



## Thanks To You, We Did It!

That's right! With the help of our beloved friends and family, Mary's Path more than doubly matched the challenge grant from the Dirk Family – our Christmas Miracle Challenge. Our total campaign yielded \$163,479, the largest year-end giving in Mary's Path history. And it's all thanks to our generous donors, like you. And to the Dirk Family, who believed in us all enough to make a \$50,000 challenge to help us reach our goals for the year.

And this is the most amazing thing, not only did we get support that will allow us to continue to care for the teen moms and babies in our residence, we got a trophy! Yes, the Dirks gave Mary's Path a trophy that we can keep to celebrate the special campaign and the kindness of our friends and family. Now the question is, who gets to have the trophy in their office after it's Jill's turn? (Please see a full thank you list for our Christmas Miracle Challenge below.)

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### Dear Friends and Family of Mary's Path,

It's been eight months since I joined Mary's Path team as Executive Director, and those months have packed years' worth of joy and challenges for us at Mary's Path and the world at large.

At Mary's Path, we've seen **great challenges**, illness, and losses from the pandemic in our extended family, including lost job opportunities and lost mobility for our residents, and loss of physical connection with our volunteers and our community. But we've also seen amazing kindness and expressions of caring and joy. From the donors who have helped us meet our Challenge and who have sent gifts for our teen moms and babies, from the companies who have donated things like landscaping and other services, and the young girl who donated her \$12 allowance to Mary's Path moms and babies, from the people who write notes of encouragement in real life and through social media, and from the myriad of friends and family who are rooting for our residents and staff every day.



This also is a time of **great hope** – there is a vaccine that can help end this pandemic, and equally important for the future, the next generation is coming into the world right here at Mary's Path. Every time we feel overwhelmed by the challenges or by covering the work with a diminished team, we hear a baby say her first words or see him take his first steps. There is nothing like that experience and knowing that we are helping teen moms with the tools and safe haven to create a family to give us renewed energy. We've shared some of those wonderful milestones in this newsletter and we hope they give you energy, too.

And it's a time of **great helping**, in ways big and small. Recently we learned that one of our residents needed new glasses. In foster care, this had been ignored until she could barely see three feet in front of her face. If we were to wait for Medi-Cal to address the problem, she'd have been unable to do her school work for the rest of the semester. Instead, Mary's Path bought her new glasses so she didn't miss the opportunity to learn and keep pace with her goals. We can do this because of support from our friends like you. Thank you!

And it's a time of **babies**. Two of our teen moms gave birth to baby girls. And we have 4 more babies due to be born in the coming 3 months. So this gives even more urgency to our work and more excitement to our days!

"Once you're in the Mary's Path Family, you're always in the Mary's Path Family."

That's what we tell our residents. We want them to know that Mary's Path is here as a lifeline if times become overwhelming.

It's because of you, to our residents, to our dedicated staff, and our visionary Board of Directors that this all is able to happen. So we say "thank you," from the bottom of our hearts.

From all of us at Mary's Path, and from Nemo (also known as "Emo" by some of the babies), and me, we send our love and best wishes for a spring that is filled with health, happiness, and wonder.

In gratitude,

Jill Dominguez

### **MILESTONES**

Here at Mary's Path, we measure milestones rigorously, like any good organization, but we also measure them in first smiles, first words, and first steps.

Here are some recent milestones of which we're very proud!

Baby M loves his bi-weekly visits with mom here. He is crawling and loves exploring things that are on his level.

Baby L is crawling, pulling up, and loves to eat! He is working on pushing toys across the room to keep up with his peers!

Baby K is a year old now and is working hard on walking! He is such a sweet baby, it's so easy to fall in love with him.

Toddler A continues to impress us with his language acquisition, he loves his daily routine here with toddler class. He can say all staff members' names (especially the ones he really likes!) Toddler B is full of energy and spunk, she has a big voice and she isn't afraid to use it! She loves when her mama does her hair with beads in it and she can whip her head around and hear the noise they make!



