

EAS News

A Time for Change

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*"I don't know
where I'd be
without the
Elizabeth Ann
Seton
Program....."*

One never knows what may trigger a lifestyle transformation for someone. For Sharon T, the realization of a need for change came while attending parenting classes through the Elizabeth Ann Seton Program. Held every week at Contact Ministries, the parenting classes were just what Sharon needed.

Sharon is mother to four children: Alexander, 15, Braedon, 11, Micah 3, and Christian, 18 months. She has lived in Springfield for most of her life and graduated from Springfield High School. Her parents and two sisters also live in Springfield.

In September 2010, Sharon was homeless and living at Contact Ministries. She did not have custody of her three older children and her circumstances were very serious. She took a huge interest in the parenting classes offered by EAS, and

began to attend the monthly EAS educational meetings. Sharon met with Dawn Morris, Springfield Coordinator. At one of their meetings, Sharon realized that she had gotten herself into a very bad situation and that now was the time to get herself out.

When her stay at Contact Ministries ended, she still needed time to plan, so she lived at Inner City Mission for a time. With Dawn's help, things finally started to fall into place, and Sharon applied to MERCY Communities for transitional housing. She was accepted there and now has a job with Goodwill Industries. She is actively working very hard to regain custody of her older children.

In addition to counseling assistance, Sharon takes advantage of EAS and its point system to "buy" items such as diapers, baby wipes and personal hygiene items.



Left to right: Christian; Sharon's sister, Lydia; Sharon T

Sharon's advice for others is, "Don't be too proud; use the services that are available to you!" She also said, "The more I fought, the harder I fell. But when I reached out to places like EAS, I realized that I was not alone, and they were there to help me achieve my goals".

Sharon still has a long journey ahead of her, but she is making the changes that will help her realize her goal to be reunited with her children and provide a stable life for her family.

EAS Greeting Cards and Gifts are coming to stores near you! See the Made by Moms article on page 2

Made by Moms



Patricia M volunteers time to make cards at the EAS office

EAS Greeting Cards sold at:

- St. John's Hospital Gift Shop, Springfield
- Carol Jo Vecchie Gift Shop, Springfield
- Marian Center, Springfield
- Memorial Women's Health Fair, October 15, Orr Building, Springfield
- Memorial Medical Center's Festival of Trees, November 19-27, Springfield
- Simply Me Purses & More, 607 N. State Stree, Litchfield
- St. Francis Hospital Gift Shop, Litchfield
- Litchfield Festival of Trees, November 18-20, Litchfield
- Chicks & Chocolate Event, December 3, Litchfield

EAS is excited to be rolling out the Made by Moms program, a jobs skills project that allows EAS moms to create and market handmade products in the community. Initially, the product line for Made by Moms will include handcrafted greeting cards, beaded jewelry and inspirational frames & mirrors. The mothers of EAS have been involved in the planning and creation of these items, with the assistance of local artists and volunteers.

There are many benefits to the Made by Moms program. Most importantly, it will empower the mothers of EAS to see that their talents and creativity can result in marketable products. Jennifer Schultz, EAS

Executive Director, stated, "We can already see the positive impacts of this program on our moms. They love having a hands-on project that allows them to be creative and also earn EAS points toward items their family needs. It is truly a win-win program."

Additionally, Made by Moms provides an opportunity for participants, volunteers and staff to work together toward a common goal. The proceeds from the sales will all go toward sustaining and growing EAS programs and educational opportunities for women and children in need.

The initial inventory of greeting cards will include notes for birthdays, get well, new baby, inspirational, Halloween and Thanksgiving.

The cards are unique in that each one includes a silver trinket charm that can be put on a chain or bracelet. Special orders are also always accepted.

Additionally, there is a beautiful line of Christmas cards that includes an olive wood ornament from the Holy Land. These cards make an excellent choice for those times when you want to give someone a special item. The Christmas cards are often described as being, "more than a card, it's a gift".

Items can be purchased at several local vendors and events (see list) and orders can be placed by contacting the EAS office at (217) 757-6025. Please support this exciting new program!

Dawn Morris Promoted

Dawn Morris was recently promoted to Director of Programs for EAS. As director, her duties will cover several program features.

She will supervise the area coordinators, Michelle Sorenson, Springfield, and Teresa de la Cruz, Beardstown. In addition, Dawn will provide Mentor Training for the program, standardize the educational sessions and coordinate fundraising for the entire program.

Dawn began working for EAS in 2007 as the Litchfield area Coordinator. She continues in that capacity along with her

Director of Programs responsibilities. She also served as Springfield Area Coordinator for several months in 2010 and 2011.

Before joining the EAS team, Dawn was LANs (Local Area Network) Coordinator for Catholic Charities, Carlinville, IL. Dawn, a Litchfield resident, is married to Rick and is mom to three sons.

