



at Raphael House



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

ONE HOME. MANY HEARTS.

Join us for the Raphael House
31st Anniversary Gala!

3

NATURE AND HEALING AND SANTA

by Carol Cole

7

FAITH IN ACTION

9

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WWW.RAPHAELHOUSE.ORG



DEAR FRIENDS,

In this newsletter you will find several interesting reflections from our staff members who work daily with the children of Raphael House. Carol Cole, the director of our Children's Program, writes about Nature and Healing. Terri DiMartini, now a graduate student at Columbia University, writes a temporary (we hope!) farewell letter looking back on her time at Raphael House. And we introduce Ralitzia Doynova, who now leads our tutoring and after-school activities, as well as our numerous field trips for the children around the Bay Area.

We believe that our capacity to learn involves more than academic review. Our capacity to imagine, create, play, and explore — these are traits that energize our love of learning. Even the very smartest people need the joy of discovery in their lives in order to accomplish anything with their gifts. Albert Einstein said it was his curiosity, not his intelligence, that he regarded as his greatest natural blessing.

Our programs support the healthy growth of children. When children have love, wholesome play, clear rules and discipline, their school work improves, as does their self-esteem and confidence.

It is a joy to watch the lives of children unfold. We know many participants in our AfterCare program who are now in college, yet we first met them as toddlers years ago. My own children (ages 12 and 15) have grown up playing and sharing in the activities here. This is the kind of program we have at Raphael House: it is the way we want our own children to be raised. At present we serve more than 500 children in our various shelter and AfterCare programs throughout the year.

Raphael House has many dedicated staff and volunteers, but all of our resources are contributed in large part by the local Bay Area community. We neither seek nor accept government tax dollars.

Thank you to everyone who is helping Raphael House touch the lives of so many children and their families.

Sincerely,

Fr. David Lowell

Fr. David Lowell

Executive Director

A Farewell from Terri DiMartini

Dear Raphael House,

Thank you for being an amazing part of my life the past four years. During my time here I have not only grown in a professional direction, but I have thrived personally as well. I am grateful to Raphael House for preparing me for graduate school, for giving me a focus in life — serving the needs of children in a holistic and healing environment.

Four years ago when the staff of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC) notified me that I would be working at Raphael House, I was disappointed to say the least! I had wanted to be in a warmer climate down in Southern California and I was not ecstatic about the fact of working in a homeless shelter. I had visions of a large gymnasium filled with cots and hundreds of people herded in and out every day. Yet, I told myself that it was only for a year and with that thought I accepted my placement at Raphael House.

Little did I know that my time at Raphael House and in California would span across several years. This has become a second home to me; the people here are my friends, family, and confidants.

After my first day at Raphael House, I went home to call my parents about what it was like. The only way I could describe the House was that

“Raphael House was overflowing with light, warmth, and harmony.”



Terri DiMartini says goodbye to one of her students in the Raphael House After School Program, with Ralitza Doynova in the background.

it reminded me of my dorm from college. It was overflowing with light, warmth, and harmony. It was one of the cleanest places I have ever stepped foot in. My concept of homeless shelters was completely blown out of the water. Suddenly, the phrase “from crisis to community” began to make sense. This is not a place for people to stay simply while searching for housing; it is a HOME, a place where people grow and thrive.

During my year of JVC, I worked on the residential floors assisting families with their morning routines and I provided adult education training support in the afternoons. I think that it was a combination of my immaturity and naiveté at the time, but I expected people to be grateful that I was there to help and I assumed that I would be accepted unconditionally. Prior to JVC I never even considered being on the other side of the tracks and what I would feel like if someone was

coming into my life, the way that I was coming into the lives of the people at Raphael House.

I am grateful that the people residing here let me into their lives, told me their stories, and allowed me the opportunity to learn and grow. I made many mistakes, I was too presumptuous at times, but I learned every day about what it meant to truly serve others. It meant that no matter what the circumstances, I had to put myself on the line, wait patiently, listen thoroughly, and love unconditionally.

