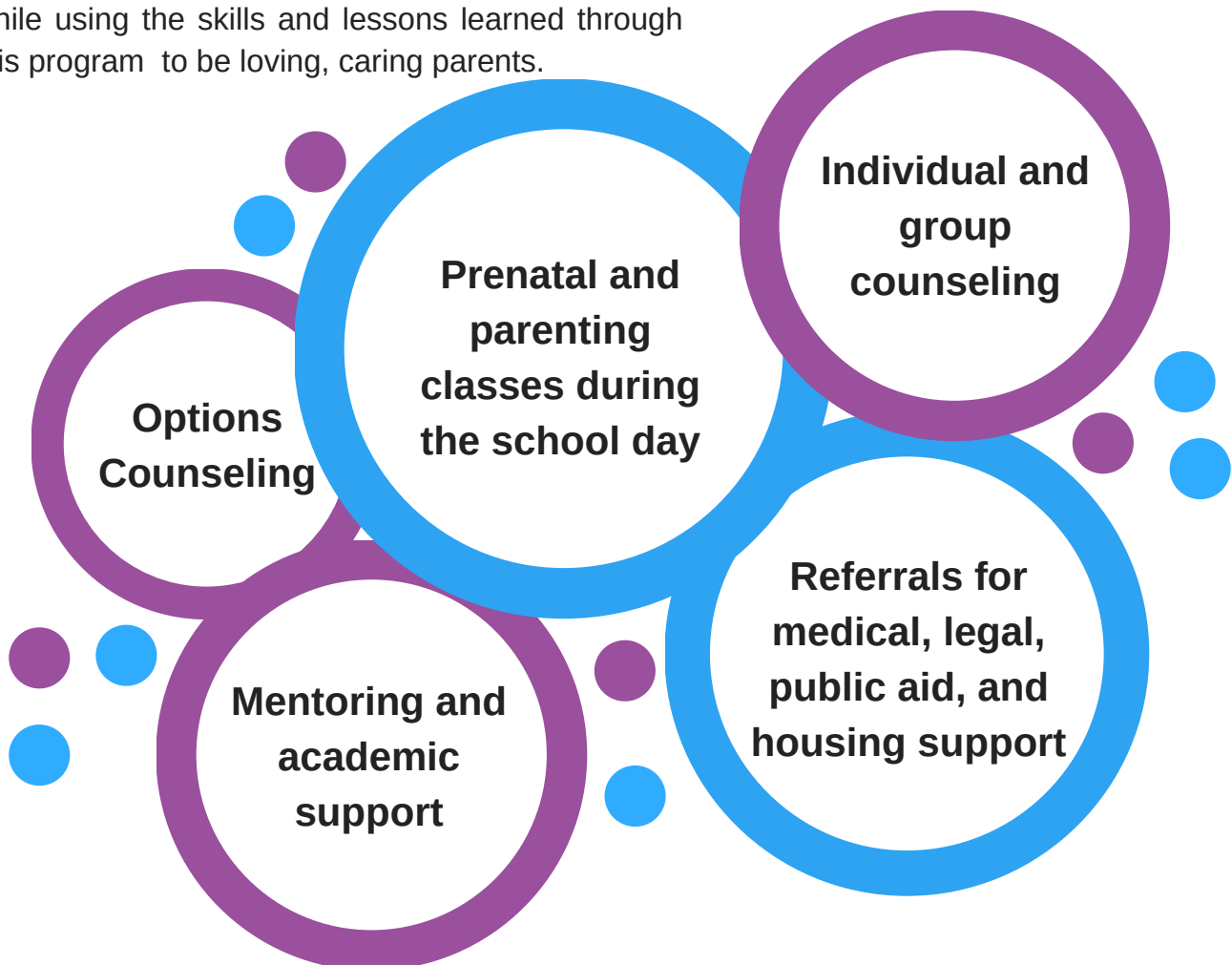
Teen Parenting Program

In collaboration and partnership with Township High School District 214, St. Mary's Services' Hopeful Beginnings Teen Parenting Program offers a variety of support to teen girls who are pregnant or already parenting. After graduating, each teen is eligible to receive a continuation of services, whether it be counseling, adjustment to motherhood, or case management, at our offices. We want to provide each one with a sense of stability, as well as continued support.

*"I'm so grateful you guys were there to support me and I am not sure how I would have gotten through this difficult time without this program." - Teri**

*name has been changed to protect the privacy of the individual

Our vision is for these students to graduate high school, and continue to pursue their life goals, while using the skills and lessons learned through this program to be loving, caring parents.



Financial Position

Fiscal year ending June 30, 2019

Revenue

	FY2019	FY2018
Public Support	\$212,215	\$224,430
Program Revenue	\$236,271	\$279,254
Investment Income	\$242,414	\$274,229
*Change in Value of Perpetual Trusts	\$795,855	\$ 82,537
Miscellaneous	\$ 77	\$ 1,726
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Total Revenue	\$1,486,832	\$ 862,176

Expenses

Program Expenses	\$440,381	\$446,483
Administrative and Occupancy	\$151,095	\$161,552
Fundraising	\$116,258	\$176,483
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Total Expenses	\$707,734	\$784,518

**Net Assets

	\$ 779,098	\$ 77,658
**Beginning of Year	\$6,028,438	\$5,950,780
**End of Year	\$6,807,536	\$6,028,438

**Donor restricted funds*

***includes Donor restricted funds*

Impact

With help from people like you, St. Mary's Services supported hundreds of clients during the 2018-19 fiscal year.



90 Pregnant or Parenting Women

St. Mary's Services responded to 79 new clients who inquired about our maternity counseling services and provided over 688 hours of direct counseling and support to 90 clients.

Over \$2,900 was spent in order to aid these women in necessary living expenses (rent, utility, grocery, etc.) and over \$1,000 in medical services.

Helped Build 5 Families

St. Mary's Services welcomed 12 new families into our adoption programs, which made a total of 47 families that we counseled and supported throughout the many stages of the adoption process. We are proud that this support culminated in five adoption placements and two interstate placements.



47 Pregnant or Parenting Teens

We served 47 clients from intake through counseling and education, which resulted in a little over 439 counseling hours. One hundred percent of our participating teens graduated from high school or promoted to the next grade level.

How You Can Help

Donate As a non-profit organization, we rely heavily on the community for resources to fund our programs and help us provide necessities for clients. Donations enable us to continue to provide free counseling services, education, and assistance to our maternity clients.

You can also donate via our Amazon Wish List; or when you shop at smile.amazon.com, Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price to St. Mary's Services. Gift Cards are also a great way to donate.

The biggest impact you can make is through a monetary donation. Another way you can contribute is by learning more about what we do, or by attending our fundraising events.

Refer As a smaller agency, St. Mary's always benefits from conversation about our services and our passion for those who are in need. Refer St. Mary's Services to women in your life that are experiencing an unplanned pregnancy or are suffering from a perinatal mood disorder or feeling unprepared for motherhood.

Promote "Like" us on Facebook and "Follow" us on Twitter and Instagram!

Educate Talk with your local schools about the benefits of implementing the Hopeful Beginnings program for their students and the teens in your neighborhood. Share our expansive pregnancy-related counseling services to women in your life.



stmaryservices.com

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St. Mary's Services is licensed by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services #040234-15

St. Mary's Services is affiliated with Episcopal Charities and Community Services

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