



Meta House

metamorphosis

Summer/Fall 2007

RECOVERING MOTHERS, REUNIFIED FAMILIES

It is estimated that at least 70% of the child welfare cases in the country involve a parent with addictions, according to a 1998 study by the National Center and Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University called Shoveling up: the impact of substance abuse on state budgets.

There is no doubt that the effects of maternal substance abuse on children can be severe and devastating. Children whose mothers are addicted to alcohol or other drugs can have social, psychological and physical problems. Clearly children must be protected from these effects. Fortunately, pregnancy is a time that women often seek treatment. One of the best ways to ensure healthy outcomes for children of substance abusing mothers is to empower the mothers with sobriety and parenting skills, through family-based treatment.

A significant proportion of women with addictions do not have adequate parenting skills. While substance abuse clearly compromises a parent's skills, most women we serve experience a variety of additional factors that impact their ability to parent. Women with addictions typically come from unhealthy homes with

negative, abusive or absent parenting. Many women we serve became parents through unplanned pregnancies. The vast majority experienced trauma in childhood. These traumas make it difficult for mothers to bond with their children because it reminds them of their own dreadful childhoods. While substance abuse is a contributing factor to a person's ability to parent their children, it is not the only factor.

At family-based treatment centers like Meta House, women are given the chance to learn how to become parents within the context of recovery. Women come to treatment pregnant or after their children have been taken into protective custody. Meta House works closely with the Milwaukee Bureau of Child Welfare to facilitate the potential reunification of family and child, if it is in the child's best interest.

When their children come to visit or are returned to them, Meta House residents practice their parenting skills within a positive parenting environment. Staff are on hand to provide immediate positive intervention to guide parents through this challenging process.

This is the essential strength of a family-based treatment in the reunification process. When women are given the opportunity to reunite with their children in this structured and supportive environment, staff can make continual assessments of their growth and their unresolved needs.

In family-based treatment, mothers learn essential skills and knowledge about parenting, child development and nutrition, learn to re-parent themselves, and heal from traumatic childhoods. Children learn to ask for what they need and can be assured of their safety. Families develop, rebuild, and strengthen the bonds broken by substance abuse. Our communities spend less money on foster care and flourish when intergenerational substance abuse is prevented.

It costs approximately \$38 million a year to place children in foster care in Milwaukee County, an average of \$5,045 per child. In the last 24 months, 114 children were reunited with their mothers at Meta House. Savings to Wisconsin taxpayers: \$575,130 over two years.

A DAY FOR META HOUSE EVENT - SAVE THE DATE

In 2006, 45 families were reunified at Meta House. You can hear these amazing stories at Meta House's free annual fundraising event - **A Day for Meta House - Home Again, Whole Again: Reunifying Families Through Recovery**. Join us on **Friday, November 30** for breakfast or lunch at Pier Wisconsin on Milwaukee's Lakefront.

Want to share these powerful stories with others while making a difference for Meta House? Become a Table Captain and host a table of ten. Contact Wendy at 414-977-5807 or wcozzens@metahouse.org for event details and more information.



Meta House, Inc.
P.O. Box 11564
Milwaukee, WI 53211-0564



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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Family Volunteer Days, Saturdays

Every Saturday through August, Meta House is in need of 5-10 volunteers to assist with gardening efforts. Volunteers of all ages are welcome. Call Carryn at 414-977-5802.

Christmas in July - Sneak Peek Week, July 16-21

George Watts & Son, 761 N. Jefferson St., Milwaukee
After-hour event on Wednesday, July 18, 5-7PM
10% of sales contributed to Meta House

Meta Moments, August 16

Substance Abuse Recovery and Employment: Featuring Step Industries, Thursday, August 16, 2007, 12-1PM
Step Industries, 2821 N. 4th St., Milwaukee

A Day for Meta House Annual Fundraiser, November 30 Home Again, Whole Again:

Reunifying Families Through Recovery
November 30, Pier Wisconsin
Breakfast 8AM-9AM or Lunch 12PM-1PM

Call Wendy at 414-977-5807 for details.

