

MMP PROFILE AS TOLD TO ANN MARTIN

Vanessa

Vanessa is a young woman you want to put your arms around and hug. With her sweet face, and lovely smile, she looks so young!

But in her 21 years she's been neglected, and abused...hooked on methamphetamine, involved in prostitution. Now she's fighting for her life, and the life of her little son.

Vanessa's mother had her first child, a son, when she was only 14. She gave birth to Vanessa two years later, when she was 16. The father was a heroin addict, in prison. So Vanessa and her brother were raised by paternal grandparents.

When Vanessa's dad got out of prison, he moved in with the grandparents too and left his drug needles around the house, Vanessa remembers. Inevitably, Vanessa and her brother ended up in foster care.

Vanessa was in 12 foster placements in one year. In one of those placements, she was molested.

Looking back, Vanessa says now, "I didn't get enough attention as a child." She started cutting herself on the arms as a teenager. But she discovered that drugs killed the inner pain much better than cutting. Crystal meth made her promiscuous, and she got pregnant. She stopped using until her baby, Steven, was born. But then she slipped back...and lost custody of Steven, and everything else she had.

Prostitution became her way to get drugs.

What a chaotic, tragic life, you say, for a girl of 21! But with the help of the Mary Magdalene Project, Vanessa is turning it all around. She's been sober for 10 months. And with the help of MMP's program staff, she's now reached her big goal in life. With MMP's cooperation, she's been able to regain some custody rights of 3-year-old Steven, stopping an adoption that would have taken him from her forever. MMP is next helping her to be able to support herself and him. She's in school, learning to be a drug and alcohol counselor.

Her joy in life? Little Steven, 3 years old now, who recently told her "You're my best friend - you're my Mommy!" She wants so much to be the parent for him that she never had...be able to check his homework, be there to talk to.

And the Mary Magdalene Project is "the best place I've ever been", she tells me, and starts to cry. At MMP she finally has people who care about her - and are helping her begin a new life. It took courage to share her story - thanks, Vanessa. We're all pulling for you!

Mary Magdalene Project
P.O. Box 8396
Van Nuys, CA 91409

Including the Mary Magdalene Project in your will is a long-term investment in reclaiming the lives of countless numbers of women and children. If you have questions, please call the Mary Magdalene Project office, 818-988-4970.

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(818) 988-4970

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ABOUT US

The Mary Magdalene Project

gives women who have been victimized by street prostitution the opportunity to turn their lives around. Through an intensive and comprehensive program, the women face, cope with and then overcome the many obstacles that life has dealt them. New relationships are formed, skills and strengths are discovered. The Mary Magdalene Project is a successful program that begins the transformation.

Summer/Fall 2007 news, events, and updates from the Mary Magdalene Project

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A GLAMOROUS JOURNEY INTO THE PAST

Casablanca ~ A Night at Rick's Café Americain

**5:30 pm Reception and Silent Auction,
7:00 pm Dinner, Live Auction & Entertainment
Saturday, September 29, 2007 at Union Station**

Casablanca, named one of the 100 Greatest Films of All Time by the American Film Institute, holds a special place in the hearts of filmgoers all around the world and across all generations. This year it becomes as well a beautiful journey into yesteryear at downtown's Union Station, and all for a wonderful cause. A story full of the challenges of danger and choices made for a greater good, it's a perfect metaphor for the work of Mary Magdalene Project.

MMP's Board of Directors and our Auction Committee were deluged with exclamations of delight following the success of last year's black tie event held at Union Station, so we decided to repeat the location for this year's special soiree. Also tapped for leadership once more on the heels of last year's success is Event Chair Lynda Ingham, joined by Co-Chairs Jean Vivrette and Judy Ames.

Romantic Ambience... Extraordinary Cuisine... Music & Dancing in the Great Hall...

Guests are once again invited to attend in period attire, and will also be pampered with extraordinary food and wines reminiscent of the best of Moroccan cuisine and served at candlelit tables by Derek's Restaurant and Dickenson West Fine Catering of Pasadena. Comedy by Robert G. Lee and music and song by Jim Roberts and his Casablanca Trio will woo you onto the dance floor, and charm you into the melodies of America's World War II era.

Special drinks... Period costume... Comfort of travel by train!

One of the most popular options for getting to the party last year was travel by train. Using the Metro Line from points all over Los Angeles County, or Amtrak from points all over Orange County, the comfort and pleasure of traveling to the party by train was a very popular feature. (Check out travel schedules at www.mta.net or www.amtrak.com, or call the office for assistance to plan your trip or see if there are others coming from the same station as you). MMP's Orange County Keyturners are arranging for their own party by train, including discount tickets for group travel (call the office for arrangements). Any prizes won inconvenient for train travelers to take with them will be held by MMP for delivery to winners at a later date. Dress up like Bogey or Bergman, get ready for cool sips of an Ingrid's Blush or a Martini Bogart, skip the traffic and enjoy the rare experience of easy maneuvering around Southern California.

