

## Donating to Planet Thrift helps Grace House



Old books, furniture, bedding, clothes...do you have any of these items in your home that you no longer want or need? Call Planet Thrift! Grace House Ministries has partnered with Planet Thrift, a thrift store located in Centerpoint, AL, and each donation you make directly helps the girls at Grace House. Planet Thrift will come to your home to pick up your items! Just call 205-419-5303 to schedule your pick-up, or drop your items off at the store, located at 1691 Center Point Parkway behind the Taco Bell. Planet Thrift is open Monday-Saturday from 8:30 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. If you have a moment, take a look around inside and do some shopping. Owners Brandon and Melissa Greer have worked hard to provide the Birmingham area with a new standard for thrift store shopping, and you will not be disappointed! **GH**

## Hats Off Banquet Raises 65K for Grace House

The Hats Off Banquet held on May 14, 2011 at the Wynfrey Hotel was a tremendous success! The Grace House Women's Auxiliary did a fantastic job putting the event together and the fruits of their labor resulted in \$65,000 being raised! Highlights from the event included the silent auction, Keynote Speaker Alexa Jones, former resident Beverly Cole, musical guests James Smith and Netra Young, and special guest Briarwood Presbyterian Church Urban Missions Director Jason Williams. Legacy Awards were presented to Church of the Highlands, Burr & Forman, and Jonathan Austin. Brenda Ladun received the inaugural Johnson Brown Award. Thank you to everyone who participated to make this one of the most successful Hats Off banquets to date! **GH**



Executive Director Pamela Phipps (center) with Alexa Jones (left) and Brenda Ladun (right)



From left to right: Latrise Carter (Hats Off Co-Chair), Gwendolyn McNeal (Hats Off Chair), Pamela Phipps (Executive Director), Terri Turner (Auxiliary President), and David Brown (Board Chairman)

"I am going to pour my *life* into you...  
Accept what I say to you as being from the *Lord.*"  
—Mama Lois Coleman, Founder

## GRACE HOUSE ministries, inc.

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"Giving Hope To  
Girls In Crisis"



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[www.grace-house.org](http://www.grace-house.org)

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## How you can help

- Spread the word!
- Invite a speaker to share at your church or group event.
- Organize a food or clothing drive.
- Come to a luncheon and invite co-workers and friends.
- Host a gathering in your home.
- Make a donation.
- Pray.
- Mentor.
- Tutor.
- Volunteer.

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# growing in GRACE

July 2011 [www.grace-house.org](http://www.grace-house.org)

## Monica's Story: from ruin to redemption



*Often in the nonprofit world, the phrase "cycle of abuse" is used.*

*Monica's story shows you why.*

Monica's grandmother gave birth to one daughter and seven sons from four different fathers. This daughter was raped by one of her brothers and gave birth to her first child when she was only 13. A couple of years later, she had a son and then a third child when she was 20; the third child was a daughter named Monica.

Monica's mother had a horrible childhood and was subjected to and witnessed an immoral and abusive lifestyle—a lifestyle she continued to lead as a single mother.

By the time Monica was six years old, she'd witnessed her mother engaging in sexual activities. She'd witnessed her mother abusing drugs, and she'd seen her mother get shot in a domestic dispute with a boyfriend. This shooting left her mother physically disabled, which deepened her drug addictions. After school officials became aware of the situation and notified the authorities, Monica and her siblings were removed from their mother's custody and placed with an uncle who would go on to physically and emotionally abuse them for years. Eventually, Monica's oldest sister became

emancipated and her brother ran away. No other family members volunteered to take over caring for Monica.

So she came to live at Grace House. Upon first meeting Monica, a person would never guess her sordid past. She is bright and vibrant, with clear eyes and a big smile that suggests an inner strength and peace. She has a Godly wisdom within her that radiates outwardly and is obvious to everyone she talks to. How can this be possible?

The one constant in Monica's life, through all of the moves and drugs and instability and abuse, has been God—she is fortunate to have always known that her Heavenly Father has been by her side despite the blank line above "father" on her birth certificate.

In only a few short months, Monica has established herself as a strong young woman of God at Grace House, and she is flourishing with the structure and love she is being given. The Grace House staff is dedicated to nurturing her relationship with God and to providing her with an excellent education so that she can break the cycle of abuse that has defined her family for generations. Monica is no longer in ruins but now redeemed. **GH**

also in  
this  
issue...



