



# ANNUAL REPORT 2007

# MISSION STATEMENT

MOMMAS is a home for young mothers aged 17 to 21 years and their babies. For approximately two years, the young mothers at MOMMAS house continue education or vocational experience interrupted by pregnancy. With guidance and direction, the young mothers can learn to support themselves and their children independently.



Katherine & her daughter Rihanna

## MOMMAS House

Mother-Child Residences

MOMMAS Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation

### Main Office:

1857 Wantagh Avenue

Wantagh, NY 11793

516-781-8637

Residences in Nassau County, NY:

Glen Cove

Jericho

Hempstead

Massapequa

[www.mommashouse.org](http://www.mommashouse.org)



“ In July of 2007 I finished school and began working in a doctor’s office. Eventually I would like to further my career in the medical field and become a nurse. MOMMAS House has helped me out a lot. Without Pat Shea and her organization I would not have been able to accomplish all my goals.”

**-Heather** with her daughter Madison

For the past 21 years, MOMMAS House has been offering group residential care to single mothers, pregnant or parenting and their children. All residences are located in Nassau County, New York, but applicants are not limited to that area.

There were 24 mothers and 25 children who shared our home for all or part of 2007. All were offered the opportunity to stay for two years but some did not need that much time and others were unable to adjust to the program requirements. Those who stayed the longest had the highest chance for successful independent living.

There were 159 requests for admission between January 1, 2007 and December 31, 2007. These referrals were from many sources: the Department of Social Services, hospitals, adoption agencies, schools, churches, health care facilities, former residents, pregnancy counseling services, shelters, domestic violence agencies, friends and relatives.

There are many very unique stories, e.g. Katherine and her daughter, Rihanna came to us from Covenant House and in less than two years went from living in a homeless shelter to being totally independent. She completed her GED program, went on to graduate from Hunter Business School and found employment at an engineering firm. She has also obtained her driver's license and hopefully will soon be driving her own car. We have watched her become a confident woman and a loving mother.

Admission is a process of completing an application, having an interview and visiting one of the houses. If placement seems a possibility, releases are forwarded to schools, health care and counseling facilities to obtain further information.

Since many women and girls apply, the next step is deciding who is offered a place. This is very difficult and depends on many factors, including the current make-up of the house, and what problems the girls in residence are already dealing with. The successful applicant signs a contract and agrees to live by a defined set of rules.

In 2007 the age range of the mothers was from 17 to 24, with the median age of 20, and the children from pre-born to 5 years old. There were two children who attended school. Referrals were made for Early Intervention and Special Education evaluations on all of our children because they demonstrated some developmental delays or learning disabilities or the mother did not receive adequate pre-natal care.

“ When I got pregnant four years ago I was going nowhere with my life. Just hanging out on the streets with friends. No school, no work, nothing productive. Since I came to MOMMAS House I got my GED, completed Hunter Business School with straight A's, and now I have a job that I love and I'm moving out into my own apartment! I never would have done any of this if I had not come to MOMMAS House. With the help of MOMMAS House I know I am now going to be a successful independent mother. ”

**-Lisa** with her son Parris



The racial make-up was 56% Black, 14% Caucasian, 18% Hispanic and 12% American Indian or Bi-racial. The mothers were generally living in Nassau and Suffolk County and the Metro New York area. However, there were also mothers from Haiti, Dominican Republic and Guyana.

As for goals attained, seven mothers attended High School, eight earned their General Equivalency Diploma, nine attended vocational/business schools with eight graduating, and six began employment. Day Care was provided on-site to facilitate school attendance. Three mothers have been accepted and are taking classes at Hunter Business School for Medical Assistant certification and Computerized Office Technology and one mother attended college.

Once their goals were reached, four families moved out into their own apartments or to a different housing situation. Five mothers were able to return to their families in a better position to support themselves and their children. Continued support services are offered to our "graduates", so that the initial stage is not so traumatic.

In 2007, the transitional living apartments in our East Massapequa house were fully occupied. Another two of our graduates have moved in. In August 2007 a third group residence was opened in Hempstead, which provided housing for an additional five families. This house was funded by the "Common Sense for the Common Good" grant from Nassau County.

The mothers received instruction in subjects important to the health and well-being of themselves and their families. Workshops were offered at all three houses and addressed the following subjects: Parenting, Debt Counseling, Self Directed Budget, Health and Wellness, Safe Start, Nutrition, Reading and Writing, Financial Literacy, Time Management, Self-Esteem, Job Search and Interviewing, Fire Safety, Cooking, Yoga, STD/AIDS Education, "How to be A Single Parent", Domestic Violence, Anger Management, Medication Management, Bias Help and Home Ownership.