And don't forget the incredible live and silent auction prizes!

MMP's live and silent auctions bring you the wonder of international and local getaways, fine wine and dining, special adventures, gift baskets, sporting events, unique crafts and services, entertainment and spectacular merchandise available for fractions of their normal costs.

Log on to www.mmp.org for a continuously updated listing of items for bid or to purchase special raffle prizes tickets (winners need not be present), donate items for the Live or Silent Auction, or buy tickets to attend!

IN LOVING MEMORY

Priscilla Alden Chaplin by Ann Hayman

Priscilla Alden Chaplin died peacefully in her home in Yucca Valley, California, on May 14, 2006. She had recently celebrated her 85th birthday on May 2. Always a loving friend to MMP and one of the earliest women ordained by the Presbyterian Church, she chose one last loving gesture by including us in her will with a significant bequest. We're learning that one of the most important nonprofit opportunities for the next 20 years is estate planning, and Priscilla's wish to be part of that is a very special blessing. We are eternally grateful and hope her example will inspire others as well!

Priscilla Chaplin was ordained in October 1957 — she was the third woman to be ordained in the Presbyterian Church and the first to be the sole pastor of a congregation. She was ordained to serve the Union Presbyterian Church of Sauquoit, New York, which she pastored for eight years. During this time the congregation doubled in size. In 1965 she became the administrative assistant to Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, Stated Clerk of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. She also served as the Executive Director of the Southern California Council of Churches.

For those of us who knew Priscilla she was someone to admire and care for deeply as a role model and as a person. She was a pioneering woman who wrestled with thorny theological issues that didn't always add up for her and her dressmaking skills were as stunning as her preaching and administration! She was tall and imposing and very articulate and compelling in her public presentations. My private conversations with her were always intense but very supportive. She loved the Mary Magdalene Project and felt passionately about the lives we reclaimed. We thank her for the legacy she has left us.

OUR LATEST MMP PROGRAM UPDATE

Good News Bulletins!

MMP's newest service, the 18-month design Transitional Living Program, has successfully enrolled 9 new families (joining 4 already in residence with our Family Reunification program) since April 2006, with the following results:

- 2 families completed program requirements early and moved on to independent living, allowing space for 2 new additional family enrollments
- 2 single parent women have had child custody rights reinstated with 5 children
- 5 single parent mothers are in education or job training programs.
- MMP clinical staff were able to intervene in support of a Hayman House client about to lose her child to an imminent adoption prompted by her family of origin who did not believe she deserved another chance at motherhood. With MMP's supervision, and a transition plan that allows her to move into the Family Reunification program upon completion of the Hayman House Program, the courts have suspended the adoption and are allowing the mother another chance to parent her child.

**MMP NEEDS YOU!
GET INVOLVED!**

Volunteer Opportunities

Board of Directors

helps fundraise and set organizational policies

Advisory Council

helps MMP's public profile and event fundraising

Administration Committee

helps the day to day business functioning of the organization, special research projects, Human Resources

Program Committee

assists MMP clinical staff review programmatic needs and services

Therapist Committee

professional psychotherapists providing services to MMP clientele

Resources Committee

helps MMP raise the money it needs to operate; includes Major Donor Committee, Special Events Committees, Alternative Markets Committee

Auction Committee

helps plan each year's Auction Special Event

Nominations Committee

helps the board, Executive Director and Director of Development recruit and train new board members

Would you like to:

Tutor our clients? Provide child-care? Volunteer time at events? Help us sell Alternative Market items? Teach others about MMP and its exceptional work? Be part of our Speaker's Bureau? Get involved in Strategic Planning for our future? Offer transportation assistance? Host informational meetings about MMP? Get involved in a landscaping project? Host a neighborhood garage sale for MMP? Collect items for donations? Paint an apartment? Help us landscape?

Please give us a call! We cannot do it without you...

818-988-4970

VOLUNTEER FOCUS

Meet Janet Fisher!

How it all started. . .

Janet was on the Kirk 'O the Valley's Outreach Committee in 1980 when she received a Synod newsletter and learned that a Presbyterian ministry with prostitutes was starting up in Reseda. Janet felt strongly that her Reseda-based congregation should be involved in a Presbyterian mission so near in the community. Janet was instrumental in establishing a relationship that is still very strong today.

The Kirk took on a major responsibility for furnishing what was then "the newest ministry to the oldest profession," coming up with bedroom and living room furniture. Members of the Kirk are often in attendance at our annual auctions, have furnished food and gifts for the women and children on special events, have been volunteers for our 25th Anniversary celebration. Janet played a leading role in all of these activities.

Janet has always been a supporter of the Mary Magdalene Project, but became really involved in 2000 helping out in the office after she retired and her husband (Frank) died. She remembers buying all her Christmas cards from Jean Sciarabba for years! Besides volunteering in our offices for many years, Janet is now helping us by coordinating our Alternative Markets.

