



Ninety-four Children, One Sister of Charity



One of Sister Michael's five foster children helps her pick a bouquet of marigolds.

Sister Michael Delores Allegrì adores children. It's no wonder, then, that she has surrounded herself with children of all ages her entire adult life.

Sister Michael's career began in 1964 when she first taught high school in

Topeka, Kansas. It was a position she would hold for the next 23 years. She retired from teaching but felt too young to quit working altogether. Fortunately, a new and exciting opportunity presented itself at Mount Saint Vincent.

Mount Saint Vincent provides clinical treatment for children with severe emotional and behavioral challenges due to trauma, mental illness, abuse or neglect. Sister Michael was asked to help out with the K-8 school's summer program in 1985. "I absolutely loved it," she said. She ultimately was called back to Kansas, but eight years later, she found her way back to Denver. This time, she would stay for good.

Sister Michael always had an interest in providing foster care. So in March of 1999, after taking the required training, two little girls came to live with her and another foster mom. Sister Michael was 57 years old at the time. Twenty-two years and 94 children later, the 79-year-old sister is still going strong.

When asked what she thinks is the biggest misperception people have about foster care, she says it's the belief that children in the foster care system are someone else's problem. "They don't understand that children are in foster care through no fault of their own," she states. "Whether it was abuse or neglect, something was done to those children, and as a society, we have the responsibility to care for and raise these kids." According to the Colorado Department of Human Services, there were 8,500 children in out-of-home placements in 2020. There were foster homes available for only 2,500 of them.

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A Letter from the Executive Director



Dear Friend,

In early 2021, Mount Saint Vincent celebrated 138 years of serving children and families. Our longevity is due in no small part to friends and donors like you, and for that we are truly grateful. I am honored to become part of Mount Saint Vincent's legacy and lead us forward. In the coming months, we will introduce new initiatives that I am excited to share with you.

This October, Mount Saint Vincent will adapt our model of care to meet the needs of children and families. Several factors, including a reduction in federal funding for residential child

treatment facilities, our own extensive experience and the latest research, drove the change. The adapted model weaves all our treatment programs into a seamless continuum of care that extends beyond just a single treatment experience.

This family-centered approach aligns with our mission to foster healthy and hopeful futures for those we serve. We adapted our programs to allow for easier access to our services, smoother transitions between programs, and increased capacity to develop comprehensive treatment plans.

Envision a family reaching out to us in time of crisis and receiving a same-day clinical evaluation along with a choice of treatment options best-suited for their unique situation. Whether that means residential treatment, day treatment or in-home therapy, that care could begin immediately. Alternatively, we will have the capability of training foster families and intentionally matching them with a child in our residential services in need of a foster home. This will allow for the development of a relationship between the child and family in the early stages of residential treatment with tremendous therapeutic support.

Finally, we plan to launch an alumni support network in 2022 to allow our alumni to maintain connections with MSV and each other. We want to provide a platform to engage with our alumni through educational events and social activities. It will allow alumni to retain connections and continue to receive the support and encouragement to live their best lives.

At Mount Saint Vincent, the spirit of the Sisters still rings true in our hearts. Their wish and ours is for every child who passes through our doors to receive the love, care and treatment they need to begin their own life's journey, feeling safe, secure and supported — now and always.

Jay Voigt
Executive Director

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Sisters at Mount Saint Vincent

Sister Michael Delores Allegri, SCL

Editor

Elizabeth Roberts

“Children are in foster care through no fault of their own. Whether it was abuse or neglect, something was done to those children, and as a society we have the responsibility to care for these kids.”

Sister Michael believes that foster parenting is a calling, and although not everyone is able to be a foster parent, there are other ways to help. “Anyone can help support foster families in their community; there are many options that are easy to do,” she said. Ideas include donating diapers, baby formula or gift cards. “Just the other day, we had a three-year-old who arrived with the clothes on his back and shoes that were a size too small,” she said, “New children’s clothing is always needed.” Even small tasks like offering to make a meal or run an errand are greatly appreciated.

The best predictor of foster parenting success is a family’s capacity to love and care for a child. To illustrate, Sister



Sister Michael and two of her foster children explore their backyard garden.

