



June 13, 2014

P.O. Box 1304, Decatur, GA 30031-1304

Dear Friends:

Thank you for this opportunity to share exciting news! On July 1, 2014, Our House and Genesis Shelter will complete a merger of the two organizations. This innovative and groundbreaking effort will create a Center of Excellence for homeless babies, children and families throughout metro Atlanta. We've coined the phrase "Stronger Together" to highlight the many benefits of this merger.



Our House, located near the Columbia Seminary in Decatur, and Genesis Shelter, located on Boulevard near the Martin Luther King Jr. Center, share a similar mission and a history of collaboration. Both organizations are devoted to empowering families to achieve self-sufficiency and break the chains of homelessness for this generation and those to come. Both organizations provide supportive environments that include **early childhood education, child care, family case management and support services**. In addition, Genesis provides **shelter** for 18 newborn babies and their families and **after care services for former residents**. Our House offers an **employment readiness** and **Child Development Associate certificate training program**. The merged organization will retain these programs, and as a premier provider of child care and residential services for homeless babies, children and families, consistently seek to improve, strengthen and expand its comprehensive programming.

On any given day there are more than 800 homeless children in the metro-Atlanta area. These children's needs – as well as those of their parents – far outreaches the capabilities of the few agencies dedicated to serving them. The merger of Our House and Genesis Shelter provides an extraordinary opportunity to have a greater, multi-county impact on these families, increasing the number of children and families served and the impact of programming provided.

To learn more about the history and programs of both organizations as well as future community impact, visit us online at www.ourhousega.org and www.genesisanewlife.org.



Over the last two years, volunteer and staff leadership of both organizations have worked carefully and strategically to ensure this merger was best for both organizations and for the babies, children and families we serve. The new organization's President and CEO will be Tyese Lawyer. As the Executive Director of Our House for 10 years, Tyese has led the agency through growth, accreditation and an Our House \$1.6 million capital campaign in 2008 for much needed program expansion. This, coupled with an extensive background in Head Start and early childhood education, positions Tyese as just

the leader the new organization needs to ensure successful completion of all aspects of the merger.

Nancy Friauf, current Executive Director of Genesis Shelter, will remain with the organization through September 2014 to assist in the transition. Over the past four years, Nancy has focused on strengthening the structure, programming and fiscal management of Genesis. Her dedication and leadership have ensured that hundreds of homeless babies and their families have found the path to permanency and that Genesis Shelter is well-positioned for a strong and successful merger.

Your support of critically needed services for homeless babies, children and families has been a vital part of the amazing and life-affirming work of Our House and Genesis. Your ongoing support is essential. Please come with us as we move forward on this journey. We would be delighted to have you visit us and see **our growth and programs in action**. *If you would like to attend a tour at either location, please contact Dannielle Thomas (404) 378-0938 ext. 41 or dthomas@ourhousega.org*. If you are unable to come for a tour, we still welcome your thoughts, ideas and questions! Please feel free to contact Nancy Friauf or Tyese Lawyer via the contact information provided below.



Once again we offer our heartfelt thanks for your willingness to partner with us to serve the homeless babies, children and families of our community. With you by our side, we truly are “Stronger Together”!

Our best;

M. Cayenne Barnes
Board Chair, Our House

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