CURRENT TOP 20 WISH LIST

*Household items may be gently used.

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Lawn Chairs | Food Storage Containers |
| Fans (box or standing) | New Swimsuits for Women & Children |
| Window Air Conditioners | Yarn |
| Cleaning Supplies | Beads |
| Cups | Paint |
| Bowls | Paint Brushes |
| Coffee Pots | Construction Paper |
| Irons | Markers |
| Pots & Pans | Glue Sticks |
| Water Pitchers | Chalk Pastels |

META HOUSE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thank you Meta House Board of Directors!
President, Anne Reed; President-Elect, Jennifer Bartolotta;
Treasurer, Kristin Beres; Secretary, Janice A. Rhodes;
Ex-Officio, Bobbie O'Hara Schmitt; Members: Tonit Calaway,
Catherine Doyle, Nancy Joseph, Mildred Leigh-Gold, Pamela Mattox, Victoria Pryor, and J.D. Watts.

Metamorphosis is written by Monica McLaughlin.

metahouse.org

FROM META HOUSE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FRANCINE FEINBERG



Right now, Meta House is facing the most critical financial challenge in our history. Funding issues in Milwaukee County have negatively impacted our ability to provide services to women and children in need.

Meta House, like most substance abuse treatment programs is funded primarily by government and other public sources. We are a fiscally responsible and administratively lean organization with impressive outcomes, yet due to the nature of substance abuse funding, we become financially vulnerable when government and public funding sources experience a shortage. That's why we are building a strategy to become more fiscally independent. We are making efforts to attract other sources of funding with the overall goal of diversifying these streams of revenue.

You know that Meta House meets a critical need in the Milwaukee community. It is estimated that over 23,000 women in this community are addicted to alcohol or other drugs. We address issues of teen pregnancy, infant mortality, and child abuse and neglect. Meta House provides a local solution to these local problems and we need to increase the amount of local dollars that support our efforts.

This is why your continued support is so crucial. We need your help now more than ever, as we build our strategy for increased fiscal independence.

What can you do to be part of the solution? Make an additional donation this year or make a multi-year pledge. You can also help us make connections to corporations or private foundations. Consider making Meta House part of your estate plan. Discuss the importance of family-based treatment and Meta House with your elected representatives, your places of worship, your colleagues, friends and family. Commit to bringing people on tours and invite potential supporters to our events. Volunteer to help us keep our administrative costs down.

Thank you, friends and supporters, for believing in and supporting our mission. You have been, and will continue to be, a critical partner.

CHRISTMAS IN JULY - SNEAK PEEK WEEK

Join us for this special "sneak peek" to the upcoming holiday season and view exclusive products available only at George Watts & Son. Shop during the week of **July 16-21** for "Christmas in July - Sneak Peek Week" and 10% of all sales those days will be contributed to Meta House. Businesses are especially encouraged to shop at this time to avoid the holiday crunch. Tell your friends now is the perfect time to purchase gifts you just won't find anywhere else...and benefit the worthy Meta House mission! You are invited to George Watts for an after-hours shopping event on **July 18 from 5-7PM** with complimentary drinks and hors d'oeuvres to be served while you browse. George Watts & Son is located on the corner of Mason & Jefferson Streets, at 761 North Jefferson Street in Milwaukee.

SIX-MONTH WINDOW! META HOUSE FRIENDS WHO HAVE REACHED AGE 70+ OR MORE, READ ON!

If you are at least age 70+ and must take unneeded taxable distributions from a traditional or Roth IRA, you may be pleased to learn of a special new provision in the law. The Pension Protection Act (PPA) of 2006 permits you to direct your mandatory withdrawal amount (or another amount up to \$100,000) to a public charity on a totally tax-free basis. Amounts donated in this way in 2007 will not be included in your taxable income for that year, even if you do not normally itemize your deductions or would otherwise be subject to adverse tax consequences. Your gift to Meta House must come directly from your IRA account. Donors have until December 31, 2007 to complete a tax free IRA transfer for 2007 - but the opportunity disappears in 2008. Check with your plan administrator or other advisors for more information on the best ways to make tax-favored gifts from your retirement accounts. Thank you for considering this option to support the women and children at Meta House.