Michael recounted a situation that took place years ago. Just after Thanksgiving of that year, a foster family was involved in a terrible car accident; the mother suffered fatal injuries and the father was paralyzed. Sister Michael knew she couldn’t let a frightened five-year-old spend Christmas in a crisis center. So she sat her four foster children down and ran through the logistics — there was one more seat in the van, there was enough room in one of the bedrooms

for another bed, and there was enough space at the dining room table. Then Sister Michael’s four-year-old foster son piped up, “And we have enough love!” Sister Michael smiled. Because she knew that in the end, that’s really what it’s all about.

For more information about Mount Saint Vincent’s foster care program or to make a donation, visit MSVhome.org/FosterCare.

New Look, Same Commitment

Part of Mount Saint Vincent’s new model of child trauma treatment is the development of a stronger strategic alliance with our parent organization, SCL Health. The sharing of resources, expertise and brand identity will raise both our visibility and long-term viability, and we are grateful for their support.

These changes prompted Mount Saint Vincent’s leadership to refine its mission and vision while preserving the

original intent set forth by our founders, the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. Our refreshed mission is “As part of SCL Health, Mount Saint Vincent partners with children and families to heal beyond trauma into a healthy and hopeful future.” Our new vision, as bold as it is succinct, is “A lifetime of healing and hope.”

We hope you’ll join us in supporting our children, who are all deserving of health, healing and hope.



A Tale of Two Children

The goal of foster care is to provide safety and security for children until they can be reunited with their families. Sometimes, reunification is not possible and adoption becomes the best choice. This is a story of two families whose foster children had different but equally beautiful outcomes.

On a warm fall evening, Brady and Natalei Shafer hosted a get-together with their friend Sarah and her 14-month-old daughter, Zoey. They laughed as they chatted about the challenges of child-rearing as they ate together. This scene would be unremarkable but for one thing: Brady and Natalei provided foster care for the toddler for 13 months. During that time, they established an extraordinary bond of trust and friendship with Sarah while Zoey was in their home. That relationship of mutual respect turned out to be a blessing for all of them.



Brady and Natalei Shafer

Brady and Natalei met in 2015 through a mutual friend. They married in 2017 with plans to have a child of their own and to foster and possibly adopt another. "I worked with children in foster care throughout college and Brady's grandfather spent some of his youth in an orphanage, so we always had a heart for children in need," Natalei explained.

Having a child of their own didn't go as planned, so they began exploring foster

care options. The couple researched several county and private child placement agencies before choosing Mount Saint Vincent. Support while navigating through the foster care and court systems was a priority and for them, Mount Saint Vincent fit that bill.

Mount Saint Vincent's foster care program provides a dedicated staff member to each specific case, monthly support group meetings where participants can share information and resources, a foster parent Facebook page that facilitates the free exchange of questions and answers, and ongoing support for all caregivers. Brady and Natalei signed on and became certified foster parents through the program in June of 2020. Four-week-old Zoey was placed in their care the following month.

From the outset, the Shafers maintained very open channels of communication with the young mom. "Our job was to care for her child and support her in parenting Zoey, so we made sure she had a voice in decisions and received regular updates," said Brady. Natalei would even call Sarah during pediatric doctor visits so Sarah could listen in on what the doctor was saying.

Because of Covid-19 restrictions, Zoom was used in lieu of in-person visits. Sarah would sometimes ask if she could "visit" outside of the mandated amount of time required and again, Brady and Natalei would always accommodate her requests. It was during one of those visits that Sarah witnessed Zoey rolling over for the first time. "It was a beautiful moment," Natalei said.

Ten months in, the couple realized that they were moving toward reunification. Zoey gradually began spending nights at Sarah's home. In September of 2021, Sarah took Zoey home for good.

Brady and Natalei's friends would often say they could never foster a child because they would get too attached. "But that's the point," Brady said. "Our job is to love and care for these kids as if they were our own. That's what sets these children up to have happy and healthy lives."

"For us, it has been the best of both worlds, because we were a part of this beautiful reunification where a family was made whole again," Natalei said. "I would take the heartache a million times over to see that happen."

Room for One More

Before they even met one another, Mike and Kyle both knew that fostering and adoption would be a part of their lives. Kyle's parents began fostering children when she was six years old. It was an act of kindness that left a lasting impression on her. And when Mike was growing up, family friends fostered a child who they eventually adopted. Mike watched as the boy grew and flourished over the years. These childhood experiences instilled within them the desire to help children in need.

