



Christmas 2017

440-240-1851, info@blessinghouse.org, www.blessinghouse.org



Dear Friends,

A few nights ago, we got a phone call to pick up a one year old girl from a local hospital. It was 3 o'clock in the morning, rainy and windy. In the Emergency Room lobby was a blond haired little girl who was obviously entertaining the staff. I spoke with mom to get the necessary information and learn how we could best care for the child. She signed the papers, kissed and hugged her little girl and then the child was in my arms and we headed to the van. Immediately, a song by Chris Tomlin called "Home" came on the radio. I was touched by the words:

***"Oh, I wanna go
Home
Where every fear is gone,
Where I belong,
Home."***



From the very beginning it has been our mission to be "home" for the children we serve. Over the years we have welcomed more than 1,300 children and given them a place to call home. Our home gives them more than a bed and clothing and food. In our home, our staff gives them care and love so that every fear will be gone, and they know that they belong.



We are only able to provide this home for our children because of the generosity of folks like you. We depend on the community to provide us with the resources we need to care for the children and families who come to us for help. ***So we are asking you to please consider making a donation to Blessing House by using the enclosed envelope or donating through our website or Facebook page. Your support is important and greatly appreciated!***

The need for this experience of home is greater than we have ever known. The number of children and families needing our help is growing and we need to respond to that need. Our Board and staff are working on a strategic plan that will allow us to grow our space and increase the number of children who can experience home at Blessing House. We will have a full announcement in the new year and will let you know how you will be able to help.



We count you as a blessing that enables us to care for our children. Through your generosity we continue to welcome, to bless and to care for the children who need our help. As we prepare to again celebrate the birth of the baby who came into the world in an unfamiliar place, surrounded by love, we ask that God bless you and your family.

"Home, where every fear is gone, where I belong."

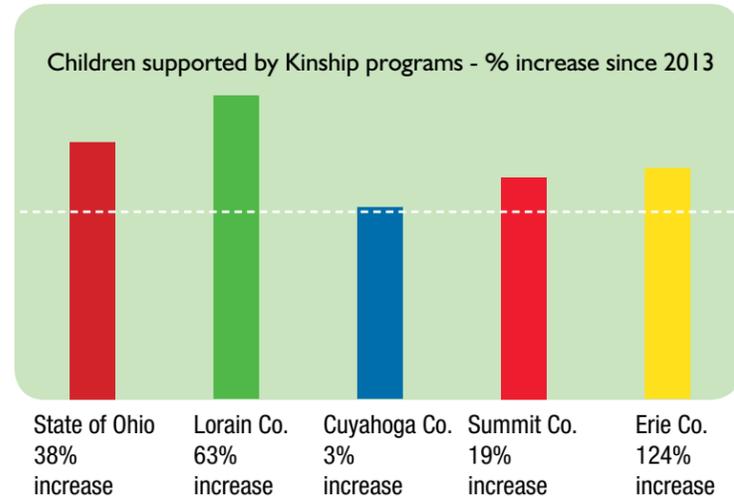
God bless you this Christmas Season,

Sister Mary Berigan
Executive Director

Help Us Help Our Children. Please consider making a donation to Blessing House, www.blessinghouse.org

Blessing House IMPACT

Last year, Blessing House provided 2,472 days of care to 163 children from 81 families. We are often asked what impact these numbers have on the community.



	Number of children placed out of home: % increase since 2013	Dollars spent per placement out of home by County Protection Agency
State of Ohio	11% increase	\$13,629
Lorain Co.	25% decrease ↓	\$9,097
Cuyahoga Co.	8% increase	\$15,857
Summit Co.	16% increase	\$9,418
Erie Co.	16% increase	\$12,401

Blessing House:

- **Keeps children safe while supporting families.** This allows children to return home to be with their parents or caregivers, reducing out of home placements.
- **Saves the taxpayers money.** As out of home placements are reduced and community resources are utilized, child protection agency costs are reduced.
- **Provides support for increasing number of non-traditional families.** Blessing House is a part of the safety net for children living with someone other than a parent.

Did you know . . .

You can make a donation to Blessing House and save on your taxes, too? If you have an IRA account from which you can take a distribution, you can arrange to have a distribution made directly to Blessing House. When you do this, you don't have to pay tax on the distribution. This qualified charitable distribution (QCD) is a great way to save taxes and help our children at the same time. For more information, please contact your tax or investment adviser.

