

Genesis House unlike other shelters

GENESIS, from 1D

same vicinity and each serves a certain segment of homeless women 18 and older. (Genesis House no longer provides housing for younger teens.)

■ Genesis House I, which opened in November 1977, is for adult mothers and children who are homeless and in transition; some of the moms are pregnant. The house has a nursery for moms and infants and a dormitory-style room for moms with older children. A third room in the basement is for a mom with one school-aged child.

The mothers usually stay for a short period of time — about two months — while they work to make more permanent living arrangements. If the moms enroll in school, they can move to Genesis House II.

■ Genesis House II, where Golebiewski lives, opened in 1984, and is for student mothers older than 18 and their children. It has eight bedrooms and two bathrooms for the residents. Some of the moms are in vocational school or pursuing college degrees. The moms can live there as long as they are in school. Some stay four years, until completing their degrees.

■ Genesis House III opened in September 1989, and is for homeless pregnant women older than 18. It provides shelter for six pregnant women, all of whom live in one room upstairs. The women share a tiny bathroom and shower. Once their babies are born, the women, if enrolled in school, can move to Genesis House II. Many find their own living accommodations.

These shelters are not traditional homeless shelters. The homes are like antique dollhouses or cottages, with pink exteriors and narrow zig-zag wooden stairs leading to multiple levels. Genesis House I was built in 1927, Genesis House II in 1899 and Genesis House III in 1924.

Unlike institutional-like quarters, these houses are homes, with living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens and laundry rooms. It's upscale living, especially for a woman who has been sleeping under a bridge or in an abandoned car, Allen said.

Here, the residents are comfortable. In Genesis House II, families get their own private, furnished rooms, including a bed or crib for each member, and a television. The house even has a piano the children can bang on.

"It's not stressful at all," said Golebiewski, who lived in Genesis House III for a month until her baby was born. "I get my schoolwork done. They help me out with the baby. It's a cheap place to stay, so you can save your money, get a career and then be on your feet."

How it started

Genesis House was not born out of personal experience. Allen, a mental health therapist at Circles of Care, never was homeless nor single and pregnant.

She grew up in North Dakota, where single-parent households were rare. She had one friend who was being raised by a single parent, so she knew a little bit about a mother bringing up a child alone.

But she knows what it takes to raise children. She has nine, five of her own and four adopted.

In 1973, Allen started volunteering with Birthright, an international pregnancy organization that



Window of hope. Jessica Bennett, 26, a mother of three, moved to Genesis House in Melbourne from Maitland about a year ago after she and her kids' father split up. "I kind of had to start from the ground up by myself," she said.

provides support to pregnant girls and women faced with unplanned pregnancy. She repeatedly encountered pregnant women who had no place to go.

She and two other volunteers started Genesis House and, from 1973 to 1977, housed pregnant women in people's homes. Genesis House was incorporated as a non-profit in 1977.

"I think I didn't know what I was getting in to," she said with a chuckle. "I didn't know I was making a lifelong commitment. I just saw a need."

She acknowledges running Genesis House is not cheap. Operating expenses are about \$300,000 a year. Donations are down and costs are up.

Funding comes from an array of sources: churches, businesses, organizations and individuals.

Genesis House also applies for government grants, which have been used to replace windows, redo floors, purchase appliances and install new air-conditioning systems. The nonprofit also relies on countless volunteers — there are birthday parties, Christmas parties, Easter celebrations, cook-outs and classes for everything from self-esteem to budgeting.

The process to get into Genesis House is fairly simple. Women must take a drug test and interview with the Genesis House case manager, Dona Guindon. Genesis House will take them if there is room. Sometimes the houses are full. A woman with five kids recently was turned away, but Genesis House found her other ac-

commodations.

"Their needs are 99 percent met," said Rebecca Henderson, house manager in Genesis House II. (Each house has a manager who lives in an apartment for free and receives a small stipend. She makes sure things are running smoothly).

For example, Genesis House helps moms who don't have any clothing or come without ID. Food is not a concern either. Most of it is donated or purchased from the food bank and some of the moms get food stamps. Volunteers even will teach a mom how to cook economically for her family.