After my year of service with the Jesuit Volunteer Corps, I was contemplating returning back East. Carol Cole, the Children's Program Director, approached me about taking over the After School Program and AfterCare services for children. After my first conversation with Carol I avoided her for days because I thought she must be crazy — the idea of ME working with children? I asked Carol why she thought I would be able to take on the task she was asking of me and she responded that she could hear me in the mornings talking to the children in the hall on the second floor, and she was quite confident that I would work well with children.

At that point in time I had no clue as to what I wanted to do for work, so I decided to put my faith in Carol's judgment and work in the Children's Program. I am eternally grateful that Carol saw in me what I could not see in myself, because through working with the children of Raphael House I have truly found my calling.

As I reflect back upon my experiences at Raphael House, I am constantly reminded of the struggles to create places of warmth and healing for the children. There are many programs in our society that serve children. They provide them with food, clothing, and outings. Yet, there are few children's programs like the one at Raphael House. I have been taught the importance of not only creating a space for children to be able to learn and to thrive,

cont'd on page 4

"One Home. Many Hearts."

THE RAPHAEL HOUSE 31ST ANNIVERSARY GALA

Chaired by Claudia Castillo Ross

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2003

at the Ritz-Carlton Grand Ballroom
600 Stockton Street, San Francisco

Black tie

6:30 PM Champagne Reception and Silent Auction

7:30 PM Dinner followed by dancing

LIVE AUCTION

Gourmet meals prepared
in your home by celebrity chefs

AUCTIONEER AND HONORARY CHAIRMAN

Narsai David, *Macy's resident culinary expert
and KCBS radio's Food and Wine Editor*

SILENT AUCTION

Including hotel packages, family portraits, sporting events, home accessories, fine wines, and much more...

BENEFACTOR — Table of 10, \$5,000

PATRON — Table of 10, \$3,000

SPONSOR — 10 Individual tickets

INDIVIDUAL TICKETS — \$190

INDIVIDUALS 35 OR YOUNGER — \$150

IF YOU WISH TO PURCHASE TICKETS OR MAKE
A DONATION TO THE GALA ON-LINE, GO TO:

<http://www.raphaelhouse.org/donate.html>
and enter your credit card information.

We ask that you also please fill in the "comments" field to indicate how many tickets you wish, and at what price. You also may let us know with whom you wish to be seated.

TO RESERVE BY MAIL, PLEASE SEND A CHECK TO:

Raphael House, Attention 31st Gala,
1065 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94109

For more information, or to place your ticket order
by phone, contact Carol Field at (415) 345-7265.

Email to: volunteers@raphaelhouse.org.



from page 3 — but I now also know what it takes to make that space. Our children do not need to be constantly entertained by us. We are not the endlessly hyperactive babysitters. We are the teachers of caring, healing, and love.

For the past three years I have been supervising the After School Program at Raphael House. Many of the children come from fragmented lives filled with memories of past and current domestic violence, physical abuse, and lifetimes of mental and emotional instability. Academically, many of the children are at least a year behind in school and most are enrolled in special education classes. We strive to help the children get back on track and to assist the families in weaving their ways through school district policy and procedures.

While I enjoy working with the children on their academic needs and I feel very strongly about the importance of being an advocate for them within

the school district, I believe the most important part of my day started at the snack table each afternoon. When the children come home from school, we have about 30 minutes of snack time. Everyone sits around the table and shares the events of what happened during their day. For many of the children who no longer live at Raphael House, this is the only time when they gather around a table for a meal.

I am twenty-six years old, yet for as long as I live, I will never forget the countless times I walked up my driveway from school and the delicious aroma of brownies would be floating from the kitchen window. It never failed to give me a warm glow and remind me that my mom was home and waiting for me. Children deserve to know that there is someone at home anticipating his or her arrival, someone who cares about them and wants to listen to what's going on. For many of these children, it is impossible for their mothers or

“The most incredible part of my work is that I was lucky enough to be that person who got to share the wonderful tales of what went on in the lives of 20 very special individuals.”

fathers to be home upon their arrival because they work or are in school. For some children home is not the safest place for them to be, and the After School Program is their safe haven. Whatever the situation may be, it's important that they have someplace and someone to meet everyday. The most incredible part of my work is that I was lucky enough to be that person who got to share the wonderful tales of what went on in the lives of 20 very special individuals.

