



*A planting of the Lord for the display of His splendor. Isaiah 61:3*



Recently residents Mariesol Arellaño, Janie Henson, and Melissa Reed were baptized at United City Church in Humble, surrounded by other residents of the Oaks, mentors, sponsors, and family members. United City is the church home of the residents and a few graduates of the Oaks. There they participate in worship, small groups, and Celebrate Recovery.

***Congratulations to everyone on their baptism!***

In May, Oaks' residents and three graduates joined women from two other transitional homes for a weekend retreat in the piney woods. The Freedom Retreat was designed to help the attendees identify their emotional strongholds and the vulnerability associated with those feelings. The ladies learned through faith and prayer how to reconcile these emotions which have enslaved them.

During the day, the women attended seminars with various speakers featuring key topics regarding strongholds such as abuse, fear, and insecurity. Each session was followed by intentional prayer time with prayer partners. The women learned to forgive oppressors. The women described the experience as one of the most emotionally healing opportunities since coming to the Oaks. The weekend refuge was considered a safe space to learn and process the topics. Their time was also blessed with prayer, music, recreation, and a dinner in their honor.

As one attendee stated "It was the most healing experience emotionally and spiritually; giving me a chance to understand my brokenness, accept my strongholds and let them go. I realize with God; I have power to overcome the grip of the strongholds which I previously allowed to hurt me."

### **Kingwood United Methodist Monthly Mission Opportunity**

In August KUMC will feature the Oaks of Righteousness for their Monthly Mission Opportunity. The ministry is requesting assistance to purchase a vehicle to help transport the residents to work, parole, appointments, and meetings.



## PHASE ONE *of the Oaks' Program*

Recently five Oaks' residents completed Phase One of their program at the Oaks. This phase is typically sixteen weeks beginning upon arrival at Oaks of Righteousness, immediately following release.

The principal goal of Phase One is for each participant to learn more about themselves, while observing and participating in a Christian lifestyle as a member of a family in a Christian home. The ladies learn to have accountability with one another as Sisters in Christ.

Phase One of the program is made up of several classes all of which have a spiritual emphasis. Classes include Anger Management, Spiritual 12 Steps, Co-Dependency, Relational Life Skills, and (REAL) Resentments, Expectations, Acceptance and Letting Go, by Laura McPherson, LPC, LMTC. Through the help of instructors and class content, the participants recognize their hurts, hang-ups, wrongdoings and need for healing. They learn how to make God a priority, while learning to show grace to others.

The residents also participate in counseling, Celebrate Recovery, Bible studies, money management classes, meetings with mentors and recovery sponsors, and community service in Phase One.

The last step of Phase One is an outside class conducted by WorkFaith. The women take part in a five-day program, Job Search Accelerator, which has a spiritual emphasis. Participants learn many skills related to a successful job search culminating in mock interviews. Students are taught how to handle difficult interview questions about employment gaps and incarceration.

Collectively, lessons learned in Phase One help prepare the women to live a Christ centered life as they prepare to step into the world outside the Oaks of Righteousness.



### SOLA GRATIA

On May 1, the Sola Gratia women's choir at Kingwood United Methodist Church, sponsored a concert to raise funds for the Oaks of Righteousness.

The choir, with the help of guest musicians and the KUMC orchestra and brass ensemble raised \$13,060. The music was paired with a slide show of poignant images featuring the ladies at the Oaks. The performance and testimonies stirred emotions for everyone who attended. The ministry thanks this beautiful assembly of talent for their heartfelt gift.



### *Formation of Long-Range* **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

A six-member long-range planning committee has begun to meet with the objective of setting growth goals for the Oaks of Righteousness. With a desire to serve more women, the ministry is considering the best ways to grow to do what God is placing on the hearts of those serving the ministry.

The committee is examining the people, property, and programs required to serve more women and expand the ministry. Financial goals are being considered as well. We pray for God's continued guidance and provision over the future of the ministry.