



# Strategic Plan 2020-2022



**Marian House**  
*Women Moving From Dependence to Independence*



“

Marian House is teaching me how to live a responsible life. I'm growing up all over again. I'm becoming more mindful of my own life and how I want to live it. I feel really loved and taken care of here.

”

Evette  
*Marian House Resident*

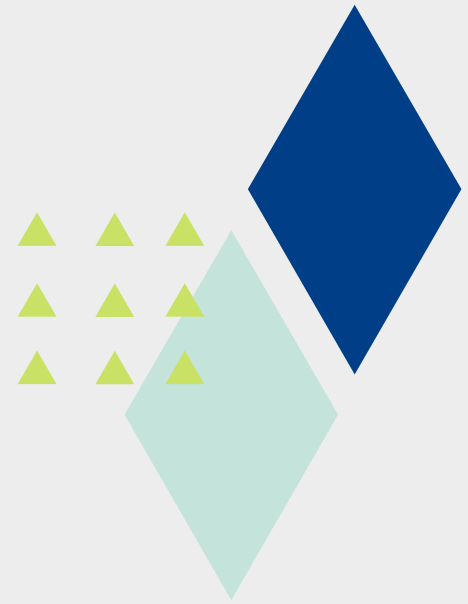


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# Executive Summary

Marian House was founded in 1982 as a joint project of the Sisters of Mercy and the School Sisters of Notre Dame in response to the dire circumstances that befell women at the Baltimore City Women's Detention Center. Two Sisters and a lay volunteer noticed that it was difficult, if not impossible, for many of the women being released from jail to rebuild their lives as housing, employment, and support were hard to come by. The two orders of Sisters came together and founded Marian House to fill these voids and to reduce recidivism rates. Since its founding, Marian House has become a leading organization in the provision of high-quality rehabilitative services to women re-entering the community from incarceration and unstable life situations. Over the past 37 years, Marian House has grown significantly and has continuously strengthened and enhanced its program to achieve strong results.

From 2010 through 2018, Marian House implemented two bold, expansion-oriented strategic plans and accomplished or made significant progress on all of the aspirations outlined in the plans, culminating in the successful completion of the \$7 million Independence Place project. This new 3-year strategic plan builds on the achievements of the last eight years. It lays out a pathway for Marian House to bring several new bold initiatives to fruition, and to advance strategic thinking in new areas that will guide organizational life beyond this plan.



## Our Mission

Marian House is a holistic, healing community for women and their children who are in need of housing and support services. We provide a safe, sober, loving environment that challenges women to respect and love themselves, confront emotional and socio-economic barriers, and transition to stable and independent lives.

## Our Vision

Marian House strengthens our society by unlocking the potential found within the women we serve.

## Our Values

Marian House values the innate dignity of each human being. Within a culture of respect and understanding of the human condition, the values of patience, trust, honesty, and integrity direct all of our interactions and endeavors. Marian House is committed to equity and inclusion. We value diversity of thought and honor individual identity which includes race, color, national origin, gender identity, sexuality, class, and religion.





## Strategic Direction and Goals 2020-2022

The 3-year period 2020-2022 will be a time of implementation, adaptation, and exploration of future opportunity. Specifically, Marian House will:

- Bring key growth and organization strengthening projects to full fruition, including the new Independence Place and the new outpatient services program.
- Determine how to best provide for additional permanent housing for Marian House women, especially in light of the new Housing First funding guidelines.
- Continue to deliver the highest quality programs and services our resources will support, while being mindful and strategic in our response to emerging program opportunities and to public policies that may affect public support for transitional housing and behavioral health services.
- Explore resource development strategies to maintain our commitment to offering transitional and permanent housing and holistic program services.
- Review the strategic plan annually to assess its efficacy and viability, ensure the goals remain relevant and cohesive, and adjust as necessary.

## Goal I: Mission Based Services *The Power of Our Program*

Marian House is committed to sustaining our high-quality programs and related partnerships that advance our mission for women and children in both our transitional program and permanent housing programs. In order to do this, Marian House is committed to maintaining and growing funding and donor relationships.

## Goal II: Organizational Capacity *The Power of Progress and Expansion*

Marian House will evaluate options to better support women graduating from our program in finding affordable permanent housing and to provide ongoing services as needed.

## Goal III: Advocacy, Visibility & Board Development *The Power of Building Relationships*

Our vision is that every member of the Marian House family (board, staff, alumnae, residents, volunteers, and other stakeholders) is active in advocating for, sustaining, and advancing the mission.