Growing the Heart

Since the beginning of 2017, we have had a waiting list at all times. During this time, there were 148 children whose parent or caregiver requested placement for their child and we could not help them because we did not have the space or ability to care for them at the time. For every child that came to stay at Blessing House, there was another child who could not come.

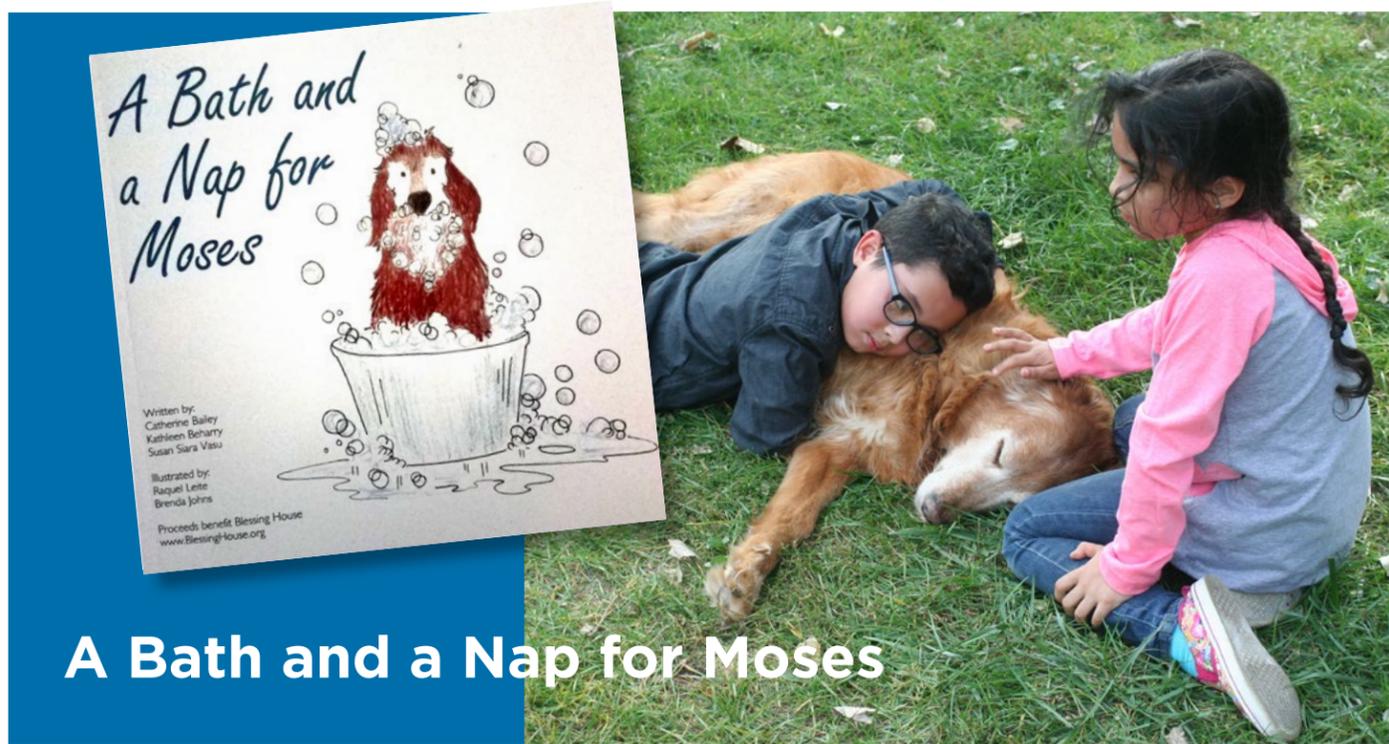
The Board of Directors recognized the growing need for help and began a strategic planning process two years ago. This process determined a need for us to focus on increasing our capacity, obtaining adequate space for our services and expanding services for children and families in need.

Blessing House will soon be announcing our plans for the future that will address these three goals. We are committed to our mission of serving as a safety net for families in crisis by providing a safe shelter for children and support for their family.

As the need for help grows, so must the heart. Blessing House is the house with a heart, where our children are kept safe.

The time has come to grow the heart.





