

## A Worthy Investment

**Nearly 30 percent of Brevard County adults rate their overall mental health as “fair” to “poor”.<sup>\*</sup> Many experience depressive disorders and chronic stress. The trauma of mental health illnesses, without receiving proper treatment, can adversely impact families for generations.**

When “Stephanie,” a junior in the New Life Mission program, walked into the office, she warned that her story wasn’t “that great”. She looked out of the window and said, “My family was normal on the outside, but we had our secrets, too.”

Stephanie and her siblings grew up in a two-parent family with access to lots of toys and extracurricular activities. She smiled as she recalled receiving a toy camera from her second-grade teacher and learning to develop film in her middle school teacher’s dark room.

She loved capturing images, and photography soon became her escape from her family’s dark times. Stephanie’s brother struggled with mental health disorders and began self-soothing with harmful substances. He never received the medical attention he needed, and his mental illness became overwhelming. He lost his battle, and their family was heartbroken.

Despite living with debilitating grief, Stephanie continued pursuing photography and several careers with her creative talents. She then became a mother.

Her youngest son was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and she left her job to be his primary caregiver.

The challenges of having a child with special needs took a toll on her marriage. Her husband became violent and turned to alcohol to cope with the stressors.

Stephanie shared, “My children and I started over together, but it was the safest I’ve ever felt. My mom welcomed us into her home then passed unexpectedly. We were homeless with nowhere to go. A friend invited us to live with them, but the situation became toxic.”

She prayed and surrendered. This was an absolute turning point in her relationship with God.

“It wasn’t until I came to New Life Mission that I felt comfortable to speak about God,” she said. “The other moms, my case managers and Bible study mentors spoke about their relationship with God how I spoke about my love for my mom. I knew He was someone I wanted to know more personally.”



During Stephanie’s first week at New Life Mission, her case manager asked if she would be interested in re-enrolling in college courses, and she was surprised the program would “invest” in her.

“I believed God brought the right teachers to me,” she said. “They supported me with my children and helped me get new photography gear. My dream has always been to be a photographer for *National Geographic* magazine.”

“My dream is to buy a home, so my children will never have to worry about being homeless ever again,” she said. “I know my journey won’t end with NLM when I graduate. I want to give back. It’s powerful when women support women.”

<sup>\*</sup>Source: 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment, Brevard County, Florida

***“I want to help raise awareness about mental health, and help at least one person.”***

# The New Has Come

We are on track to **DOUBLE** capacity this year!



After two years of preparation and renovations, we are ready for operation! As you read this, we are welcoming new families onto our fourth campus, New Life Village.

The three homes on the property will offer group-style and apartment-style living, and will now be the entry point for all women with children as they enter our program and begin their journeys toward self-sufficiency.

We will continue to track the progress of our moms (who we call "students") as they move through the levels of the program: freshman, sophomore, junior, senior.

While not every student who enters our program reaches graduation, the seeds that are planted in each of those levels are pieces of knowledge and learned coping skills that can never be taken away.

As we grow and evolve as a mission, we're tracking the needs of our families more closely, specifically those required by the children in our program.

By opening our own child care center, Kids Academy, we are able to respond to the needs of our children that require more specialized services as a result of the abuse, trauma, and, in many cases, disadvantages they may have experienced.

## Increased Need

With the rising costs of housing, food and supplies, the needs of individuals experiencing poverty and homelessness have risen dramatically in Brevard County.

Over the last year, our intake calls for service have increased 181 percent. We are responding with a plan to **DOUBLE** our capacity in 2023!

A breakdown of our campuses:

- Casa Carol - 8 families
- Joy's Place - 5 families
- New Life Village - 15-18 families
- Life Transformation Center: 8 families in graduate housing

By serving 30+ families, we will likely be serving 70-80 individuals or more. One mom may have one child; whereas, another mom may have three, four or five children. We advocate for the children, just as we advocate for the moms.

## Together

As Helen Keller said, "Alone we can do so little; *together* we can do so much."

Thank you for being *together* with us on this journey as we bring about generational change for the least, the lost and the hurting in our community.

I hope to see you at our annual Community Care & Share fundraiser April 27 and 28!