Shopping for a cause  
at Planet Thrift



Graceful girls  
growing gardens

## Fairfield Community Garden—

### more than an agricultural lesson

As a part of our education platform, the girls at Grace House are encouraged to participate in service learning projects. Grace House is currently partnering with the Nehemiah Project as members of the Fairfield Community Garden. The girls were given two garden plots where they have planted collard greens, squash, peppers, and tomatoes. They have been blessed to learn about gardening while being taught valuable lessons about the purpose of community gardens and the benefits of growing their own food. This is firsthand experience for the girls to see how caring and tending to something yields great results. Seeing the girls working in the soil with others in the community, for a common purpose, has really enriched their lives. The bi-weekly visits have become much anticipated, as the girls can't wait to see what has sprouted or ripened, and the house parents are having fun incorporating this fresh produce into meals as well. Salsa anyone? **GH**

## Adopt-A-Grandparent program fills void for GH girls

It is often discussed that the girls at Grace House do not have mothers and fathers they can count on. While this is certainly the most notable family omission, extended family—grandparents, cousins, aunts, and uncles—are also missing from the girls' lives. In an effort to provide the girls with role models and the comforting presence we know grandparents to be, Grace House has started an Adopt-A-Grandparent program at assisted living facility Princeton Towers.

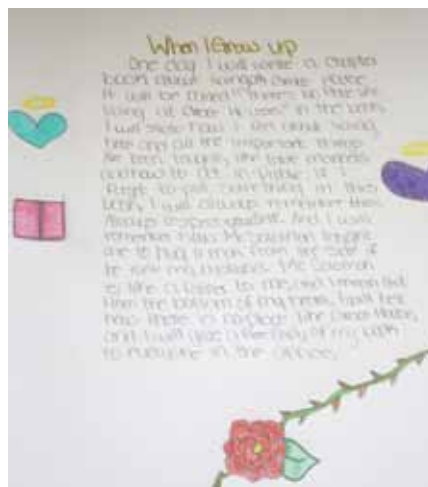
Many of our girls have been paired with elderly men and women to serve as surrogate grandchildren to those in need of this special kind of caring. It is a reciprocal relationship where we know that both the grandparents and the girls at Grace House will reap remarkable and valuable rewards. If you are interested in this program, please contact Arlene Godwin at agodwin@grace-house.org **GH**



Princeton Towers resident with the gift basket he won from Grace House in a drawing

## Prose Corner: "When I Grow Up"

"One day I will write a chapter book about living at Grace House. It will be called, 'There's no place like living at Grace House.' In the book, I will state how I feel about living here and all the important things I've been taught, like table manners, and how to act in public. If I forget to put something in this book, I will always remember this: Always respect yourself. And I will remember how Mr. Solomon taught me to hug a man from the side if he isn't my husband. Mr. Solomon is like a father to me, and I mean that from the bottom of my heart. I will tell how there is no place like Grace House, and I will give a free copy of my book to everyone in the office." **GH**



## Volunteer spotlight: Mimi Cawood

*Mimi is one of our most beloved volunteers. In her own words, she explains why she chooses to volunteer at Grace House...*

I first heard about Grace House through Briarwood Presbyterian Church's Urban Ministry. I attended a "Lunch with Lois," and I felt an instant bond to the ministry. I cannot understand who could abuse, abandon or neglect these precious girls, but I am so thankful the Lord led me to learn more about Grace House.

I volunteer to show the light of Christ to these young women. I want the ladies to develop important life skills at Grace House so they can succeed no matter what their circumstances may be in the future.

It is such a pleasure to spend time with the Grace House girls. Whether it is skating, book club or going to the beach, I love to see them smile.

—Mimi Cawood **GH**



Mimi pictured with her husband, Joseph

## God's delightful and unexpected answers

by Natalie Heard, *Development Intern*

Picking an internship can be a daunting task for any college student. As a journalism mass communication major at Samford University, there are many intern opportunities in my field and finding the right one has a great influence on where my career might start after graduation.

As a dedicated daughter, sister, and aunt, I wanted to be home with my family for the summer. I first started applying for internships in my hometown, a little place the world calls "Music City," Nashville, TN. I became discouraged as most places I applied to probably had 500 other collegians hoping to make it big. As the emails continued to come in saying there were no positions available, I decided I would open myself up to an internship in Birmingham and allow the Lord to do the rest. Little did I know just what He had in store for me.

Just two short days later, I received an email from our department chair about an internship at Grace House Ministries. I read the description and was in awe about the position and the work being done at Grace House.