## "...Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Psalm 30:5

Do you feel this in the air? It's hope, the hope that the swiftly developed vaccine can help protect our residents, babies, friends, and family, and can help end this pandemic that is shaking the globe. It's the idea that someday we can again gather safely, and again be together "in real life," as our teen moms say, for hugs and handshakes. We know that it will take time to get there, but hope is on the horizon and we feel so blessed to entertain this feeling of anticipation and joy. As an essential service, Mary's Path is able to get the vaccine for our team, for which we are most grateful. We know many of you may still be waiting, so please wear a mask (our babies like the superhero and animal ones!), wash your hands every hour or so, and maintain social distance. As our friends at the Los Angeles Zoo like to say,

"Keep a giraffe length apart.".

## SUPPORTING MARY'S PATH

Mary's Path is the solution for pregnant and parenting teens from the foster care system and their children. We provide a healthy and safe space for teen moms who have experienced trauma, been exposed to violence, and who still have the courage to take charge of life for themselves and their babies. Did you know we are 1 of only 5 residences in California for this very vulnerable population?

Mary's Path is able to fulfill our mission to serve the teen mothers and babies in our care through funds that come from some government sources, and donations from foundations, companies, individuals, families and groups like churches and clubs. This mosaic of supporters allows us to help our residents with the highest level of quality care, something that is vital to the health and development of the babies and their moms.



We thank you for your support of Mary's Path and hope you will continue to do so as you're able. We also hope that if you have friends, family members, or others in your network who would believe in our mission that you'll help us meet them (virtually of course). Please contact Gina Crofts at gina@maryspath.org or by phone at 714-730-0930 ext. 15 if you have potential supporters to whom you'd like to refer. (All donors for 2020 will be listed in our Annual Report, which will be sent electronically in July.)

## Our Spring Fundraising Campaign Moms for Moms

"Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping."

Fred Rogers

We will definitely be foregoing our spring inperson gala this year, in order to keep our friends and family safe! However, we've got a plan to help us all celebrate and remember the moms in our lives – whether here with us on Earth or in Heaven. Moms for Moms will be a wonderful way to salute mothers, daughters, sisters and help Mary's Path continue our work. Want to honor the moms in your life - mom, sister, aunt, daughter, grandmother? Make a donation to our Moms for Moms campaign and her name will be included in a full-page tribute ad in the Orange County Register on Mother's Day, May 9. Oh, and please feel free to honor your Dads for Moms, too!

www.maryspath.org/momsformoms

## MEET MARY'S PATH: CLETE MENKE

This is our first interview with a Mary's Path team member. Over the coming months, we'll be introducing you to more of them. Clete Menke is Director of Operations and Programs.

## Clete, how did you come to Mary's Path and how long have you worked here?

I have been at Mary's Path for about 8.5 years. I have a longer history with the organization, though. I was a member of the parish that the prayer group came from that founded the agency in the 1990s and I knew a couple of the founders. I was at the original open house for Mary's Path. I stayed attached as a donor and I knew some of the leaders along the way. Then the opportunity came up in 2012 to join Mary's Path and help steer its future. I was very glad to be part of this team. I have been working with kids since the mid-1980s, since I got out of college.



#### What is it about Mary's Path that made you want to be a leader here?

I like the population we work with. The kids are very special. Despite the challenges they have had they work hard and become strong mothers, against all odds in many cases. I think the staff is special and dedicated and I enjoy working with them.

#### What does your job entail?

I am responsible for the kids, the houses, and the staff. I do whatever needs to be done, of course, we all do. I make sure we have good staff – people who are well-qualified, trained, and who have been interviewed well. I'm responsible for the program itself – contracts with agencies, deciding which moms come here, the clinical decisions, and making sure the facilities are the best they can be.

We are blessed with the residences we have. Not very many residential facilities are built for the purpose they are used for. Many are homes or other buildings that have been adapted. Ours was built to be a home for young girls with babies. For that reason the homes themselves are special. The fact is the homes are spacious and well laid out and the outdoor area is specifically designed for the purpose. When they bought the property they were so wise. It's about a full acre. The homes have about 8600 sf of living area, with good bedrooms and large common areas for meals and activities. They were thinking about how to promote community in the design of the houses. It was really wise.

