

"You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore." Psalm 16:11



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Good News of Great Joy

A Savior is Still What We Need

I hope this finds you well and looking forward to the season's celebrations. In thinking about Christmas and our past year here I was reminded of the angelic announcement to the shepherds on the first Christmas: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11) Do we really believe that we need a Savior, and do we see this as good news that brings great joy?

I recently had a phone conversation with a mom seeking help for her teen. She shared how her teen was in a bad spot. As our conversation continued it revealed that there were failed marriages and the mom's own struggle with life-controlling issues. I could sense her own shame and guilt revealing that she felt she shared some of the responsibility for her teen's situation. As I think about this and my own captivity to sin, a Savior is exactly what we still need. This is indeed "good news of great joy." We need Christ to deal with our guilt and the empowerment of His spirit to set us free to be what he intends us to be.

This year, I also witnessed great joy as one of our young ladies, Christina, and her mom recently completed the residential program. We celebrated the changes Christ had brought in her life. One of her great accomplishments was graduating high school while attending The Joy House Academy, something she didn't feel she would have successfully done outside the program. She also had taken great strides in how to share her emotions in a healthy way. She celebrated finding a Savior to move her past her sin and brokenness and looked forward to continuing her walk with Christ. We've enjoyed sharing the good news of Christ as Savior this year with the teens and families in our Residential Program and our many friends being served through our Community Counseling Center. We're on pace to serve a record number of people through our Counseling Center this year.

I know many of you consider ministry investments at year's end. We're praying for a great year-end of giving to establish a solid foundation for continuing to share Christ's hope and love in 2019. You can find instructions on making a year-end gift on the following page. Thanks for your consideration and partnership. May you know the "great joy" of our Savior this Christmas.

*Merry Christmas,
Steve*



Teen Spotlight...

Christina



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Upcoming Events

Annual Banquet

Tuesday, April 23, 2019

Place: SharpTop Cove

My name is Christina, and I am 17-years-old. To share some background about myself, I came to the Joy House mainly because of family and school issues. I didn't really care about school or my grades, I just went because I had to. The friends I chose to hang out with weren't the best and it caused me to become more sassy and just down right rude to my mom. My mom and I would get into arguments over the stupidest things. I would yell at her, tell her that I wished she weren't my mom and then walk out of the house. That's when the police were called. I have had the police called on me about four times, three of those times were because I walked out of the house and I wouldn't listen to my mom when she told me to come back in. The fourth was because I wouldn't listen to my mom when she told me to get out of bed and get ready for school and things just kept on spiraling down from there.

My mom did already know about the Joy House before my time here came because my older sibling had been here before me and it did help their relationship, so here I am. I came to the Joy House when I was 14-years-old and I was one of the rare ones who actually wanted to come in. I was so sick of living with my family and I really just wanted to get away from it all. I dreaded going home on the weekends and was really happy to come back, until maybe six months into my time here. I didn't mind being here but I started to prefer home over here. But of course, nobody knew this. I was very quiet and very closed off. I didn't talk to anyone about anything and I never went deeper than surface stuff when talking to other people. I didn't talk to my counselor, or the houseparents or even my mom. I kept all my feelings inside and never let them out. It was something I'd been doing my whole life so it felt natural to me. I followed the rules and really the only thing I would get into trouble for was cheating in school. Which I say like it's no big deal, but it got me on discipline more times than I can count. All I really cared about was getting the pace over with, so I would just look up the answers and then barely pass or fail the test. When I got a 70 I was happy and when I got a 62, I said, "That's not so bad." I procrastinated and pushed the due dates for as long as I could. I was OK with the way things were going until the school decided to start making me redo the paces. Each pace I failed I had to do again until I passed it. Needless to say, I was in 8th grade for a while.

I realized I had to make some very serious changes in my actions regarding school and home. My personal integrity got a real nitro boost about six months ago when I sat down with my principal, Mr. Ron, and had a real heart to heart. He told me that I was close to finishing but that to meet the estimated completion date I would have to buckle down and get moving.... **Continued on Next Page**

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Teen Spotlight Continued...

