

First time 3 Year Accreditation
with Exemplary Child
& Adolescent Services



Meeting International
Standards of Quality



printed on recycled paper

Holy Angels as a non-profit corporation
welcomes your contributions.



HOLY ANGELS

6600 Wilkinson Boulevard
Post Office Box 710
Belmont, NC 28012

Non-Profit ORG.
US Postage
PAID
Permit #34
Charlotte, NC

Unlimited Possibilities



Unconditional Love.

Unlimited Possibilities

Unconditional Love.

Unlimited Possibilities

Unconditional Love.

Unlimited Possibilities

Unconditional Love.

Unlimited Possibilities

Unconditional Love.

Unlimited Possibilities

Unconditional Love.

MISSION STATEMENT

In a positive environment of spiritual, physical, educational, social and emotional support, Holy Angels provides children and adults with dignified and empowering opportunities for living with special emphasis on those individuals with varying degrees of mental retardation who may also have other developmental disabilities.

Unconditional Love.

HOLY ANGELS HEARTLINE

SPECIAL EDITION 2010

Unconditional Love. Unlimited Possibilities.

Our First "Angel" Flies To Heaven

It is with great sorrow that we inform you of the death of Holy Angels first resident, Maria Morrow, 54 years old. She passed away due to complications during surgery on Tuesday, August 24, 2010 at Gaston Memorial Hospital.

Holy Angels roots trace back to the love and commitment provided to Maria, who was born December 20, 1955, with complex medical needs, multiple disabilities and a dim prognosis. Maria's mother sought the help of a day care center operated by the Sisters of Mercy. With the Sisters' loving care and medical attention, Maria not only lived but also thrived and the day care became a home for children and adults with mental retardation and physical disabilities where loving and caring became synonymous.

Throughout her life, Maria became somewhat of a local celebrity – primarily due to the writings of Charlotte Observer columnist, the late Kays Gary, and nationally syndicated columnist, Jim Bishop. Everywhere she went – people would stop her – she never knew a stranger and always had a welcoming smile for all.

Maria, who was not expected to live, lived at Holy Angels and was also employed as the morning receptionist at the "Morrow Center" – Holy Angels main facility. In the afternoons she could be found at Cherubs Candy Bouquet in Downtown Belmont, making bouquets.

In her early years, Maria attended Sacred Heart Elementary School, operated by the Sisters of Mercy in Belmont, NC. She was a member of the Girl Scouts. Maria began her employment at Holy Angels in 1975.

Regina Moody, Holy Angels President/CEO, established the Maria T. Morrow Spirit Award in 2005-in recognition of Maria's "spirit," love, perseverance, can-do attitude, empathy, commitment to making a difference, encouragement, always upbeat fun way, determination, sparkle, seeing endless possibilities and unconditional LOVE for all. Each year the Maria T. Morrow Spirit Award is presented to a Holy Angels staff member who exemplifies Maria's indomitable SPIRIT.

Maria will forever be known for her generosity, her sense of humor and her great love of Holy Angels. Throughout her life she did not let any aspect of her disability stop her from experiencing all life had to offer – she traveled to Ireland, participated in several cruise vacations and just last summer had the opportunity to go in the ocean (at Ocean Isle, NC) and on a kayak ride at Camp Lake James, NC. Of course, her very favorite activity was shopping.

According to Mrs. Moody, the spirit of God worked through her in establishing Holy Angels nearly 55 years ago. "Maria's spirit will forever be a part of Holy Angels – and she will truly be missed by all who knew her!" Maria would often, kiddingly, let her Holy Angels friends know, "if it weren't for me, Holy Angels wouldn't be here." That is so true – hundreds of families and their children have been served at Holy Angels due to the love Sr. Patrice and the Sisters of Mercy had for that first fragile baby – who defied the odds and lived – lived life to the fullest – experiencing "unconditional love and unlimited possibilities."

The front desk and the halls of the Morrow Center are quiet these days. . .one expects to hear Maria's voice say, "Good Morning, Holy Angels. Can I help you?" or her chair whizzing by your door as she quickly goes about her morning routine. However, we all know she is in heaven with her dear friends, Sr. Patrice, Mother Benignus, Sr. Annette, Kays Gary and all of the "holy angels" who have gone before her.



HEARTLINE

From My Perspective...Regina P. Moody, President/CEO

Dear Friends,

These past few weeks have been a time of mourning and remembering the life of our first "angel", Maria. She has been the face of Holy Angels for nearly 55 years – our "First Lady".

