

Providence Home and Family Services (for children with AIDS)



Providence Home and Family Services was founded in 1990. It was at the height of the AIDS scare and Dr. John A. Mangus of the University of Texas Medical School Pediatric Center was concerned about the babies born with AIDS whose mothers could not care for them. He asked the Congregation for assistance. It was a time when the epidemiology of the disease was only beginning to be understood. Further, the mothers often were drug addicts or so sick they were unable to care for them. Stella Maris Annex was prepared for them and volunteers came to help.

Sister Barbara Lynn Hyzak was Director of the Home. Each volunteer was trained in how to handle the babies. Sisters and others came to rock the children and lovingly care for their growth. The Stella Maris Clinic building was converted into a learning Center for the children from 18 months to 6 years of age. Later services were added for infants from birth to 18 months. All these children were either infected with AIDS or from families affected by the disease. In 1997 research in the treatment of AIDS had advanced and hospitals had facilities dedicated to children with AIDS. Further, government aid was available to their families. There was no longer a need for Providence Home. More than 200 clients had been served and more that 400,000 services had provided by staff and volunteers. The purpose of the Home had been met and the Home celebrated its closing in a spirit of having completed a job well done.

(Photo: Sisters Constance Christopher and Sharon Rhode)