#### Tell us a little about your professional and educational experience.

I grew up in Nebraska and went to a small private college majoring in psychology and sociology. I also went to Creighton and earned a Master's degree in counseling. Then I went to work at Boy's Town, which is pretty well known. Yes, the one in the movie with Spencer Tracy! I stayed there for about 13 years and during that time they sent me to California to start up their work there. Then I went to Canyon Acres where I worked for 11 years before I came to Mary's Path.

#### Is there a difference between working with young men and young women?

Some people will tell you that working with boys is different. That's not quite how I see it. There is one difference you might not think of. The difference with our residents is I've worked with foster kids for many years and their situations are often fairly desperate, sometimes they run away. But the stakes are so high for our residents – they are about to become mothers. There is a lot of pressure on the girls, for this reason, they know they have someone to think about in addition to themselves. They all want the best for their children and they don't ever want their children to end up in the system. We want our residents to be in a situation where that sense of desperation is gone.

Motherhood is hard in the easiest of times, it is even harder when you are fighting against past challenges. It makes their successes even more impressive. We have managed our way through COVID and I am exceptionally proud of the girls. I looked at the data recently and the accomplishments of the girls is still fantastic. They are graduating, having healthy babies, moving on to independent lives, all in the midst of a pandemic. We celebrate all these accomplishments graduation, birthdays. Someone asked me, "are you guys always celebrating?" Yes. It's so important to celebrate these joyful events.

## SERVICE, COMPASSION, AND SUPPORT: THE DIRK FAMILY



Patrick and Mary Dirk, and their daughter, Lorrie Dirk Brown, are long-time supporters of Mary's Path. Lorrie also serves on our Board of Directors. They have agreed to speak with us for our inaugural feature introducing supporters of Mary's Path.

Thank you for your support of Mary's Path these years, and for your leadership, Lorrie. Patrick and Mary, tell us about yourselves.

#### How did you come to California?

PD & MD: We are originally from North Dakota where we met in high school and fell in love 62 years ago. All of our children were born while in North Dakota. We moved to Minnesota after Patrick finished his Master's Degree. While in Minnesota, Mary continued to be a stay at home Mom and Patrick continued his business career. We lived in Minnesota for almost 19 years and while there we opened a business – Troy Group – in 1982. In 1987 a business opportunity brought us to Orange County California. Today, we have business operations in California, West Virginia and Pittsburgh.

Among Troy Group's businesses is an olive farm in Paso Robles, Pasolivo, and we love to spend time there. The product is world-renowned and is privately purchased through our website and tasting rooms. Paso Robles is home to dozens of wineries and is now a world destination.

For us, family is #1. We have been blessed with 4 beautiful children, 14 grandchildren, and 2 great grandchildren. We have been blessed and always taught our children that is important to give back.

#### Lorrie, tell us about yourself.

LB: My husband, Lindsay and I moved our family back to California from Minnesota 5 years ago. We have 4 children and 1 grandchild. My parents always had some charity to give time, talent and treasure to. They taught us the importance of giving. In Minnesota I was involved with the Children's Hospital, the Junior League, and I taught classes at our church and school. When we moved to California I got involved with the children's classes at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and Queen of Angels. Through my parents, I learned of Mary's Path and I was attracted to the mission. It's the organization that is most near and dear to my heart.

#### How did you come to know about Mary's Path?

PD: 20 years ago, a former board member, Pat Powers, and I were discussing how to help teen mothers and their babies have a happy and healthy future. He asked me what I was doing about it and went on to explain the mission of Mary's Path "Saving Two Lives at a Time". That sounded like a good way to give tangible help. So we investigated the organization and started to follow them. Mary and I served on the board of advisors for several years, giving insights and suggestions, and later they recognized us for our work. Then Lorrie became even more involved than we had been. We have seen Mary's Path evolve from the dream of the founding Board to what it is today. We are a blessed family. Mary and I both came from families of modest means, but we have always been involved in charities as much as we can. Sometimes that was giving our hands and heart only, we didn't have much money. But we have always wanted to give back and support organizations and causes we believe in.