After marrying in 2003 and settling in Kansas, the Boeglins waited for the right time to pursue fostering. That moment took place shortly after the birth of their fourth child. "We were done having biological children, but our family just didn't quite feel complete," Kyle said. So, after taking the requisite classes and obtaining licensure, they welcomed their first placement in October of 2013.

Then, an unexpected job opportunity in Colorado presented itself. "Kyle's family lived in Colorado and we always wanted to move there, so we knew it was the right thing to do," said Mike. The couple was able to transition the baby to a loving family before they left.

Even though their time fostering was short, Mike and Kyle thought that perhaps that was the end of their fostering career. But life had other plans. Just a year after moving to Colorado, they met a family that happened to be foster parents. "Mike and I wondered, is life giving us a nudge?" Kyle laughed. Taking the hint, they obtained their Colorado foster care license and accepted the placement of a newborn girl in September of 2016. The placement agency was not expecting to locate any next of kin, so the couple were mentally prepared to adopt little Kelli. But 17 months later, a biological family was found that was willing to take both Kelli and her older siblings. "As heart-wrenching as it was, we knew that it was the best thing for her," Kyle said.

It was extremely difficult for the family to give up the baby they had grown to love. Mike and Kyle decided that the next child they fostered would be on a fairly certain track for adoption. A few months later, they received a call in May of 2018 about Tessa, a four-year-old in need of an adoptive family. After a weekend respite visit, the Boeglin's decided to welcome her into their home. It soon became apparent that this was the child they would adopt.



Photo: Amy Stephens, Crib Tales Photography

The Boeglin family

An expedited adoption expectation turned into a two-year wait. After numerous delayed court dates and a lengthy parental appeal, the adoption date was finally set for April 20, 2020. Because of Covid-19 restrictions, the court procedure was conducted over the phone. Dozens of family members and friends listened in on the call as Tessa was formally adopted. Shortly after, 30 friends surprised the family with a car parade outside the Boeglin's home, where they waved and cheered, held welcome signs,

and honked their horns enthusiastically as they drove by. "The look on Tessa's face was priceless," Kyle said.

At first blush, one might think of Tessa as the sole beneficiary in this scenario, but Mike and Kyle would disagree. The entire fostering and adoption experience had a profound impact on the family. "We are better parents for having been foster parents," Mike said, "and the children we cared for enriched the lives of every single member of our family." And in the end, the Boeglin family was finally complete.

2021 Golf Tournament the Most Successful Yet



Nestled in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains in Golden, Colo., players in the annual Play a Round for Kids charity golf tournament teed off at The Club at Rolling Hills on August 30, 2021.

The sold-out event included breakfast, lunch and prizes for the top three teams. At the awards luncheon, a foster dad currently participating in Mount Saint Vincent's foster care program gave a moving talk about the need and impact of foster care in our community.

The tournament's new location earned rave reviews from the participants. Two-time attendee Frank Yantorno said, "The food was delicious, the course was in great shape, and it supports a much-needed cause for so many children." The event raised thousands of dollars for the care of children and families served by Mount Saint Vincent.

Thank you to the players and sponsors who took part in this year's tournament. The 2022 event will be held in the same location. We hope you'll join us!

Family First Act Keeps Children in Homes



On October 1, 2021, one of the biggest changes affecting child welfare funding in nearly 40 years became law.

Under the Family First Prevention Services Act, the federal government reimburses states for up to 12 months of evidence-based programs designed to keep families together. Such programs will include mental health services, substance abuse treatment

and in-home services. To pay for the new prevention services, funding will be shifted away from residential childcare facilities. The law also places a lifetime cap on the length of time a child can be in residential care. The cap ranges from six to 18 months, depending on the child's age.

Mount Saint Vincent began preparing for this shift in focus well over a year ago. Our nonprofit agency offers numerous prevention services, including day treatment in our K–8 school, in-home behavior therapy and in-home family coaching. In addition, our highly regarded and well-established training department is prepared for an anticipated surge in caregiver and

foster care training in trauma-informed care. We are also creating an alumni support network, which will allow alumni to retain connections and continue to receive encouragement and support from our extensively trained staff.

Changing to meet the needs of the community is nothing new to Mount Saint Vincent. Just as we transformed from an orphanage to a treatment center for children in the 1960s, we will pivot again to meet this new challenge. The one thing that will never change is our purpose — to foster healthy and hopeful futures for the children and families we serve.