God certainly used the life of Maria to show us what the power of love can do – there are so many examples. . . a Sister of Mercy who showered a baby, who wasn't expected to live, with lots of love and care and we all watched in wonder as she aged with grace, laughter and lots of spirit. A Sister of Mercy who shared that love and care with other children with special needs and we all watched in wonder as a new ministry was founded. A Mercy ministry, named Holy Angels, expanded and grew beyond the walls of that first building . . . to include our Morrow Center, four community group homes, five ICF group homes, a camp and a vocational program on Main Street in Downtown Belmont – all of this from one Sister of Mercy and one tiny baby who was medically fragile.

Our Maria was given a very special mission during her lifetime with us and it is up to us to carry on her mission. Holy Angels has served hundreds of children with special needs and their families over the past 55 years! Maria left us



in charge and we plan to be here for many years to come.

As we move into the future and life without Maria, we will continue to have funding challenges and more than ever, will need the on-going support of our donors. To honor the memory of Maria, we are asking her friends, family and all who knew and loved her, to consider making a Memorial Donation in Maria's name. (An envelope has been included with this special edition of Heartline.) Your donation not only helps with our day to day operations . . .but also a portion will go to our Endowment Fund to better secure the future of Holy Angels.

Please remember all of us in your prayers as we approach Maria's 55th birthday and cope with the loss of our newest angel. As always, you remain in our prayers, that you will be richly blessed.

P.S. In preparing this Special Edition of Heartline, we have all reminisced and shared our memories of Maria. Do you have a special memory of Maria you would be willing to share with us? Please email to us your favorite story to info@holyangelsnc.org.



Remembering Maria - December 20, 1955 - August 24, 2010

Following the death of Maria, tributes and notes of condolence poured into Holy Angels – she had so many friends! They came in by email, cards and letters, our Facebook page and the Gaston Gazette and Charlotte Observer. Here are just a few of them.

Maria Morrow: a true inspiration; a determining nature; a real go-getter; a loving spirit; compassionate; an angel on earth - the FIRST HOLY ANGEL. She touched the lives of so many in our community, and will continue to do so as her legacy lives.

Sara Osborne - Executive Director the Arc of Gaston County



I am so sad to hear this. She was so incredibly wonderful and had such positive energy to share with everyone.

*Pam Newton Welker
Friend of Holy Angels*



I'm so sorry to hear about Maria. I feel bad for you because I know she was part of your family! It just won't be the same without her smiling face and feisty ways! Maria had a wonderful life and came into this world to pave the way for others like her to have first class care.

Irene Golding - Friend of Holy Angels



I can't believe that we have lost our Head Angel. I write to you with a heavy heart and tears for Maria, but yet I can visualize Maria in heaven on her feet, smiling. And just think, her first steps were with Our Lord. [OK she probably danced.]

Nancy Caldwell-Baker - Volunteer



Heartline is published quarterly by Holy Angels, Inc. 6600 Wilkinson Boulevard, PO Box 710, Belmont, NC 28012-0710. Regina P. Moody is President/CEO and Sr. Nancy Nance, Vice President of Community Relations is the Editor. Holy Angels was founded in 1956 by the Sisters of Mercy. Visit our website at www.holyangelsnc.org. Holy Angels Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) number is 68668



I know there is an emptiness at Holy Angels by the loss of Maria. However, she was so full of spirit and joy, as I remember her, that her memory will forever bring a smile and pleasant thought to mind each time we think of her. God Bless,

Malinda Lowery - Friend of Holy Angels

Maria was such an inspiration to my life and she was always this happy person you never saw her not smiling! I loved growing up going to Holy Angels and always going to find Maria to give her a hug! Love you, Maria! Will be seeing you again someday.

Denice Cope - Volunteer



I never had the pleasure of meeting Maria Morrow but I have read her story several time over the years and admired her greatly.

*Joyce Anderson
Friend of Holy Angels*



I knew Maria for 30 years. Oh the stories I could tell of this wonderful woman! She was an inspiration to me and to all who came in contact with her. Her spirit will always be present at Holy Angels. I will miss your sneaky little laugh but most of all your hugs. I will miss you Maria.

Dot Hopkins - Retired Staff Member

What a legacy she leaves. She impacted so many people, changed so many minds about how those with challenges should be treated and cared for. Maria led a blessed life.

Jean Kienast Culbreth - Friend of Holy Angels

My deepest condolences on the recent loss of Maria Morrow. I visited Holy Angels many times over that 30 years or so and Maria never failed to offer a smile and a good word. She was a true inspiration to many and will be sorely missed. You're home now, Angel, Rest peacefully in His arms.

Andy Pagoota - Friend of Holy Angels

