



Merry Christmas, Season's Greetings,  
and Happy New Year from  
The Henry and William Evans Home for Children!

Thank you!

Your kindness, whether expressed in gifts of goods or deeds, has allowed us to share another year in the lives of our wonderful children. We sincerely hope that this message of holiday greetings and heart-felt appreciation allows you a peek at some of the happiness that you have engendered in our family. While not all of our moments were perfect ones, all that we have is possible only because you cared and continue to keep us among your priorities.



**Winter 2008/09.**

Christmas is always a challenging time for the children of the Evans Home, and last year was no different. With the combination of a barrage of messages about the importance of being home for the holidays with family, well-meaning adults asking if the children want to spend the holidays with them (suggesting they have no home?), and all-too vivid memories of unpleasant past holiday experiences, it was our challenge to help them feel wanted and loved. That's where the community stepped in! With church groups and civic organizations throwing evening parties, a very special Rotary Lunch, garden clubs decorating, and companies and individuals helping our house parents assist Santa anonymously, our children gradually began to realize that they are actually more supported in our home (in some ways) than most!

Additionally, several years ago we began the seasonal tradition of quietly helping a needy family in the area ourselves. Again last year, our children had the peaceful experience of putting together and wrapping toys for less fortunate children, and packing the makings of a fantastic Christmas meal! Then we wrapped Christmas gifts at a local restaurant destined for more needy children, and attended the dinner when those children received them the following day. According to one of our boys, "It was awesome!"

Christmas morning was mayhem as usual. As we bleary-eyed adults exchanged smiles over cups of coffee held at nose level, the herd blew into the room and flew around like moths in a chandelier. The rest of the day was spent enjoying and trying on new stuff, looking for batteries, and welcoming invited relatives to dinner. Some kids had parents or grandparents to visit, and we opened our home to make the holiday enjoyable for everyone. We had just a little more excitement than planned, however, when one of our 14 year old boys broke his arm skating, and had a trip to the emergency room (sigh).

In January, we resumed our career night routine with a great visit from a man who discussed “non-traditional” job opportunities within the military. We also started attending community meals at a local church, and we received a grant from a local company to be used for a kitchen make-over! Usually a pretty dark month, we were also guests for dinner out at local restaurant and a motorcycle club came in and threw a heck of a Super-Bowl party! Our youngest girl finished gymnastics with a flourish (she finishes everything with a flourish) and one of our boys began taking karate classes. We also had four children gainfully employed: two at fast food establishments, one at a grocery store, and one at an ice cream shop (sweet!).

In February we got some not-so-good news. New house parents (who had taken almost a year to find) announced that they would be leaving. Shirley, house mom, received news that her adult daughter in Georgia was critically ill, with no one to care for her children. A year to the month since former long-time house mom Carole’s death and we were back in search of the perfect counterparts to Mike and Winona. Some things you’re glad you didn’t know in advance. In this case it was that we would be searching for house parents until the end of June. Poor kids, once again they were at the mercy of “*the b’ team!*” When house parents are out, the others among us are in: Kris, Frankie, Laura, and I, with Della helping over-nights. Mike and Winona once again adjusted their schedules; adding a day each shift so the kids didn’t have to deal with us any more than necessary and boy did the community come to the rescue! We ate out at almost every restaurant in Winchester, hosted or sponsored by board members, friends, or just about anyone who happened to stop by when we actually were cooking. (Somewhere in there was a pizza party with the Circle K club of Shenandoah University!) Still others dropped off prepared dinners, or “fixins” that were fairly foolproof! (No worries, we still had our boy working late nights at the ice cream parlor – sweet!)

We started taking the boys to Hagerstown for some rink time on ice, in preparation for summer hockey camp at the University of North Dakota! Three of our guys actually played in the championships for the Handley High School Hockey team at the Sportsplex.

Another career night opportunity happened when Country music singer, Tara Jackson was in town to perform at our Chili Dinner ... she spent the evening hanging out in our kitchen chatting and laughing with the kids for hours before an over-night at our Lloyd House. Oh, and Chili Dinner Night was yet another evening that the "B" team scored without cooking!