# Detailed Strategic Plan

## Introduction

This 3-year strategic plan was developed with participation of the Marian House Board of Directors and senior staff. We are grateful for the support and contributions of our many volunteers and staff who made the process of developing this plan both inclusive and strategic. (See Acknowledgments on pages 17 and 18)

Marian House will use this plan as our guiding framework for key strategic issues through fiscal year 2022.

We will annually develop a business plan detailing actions, assignments, budget and other resource requirements to facilitate plan implementation. This plan was approved by the Marian House Board of Directors on April 10, 2019.

The plan is presented in two sections.

- **Section I** presents the Marian House Organization Identity Statement. Organization Identity elements that distinguish Marian House include our mission statement, 10-year vision statement, core operating values, core beliefs and definitions of our primary audience for program support and our supporting partners. These identity elements provide the context for this strategic plan.
- **Section II** presents environmental scan highlights, and the strategic direction, goals, and objectives that will guide Marian House through fiscal years 2020-2022.

## I. Organization Identity Statement

**Background:** The Marian House Organization Identity Statement was first developed and approved in the 2010 Strategic Plan. We are committed to keeping the statement fresh and relevant in order to continue guiding our Board of Directors and staff in a shared perspective of our identity and our purpose. This Organization Identity Statement reflects an update of the original statement.

### Mission Statement

*The remarkable difference we aim to make in the world*

Marian House is a holistic, healing community for women and their children who are in need of housing and support services. We provide a safe, sober, loving environment that challenges women to respect and love themselves, confront emotional and socio-economic barriers, and transition to stable and independent lives.



## Meaning Behind the Mission Statement

### *Holistic, healing community for women and their children who are in need of housing and support services*

Marian House provides shelter and homes for families of women and children who are in a period of crisis and transition, who may suffer from trauma, mental health disorders, physical and sexual abuse, addictions and/or previous incarceration. The program, steeped in a spirit of loving compassion, offers a caring environment where families receive help with life-impacting services including shelter, food, clothing, therapy, recovery, finances, education, employment, and more, in a safe, community environment that fosters self-reflection and self-improvement.

### *Provide a safe, loving environment*

Marian House offers a tranquil space and protective environment for women and children, many of whom have never experienced the warmth and compassion of a home with a routine, responsibilities, and expectations. The program is grounded in compassion for others, personal responsibility, and belief in the goodness of humanity – that no matter her circumstances, each woman matters as a human being and deserves well-being and success.

### *That challenges women to respect and love themselves*

Marian House supports women as they confront barriers to growth in self-esteem, providing them with tools and experiences needed to build self-confidence and self-worth.

### *Confront emotional and socio-economic barriers*

Marian House supports women in responding to their hardships by helping them strengthen their attitudes, mental health and outlook on life. We also guide them in developing or enhancing skills that will enable them to find meaningful work through employment or the creation of a business that puts them on a path to competitive wages and benefits.

### *Transition to stable and independent lives*

Marian House offers women the opportunity to change and to create a fresh start. Women who complete our program leave with a new-found health and a sense of self-worth, confidence, and drive that sets the foundation for financial well-being and personal fulfillment.

## 2029 Vision Statement

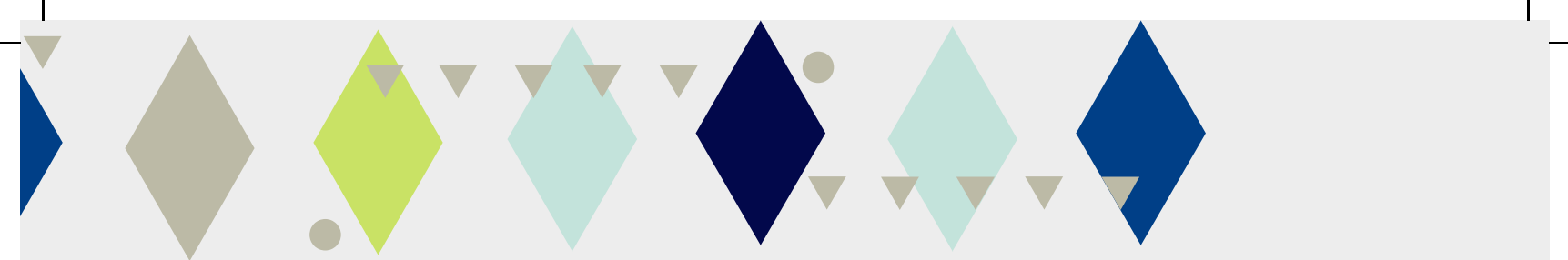
### *Meaningful results we are committed to achieving in a decade*

#### **For program graduates, residents, and our organization in 2029, we envision:**

... that Marian House will continue to create an environment for women and children, where they are accepted and learn to maximize their potential, become more stable and secure emotionally, and begin a path toward financial stability.