A Continuum of Care for Children and Families



Since opening in 1883, Mount Saint Vincent has continually evolved to meet our community's changing needs. We are a regional leader in trauma-informed treatment, offering a complete continuum of care for children and families, including:

- Residential Treatment
- Foster Care
- Therapeutic K–8 School/Day Treatment
- In-home Family Therapy
- Outpatient Therapy
- Community Preschool

Learn more about Mount Saint Vincent and the many programs we offer at MSVhome.org.

Silver Bell Ball Returns in 2022!



Mark your calendars for next year's Silver Bell Ball, tentatively slated for November 12, 2022 at the Grand Hyatt in downtown Denver. More information to come in late spring of 2022. Stay tuned!

Superheroes Visit and Donate Supplies

There are not too many people our kiddos would rather have visit them than superheroes. Their wish came true recently as representatives from Revelations in Christ Ministries stopped by to drop off \$2,000 worth of clothing, shoes, craft supplies and toys.

To the children's surprise, the five visitors arrived in complete makeup and costume, representing Batman, the Joker, Superman, Wonder Woman and Flash. Best of all, they pulled up in a full-sized replica of the Batmobile, complete with sound effects and lights. The kiddos had a great time exploring the vehicle. "This is fantastic!" said one young resident.

In-kind donations such as these are a crucial element of the donation choices available to people who wish

to help. "When our supporters donate much-needed clothing, school supplies, therapeutic tools or toys, it frees up our funds to pay for meals, therapy sessions, trauma-care training and so much more," said Director of Development Ron Adelson. "Every gift, no matter the size, is welcomed and appreciated."

Our thanks go to these superheroes who went the extra mile — in a Batmobile! — to make their visit such a fun event for our kids.

Mount Saint Vincent accepts gifts of stock, vehicle donations, cash donations and more. For holiday gift requests from the children, visit [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). See [MSVhome.org/Donations](https://www.MSVhome.org/Donations) to learn more.



Five "superheroes" from Revelations in Christ Ministries drop off a donation at Mount Saint Vincent.

Thank You, Volunteers and Donors!



Mount Saint Vincent is the Rocky Mountain region's leading provider of clinical treatment and care for children suffering from the effects of trauma, mental illness, abuse or neglect. Because of our expertise, we train parents, teachers, therapists and caregivers on trauma-informed best practices. We are also licensed to train and certify foster families.

This important work would not be possible without the incredible generosity of our faithful donors and volunteers. Through their selfless giving, they help us heal the invisible wounds of childhood trauma.

Our hearts are full of gratitude, and we are grateful beyond words. On behalf of the board, staff and children, we offer our most sincere thanks.



Colorado has one toll-free number to report suspected child abuse and neglect.

1-844-CO-4-KIDS

Help keep children safe and secure.
Your call is confidential.

Be Social With Us!

Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram and join in the conversation.



Join the Staff at Mount Saint Vincent!

“My position at MSV was hands-down the highlight of my professional career.”

Cathi Sommer, 16-year employee

Are you passionate about working for a nonprofit children's health agency?

Mount Saint Vincent is the Rocky Mountain region's premier provider of mental health treatment, foster care services, therapeutic K-8 education and trauma-informed training — all focused on children and their families. Our innovative programs help children reach their full potential within their homes, schools and communities.

We have therapeutic and educational career opportunities available for special education teachers, mental health workers, therapists, school social workers and more.

Visit MSVhome.org/Careers for a complete list of available positions. Apply to be a member of our team today!



How You Can Help Our Special Children

♥ Make a donation

While we accept donations of many types, our most urgent need is for financial support. Funds are needed to help pay for therapy, food, clothing and more. You can donate securely online at MSVhome.org.

♥ Help a foster family

You can support a foster family by donating diapers, clothes or gift cards. Or you can give the gift of your time by offering to perform tasks like making a meal or running an errand. Call 303-458-7220 for details.

♥ Give clothing or supplies

Donations of clothing for newborns up to children aged 14 are always appreciated (new only, please). A list of toys and therapeutic tools needed can be found at MSVhome.org/AmazonWishlist.

It's easy for you to make a difference in the life of a child. Here's how.



Donate securely online at MSVhome.org