I have worked closely with Carol Cole assessing the needs of the children and their families. This delves much deeper than what they physically need. We look to see if a child's inner/spiritual being is healthy and what he or she needs in order to grow. Working with Carol has been a blessing and I was fortunate to have not only a terrific supervisor, but a mentor as well. Carol Cole has been the most influential person in my life over the past three years. She has taken me under her wing and helped me find my way through working in an environment where people's lives are often filled with uncertainty and instability. Despite the backgrounds of many of our children, all is not lost, for we can help bring these children to another place. One cannot fix a person and erase the traumas of the past. Yet, we can teach children the skills they will need to last them a lifetime, and hope that one day, they can call upon their own inner strengths because someone believed in them, showed them unconditional love, and taught them how to find their way in the world.

I am leaving Raphael House with a heavy heart, filled with sadness from saying good-bye, but also filled with hope for the future of children in San Francisco. I do hope that the children are kept in the forefront of your minds and consciousness because they are why Raphael House is what it is today and what it can be for the futures of tomorrow.

Through my work here, I have not only found my calling, but have known what it is that “inspires and sustains” me to stay in the field of children's social services and education. What sustains me is that I believe in the work and the people that I encounter each day. What inspires me to keep forging ahead in this line of work is the knowledge that there is so much more that needs to, and can, be done for children who are living in poverty, particularly when it comes to their education.

cont'd on page 6



“Say cheese!”

from page 5 — I will be working towards earning a dual degree in social work and education through the program offered at Columbia University in connection with Bank Street College. I believe that this degree will allow me to continue to work in children's education while also allowing me to encompass the community and broader view of a child's classroom and world. While I am saddened to be leaving Raphael House, my time here has taught me a great deal about what it takes to continue a career in children's services and it has also prepared me for the work intensity that this degree program will require of me.

Thank you, to all of the staff, families, and volunteers of Raphael House. May our paths cross again in the future. I will miss you, but never forget you. Just knowing that you are here makes the world an incredibly brighter place. May you continue to be a candle shining bright in the lives of children and may you continue to build a community devoted to healing people's lives. In the words of Archbishop Oscar Romero:

We plant seeds that will one day grow.

We water seeds that are already planted.

Knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

*We provide the yeast that produces
effects beyond our capabilities.*

*We cannot do everything, and there is a sense
of liberation in realizing that.*

This enables us to do something and do it well.

With much love and respect,

Terri DiMartini

Terri DiMartini



When Terri left in July of 2002, Ralitza Doynova (left), who had been working with her in the Children's Program, became the After School Program and Outings Coordinator. Originally from Bulgaria, Ralitza came to Raphael House with three years of experience in the home-school education field—both as a tutor and class instructor. Beginning in 1999 as a live-in volunteer at Raphael House, she later supervised the Live-in Volunteer Program while also working in the Daycare and After School Programs. In addition to running the program each school day afternoon, Ralitza helps families with school enrollment and advocacy, coordinates the Summer Camp Program and leads the children's field trips year-round. She holds a B.A. in English, and M.A. in Education.

Nature and Healing and Santa

BY CAROL COLE, CHILDREN'S PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Many of our children come to us in a wounded state: we often look to nature to help in the healing process. The children's lives have been very fragmented, without a center. They often feel that they don't belong, that they have no legitimate place to be. We work with them in ways that help them to see that they do belong here on this earth.

During their stay at Raphael House we support them in building an enriching relationship to the basic elements of earth, fire, air and water. Depending on the age of the child, the experiences with the elements will be different.