Not 'welfare moms'

Moms come to Genesis House for many reasons. Some are from abusive situations. Others became homeless because of job loss.

Sharon Pace, 22, was living in the woods in Palm Bay when she got pregnant. She is eight months pregnant and is staying in Genesis House III.

"I found out I was pregnant and I didn't have nowhere to go," said Pace, who is engaged to her baby's father. She spends her days looking for housing and is working to get Social Security benefits. If she can go to school, she would like to become a massage therapist.

Jessica Bennett, 26, a mother of three, ages 6, 3 and 1½, moved to Genesis House from Maitland about a year ago after she and her kids' father split up.

"I kind of had to start from the ground up by myself," she said.



Heat fan. Jay, 17 months, lives with his mother Shaye in Genesis House II. The house is for student mothers older than 18 and their children.

"It's not like one of those places where you just go and mooch off of them. Here, everyone's trying to better their lives instead of just being content where they are."

Kandice Golebiewski, Genesis House resident

Despite the perception of a slothful welfare mom, these mothers have responsibilities other than raising their kids: they must pay rent (\$2 per day per person), do household chores (two a day) and keep their rooms neat. They are responsible for finding day care and transportation.

Depending on their situation, during the day they take classes at school or online, hold jobs, look for work, study for their GEDs, search for more permanent housing.

A case manager, therapist and graduate-school interns counsel and guide residents on finding resources in addition to addressing the issues that led to their homelessness. The residents are held accountable for setting and achieving their goals.

"It's not like one of those places where you just go and mooch off of them," Golebiewski said. "Here, everyone's trying to better their lives instead of just being content where they are."

Seeking a better life

Indeed, the moms are motivated to do better for themselves and their kids.

Bennett takes online classes at Axia College through University of Phoenix, and works at a nearby restaurant. Her goals: finish her AA degree, go back to school for her bachelor's and move into a house.

She is hoping to be accepted into the Women's Center transitional housing program because the women have their own apartments.

"Something I want to give my kids is their own home, to be able to run around," she said.

But she is grateful for what Genesis House has done for her and her family. "If this place didn't exist, I don't know where I would be."

Genesis House has changed thousands of lives during its more than 30-year existence. Former residents come back to volunteer, to donate, sometimes simply to say thank you.

Henderson recalls a young

woman who knocked on the door four years ago. She had donations for Genesis House in her car. As she walked with her to the car to help her unload them, she learned the former resident was now a registered nurse married to a doctor.

"She said, 'I knew one day that I was going to pay Genesis back for all the goodness they did,'" Henderson said. "People just really are grateful that there is a program like this."

Golebiewski certainly is. She wants to finish her AA degree and attend the University of Miami to study marine biology.

"I want to have a better life for my daughter, and this place is helping me do that."

Former residents praise their experience at Genesis House, even though the women could be catty and some of them, as Connie Monroe put it, "didn't have a clue." Monroe lived in Genesis House for five months in 1986 after she got pregnant while a junior at Florida State University. One of seven children, she did not want to burden her parents, so she moved there.

"I went in expecting a place where I could sit and think and write and contemplate my life," she said. "I was thrown into a situation where I was dealing with women from all walks of life, no education, poverty stricken. There were girls dealing with drug and alcohol addiction."

Monroe enrolled at the University of Florida when her son was eight weeks old. She graduated and taught for almost a decade. She now is married with two more sons and is working as a producer in Glendale, Calif.

Even though her life has moved on, she has not forgotten Genesis House. When her son graduated from high school, she thought about the other Genesis House babies. "I was thinking, 'Wow, where are they all now?'"

"It was such a great experience because it really taught me that any woman is only three bad choices away from being homeless," she said. "It made me realize how fortunate I was coming from a real strong, connected family with an education." ■

'Gus' breaks new ground on 'Breaking Bad'

BY FRAZIER MOORE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — Walter White has lived a hectic life since learning he has terminal lung cancer, then deciding to apply his skills as a high school chemistry teacher to cook and sell methamphetamine so that, after he's gone, his family will be provided for.