A Bath and a Nap for Moses

It all started one day when Moses went with Sr. Mary to the Blessing House Car and Dog Wash. After he got his bath, he curled up for his nap and was thus the inspiration for this delightful book written by our own Blessing House friends.

This book tells the story about Moses who comes to Blessing House often with Sr. Mary to keep our children company and help them feel at ease. Moses was adopted through the Golden Retriever Rescue group, GRIN, and now shares his love with the children who stay with us.

"A Bath and a Nap for Moses" is available at Blessing House now for \$15 and can be purchased by calling 440-240-1851 or emailing: support@blessinghouse.org. All proceeds from the book go toward the care of the children at Blessing House.

Many thanks to our authors, Catherine Bailey, Kathleen Beharry and Susan Siara Vasu and our illustrators, Raquel Leite and Brenda Johns.



Donor Spotlight

Blessing House is able to help children and families because of our generous supporters. We would like to recognize and thank two of our community partners who have been instrumental in the success of our program.



Jon and Cindy Cromling, The Ross Group of Companies

Jon and Cindy Cromling, the Cromling Family and The Ross Group of companies (Ross Environmental Services, Inc., Ross Incineration Services, Inc., and Ross Transportation Services, Inc.) have been generous supporters of Blessing House through their time, their talents and their treasure.

Cindy Cromling has helped with all thirteen of our gala events and in recent years, she has managed the auction items and co-chaired the event. Jon and Cindy also sponsored and hosted our golf outing at Pine Brook Golf club this year. Cindy is a board member and is always willing to do whatever she can to help our children and families. Cindy says, "Jon and I are honored to support Blessing House and appreciate the care, love and support that each child is given. Blessing House is truly a blessing."

Jon and Cindy, along with the Cromling Family and The Ross Group of Companies believe it is important for everyone to play a meaningful role in the community and to do what they can to improve the quality of life for all. In addition to their generous financial support of our Rock-a-Bye Ball, Jon and Cindy have opened their home and their hearts for the benefit of our children. We are blessed to have them as our partners.



Nordson Corporation

Nordson Corporation and its employees have supported Blessing House financially as well as through ongoing service for many years. The Nordson Corporation Foundation has also given us grants to support our operations. Nordson Corporation and its Foundation have provided financial support to our Rock-a-Bye Ball and have matched the donations of their employees' United Way and private contributions. Since 2006, Nordson Corporation and the Nordson Corporation Foundation have donated or granted over \$190,000 to Blessing House to help our children and families.

Cecilia Render, Executive Director of Nordson Corporation Foundation, stated, "Nordson is proud to be an ongoing partner with Blessing House. They offer a service to the community that helps protect our most vulnerable children."

The Nordson employees have also been helpful in other ways at Blessing House. Volunteers have helped with yardwork, making meals for the children and fixing bikes. They have also made blankets for our children and go home bags as part of Project Night Night. Holly Mihok, an employee at Nordson, also served on our board for several years.



The Nordson Corporation has shared its success with our community through its generosity and corporate citizenship. We are blessed to have them as our partners.



5540 Grove Avenue
Lorain Ohio 44055

HOW ARE DONATIONS SPENT?

Blessing House is a good steward of your very valuable and appreciated monetary donations. 90% of every \$1 goes directly toward our primary cause—to serve children of families in Lorain County who are in crisis, by providing a temporary safe home for children and support for their families.

*2015 Blessing House IRS Form 990

2%

Fundraising

- administrative staff

8%

Management and General Expenses

- office staff
- office supplies
- accounting & auditing
- risk management



90%

Programming and Services

- diapers
- groceries
- supplies
- child care staff payroll
- rent
- utilities
- transportation
- programming staff

Blessing House Board of Directors

President: Mary Herrick
Vice President: Jennifer Randall
Secretary: Brian Tetkowski
Treasurer: Denise Shafer
Jessica Baggett
Cindy Cromling
Sr. Josephe Fernandez, SND
William Gallagher
Stephanie Gillespie
Molly Lucas
Elizabeth Davis Williams
Michael Zidar

Blessing House Staff

Executive Director: Sr. Mary Berigan, SND
Business Manager: Donna Humphrey
Family Advocate: Lea Arcuri
Child Advocate: Laurie Conrad
Shelter Manager: Barbara Hammond
Shelter Manager: Colleen Dirk
Administrative Assistant: Regina Morris