PROUD MOMENTS!

Recently, Meta House staff and program graduates partnered with the Rebecca Project for Human Rights to launch the Wisconsin Chapter of Sacred Authority - a national leadership network of advocates that use their personal experiences and stories of recovery to personify the real lives of families with substance abuse and subsequently influence decision-makers.

Two members from this group, graduates of the Meta House treatment program, traveled with Meta House Executive Director, Francine Feinberg, to D.C. to attend a conference on substance abuse and employment where they provided insight into recovery from a personal perspective.

VOLUNTEER CORNER



The epitome of flexibility, Paulann Braun has become an integral part of Meta House's administrative team on Prospect Avenue. Paulann regularly assists at the reception desk and often shows up at a moment's notice to help with a variety of administrative tasks. A retired school teacher and neighbor to Meta House, Paulann has become a familiar face around the office. Her positive attitude, close proximity to the office and willingness to walk over whenever needed has made her an indispensable member of the Meta House volunteer crew. Paulann's administrative assistance makes the Meta House staff more efficient and saves donor dollars. Thank you, Paulann!

Want to volunteer at Meta House? Call Carryn at 414-977-5802 to discuss upcoming opportunities.

Helping Women Through the Progression of Recovery

HOME AGAIN, WHOLE AGAIN



Mary was abused as a child and watched her mother endure abuse from her father. Although she finished high school, she was not able to go to college because she had to take care of her siblings after her mother passed away.

Reeling from the cumulative trauma and stress of the abuse, loss of her mother and her responsibilities as a caregiver, Mary started to drink alcohol as a teenager.

She found herself in an abusive relationship as an adult and eventually left her husband. Mary continued to drink and eventually started using crack cocaine.

When Mary started to use crack cocaine, her life descended into chaos. She lost her job, her home and her children. Although Mary often felt hopeless during this time, she prayed that her life would change. She found out that she was pregnant and then Mary's son was taken into state protective custody because of her addiction. Determined to start her recovery and become a good parent, Mary entered into treatment.

She entered a treatment program but soon relapsed when she went to live on her own. After her relapse, she came to the Meta House Residential Treatment Program and stayed for 9 months.

She worked with the Child and Family team to build her parenting skills and work toward getting her son back. She knew that she needed her sobriety in order to be a successful parent.

"Meta House staff taught me how to budget, how to prepare for the working world, how to care for my child, and how to maintain my recovery. They made sure that when I got my son back I would be ready to be his mom and give him a great life."

After successfully completing her residential treatment, Mary moved on to the Meta Housing Program. While in Housing, Meta House staff continued to support Mary as she worked diligently to improve her parenting skills and stability. Mary needed to prove to the Child Welfare Bureau that she was a fit parent. By remaining drug-free and running a safe, structured home, Mary was eventually reunified with her son.

"My son, Amiero, is my little miracle baby, born on Easter Day. I knew that with the right help, I could give him a good home and a good life. That's all I ever wanted to do."

Choking back tears Mary said of the Meta House staff, "I am so grateful for them. First of all, they believed in me. They knew I was providing a safe, drug-free home for my son."

Having completed her Medical Billing and Coding certification, she is now seeking employment that she will balance with her role as a mother. She still receives support from Meta House, attends community recovery groups and is active in her church.

"My life is getting back on track in a way that I never could have imagined. I am rebuilding bonds with my three older children and really enjoying this time with Amiero. If it weren't for Meta House, none of this would have been possible."

Your contributions are critical to Meta House. Please help us to provide essential services to women recovering from substance abuse and their children.

Yes, I want to support Meta House!

\$2,500 \$1,000 \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$35 Other

Name _____ Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Check Enclosed _____ MasterCard _____ Visa _____ Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Please make checks payable to Meta House, Inc., a 501 (C) (3) not-for-profit organization. Your contribution is tax deductible in accordance with IRS regulations.

Thank you!

Please detach and mail to: Meta House, Attn: Development, 2266 N. Prospect Avenue, 4th Floor, Milwaukee, WI 53202.