During the first three seasons of the AMC drama "Breaking Bad," Walt (played by series star Bryan Cranston) has grappled not only with cancer, but also with a Mexican drug cartel, his tormented wife, a brother-in-law who is a DEA agent, and his unstable partner in crime, Jesse Pinkman (co-star Aaron Paul).

Bleak, suspenseful, shocking and, at times, bitterly funny, "Breaking Bad" has charted the transformation of Walt from a middle-class Albuquerque, N.M., milquetoast to a dark virtuoso of the crystal-meth game. His cancer seems less of a threat these days, but he regularly faces other perils. Meanwhile, thanks to the genius of this series, viewers root for Walt to escape each close call, despite his growing villainy.



'Bad' guys. Things heat up between Giancarlo Esposito, left, and Bryan Cranston in "Breaking Bad."

"Breaking Bad" begins its fourth season at 10 tonight, and, further upping the ante, future episodes pit Walt, *mano a mano*, against his most formidable opponent yet: big-time drug boss Gustavo "Gus" Fring.

Gus has been a presence since Season 2, when, played by Giancarlo Esposito, he emerged as an instantly fascinating character — a man of professional mien, soft-spoken, even-tempered.

"I decided that I wanted to play him really graceful, calm, even modest," Esposito says. "I decided to trust that I could do very, very little, and get my point across."

He gets his point across all right, chillingly, while keeping Gus unexceptional to the

naked eye.

"I wanted him to be someone who hides in plain sight," says Esposito.

Gus keeps his criminal activities under wraps beneath his identity as a legitimate businessman. He owns several outlets of a fast-food chain, Los Pollos Hermanos ("The Chicken Brothers"), as well as an industrial laundry processing center (a perfect cover, literally, for his huge subterranean meth-processing lab).

Walt and Gus have had their past differences. Can Walt now forge an agreement with Gus to get back to running the lab with Jesse?

Well, not before the unforgiving Gus teaches them a lesson on the order of: Even

if it doesn't make good business sense to kill you, I'll make you wish you were dead.

Esposito says he originally was signed for a single episode of "Breaking Bad."

The story called for Walt to be dispatched by a go-between to a fast-food restaurant to meet a buyer for the methamphetamine he and Jesse had cooked in their motor-home lab. On arriving, Walt almost missed Gus, hidden in plain sight in his restaurant manager's uniform.

"In that first scene in Los Pollos Hermanos when he didn't know who I was, for me to play that little game got us both very interested in each other," Esposito recalls, speaking as much about himself and Bryan Cranston as about Gus and Walt.

"We listened to each other," he says, explaining the secret to their acting chemistry, "and real listening is listening with every part of your being. From the beginning, that's the way I felt working with Bryan. I love working with the guy."

"And what always surprises me about Bryan is, he's really funny," Esposito adds. "Masterfully funny." ■

Clifford: Being 89 is no cakewalk

CLIFFORD, from 1D

copy documents at a lucrative legal firm and at first cranks the stuff out quickly.

Then suddenly he starts refusing to do his assigned tasks, telling his boss over and over again, "I would prefer not to," without further explanation. Eventually, he's unwilling to do any work at all.

I'll leave out the ending so as not to ruin the story for anyone, but the tale has been the subject of some 150 years of literary theorizing about what Bartleby's actions — and Melville's portrayal of him — mean.

Some critics say Bartleby is a symbol of protest against the oppressions of a materialistic, dehumanizing society.

Perhaps the link between Bartleby and my mother's refusal to participate in a needless exercise is a stretch. It makes me smile, though, remembering what Mom did.

Being 89 is no cakewalk, but at least you can check out — pull a Bartleby — without fear of consequences.

As a follow-up, we later heard from the insurer that the nurse should have used a short form for dementia patients and backed off rather than tire a patient out.

Lesson learned: Family members should take control rather than going along with unacceptable treatment of the elderly, by insurance company employees or anyone else. ■

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