### **Spring:**

In March, Girl Scout Troop 792 brought huge boxes of collected non-perishables to restock our pantry that was getting pretty low from school days cancelled due to threat-of-snow (lots of Oodles of Noodles!) - along with gift cards for groceries. And on April 1, Troop 2281 brought 100 pre-loaded plastic eggs with surprises inside for our Easter Egg Hunt. March also brought us three new boys, and we said goodbye to one other boy, who left to live with a relative.

What did we eat on April 4? What everyone in Winchester ate on that day ... Pancakes thanks to Kiwanis! When Easter rolled around we had stuffed baskets donated by SU's Circle K club *and* the Sherriff's Department. The next day all the girls plus Laura and Winona piled in the van and went to New York for an amazing multi-day shopping spree (and a bunch of sight-seeing). They came back with more stories than can be told here! Meanwhile the boys were left with Frankie, Marc and Kris in support of house dad Mike, who was recovering from rotator cuff surgery.

Later in the month of April we did an "Adopt-a-Highway" project with Circle K, went to a Pizza/Bingo night at Braddock Street Church, and finished with a surprise trip to Hershey Park compliments of our own Collette and a few of her friends! Oh, and Apple-Blossom? We were playing at just about every kid-friendly event, plus selling parade seats and parking cars on our field to earn spending money for our August vacation. April also brought us a familiar face, with a returning resident who had moved to a more structured atmosphere and had to return when that facility closed. Also, one of our girls turned 18 and moved out to reunite with family.

In May, Sherando High School's DECA club came and announced that their program on money management with our crew the previous fall had landed them a spot in the finals in California! Also that month, two of our children looked totally fabulous at the Handley Prom.

We launched a new website as well, hopefully allowing visitors to better understand us, and started a Facebook Friends page that garnered 78 "friends" in the first month and continues to grow (yes, that's a hint)!

Also that month was a pool practice dive for one of our 14-year-olds on his way to scuba diving certification, another boy turned 18, a girl turned 17, and the whole bunch of us went to a special party at a movie star's house to see a clever mule doing tricks (seriously), and eat our weight in pizza. Two boys left that month, one having turned 18 and one after completing his G.E.D.



In June, we received the very sad news that our dear friend and board member, Sharron White, died. The outpouring of sympathy from the community honoring her love for our home and children was remarkable. We were deeply moved by her memorial service and we miss her.

Three of our boys started freshman football camp and another completed his motorcycle safety course at Lord Fairfax Community College... (no comment). Later that month we celebrated graduations from Daniel Morgan Middle and Handley High. (We are loud at graduations.) But there's more: we all went camping for the weekend of our boy's deep lake certification dive in West Virginia; had one at Shenandoah University's youth football camp; went on the first of several day trips to Lake Holiday; were guests of our Sherriff at a Winchester Royals game; welcomed our new house parents, Lynn and Karen; had a surprise two day visit from our licensing officer; and sent one child off to summer school. Wait, did you catch that? New HOUSE PARENTS?! Yes! Lynn and Karen Sawyer joined us from the Milton Hershey School in Hershey, PA. They brought with them a world of experience, and just the capacity for love and support that we needed. Oh, and that next part ... the surprise licensing inspection? Yes, that was on their first week! (Might as well get them used to the pace!)



### **Summer(!).**

On July 2 we all converged on Laura's farm after picking beans all morning at the volunteer farm for the food-bank. We had a huge barbeque followed by paintball between hay bales and go-carting like we were at Indy! We had a quieter 4<sup>th</sup>, with a local picnic (we like picnics) and fireworks in the evening.

Two more began summer school, and we fell into our rhythm of Thursday Community Service projects and Tuesday Adventures. Also in July, our three hockey stars spent a week in Grand Forks, North Dakota, at a hockey camp at UND! When I arrived there to pick them up I asked if they were the furthest from home and received a grin from one of their “roommates,” ... from France.

Summer fun continued in August, with trips to the river, local lakes, history tours with ghost stories, and a visit to a horse farm that raises more Charles Town winners than any other (lots of picnics). Our important adults had their annual retreat while Della and I took the younger crew on our annual trip to the Magothy River in Maryland for skiing, wake-boarding, tubing and pool play at my brother’s house. We welcomed a new girl, and said goodbye to a boy.