With a great sensibility to the needs of the EAS women and their families, Dawn makes excellent use of community resources and her professional knowledge to improve the entire EAS program. Whether it is

putting together a Pork Patty fundraiser, counseling a mom to finish her GED or making use of a volunteer's talents, Dawn is an invaluable member of the EAS team. Congratulations, Dawn!



New Springfield Coordinator Michelle Sorenson

Michelle Sorenson was welcomed to the EAS Program as Springfield Coordinator effective June 30, 2011. Since her employment, Michelle has been busy getting to know and understand the ins and outs of how the program works. Meeting past, current and new moms this summer has been a whirlwind of excitement.

As Coordinator, Michelle is already working with participants to counsel them in setting life and career

goals. Along with that, she conducts monthly educational meetings for participants and provides parenting classes at Contact Ministries. Recruiting and working with volunteers is another facet of Michelle's responsibilities.

Michelle is a Springfield native, a graduate of St. Aloysius Elementary School and Ursuline Academy. She obtained her Bachelor's Degree from Illinois State University and returned to central Illinois to pursue her

career in social services. Her professional background includes working for Catholic Social Services in Lincoln, IL, the Rutledge Youth Foundation in Springfield and substitute teaching in area schools. She is a full-time wife to Tim and mom to three children.

Michelle brings extensive experience to EAS and adds a fresh and enthusiastic perspective to the program. Welcome, Michelle!



Thank You to

- Special thanks to Vance Dhooge of VS Technologies for donating his time and talent to redesign the EAS website. Check out the new look at www.elizabethannsetonprogram.org
- Knights of Columbus Council #364 for donating proceeds from June Breakfast fundraiser to EAS
- St. Peter's Catholic Church in Petersburg

for their generous donations

- SIU School of Medicine Department of Surgery for donating to EAS from their casual day contributions
- Mrs. Patton's 5th Grade Class at St. Agnes School
- IL Department of Health & Human Services for making EAS the recipient of their women's Donation Drive

- Mt. Moriah Baptist Church in Coffeen for their continued support and generosity

For EAS, the time, talents and treasures that are donated mean that the program can continue to provide services to the women and their families in three different communities: Springfield, Litchfield and Beardstown. Without our benefactors and volunteers, EAS could not survive. Our thanks and appreciation goes out to each and every one.

Calendar of Events

September 28: Springfield Social Club starting at 5:30; Boone's Saloon in Springfield (EAS is the September charity recipient)

October 4: Litchfield Pork Patty fundraiser (last one of the season)

October 15: Memorial women's Health Fair from 9:00 – 2:00; IL State Fairgrounds, Springfield, Orr Building (EAS is exhibiting)

October 15: St. Agnes Young at Heart Social Club starting at 5:30; All About Wine in Springfield (EAS is being sponsored)

November 18-20: Litchfield Festival of Trees

December 3: Chicks & Chocolate Fundraiser for Litchfield EAS starting at 6:00; Wooden Nickel Winery in Honeybend

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Coordinators:
Teresa de la Cruz,
Beardstown

Dawn Morris,
Litchfield

Michelle Sorenson,
Springfield

EAS Activities

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Beardstown: The Beardstown Program is a large and close-knit group, headed by EAS Program Coordinator, Teresa de la Cruz. They celebrated with a family picnic this summer at the Beardstown Park, attended by many EAS families. The 2011-2012 Mom-to-Mom educational calendar will address many parenting issues as well as the bilingual challenges that many participants routinely face with their school-aged children.



Springfield: Springfield Mom volunteers have been coming to the office to help organize it and help out in any way while earning points towards getting items they need. The annual EAS picnic was held in August at Enos Park. Everyone enjoyed a delicious meal and lots of fun! A visit from the Springfield Fire Department and Police Department was the highlight of the evening. The parenting/support group continues at Contact Ministries each week. Parenting classes for teen moms will begin soon at Lawrence Adult Education Center, and in addition, a weekly group parenting class will be held at the EAS office, 700 N. 7th Street, Springfield.

Litchfield: The Litchfield

EAS Center has been very busy. They had three Pork Patty Fundraisers throughout the summer. A Back to School Beach Party was held in August. Their monthly meeting is held on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 12:30 p.m. (107 W. Ryder). For September's meeting they will be going to the local library for a story hour. Upcoming events include another Pork Patty Fundraiser, Chicks 'n Chocolate and Festival of Trees



About Our Organization.....

Since 1996 the Elizabeth Ann Seton Program has been assisting pregnant and parenting women in Springfield and the central Illinois area with:

- *Mentoring Support*
- *Education*
- *Practical Assistance*
- *Employment Assistance*
- *Volunteer Opportunities*