#### What is it about Mary's Path that touches your hearts?

PD & MD: It's the mission of serving young mothers. Helping make things easier for them is so important. A few years ago, Mary and I took some of the moms from Mary's Path and the Executive Director to hear a concert by the Pacific Symphony. None of them had been to a concert or a concert hall before. One of the girls was 13 and said, "I want to bring my baby here someday." It touched our hearts. Mary's Path shows teen moms that there is another path, something else available to reach for. Lorrie, as a member of the Board, what are your hopes and dreams for Mary's Path?LB: My hope for Mary's Path is that someday we are able to continue providing assistance to the mothers and babies that are aging out of the system. We want to be a part of their family support for as long as they need us. Once you're part of the Mary's Path family, you're always part of the Mary's Path family.

#### Is there anything else you think our readers should know?

LB: All of us on the Board have a great deal of confidence in where Mary's Path is headed. The plans are strong and well designed and the money is used wisely and with great care. As a donor or a potential donor you are making a wise investment. In my view, no money is wasted. It is all well managed. Mary's Path is committed to doing this important work, and we are one of the few organizations in California that serves teen moms and their babies in this way.

### VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



## WITH HANDS AND HEARTS SUPPORTING MARY'S PATH THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

Mary's Path is very careful with how we spend the financial resources donated by community members, companies, foundations and others. As a nonprofit, providing crucial resources to teen moms and their babies, we carefully consider every purchase of goods or services. That's why volunteers can make such a difference. Of course, during COVID-19, volunteer opportunities are very limited. But some of our most loyal friends from San Francisco Solano Catholic Church Men's Group have continued to help maintain the garden that is much loved by moms, babies, and staff.

Charlie has been volunteering at Mary's Path for 12 years. He started when he and a group from his church wanted to find a way to support young mothers during Lent. They found our organization and have never stopped coming back. Charlie has said that when he is at the pearly gates he wants to hear "well done." We know that he will! He said, "I am here because of who I am and the gifts and talents I have. Everyone has time, you just have to make the decision you want to give that time to those in need." Once the garden has been planted, Charlie would like to share with the staff and moms how they can manage it and show them how to fix the watering system. "We know the girls really benefit from the garden and I am happy to do it," he said. Charlie has been married for 36 years to his incredible wife; they have 2 adult children and are expecting their first grandchild soon.

Clay likes to come to Mary's Path with Charlie because he believes in supporting our teen moms with his time and talent. He has known of Mary's Path for a number of years. He likes to come with Charlie and Jerry because after their time here Jerry makes the Best Margaritas!!

Jerry goes wherever volunteers are needed. He lives his life by supporting those in need. He feels drawn to Mary's Path because of what we do to help the teen moms and babies who live in our homes.

Charlie, Clay, and Jerry all salute Green Thumb, whose owner, Bud Bergquist, has offered to help defray the costs of the plants that we are going to buy for the veggie planting and rose trees. They have a number of locations in Southern California. We hope that Mary's Path supporters will keep Bud and his stores in mind. We thank Bud and his colleagues and we offer our heartfelt gratitude to Charlie, Clay, Jerry and their fellow members of the San Francisco Solano Men's Group.

## **DONATING TO MARY'S PATH**

Like any good nonprofit organization, at Mary's Path we must be careful with our resources. So donated items can make a big difference to us. At this time, due to COVID-19 restrictions, we may only accept new items. There are two ways to give items – direct gifts of items or giving through a purchase from our Amazon wish list.

#### Facilities

Kitchen table (seating for 12)
Vacuum
2 50-gallon commercial
water heaters
2 BBQ grills
Light bulbs

### Bedding and Linen (New)

Twin sized sheets
Towels
Pillows
Twin sized comforters
Blankets

#### **Bedding and Linen (New)**

Twin sized sheets
Towels
Pillows
Twin sized comforters
Blankets

#### **Food Supplies**

4 microwave/oven combos
Washer
Toaster
(New) plastic food storage containers with lids

Rice cooker Blender Flatware

#### School Supplies

Water bottles
Earbuds
College rule notebooks
College rule notebook paper
Writing supplies (highlighters,
markers, pens, crayons,
pouches)
Backpacks

Calculators
Multipurpose
paper for the
printer/copier
Mechanical pencils
Graph paper
Laptops



#### Gifts Through Amazon

In 2020 Mary's Path received over 80 items with a total of \$2,500 from our Amazon charity wish list! It is an important part of giving to the girls and babies and we are so grateful.