Take for example water. A toddler will be given rain boots and a safe place to jump in the puddles, an ordinary enough experience for most young children but often an exciting new experience for our children. A young child may float a leaf boat; an older child may practice outrunning the waves. All the children can listen to the rain. Songs and stories of water, and watercolor painting bring more experiences with water. Outings to a lake, a river, the ocean and the bay help the children come to know the different bodies of water. The children then begin to see the exquisite order and beauty in nature. And so it is for each of the elements.

*"Within each kingdom
of nature there are great
treasures waiting to be
discovered anew."*



Within each kingdom of nature there are great treasures waiting to be discovered anew. The children explore the mineral world, the plant world, the animal world and the world of the sun, moon and stars through story, song, artistic work and outings. The richness gained from these experiences creates a feeling of confidence in the child, a feeling that he or she does know how the world works and is ordered. Through these experiences each child can gain a relationship to the whole and feel his or her place within it. Their lives are then enriched in ways that can again and again allow them access to the natural world long after they have left Raphael House.

cont'd on page 8



Summer camp-out in Marin.

from page 7 — Many of our children simply do not hear the birds singing until they are guided to listening. As the old song goes *“there were birds in the trees but I never heard them singing, no I never heard them at all ‘till there was you.”* Our children have a great need to know that they too are a part of the magnificent earth and cosmos. Nature speaks to them just as brightly and with as much beauty as it does to anyone. To the sun each person is not more or less significant than the rest, all are equally significant.

We try to nurture this feeling of wholeness in all that we do. It is a joy to see the children grow in their sense of belonging and in their sense of being a part of the whole. Two small stories of our children may illustrate the point.

A little girl who has just turned four years old looks at a bird that is singing in a tree. *“Whose bird is that?”* she asks. *“No-one’s and everyone’s”* she is told. *“Who is it singing for?”* she puzzles. Then with a joyful smile she exclaims, *“I know! He is singing for everyone.”* It has taken this child some time to believe that the bird’s song is for her too. Before her time with us her impression had been that the bird was singing for someone but not her, never

“Our children have a great need to know that they too are a part of the magnificent earth and cosmos.”

her; she just happened to be able to overhear the song. It makes a world of difference to know you are included.

Little by little in as many ways as possible the children come to know that they count, that they matter, as in the case of Jason.

On a field trip to Año Nuevo the children were standing on the shore looking at the truly immense elephant seals, the crashing waves and the great expanse of ocean. Jason, a five-year-old boy, looks up at the park ranger guiding the children and said, *“Santa Claus knows my name.”* The ranger looked at Jason and nodded. What else is there to say?



Faith in Action

During the past few years we have experienced a strong increase in the number of congregations in the Bay Area who contribute to Raphael House. Special collections, food drives, the sponsoring of volunteers and interns, and generous donations of a portion of proceeds from Fall Food Fairs have made a big difference! Our thanks to everyone who has helped to involve the membership of their church or synagogue in the work of Raphael House.

We invite new individuals, churches, synagogues or faith based organizations to become involved with Raphael House. We are always in need of time, money and resources. Please contact Carol Field by phone at (415) 345-7265 or by e-mail at: volunteers@raphaelhouse.org.



Browne Barr and his neighbors from Napa Valley, the "Holy Gleaners," pack up donated fresh produce that they deliver to Raphael House every week during the summer months.

The following are among the many faith-based groups who have helped Raphael House through the years. Thank you to all!

Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church,
San Francisco

Assumption of the Holy Virgin Church,
Philadelphia, PA

Brandeis Hillel Day School, San Francisco

Calvary Presbyterian Church, San Francisco

Christ Lutheran Church, Libby, MT

Christ the Saviour Parish, San Francisco

Christ the Saviour Brotherhood, Indianapolis

The Church of Jesus Christ of
the Latter Day Saints, San Francisco

The Church of the Synaxis of the Theotokos,
San Francisco

The Community of St. Francis, San Francisco

Congregation Beth Sholom, San Francisco

Diocese of the West, Orthodox Church in America

First Christian Church, Santa Monica

First Presbyterian Church of St. Helena

Holy Dormition Bulgarian Orthodox Church,
Santa Rosa

Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco

Jesuit Volunteer Corps

Mennonite Mission Network

Nativity of Christ Greek Orthodox Church,
Ignacio, CA

Noe Valley Ministry, San Francisco

Orthodox Monastery of the Transfiguration,
Ellwood City, PA

cont'd on page 10

from page 9 —

Old First Presbyterian Church, San Francisco
 Orthodox Christian Fellowship
 Orthodox Christian Mission, St. Augustine, FL
 Our Lady of Kazan Skete, Santa Rosa
 Presbyterian Women of Lincoln Park Church,
 San Francisco
 Protection of the Holy Virgin, Santa Rosa
 Schools of the Sacred Heart, San Francisco
 Sisterhood of St. Mary's, Santa Rosa
 St. Augustine's Church, Pleasanton
 St. Elizabeth's Italian Catholic Federation,
 San Francisco
 St. George Orthodox Church, Rohnert Park
 St. Innocent Orthodox Church, Fremont
 St. John Orthodox Church, Orinda
 St. John of God Catholic Church, San Francisco
 St. John's Volunteers, Redwood City
 St. John the Wonderworker Orthodox Church,
 Atlanta GA
 St. Mary the Virgin Episcopal Church,
 San Francisco
 St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Saratoga, CA
 St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, San Anselmo
 Sts. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church, Ben Lomond
 St. Seraphim Orthodox Church, Santa Rosa
 St. Sergius and St. Herman Orthodox Church,
 Syracuse, NY
 St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Orinda
 St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church,
 San Francisco
 Unity Christ Church, San Francisco
 Zion Lutheran Church and School, San Francisco



The Third Annual Santa Lucia Festival, sponsored by the Holy Dormition Orthodox Church of Santa Rosa, was held on December 14, 2002, at St. George Orthodox Church in Rohnert Park, CA. More than \$1,200 was raised this year for the Children's Program at Raphael House. Mara McLeester, who remembers former events in San Francisco and has a place in her heart for Raphael House, has been the instigator and organizer for all three of these annual fund-raising Santa Lucia Festivals. This year's Santa Lucia, Ann Rodier (center) and two of her attendants, Rebecca Tolbert (left) and Beth Ann McLeester (right), offer traditional Santa Lucia buns from the baskets to the attendees.



Raphael House, You, and eScrip.com

Raphael House is now a member of **eScrip.com** an innovative service where, with your participation, we can raise additional, much-needed funds for programs and services for our families.

Once you register to take part, eScrip's more than 150 merchants will contribute up to 8% of your everyday purchases to Raphael House.

Registration is simple: Log on to **www.eScrip.com** and go to sign up. Designate Raphael House to receive contributions. **The Raphael House Group ID # is 151278850.**

Register your grocery club card, your oil company card and your debit/credit cards from participating merchants listed.*

The next time you use those cards, a portion of your purchase will automatically be sent to Raphael House. (Up to three charities can be designated for eScrip contributions.)

If you do not have access to the internet, please call the Raphael House Development office at (415) 474-3245 for a registration form.

Please sign up soon, and tell your family and friends! Thank you.

*To see entire list of merchants, go to eScrip website. On home page, click on "Family of Merchants" tab. Click on link "Download Current Merchant List."

Raphael House, a family homeless shelter and AfterCare program, has served San Francisco since 1971. It is funded by contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations, and civic and religious groups. We neither seek nor accept government funding.

Raphael House was founded by Christ the Saviour Brotherhood of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Our services are named after the Archangel Raphael, whose name in Hebrew means "God has healed."

at [Raphael House](#) is produced by the staff and volunteers, and is mailed to donors and former residents.

Please send your questions or comments to:

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SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94109
OR CALL (415) 474-4621

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MOVING FAMILIES FROM CRISIS TO COMMUNITY

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One Home.
Many Hearts.



THE RITZ-CARLTON GRAND BALLROOM
600 STOCKTON STREET, SAN FRANCISCO
BLACK TIE

The Raphael House
31st Anniversary Gala

WEDNESDAY, MAY 21, 2003
Chaired by Claudia Castillo Ross