That conversation with Mr. Ron made me realize that my goal was closer than I had originally thought. I could indeed finish High School not only on time, but two years earlier than I would have if I had gone back to public school.

In closing, my mother and I have a better relationship. I am able to work through things with her instead of ignoring her for a while and then coming back and acting like nothing happened. I've learned how to talk to people about how I'm feeling instead of just walking around holding a grudge. Instead of keeping everyone at arm's length I am more willing to let them see more than just "surface" me. I do still have trust issues, but they are nowhere near as bad as they used to be. I still struggle with my faith, I admit it's not as strong as I want it to be, but it is getting better. Regarding school, I came in at the beginning of my 8th grade year. Wouldn't you know it, my last year here is when I started to care about my grades and how I was doing, and now I am a high school graduate. It's been an adventure and I do not regret one bit the decision my mom and I made to keep me here for school. I can tell you right now that if I had gone back to public school I would not have graduated. Staying here has also provided me with the chance to become the person I am today. If I had left when I was allowed to, and I was allowed to leave about two years ago, I wouldn't have developed the skills that I have with opening up and just talking through things instead of shutting down. Thank you, *Christina*

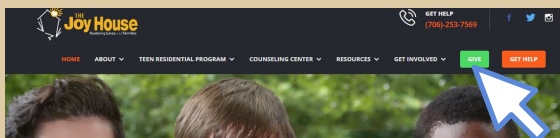
Ready to Receive a Dollar-For-Dollar Tax Credit? Read More Here!

You can make a difference in the lives of our Joy House Academy students through dollars you are already going to spend and receive dollar-for-dollar tax credit. This is accomplished through the Georgia Qualified Education Expense Tax Credit Program. Each year, the State of Georgia allows a portion of state income tax dollars to be designated for school scholarships. The portion for 2019 has been increased to \$100 million. This program allows **individuals and companies** to receive a dollar-for-dollar tax credit for donations for student scholarships at accredited non-profit private schools in Georgia, which includes The Joy House Academy. You can get all the details about this program by visiting thejoyhouse.org and clicking on the "Get Involved" menu item across the top, then select "Education Expense Tax Credit" in the drop down menu. You may also contact Steve Lowe directly for more information at 706.253.7569 or steve@thejoyhouse.org. Scholarship contributions can have a significant impact on supporting The Joy House program, as nearly 20 percent of our budget needs are for education. Thank you for your consideration!

Year-End Giving Instructions

If you are mailing a gift it must be postmarked no later than **December 31, 2018**. If you want to donate online, you may do so by going to thejoyhouse.org and clicking on "**Give**." You can make donations online until midnight on December 31, 2018. If you want to give the donation to us personally, it must be in hand by midnight on December 31, 2018.

We will not be maintaining normal office hours from Monday, December 24th through Friday, January 4th. However, if you need to speak to Steve personally regarding a year-end gift you can contact him by leaving a voicemail or by e-mail at steve@thejoyhouse.org. He will be checking both of these and will be glad to contact you.





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Newsletter

Holidays 2018

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Harry & Syble Brooks
Wendell Cagle
Margo Coleman

Janet Conway
Johnny Darnell
Melanie Griggs

Edith Grimes
Kent Mosley
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Given By:

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Patsy Stanfield
Ray & Betty Ferrell

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The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution, Bobby & Brenda Womack

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Alvin & Hettie Young, Marty Beaver
Eddie & Joan McDonald
Cobb County Department of Transportation
Kali Shay Quinton Memorial Scholarship Fund
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In Honor Of:

Neil & Tricia Atkinson
Neil Atkinson
Marty Beaver

Gerald & Mary Jane Reid
Neil & Tricia Atkinson
Peggy Higgins
Loralie Arnold

Given By:

Gerald & Mary Jane Reid
Tricia Atkinson
Tricia Atkinson,
Gerald & Mary Jane Reid
Tricia Atkinson
Rosalie Castleberry

E-mail info@thejoyhouse.org or call 706.253.7569 for more information on how to give in memory or honor of your loved one