Here's a challenge, though - Amazon does not release the donor's name or any contact information to Mary's Path from donations received through the wish list. We would like to stay in touch with our donors and have created an email so we can track and thank our donors. Just follow the instructions below if you want to be added to our mailing list:

#### From the wish list:

https://smile.amazon.com/hz/charitylist/ls/RVV3OL2LH9NI and make sure to check the box **This item is a gift**. Once you are checking out in the shopping cart you have the option to add your name ONLY to the gift receipt. You can email <a href="mailto:Amazon@maryspath.org">Amazon@maryspath.org</a> to notify us of your donation with contact information so we can thank you and add you to the newsletter mailing list. For those who wish to remain anonymous, we thank you for your support of the girls and babies at Mary's Path.

If you have any questions about your giving please contact <u>Gina@maryspath.org</u>.

## THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING FOR MARY'S PATH



## Thanks for Donated Items

Our residences received much needed new doors and mattresses and dressers from the Warren P Powers Foundation and Pat Powers, founding member of Mary Path. Thank you for helping Mary's Path provided all new dressers, mattresses and doors the both houses. Our teen moms and babies now arrive home to beautiful new rooms thanks to your family foundation.

## **Christmas Gratitude**

So many people and organizations played an important part in making Christmas 2020 such a special time for Mary's Path.



# Special Christmas Eve Donation From Kirkorowicz'.



This year we had a heartfelt gift donated to four of our residents whom are currently enrolled in our aftercare services program. Dr. Gregory Kirkorowicz and Dr. Maureen Downs made this generous donation and started an aftercare giving fund to provide additional support for the girls who no longer live in our home; yet still need financial support. This campaign is designated to provide resources specifically for the girls who could use support once in a while as they transition to independent living.

## THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING FOR MARY'S PATH

We also send our thanks, and those of our residents and staff, to all the donors for Christmas – those who gave gifts and gift cards for the teen moms and babies; door decorating (Randall's); Christmas trees; and Board Member Elizabeth's school that gave gifts in lieu of their own party due to COVID-19.

Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Adams Mr. and Mrs. Charles Agozino Ms. Karla Amador Mr. and Mrs. Bill Anderson Mr. and Mrs. Jeffery Anderson Mr. and Mrs. Edward Andrade Mr. Joel Austad Mr. and Mrs. David Baccitich Mr. and Mrs. Terrance Barry Mr. Vincent Bauerlein Mr. and Mrs. William Beam Ms. Marion Bechtel Mr. and Mrs. James Bell Mr. Lou Bellanca Mr. and Mrs. David Belz Mr. Adam Beneschan Ms. Fatima Bialon Mrs. Priscilla Bintoro Mr. and Mrs. George Blanc Mr. and Mrs. John Boston Mr. and Mrs. Paul Brady Mrs. Pearl Breen Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Brittain Ms. Madeline Brown Ms. Julie Brown Mrs. Jeanne Buell Mr. and Mrs. Paul Bunkers Mr. and Mrs. Colin Burkhalter Ms. Virginia Butler Cabral Anastacio Ms. Cafferty Mr. and Mrs. Robert Campbell Ms. Priscilla Carroll Mr. and Mrs. William Cassidy Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Caves Ms. Nancy Celio Mr. and Mrs. Frank Chiaretta Ho Yin Chow Ms. Connie Clancy Ms. Judy Clevenger Mr. and Mrs. David Coleman Mr. and Mrs. Sean Connolly Ms. Helga Coover Mr. and Mrs. John Correz Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Croal Mrs. Gina Crofts Mr. and Mrs. Larry Cucovatz Mr. Culhane and Mrs. Kathleen Wetzel Mr. and Mrs. Robert Dausch Mr. and Mrs. Peter Davies Ms. Jane DeLorenzo Mr. and Mrs. Robert Haub Mr. Brian Dirk Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Dirk Mr. and Mrs. Robert Drouillard Mr. Thomas Duchene Mr. and Mrs. William Dumler Mr. Raymond Dunne Mr. and Mrs. Joe East Ms. Diane Ehrbright Mr. and Mrs. Richard Elliot Mr. and Mrs. Lars Ericson Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Essex

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