Some personal history. . .

Janet was born in Cheyenne, Wyoming. At age 11 her father went to work for United Airlines and the family moved to Northern California. Janet married and was a stay-at-home mom while her children were young. She worked occasionally in the family stationary store in Canoga Park until her first marriage ended. She then took a refresher course in nursing and went to work as a psychiatric nurse at Parkwood Hospital in Woodland Hills. She retired from Woodview Calabasas Hospital when it closed. Janet is the mother of three children, grandmother to 11 and she has four great-grandchildren.

Why get involved. . .

For Janet volunteer service is an extension of her faith, her compassion for others, and her involvement in the Kirk. "I'd always been interested in the Mary Magdalene Project and it is a pleasure to be involved in such worthwhile work." We are very grateful for Janet's service to us and feel the blessings of her presence at MMP.



ABOVE: Janet Fisher, right, with Office Manager Leda Lopez and Easter baskets donated by Kirk O' The Valley Presbyterian Church.

**FROM ANN HAYMAN,
OUR DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT**



To Do List

- ✓ Schedule family meeting to discuss budget and update financial plans
- ✓ Invest in grandchildren's education
- ✓ Additional funds to retirement account
- ✓ Make pledge to church endowment campaign
- ✓ Put the Mary Magdalene Project in our will

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**OUR WISH LIST
Special Needs
Donations**

Do you have any the following you might donate? Give us a call!

- Refrigerator (2)
- Oven (one standard sized, one large)
- Air conditioner units
- A sofa
- Electronic communications devices / blackberry or palm pilots
- Laptop computers
- Plants and landscaping items

Many thanks to our Donors for their support!

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See you at MMP's
next event
Casablanca
A Night at Rick's
Cafe Americain
Sept. 29, 2007
Union Station
Los Angeles

This could be your next vacation photo album!
Our Live Auction will feature an African Safari - Spend six nights at an elegant resort in Zululand - one of Africa's richest conservation regions. Includes full board, three meals daily prepared with an African flavor by international chefs, and two wildlife viewing activities per day in open game-viewing vehicles. Airfare not included.



Photos by 2005's Safari Auction winners Brian and Kate Folb

HELP US BY SHARING YOUR OPINION!

Take the MMP Poll!

The Friends of Mary Magdalene Project Poll:

The MMP Resources Committee is considering creating a Golf Tournament Fundraiser for the Spring of 2008.

We'd love to hear back from you about the following questions:

- Do you think it's a good idea?
- Would you participate in the tournament?
- Would you help us as a volunteer at the event?
- Would you help us by promoting the event to friends and sponsors?
- Would you help us by collecting live and silent auction donations?

The MMP Board of Directors is considering a special raffle ticket fundraising project we've seen be successful for other nonprofit organizations. The idea is to sell a limited number of raffle tickets (say 200 or 400) at much higher prices (\$100 a ticket) for a chance at a great week's vacation for two. The travel opportunities range from national and international travel, and the winner can make a selection from among a group of trips. The idea is that because there is a much smaller pool of potential winners, people will be willing to buy a much more expensive ticket, still for a good cause.

We'd love to hear back from you about the following questions:

- Do you think it's a good idea?
- Would you help us sell tickets?
- Do you think you have friends who would buy tickets?
- Would you care to be pre-registered for a chance to buy one of the limited tickets if we proceed with the idea?

Please feel free to reply via our website email (www.mmp.org), or MMc4MMP@aol.com) or call the office with your feedback. Thank you for expressing your opinion!

CELEBRATE OUR NEWLY RENOVATED APARTMENT BUILDING SITE

Join us for our Shared Living Community Open House October 21st, 2007

In joyous celebration of the generous building refurbishment grant from The Ahmanson Foundation in late 2006, MMP is delighted to host an Open House at its Shared Living Community in Van Nuys on Sunday, October 21st, from 2-5 pm. Refreshments, tours, music and entertainment will all be part of a wonderful afternoon of counting our blessings and proudly exhibiting our wonderful space. RSVP's to the office are required to protect the confidentiality of our location.

Our Shared Living Community is actually a collection of 12 apartment units in a building that houses the Mary Magdalene Project offices, our Family Reunification Program and our newest program service, the Transitional Living Program. In late 2006 ED Marty McCombs received the happy news that The Ahmanson Foundation had agreed to provide funding for sorely needed building improvements, upgrades, and safety improvements. Among the work accomplished was the installation of a new roof for the entire building, fixing broken security systems and installing additional ones, repainting the building exterior and office interiors, new carpeting and tile throughout all the apartments, and fixing and repairing broken plumbing and other things having fallen into states of disrepair.

BEFORE...



AFTER...



TOP LEFT: The building gets ready for its facelift! TOP RIGHT: Volunteers from Bel Air Presbyterian are on hand to help! ABOVE LEFT: The new front of the Shared Living Community. ABOVE RIGHT: The new courtyard is a pleasant place to hang out!