

SINCE 1887



MERCY
HOME
FOR BOYS & GIRLS

A Solution for Kids in Crisis





An Opportunity



Kids in Crisis

Across the country, and in epidemic numbers, children confront crisis and adversity. From unstable or even abusive living environments, or from chaos that grips their lives. From neighborhood gangs that prey on an adolescent's need for belonging, or from the countless challenges kids face every day.

Each year, a growing number of children need care outside of their own home just to survive. Some no longer have a place that they can call home. At the same time, funding for group homes that provide safe haven is getting scarcer. Opportunities to find safety and healing for young people at risk become more critical with each year.

Mercy Home for Boys & Girls offers young people in crisis an opportunity—one that can save their lives, and change their futures.

Our residential, aftercare and community-based mentoring programs provide nurturing, guidance, and opportunity to more than 400 kids in crisis every year. We assist hundreds more by connecting them to a vast network of accredited professional service-agencies throughout the metropolitan Chicago area.

Mercy Home doesn't just save young lives—we give young people the means for personal, academic and vocational growth. We partner with families to promote healing. We are committed to raising the public's awareness about children in need. And, we are supported by a community that believes in the miracle of God's mercy in action.

Please read on to learn more about how Mercy Home for Boys & Girls provides opportunity, solutions and a life-saving community for kids in crisis.

The Solution



When children enter Mercy Home for Boys & Girls, they are given what had once been lacking—a safe, structured and supportive environment in which they can rebuild their lives and redirect their futures. We provide them with therapeutic, academic and vocational help so that they can grow into healthy, happy adults who will go on to pursue higher education, secure good jobs, and raise loving families of their own.

At Mercy Home, we create a plan to help each child address emotional, behavioral, and educational challenges. That plan contains individually-tailored goals that the child will work toward. And, each child is assigned an advocate on our staff who will personally direct that young person's daily care.

Healing in *Residential Youth Programs* is structured around an ideology of a therapeutic community, in which every interaction with peers and staff presents a learning opportunity that helps a youth correct self-limiting or negative behaviors. We help young people gain a sense of control and help them make

better choices. Young people use their time at Mercy Home to practice new behaviors and are given regular opportunities to build better relationships with peers and adults. Children at Mercy Home participate in individual, group and family therapy, tutoring, study sessions, education and enrichment events.

Our program helps kids succeed. More than two-thirds of our young people—so many of whom come from some of the most challenging life circumstances imaginable—leave Mercy Home more confident and more equipped to make better life choices. Their continued progress is supported further through our program of *AfterCare*, which provides a connection to Mercy Home for as long as they have need.

Additionally, our *Friends First* mentoring program matches at-risk young people living in the community outside of Mercy Home with adult volunteers who act as role models. Our volunteer mentors help change these children's lives by guiding them through the challenges of adolescence.



Lydia's Story

Lydia enjoyed a happy childhood until her mother became mentally unstable and unable to protect her, first from her alcoholic father, and later from her abusive boyfriend. When Lydia was 14, her 18 year-old-boyfriend routinely kidnapped her from her home and tortured her. He jeopardized Lydia's future as well as her life, keeping her locked up in his apartment and preventing her from attending school. She tried many times to escape her abuser, but he would invariably threaten Lydia's mother who would allow him to take the young girl away.

Lydia came close to death at the hands of her boyfriend before she was finally able to escape, running barefoot to a nearby convenience store where she called police. Afterward, Lydia came to live at Mercy Home where

she received the caring, guidance and shelter she needed to make a fresh start.

Lydia turned her life completely around. With the educational support offered by Mercy Home and our supporters, she was able to go back to class and made up lost time in summer school. Thanks to her hard work, and her increasing confidence and ownership over her life, Lydia was able to graduate on time and later earned a degree in computer science from Roosevelt University. She went on to attend the prestigious University of Chicago's Graduate School of Business.

You can watch Lydia tell her amazing story at mercyhome.org/Lydia

A Life-Saving Community



Our success is made possible by the support we receive from a community of believers in our mission to provide the best care and education for kids in crisis. We rely heavily on the involvement of compassionate individuals all over this country who want to make a real difference in the lives of children. We partner with people who want kids to know that they are loved, that they are valued, that they can succeed.

There are many roles you can play in our community of care.

Refer a Child. If you know a child in crisis, please call Mercy Home. Our professional staff will speak to the child and his or her family about options available. Your call could save a life.

Mentor a child. Give a gift of time to a child by being a volunteer mentor. A few hours each week can last a child a lifetime. You may also consider volunteering to tutor a child to enhance his or her educational achievement. And, for recent college graduates, we offer a faith-based, live-in, volunteer year-of-service program known as Mercy Works.

Invest in a child. Your financial support of Mercy Home is an investment in a child's future. Since 1887, Mercy Home has been a trusted name in the care of young people and a faithful steward of our donors' generous support. Our life-saving mission is nearly 100% supported by private sources.

What You Can Do

- Refer a child (mercyhome.org/admissions) 312-738-7590
- Mentor a child (mercyhome.org/mentor) 312-738-7552
- Invest in a child (mercyhome.org/waystogive) 877-637-2955

For General Information, call 312-738-7560

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