... that Marian House will work tirelessly to ensure safe, stable, affordable housing is available for women who successfully complete the transitional program.





...that Marian House will continue to be a strong, driving force behind systemic improvements that enable more women and children to move from crisis and transition by accessing the help they need to heal and recover.

...that Marian House will have successfully advocated for the public policy changes essential to providing services with long-term impact.

...that Marian House remain accredited and continue to offer a strong program that sets a standard for services and support for women and children who are homeless.

...that Marian House will continue to have strong leadership and a fully active and engaged board of directors that supports its work.

...that Marian House will have a strong, broad network of supporters who contribute to the healing and recovery of women and children and to our organization's continued success.

## **Core Operating Values**

*Ideals that guide our actions*

These five core operating values guide the way Marian House wants our residents, our staff, our partners, and the community to experience Marian House - as a compassionate, responsive, and effective organization. In addition, through our program we teach these values to our residents and support them in adapting these values to their own lives.

### ***Spiritually Grounded***

We embrace our rich heritage and draw on the charisms of the School Sisters of Notre Dame and the Sisters of Mercy. We are dedicated to the women who seek our assistance and infuse all of our programs with faith and compassion.

### ***Solutions Focused***

We believe there are ways to address any obstacle that a woman faces in her path to recovery and to a better future. We foster a positive outlook to problem-solving among our staff and residents and advocate tirelessly to ensure that laws are written to protect the women we serve and provide the funding to support our efforts.

### ***Innovative and Fearless***

We seek out and embrace new options for supporting our residents and their success and do not allow uncertainty about the future to stand in the way of program improvement. We also believe that it is important for the women in our program to explore different experiences that stretch their perspective and offer them new opportunities. Within our supportive community women have the opportunity to transform fearfulness into fearlessness.

## *Love, Care, Patience, and Persistence*

We believe in the goodness of all people and approach our work and relationships in ways that cultivate an open heart, inclusiveness, respect, and beauty in each individual. We see positive change and growth as a long-term commitment. As long as women in our care have a desire and are making efforts toward positive change in their lives, we will continue to persevere with them.

## *Quality and Integrity*

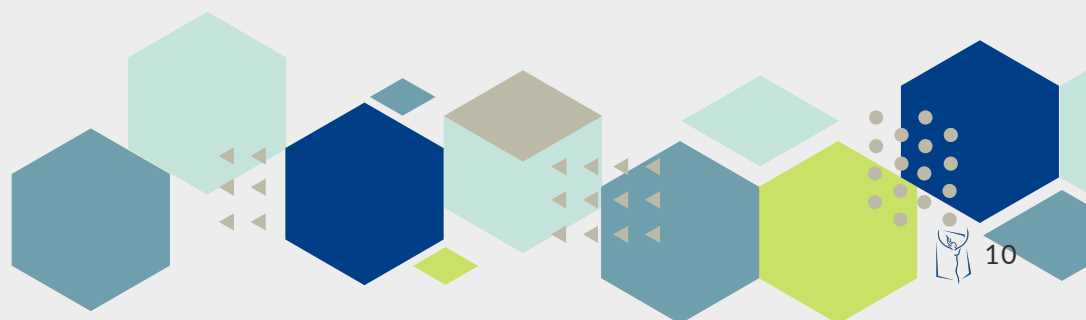
We aim for high levels of trust, confidence, satisfaction and results in our programs, our management, and our governance. We are guided by the reputation of Marian House as a highly regarded organization in the community.

## **Core Beliefs**

*Concepts that express our sense about how change happens*

As Marian House pursues its mission, our top priority is supporting women in designing their own unique pathways to healthy, independent lives. The approach to achieving our mission is rooted in the following principles and beliefs about the value of a holistic and healing residential community. These principles and beliefs guide our work.