The ministry's mission was personal for me as my sister had recently gotten out of an abusive relationship—a relationship that produced my much-adored niece, aptly

named, "Grace." My heart echoed the purpose of this ministry that meets physical needs while also working toward spiritual healing. I was convinced Grace House was where I needed to be this summer. Luckily for me, God placed it on their hearts to choose me for the internship as well!

Since I started working at Grace House, I've found this internship to be everything I wanted and more. I'm surrounded by truly remarkable women who love what they do, who they are serving, and their God. I am privileged to take part in this ministry that so graciously encourages girls aching for love, and being in a place willing to give this love ministers to me. The people working here seek to exhibit God's two greatest commands: to love God with all their hearts and to love others as He has loved us. Grace House isn't in Music City near my family, and it's not a big design firm where I am going to "make it big." Grace House is in Fairfield, AL, and it is a small ministry—a small ministry doing very BIG things! I am humbled each day by the work being done here and by the girls who refuse to stop smiling and making plans. After all, God has promised to lift up the humble. So, who am I to argue? **GH**

## Education update

Grace House served 11 high school students, 17 middle school students, and seven elementary students during the 2010-2011 school year. These girls attended school at Restoration Academy, Fairfield High, Forest Hills Middle, Glen Oaks Elementary, and CJ Donald Elementary. In addition, one resident successfully completed 6th grade through Grace House's home school partnership with Harvest Community Christian Home School.

In an effort to maximize their academic potential and address recognized deficiencies, our girls were provided with tutors 2-3 times per week during homework time. As a result, we saw great improvement on their overall grades. Six of the students were consistently on the A/B Honor Roll for the entire school year and several others were on the Honor Roll intermittently during that time. We are proud to say that two of our girls passed all four parts of the Alabama High School Graduation Exam; and, in May, we had three eighth grade graduates and one fifth grade graduate!

Grace House has been very pleased with our school partnerships, and education continues to be a primary focus for the organization. We know that each girl reaching her potential academically is the best way to break the cycle of abuse and see the girls continue the forward momentum they establish while living at Grace House. **GH**

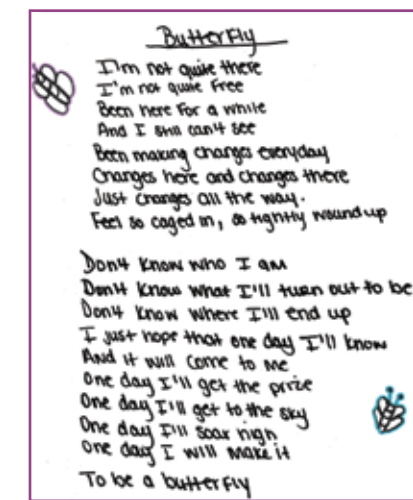


New technology is now available for the girls to continue growing as our world goes high-tech.

## Extracurricular activities keep the girls busy

Along with their academics, the girls at Grace House participate in a wide range of extracurricular and cultural enrichment activities. In the past few months, they have attended the ballet, plays, and musical events. Also, Children's Dance Foundation awarded Grace House fourteen dance and drama scholarships, which covered all related expenses, including recital costumes! What a blessing this has been for our girls as they have discovered new ways to express themselves while also becoming more fit! Four of our girls participated in CDF's annual recital at the Alabama Theater as well. They did a fabulous job, and we were so excited to attend as a Grace House family. Several volunteers also came and brought the girls roses. The smiles on their faces were truly uplifting!

The girls attended vacation bible school at Sixth Avenue Baptist Church and Restoration Academy, completed an etiquette workshop, and served with the Fairfield Missions Project sponsored by Briarwood Presbyterian Church. They are currently participating in summer academic enrichment programs at Restoration Academy and Better Basics, economic literacy activities, and the Giving Voices poetry symposium hosted by Aids Alabama. In their "free time," they are taking dance, swimming, and art lessons as well! Upcoming events include several college campus tours in July and a Smart Girls Math and Science Boot Camp that will be held in August at Grace House. Please keep us in your prayers as we continue our busy summer schedule with the girls! **GH**



(See below for typed version of poem above.)

## Poetry Corner: "Butterfly"

I'm not quite there	Been making changes everyday	Don't know who I am	One day I'll get the prize
I'm not quite free	Changes here and there	Don't know what I'll turn out to be	One day I'll get to the sky
Been here for a while	Just changes all the way.	Don't know where I'll end up	One day I'll soar high
And I still can't see	Feel so caged in,	I just hope that one day I'll know	One day I will make it
	So tightly wound up.	And it will come to me.	To be a butterfly. <b>GH</b>

*I have found my voice*