

Dana Balmer



The Masonic Children's home became my angel at nine years old. My sisters and I were in need of a place to live, and the children's home took us in.

I was scared. I didn't understand why I had to move in with a bunch of girls I didn't know and have houseparents, but looking back, I wouldn't

change that frightening day for anything. That warm March day changed my life forever and gave me opportunities and the chance to live a happy life.

I can't imagine my life today without the children's home being a part of it. If I had never lived at the home, my life would be completely different – a bad different. The children's home molded me into who I am today. The staff and other children's love, dedication and care gave me a sense of family and became my family. I have relationships and memories that will last a lifetime because of them.

Even though I no longer live there, the children's home is still a big part of my life. I know the houseparents and staff members would do anything for me. The children's home even helped to financially support my schooling.

The children's home is still the rock that I need to lean on, and it made an imprint on my heart that will never fade away.

—Dana Balmer, Masonic Children's Home alumna

“The children's home molded me into who I am today.”

Carol Mendez



I like being able to help the children better their lives. When they first arrive, they are very shy and scared and miss their families. We help them adjust to their new surroundings and adjust to living with other kids. Over time, you can see the change in their behavior. They're happy they have a safe environment to come home to. I enjoy working with them – preparing meals, helping with their laundry, taking them clothes shopping, ensuring they receive a good education and then seeing them off to college.

—Carol Mendez, a Child Care Worker who has spent 13 years with the Masonic Children's Home

“The children's home staff all have a passion for working with children... it's exciting for us to see how the children grow.”

— Virginia Migrala,
Director of Children's Services

Masonic Village ^{Elizabethtown}



Children's Home

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ENERGY

Masonic Children's Home



POTENTIAL

Welcome

The Masonic Children's Home, located on the Masonic Village at Elizabethtown's 1,400-acre campus, has been caring for children since 1913 and has the capacity to serve 40 youth within its five cottages.

We give children a unique opportunity to grow and succeed through a supportive homelike environment that gives them a chance to receive friendship, care and guidance. As our youth mature, we provide the resources to prepare them to live on their own.

The Masonic Children's Home is an ideal opportunity for children who are orphaned, being raised by aging grandparents, or who come from various socioeconomic environments which do not provide the security and support necessary for healthy growth and development.



"Offering Care and Guidance to Our Youth"

Staying Healthy

We give special attention to children's healthcare needs. Children receive regular dental and physical checkups with local providers and, as needed, may visit the physicians, dentists, ophthalmologists, physical therapists, dermatologists and nurses on staff in the Masonic Health Care Center on campus. We also make referrals to outside facilities, if necessary, so children receive the best care possible.

Complementary Care

Generous contributions fund the children's home, so parents/guardians do not have to pay for their children to live here.

Growing in Knowledge

Youth may stay at the children's home throughout their school years. They attend the Elizabethtown Area School District, programs conducted by Intermediate Unit 13 and the Lancaster County Career and Technology Center. We support regular study habits and expect students to study each day. If a child needs additional help, certified teachers and college students provide tutoring on campus.

Upon graduation, the youth receive financial support to attain higher education if they choose to do so.



Exploring Interests

We help children pursue their own interests and goals. Through the local recreation center and Elizabethtown Area School District sports programs, children can choose to participate in a variety of activities. Our campus has basketball and tennis courts, play areas, swimming pools and bike paths, and youth who have other interests, such as art and music, may take private lessons. We even take group trips to enjoy picnics, sports games, amusement parks and vacations. Children may also participate in the religious worship of their choice.

Family Matters

Families are important to us. When appropriate, we welcome siblings to move onto our campus together, and provide parent/guardian visitations.

Enjoying Life

The Masonic Children's Home features:

- Attractive, homelike environment
- Spacious bedrooms
- Nutritious home-cooked meals
- Clothing
- Skilled child care
- Complete medical care
- Social worker on staff
- Academic tutoring
- Resources to pursue hobbies
- Organized sports and activities
- Annual vacations and trips
- Opportunity for higher education
- Independent living program



Questions & Answers

Q: Do parents/guardians have to give up legal guardianship of their children?

A: No. Parents/guardians remain the legal guardians and after a 30-day initial period, may arrange visitations on a biweekly basis.

Q: Do parents/guardians have to pay for their children to stay at the children's home?

A: No. Generous contributions to the Masonic Villages fund the Masonic Children's Home, so we do not charge individuals, organizations or units of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or federal government for our services.

Q: Explain the children's home application process.

A: Call us at (717) 367-1121, ext. 33301 and ask for application information. We'll answer any questions you may have.

Later, we will sign the application form at the applicant's home and afterward, set up a weekend for the child to visit the children's home.

After evaluating the child's information, and upon approving the applicant, the Director of Children's Services arranges a date for the child to move into the children's home.

Q: How long does the application process take?

A: Due to its thoroughness, the process can take several weeks.

Q: Are there any reasons the children's home cannot accept a child?

A: To best serve all of the youth within a group setting, we cannot accept children with extreme treatment needs, police involvement or serious behavior issues.

Q: Does a child need to have a Masonic affiliation in the family to live at the children's home?

A: No. During the application process, we contact a local lodge to sponsor each child.