

## Facts about Saint Gianna's Maternity Home

### Saint Gianna's Maternity Home

15605 County Road 15

Minto, ND 58261

701-248-3077 or toll free: 877-701-3077

### SUMMARY

Saint Gianna's Maternity Home (SGMH) serves the Body of Christ as a pro-life home of formation serving pregnant women and their children. After undergoing an extensive renovation of a 9,000 square foot building that was constructed in 1921, SGMH secured licensure by the State of North Dakota at the end of 2003 and welcomed its first residents in January of 2004.

### BACKGROUND

Nestled in the tiny village of Warsaw, North Dakota in the Northeast corner of the state, Saint Gianna's Maternity Home (SGMH) strives to provide a much-needed service to pregnant women and their children who are in crises. In 2002, after a Board of Directors was formed and fundraising was underway, the renovation of the old St. Anthony's Convent and School, which had stood abandoned for almost thirty years, was started. Each Saturday for almost a year, a crew of 20 to 30 volunteers would descend on the building and put in a day's work under the direction of two volunteer Project Managers. The model of Habitat for Humanity was used for the renovation with experienced carpenters, electricians, and plumbers overseeing the work of the volunteers. Some of these volunteers came from as far away as 200 miles.

Meanwhile, the Board of Directors, the Resident Director, and the Development Director worked to develop a broad base of support, disseminate information about the Home, explore avenues for financing the ministry, and pursue a strategy for sustainability. After completing all of the requirements for the State Fire Marshall, the State Electrical Inspector, the State Health Inspector and the Department of Human Services, Saint Gianna's Maternity Home was licensed by the State of North Dakota in the fall of 2003.

Presently, the paid staff at SGMH consists of a fulltime, live-in Resident Director; three fulltime, live-in Housemothers and a part-time Office Manager. We also have a Registered Nurse who serves part-time as a volunteer Case Manager. In addition, we have many volunteers who assist with mailings, childcare, driving, cleaning, and other miscellaneous tasks. We are grateful to have a very active Board of Directors who gives generously of their time and talents. A priest of the Diocese of Fargo serves as Spiritual Director to the Home and another priest serves as the Chaplain.

The mission of Saint Gianna's Maternity Home is as follows:

- 1- To provide a peaceful, secure Christian family environment in a rural community for pregnant women and their children who are in difficult situations.
- 2- To provide an atmosphere that encourages quiet reflection and spiritual development.
- 3- To ensure that women and their children receive proper medical care.
- 4- To encourage maternal bonding and nurturing through parenting classes and other resources, such as the Even Start Program
- 5- To assist mothers in becoming self-sufficient by securing employment and stable housing for themselves and their children.
- 6- To work directly with other agencies to provide childcare, transitional housing, medical care, etc.
- 7- To assist women in pursuing their education, such as to obtain a high school diploma, GED, vocational training, take online classes, etc.

SGMH is unique in several ways. Firstly, women who are pregnant and have other children may reside at the Home with their children. Some maternity homes do not accept women with children. Secondly, we offer an extended period of stay after the birth of their children for women to pursue their education and make other necessary plans (seek employment, find housing, etc) to begin to live independently. Again, some maternity homes offer no post delivery housing or care. In addition, we are able to offer a Transition Plan of Service, where a young woman who no longer physically lives at the Home can still tap into some of our services, such as childcare, as she transitions to the "outside world".

**Since Saint Gianna's Maternity Home welcomed its first residents in January 2004, 53 mothers and 32 children have lived at the home (as of 6-13-10). About 50% of the residents we have served are Native American and some of them have been under tribal custody. Over 60% of the children who have been residents are Native American. We also provided non-resident services, such as counseling, support, maternity clothing, baby supplies, etc., to over 68 additional women.**

The work is very labor intensive and each woman and child is provided with care 24 hours per day and 7 days per week. The scope of services is broad and intense, covering many needs – physical, mental, emotional, medical, social, educational, and at times, legal issues. Because women stay at St. Gianna's Maternity Home for weeks and months, we have the opportunity to make a major impact on their lives. Thus, our aim is to focus our efforts so that we can provide the extensive help that each of these young women need.

Our goal is to implement the mission of Saint Gianna's Maternity Home ***one mother, one baby, one family at a time.***

## **TARGET POPULATION**

Saint Gianna's Maternity Home serves pregnant women and children who are homeless; at risk for abuse, drug and alcohol usage; women who are transitioning from welfare-to-work by seeking to improve their circumstances by learning job skills and furthering their education; women who want to learn how to care for their children and to be better parents. Women of all faiths or no faith are welcomed, as Christ would welcome them. Since most women have no financial resources, SGMH does not charge for its services.



Many of the women we serve have lived in poverty or abuse for much of their lives. Most grew up in dysfunctional homes characterized by drug and alcohol abuse, sexual abuse, mental illness issues, divorce, neglect and abandonment. Almost all of the women who come have given up pursuing their education. A few were raised in foster care.

## CAPABILITIES

Saint Gianna's Maternity Home is an established and sound organization that is seeking to expand its base of support and to reach out to more pregnant women and children in need. We have the support of an active and involved Board of Directors from eastern North Dakota who gives generously of their time, talents, and resources to further the mission of SGMH.

Our Resident Director (RD) is one of the founders of this ministry and has been an integral part of the work since its inception. The RD has an extensive history in working with young people as an educator and as a volunteer at one of Mother Teresa's Maternity Homes in Los Angeles. The Development Director (a priest who recently returned to his home diocese in another state) had a large network of business and professional contacts in the Diocese of Fargo and throughout the State of North Dakota. Since he was employed fulltime by SGMH, he was able to travel extensively on behalf of the Home. The RD has taken over many of the roles of the Development Director since his departure.

With the gifts and talents of the Resident Director and the Board of Directors, SGMH has a strong leadership base and the capability to complete all projects and programs that the Home endeavors. Because SGMH is seen as a reputable and stable charitable ministry, the support of individuals, churches, and organizations in our state and nationwide has been strong with fundraising projects held to benefit the women and children who reside at the Home. Many organizations hold fundraising benefits in their hometowns then send the donated items and/or financial contributions to SGMH.

## CLIENTS SERVED

The Saint Gianna's Maternity Home has worked with women from ages 12-39 years. Children as well as extended family members and birth fathers are often included in this process. It is not unusual for the staff to be actively involved with 8-10 women and children at any given time. This is due to the fact that not all residents are in-house but indeed our hands reach out to many that do not live at the Saint Gianna's Maternity Home but are progressing in the transitional stage of their lives.

## MISCELLANEOUS

*Heroic Witness to Life:* Saint Gianna (1922 – 1962)

Saint Gianna's Maternity Home is named after Saint Gianna Beretta Molla, an Italian wife, mother, and physician, who sacrificed her own life so that her unborn child would live. Pope John Paul II canonized Gianna on May 16, 2004.

**\* SGMH is a not-for-profit corporation designated by the IRS as tax exempt under Section 501©3. All gifts are tax deductible.**