



St. Clare's Home
RESTORING HOPE ~ SAVING LIVES

Dear Volunteers and Supporters,

We are thrilled that St. Clare's Home is celebrating its **Fifth Anniversary** on **Aug. 11, 2026**. Over these five years, we have served 77 moms in Greenville and eight moms in our Charleston home. Both locations are currently full, and we have a waiting list of moms who need support. We also continue to offer outreach to other low-income women who just need a little assistance and an occasional helping hand.

Our next project is to **build a convent for the Charleston sisters**. Our religious deserve to live in community, and they need space for three to share prayer and community life. Because of zoning restrictions, we have not been able to bring a third sister on-site, and for the past year, Hospitaller Sisters Leena Joseph and Cherry Butaslac have been living with the residents 24/7. They need private time and their own space.

The plan is to build the same convent structure as we did in Greenville on an adjacent lot to our Charleston site. Rising Tide Builders has agreed to do this for us at cost; however, the total project is still approximately \$500,000. Excitingly, once the sisters live in their convent, we can expand to serve five moms in the Charleston home!

We are deeply proud of our mothers and the progress they've made toward independent living for themselves and their children. They come from diverse backgrounds, and some are part of the troubling statistic that 20% of children who age out of the foster care program become homeless within their first five years. Several of our moms have experienced this reality. With a little support and guidance, they move forward and build stable futures.

This anniversary letter highlights Zenaida, one of our moms. She has been with us for only a few months, and we're already amazed by how much progress she has made. Recently, we held a gender reveal party, and we discovered she is expecting a baby girl.

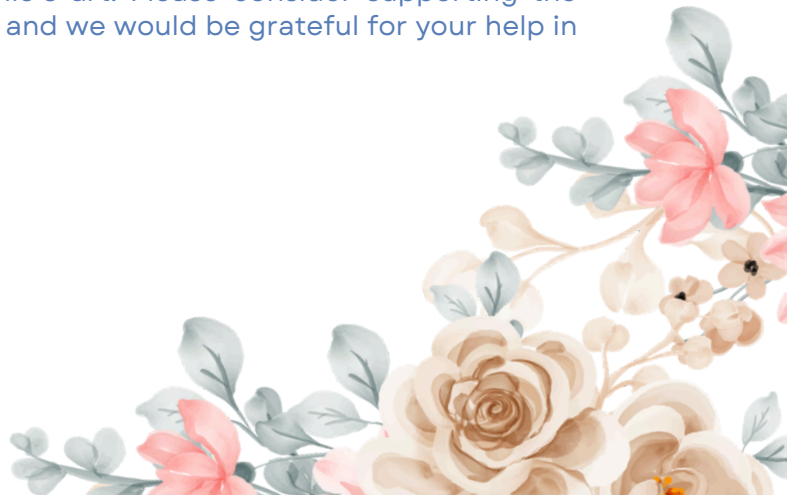
Another mom, Noelle, who once aged out of foster care, is a budding artist. We joyfully share the picture she drew of our Blessed Mother.

We hope you enjoy Zenaida's story and Noelle's art. Please consider supporting the operating expenses of both St. Clare's homes and we would be grateful for your help in building our new Charleston convent.

In the Service of Christ,

Valerie

Valerie Baronkin
Executive Director, St. Clare's Home



Zenaida's Story

When going through the motions of life, it's never linear. It's a rollercoaster of good and bad days. Growing up, every day felt like a bad day, maybe an OK day, but never one I could look forward to. From the day I was born until I turned 18, I moved around, always feeling unwanted.

By the time I was 6, I'd lived in four states with four different family members.

I moved to South Carolina the summer before second grade, and from there things only got worse. When you're young, you're naive and hopeful, trusting the people around you. Unfortunately, I found more comfort in strangers than in the family who were meant to love me. I grew up without my parents, which may seem like the problem, but in hindsight I was better off without them. I felt like a burden: unwanted, unloved, unwelcome. I asked God the question everyone faces during hard times: "Why me?"

I overcame many obstacles, including bullying from peers and adults in my life. By the time I was 14, I was in foster care. I attended five different high schools before graduating with a 3.6 GPA. Even through the trials, I never gave up on myself, and neither did God. It took years to understand that sometimes God puts you through battles because he knows you're strong enough to fight them. I didn't lose faith; I still believed in myself.

After high school, I didn't have the resources to go to college. I was working to survive and pay rent. I wasn't happy, but that felt normal because I was never truly happy to begin with. I was at peace, though, knowing I had God in my corner. But after four years of working and surviving, I lost my way.

I somehow always made just enough to stay afloat, but I was living paycheck to paycheck, without reliable transportation, struggling to feed myself balanced meals. It felt like a never-ending cycle of hopelessness. I stopped praying, wasn't active in church, wasn't reading my Bible or living by his Word. I had faith, but we know faith without works is dead.

This year, I faced the possibility of homelessness. I was let go from my job after being unable to work due to nausea. Then I found out I was pregnant, and it was the scariest moment of my life. My instant thought was, "How can I take care of a child when the role models in my life failed me?" Paired with being homeless, pregnancy seemed like a curse.

Once I came to terms with it, I realized I needed a different outlook. I had to get myself together for myself and my baby. I never gave up before, so it didn't make sense to start now. But I knew I couldn't do it alone. I prayed to God to save me and help me find a better path. I lived out of a hotel for weeks, eating microwaved food, having more faith at rock bottom than when I had a home.

After endless rejection from programs and shelters, I was finally given a chance at St. Clare's Home. People say doors close so others can open, and St. Clare's has opened so many I never knew were possible. I'm prepared for the birth of my child and finally looking forward to what the future holds. I'm no longer scared of the parent I'll become, because they are setting me up to be the best I can be. For the first time, I feel wanted, cared for, and not judged—like someone has my best interests at heart. In less than three months, I've obtained Medicaid, food stamps, education in nurse assisting, a car, education on pregnancy and delivery, and the chance at a fulfilled life. For the first time in my life, I'm excited and happy to be alive. I no longer look back and feel shame. I just feel blessed for what it is now.

I truly thank Valerie, Patricia, Sister Leena, and Sister Cherry for being people I can rely on. I appreciate the volunteers who babysit while we're at school, drive us there, and cook our meals. I'm blessed to have them and St. Clare's to call home on this journey of pregnancy and parenthood.



Donations may be made to:

St. Clare's Home

1754 Woodruff Road #170 | Greenville, SC 29607

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