In October, all the residents met privately with Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, the renowned pediatrician, at an Adelphi University conference. It was memorable for all. They also met with Pam Stenzel, the dynamic speaker on abstinence. As part of the Financial Literacy workshop, the residents of the Jericho house came in second place in Newsday's "Stock Market Game".

Stephanie and her daughter Amaya



For recreation the mothers attended the Circus, the L.I. Balloon & Music Festival, a Halloween Party, pumpkin picking, sports challenges, Mother Day's dinner and parties, a Mardi Gras Party, pool parties, picnics and an evening with students at St John's Campus Ministry. All graduations were celebrated, as were birthdays and baby showers. Each mother was given the opportunity to obtain her driver's license. Grants were obtained to sponsor 10 new drivers and our Independent Living social worker devoted much time to obtaining necessary documents, scheduling testing, driving lessons and five hour courses. But in the end, it was one of their most exciting days to receive their licenses.

The staff has increased since we started the new house. Each house has two House Managers and a day care worker. The staff of MOMMAS House is very dedicated to the goals of reducing homelessness, improving pregnancy outcomes and insuring healthier babies. Each of our four homes has supervisory staff and three are managed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The fourth is the transitional home where there is less intense supervision. There are 12 full time employees and 4 part-time. There are about 180 volunteers, who work in various capacities, and who enhance our program in many ways. Two interns from C.W. Post and Molloy College, social work and counseling majors worked with our residents this year assisting the part-time social worker for case management and counseling, as needed.

Additionally, five colleges sent over 40 students to experience Service-Learning with MOMMAS House as well as the alumni of Sacred Heart Academy. The Interior Design Club from Nassau Community College did an amazing makeover in four rooms and the entrance hall in our Glen Cove house. St John's University Staff and Administrators performed days of service, as did the "Feminists for Life." Amityville Kiwanis Club along with other dedicated volunteers spent three months renovating one of our transitional apartments, including a complete new kitchen in the Massapequa house.

Hofstra University's Public Relations classes devoted a full semester to developing a publicity campaign for the 20th Anniversary of MOMMAS House and concluded with a Bowl-a-thon fundraiser to fund the program. They also managed a table at Hofstra's Flower Show and sold our cookbooks to raise additional funds.



“ I believe God has a plan for everyone and I’m so happy that MOMMAS House is a part of my plan.”

-**Narousse** on her graduation day

There were also two Boy Scout Eagle Scout awards and two Girl Scout Gold Awards for projects complete on behalf of MOMMAS House. There were group projects by the Adelphi University community service group, CALIBER.

Cohen Optical sent a mobile eye exam van to our houses and provided free eye exams and prescription glasses for all residents. Some of the mothers had a great need for corrective lenses and never has the funds to obtain them. St. John’s Univ. Masters level Speech and Language students performed individual assessments on each child and sometimes the mothers. They then referred for services or taught the mothers how to improve their child’s ability to communicate. In two instances, it was discovered the children needed special educational programs. Currently MOMMAS is working collaboratively with Catholic Charities and Nassau County government on several projects.

MOMMAS House is a member of the Pregnancy Services Network, the Residential Service Providers Group, the Inter-Agency Council of Glen Cove, APVA and L.I. Volunteer Center of Nassau County.

The director has been appointed to the Nassau County Task Force to End Homelessness in 10 years.

There were 26 speaking engagements at organizations (both civic and religious), schools and women’s groups. MOMMAS was featured in three television/radio stories. Our newsletter is published 3-4 times/year and there have been several newspaper articles in the religious and secular press. Our web site ([www.mommashouse.org](http://www.mommashouse.org)) generated much interest and about 20 new volunteers and supporters. This was also the vehicle for referrals from all over the country.

Our 2007 operating costs were \$571,349. Because of increased fund raising revenue and grants, there was a net income of \$701,199 (including funds raised to purchase a house). This has finally given us an opportunity to do needed improvements, and to have an ability to meet unforeseen expenses. A complete report may be obtained from the N.Y.S. Charities Registration Bureau ([www.oag.state.ny.us/charities.html](http://www.oag.state.ny.us/charities.html)) and Guidestar.com.

A Capital Fund Campaign is about 60% toward raising the money to purchase one of our houses. It is time that we stop renting and start investing income into property that MOMMAS owns. Our future is more secure and our organization continues to grow in an effort to meet the needs of these most vulnerable members of our society – the homeless mothers and their babies.

NOT THE END...



...JUST THE  
**BEGINNING**