And then ... Virginia Beach! New hp’s Lynn and Karen, plus Laura and I showed up at the home of a friend down there, with a dozen excited, squirmy children. The friend has adopted one of our former residents, and the reunion was wonderful. We played day and night three times, and came back much darker than we left (and a little less squirmy).

### **Late Summer/Early Fall.**

Just before school began we received a very special honor: We were selected by the Winchester Education Association as this year’s “Friend of Education!”

With free haircuts and designer backpacks from a very cool salon, plus school supplies donated by special friends, we were almost ready for school. Two weeks shopping for clothes? Now we were ready (and we looked it). Somebody ok’d vacation for Mike and Winona so, ... hello “B” team! A board member heard about this, however, and rescued the kids once again by coming in and cooking dinner for us with our own garden produce! Yes, thanks to a wonderful cadre of friends in a garden club, with a relentless leader, we grew a ton of our own vegetables this year ... and learned to like eating them!



September was a busy month, with two boys and a girl leaving our home, and one new girl being welcomed.

More sad, sad news; our Della died on September 12, after struggling with complications from diabetes. She was the live-in guardian of our alumni house, and our relief house parent whenever we needed her. We cried again.

In October, we had our first child come home with swine flu. Confirmed by the doctor, we were all ready to line his room with plastic, bathe ourselves in alcohol, and set up a means of feeding him with sticks under the door, when he got better. Seriously, 24 hours plus a relaxing day when he felt *waaay* to well to be home watching TV and we were off the hook.

Our three on the Handley Freshman Football team gradually dwindled to one, but he was a starter! (We are loud at football games.) More news? Our 17 year old girl was among seven nominated for Homecoming Queen! She wasn't chosen (although she would have been if it wasn't FIXED (kidding)), but she played a mean game of powder-puff football the next day! (We are loud at powder-puff football games...and we bring signs!)

#### **Fall to winter.**

October, the spooky month, included a visit from Circle K for a Halloween party, trick-or-treating in a residents' hall at Shenandoah University, and then the real deal on Halloween night, with costumes and neighborhood door-knocking followed by candy, candy, candy! Never fear, the house parents "sampled" the loot to make certain it was safe.

With November came the holidays again! (As well as a new boy resident and a girl!) Also that month we got a line on new used bedroom furniture, from a children's home in Lynchburg. We got it for next to nothing, and thanks to some special friends who helped us pick it up and bring it home ... and a very special local company who is refinishing it all for us, we will begin refurbishing our bedrooms early next year!

Thanksgiving was wonderful. When I woke up early I already had 10 texts from alumni wishing a happy day, and heard from several more in the afternoon. We also hosted a visit from a special young man who has been away for 9 years, and were joined for the meal by our current residents of the Lloyd House. Between food prepared by friends and brought in, and side-dishes prepared by the kids with house parent over-sight, friends, alums, ... nothing was missing!



With a difficult economy, families everywhere are finding ways to pool resources and sometimes even living arrangements. In our case, we have been in regular contact with some 25 of our former children this year, and we have hosted four in our Lloyd house, including one bringing her adorable two-year-old with a new baby due anytime! It is simply impossible to convey the privilege we feel being able to remain a part of so many lives long-since departed from our full-time care.

I suppose that's it for now, and as always I haven't begun to completely chronicle the blessings that have kept us going for another year. What I hope to have included, however, is a taste of how much you, our community mean to us. You bring us everything that is good in our world, and allow us to dream about what is yet to come with the inclusion of our own hard work and potential. We are honored by your friendship, and we wish you smiles and happiness throughout the year!

Gratefully,



Marc



Evans Home adults: Mike and Winona Powers; Lynn and Karen Sawyer; Laura Regan; Frank Paige; Kris Short; Collette Hawes; and Marc Jaccard

Evans Home Board: Stephen Shendow; Wendell Dick; Mike Frazier; Andrea Board; Nancy Campbell; Lenny Millholland; Liz Minor; Stephanie Smith; Ann Throckmorton; Stuart Wolk; Kevin Crosen, and Ann Wallinger.