Amy Lyon  
CEO



## Come & See New Life Village

Saturday, May 20, 2023 | 10 a.m.-1 p.m.\*

326 Croton Road, Melbourne

You're invited to **Come & See** New Life Village as we open this campus to families. See inside a home, visit Kids Academy, tour the Transformed Shop sewing center, and learn about opportunities to volunteer and support the transformation of families.

\*The guided walking tour takes approximately one hour.



Scan here to  
RSVP and for  
more information





# Now Open: Kids Academy



In the fall, New Life Mission launched our own child care center, Kids Academy, for the children in our program. This has removed the barrier many of our moms face in finding safe, affordable child care, and the transportation to get them to school. We know when a child is cared for, a mother is better able to focus on the tasks she needs to accomplish to move her family forward.

Each morning starts with a nutritious breakfast and "Circle Time". This is time for the teachers to greet students, lead worship and review the day's lesson and calendar.



By mid-morning, the children have plenty of time to play outdoors. They like going on nature walks and tending to their class garden. They enjoy harvesting fresh herbs to include in meals.

The children then have lunch and nap time. They finish the day by playing in learning stations. Then mothers return from their work or school day to greet their little ones with smiles and hugs.

Kids Academy Manager, Dezi, shared that her favorite memories are themed-school days, like Celebrating Dr. Seuss and holidays. She also likes to invite moms to participate in all aspects of their children's learning.

"Our focus is to prepare children to attend public school and feel academically, socially and emotionally confident," Dezi shared.

"We assist mothers with connecting with local professionals to improve behavioral and mental health and heal from any traumas."

When a child thrives, a family is transformed for generations to come!

## Kids Academy's Current Needs

- Snacks, *please no peanuts*
- Manipulative toys to improve fine motor skills
- Toddler puzzles (6-15 pieces)
- Faith-based board books
- Tempera paint



To view a full list of needs, visit [www.NewLife-Mission.org/wishlist](http://www.NewLife-Mission.org/wishlist)

## Volunteer Spotlight

## Helping Hands

**Donna Fox, Facilities Volunteer since 2020**

"I served in the Air Force for over 20 years, and I've always looked for an opportunity to volunteer in every place I was stationed. When I moved to Florida, I purchased an old house and taught myself how to renovate it.

"When a friend introduced me to New Life Mission, I knew my knowledge of home renovating could help them, too. I also agree with the program's values of faith, accountability, education and empowerment. ***It's important for women to learn to be self-sufficient, and not just given a handout.***"

Donna went on to share that some of her favorite memories of volunteering are painting, ripping out kitchens, installing backsplashes and any projects incorporating power tools. "This is a welcoming community," she said, "and they will gladly accept any time or talents you could offer."



[www.NewLife-Mission.org/volunteer](http://www.NewLife-Mission.org/volunteer)

Scan here for  
volunteer  
application







# Handmade Healing

Give a gift with meaning to your staff or clients



"Some of our most popular sellers are the denim keychains, lanyards and coaster sets," said Transformed Shop Coordinator Kameisha Chavis. **"They make great appreciation gifts for employees, teachers, and clients."**

Each product includes an info tag signed by the mom who created it.



By purchasing products from the Transformed Shop, you are empowering a woman to gain valuable skills that will equip her to break the cycle of homelessness.

We are now offering quantity discounts as part of our Corporate Gifts program. The more you buy, the more you save, and the more lives you help transform!

Learn more at [www.TransformedShop.com](http://www.TransformedShop.com)

*You're Invited!*

## Community Care & Share 2023



Thursday, April 27 or Friday, April 28

11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Hilton Melbourne, 200 Rialto Place, Melbourne

To RSVP, please email [CCS@NewLife-Mission.org](mailto:CCS@NewLife-Mission.org)

fundraiser for  
*New Life Mission*



Opening  
*Eyes*  
to  
Homelessness



This luncheon generates nearly half\* of the annual operating budget for New Life Mission. Guests attend at no cost with the knowledge that they will be asked to make a donation.



\*If you are unable to attend, please consider mailing a donation in the enclosed envelope.

[www.NewLife-Mission.org/CCS](http://www.NewLife-Mission.org/CCS)