

Golden Girl Gazette - Herald

Golden Girl Group Home | Summer 2024



A letter from our Executive Director, Renee Harrison

As we stand in line, at the highest roller coaster in the park, hands covering her face, she begins to quietly cry. Although she looks sixteen and acts eighteen, she's only twelve.

A baby. Lowering her hands, she looks at me with big, beautiful, hazel eyes and whispers. "I don't know if I can do it." I assure her that this is her choice, and I will be with her. She takes a big breath and straightens her shoulders. As our ride arrives, she buckles beside me and grabs my hand. She is shaking. She asks, "Does it still count if my eyes are closed?" We begin our ascent and her breathing increases. In seconds, we are lifted from our seats, the wind in our face as we race towards the ground. A quick glance and I see her eyes tightly shut and tears streaming down her face. At one point I told her it's over and she did great. She peeks with one eye and exclaims, "No! There is MOOREEEEEEEEE!" She's right. As the ride finally ends, she sobs quietly. She hiccups and we both laugh. I tell her she is so brave. With a slight nod, she whispers, "I AM brave."

With others from Golden Girl, we walk to the exit, and I think about bravery. Looking at each girl, I think of all the trauma she has experienced in her short life. I am angry at the loss of her childhood, her innocence ripped from her, often by someone she trusted most.

Our girls come to us sad, broken, and scared. Most of them have experienced things we try not to even imagine: the physical and mental abuse, sex trafficking, domestic violence, overdose deaths of a parent or sibling (or both) and way too often, simply not wanted or loved. **Being brave isn't about the absence of fear; it is facing each struggle despite the fear.** And these kids are the bravest of us all. Most of them have already faced the horrors life can give and the trauma it inflicted

can make the seemingly easy be difficult. Of course, nothing about being a teenage girl is easy. Add to that, moving to a new place, new people, new school. Simply facing each day shows their resiliency and courage. Thriving and succeeding in their life is heroic. And they do it. Every day.

While these girls are entrusted in our care, we treat the trauma. Let them be a child and show them they are wanted and loved. We plan for fun, celebrating the major and minor holidays, camping by the lake, visiting museums and amusement parks and bringing that same fun home through movie nights, karaoke, board games, bike riding and any way for them to make new childhood memories to cherish.

An hour after that rollercoaster ride, I heard her sharing her experience with one of my co-workers. Her face is animated, her voice excited, her hands gesturing wildly. And then I see it. She is finally acting like a twelve-year-old. She has shown such courage in dealing with her painful past but at this moment, she is simply a child thrilled at the success of facing her fears.

Seeing me she runs to my side. She grabs my arm, pulling, with a mischievous grin shout, "C'mon Renee! Let's ride it again!" My heart fills with love for this sweet child, this sweet *very brave* child.





SUMMER NEEDS

We greatly appreciate all in-kind donations this summer, especially, new, and gently used summer clothes, games, puzzles and gift cards. We can also use flip-flops, beach towels, sunscreen, and beach bags. To sponsor a girl to enable her to go on a camping trip this summer please go to gggh.org or call

Nikki Thomas 304-939-5726.



Neighborhood Investment Tax Credits

The Neighborhood Investment Tax Credit program was established by the West Virginia Legislature to increase charitable giving throughout the state. For well over a decade, Golden Girl has received an allocation of credits. Our donors are extremely excited about this program because they are giving to a worthy cause, and they are minimizing their State of West Virginia tax liability.

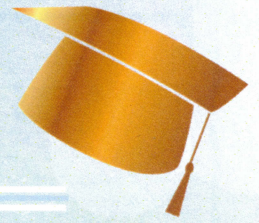
To find out more or to reserve your tax credits today please contact Nikki Thomas nthomas@gggh.org or call 304-939-5726.



**RESERVE YOURS
TODAY!**



Congratulations Class of 2024



Our girls come to live at Golden Girl with so many obstacles to overcome. Most girls are at least two grade levels behind in school. Fortunately, we are able to pick up the pieces and provide educational programs that help our girls graduate from high school and attend college.

Meet our graduates:

Stephanie

Stephanie is taking a year to think about what she wants to study in college. In the meantime, she will work at our Golden Treasures boutique, and she will live at our Golden Heart Apartment complex.



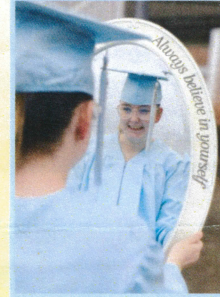
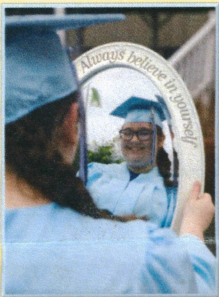
Addison

Addison is going to Marshall University to study Early Childhood Education and Physiology.



Natasha

Natasha will spend the summer working at our Golden Treasures boutique and will attend Mountwest Community College in the fall to pursue her business degree.



Brunch Fundraiser



**PLEASE COME ENJOY A LOCALLY OWNED RESTAURANT,
EAT A FABULOUS BRUNCH AND SUPPORT A GREAT CAUSE!**

10% OF ALL PROCEEDS WILL BE DONATED TO GOLDEN GIRL GROUP HOME



**Sunday, June 23, 2024
10:30 am - 3 pm**

Christopher's | 3565 US Route 60 | Huntington, WV 2705 | 304.736.5520

Golden Girl
GROUP HOME
Share Your Heart

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203 GERONIMO DR

SAINT ALBANS WV 25177-3329



Flats Off
A TRADITIONAL DERBY BRUNCH



Save the date!

Saturday, April 26, 2025

Reserve your tickets today!

Go to gghh.org or call Nikki Thomas for more information at 304.939.5726