- We believe in the dignity of each person, and the potential of all women to live healthy and productive lives. We believe that every family deserves to have a “home” that provides a loving and caring environment.
- We believe that holistic healing begins by confronting past negative experiences and reshaping attitudes and experiences that will build a different future.
- We believe in the goodness of humanity, the value of order, and in nourishing spirituality in individuals and communities.
- We believe that education and the opportunity for work are powerful and transformative platforms for helping women lead more satisfying, meaningful, connected, and self-determined lives.
- We believe in giving back to the community.
- We believe that structure and clear expectations help people live more productive lives.
- We believe in growing and learning from mistakes.
- We believe that transitional housing is a valuable tool for helping homeless women and children stabilize their lives and move into permanent homes.
- We believe that sound public policy is essential to providing services with long-term impact.



## Primary Customer

*Programs and services are organized to respond to the needs, wants and aspirations of this group.*

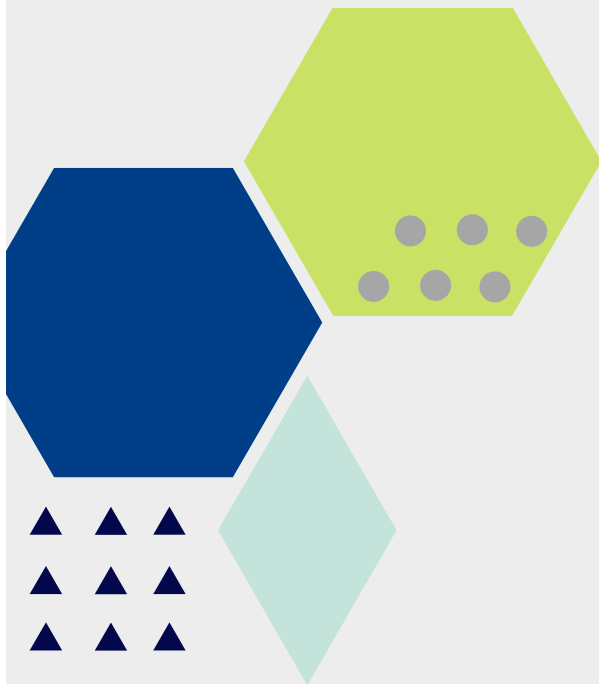
For the purposes of designing effective programs and services, Marian House defines its primary customer group as women and children in crisis and transition who may suffer from trauma, mental health disorders, physical and sexual abuse, addictions, and/or previous incarcerations that have left them homeless, unemployed, and/or separated from their families.

## Supporting Partners

*Resources and relationships that help an organization successfully serve its primary customer.*

Just as important as our primary customers, supporting partners are also essential to the success of Marian House. These are community resources that have the power to influence the mindset, behavior, and institutional and systemic practices that perpetuate homelessness. Marian House supporting partners include the following:

- Marian House Staff
- Marian House Board of Directors
- School Sisters of Notre Dame
- Sisters of Mercy
- Marian House alumnae
- Foundations
- Individual Donors
- Corporate Donors
- Local, State, and National Government Agencies
- Elected Officials
- Employers
- Peer Community Organizations
- Volunteers
- Neighbors
- Landlords
- Vendors





## II. Organization Strategic Direction 2020-2022

### 2019 Environmental Scan Key Findings

The direction, goals, and strategies included in this plan were developed with the assistance of the consulting firm, Avancé, LLC. The basis of the process was Appreciative Inquiry, with the goal being to uncover the positive things currently being done by Marian House, and to dream boldly as to where we thought Marian House should focus efforts to maximize the impact on the women we are serving. Appreciative Inquiry is the discovery of the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them. It is the art and practice of asking unconditional positive questions that anticipate and heighten potential. Appreciative Inquiry links the energy of an organization's POSITIVE CORE directly to any change agenda, and changes never thought possible are democratically mobilized. The basis of Appreciative Inquiry is that human systems grow in the direction of what they persistently ask questions about. As Albert Einstein said, "No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it. We must learn to see the world anew."

We engaged 79 stakeholders through interviews (15 one-on-one interviews, 59 on-line survey respondents, 5 Marian House II Residents). Thirty-nine Stakeholders participated in the Dream Workshop and 22 Stakeholders participated in the Workshop to draft Aspirational Statements, where a first draft of a Strategic Plan was created. The finalized plan was created by the 10-member Strategic Planning Committee. This entire deliberate and comprehensive process took us 9 months to complete.

### *Key Client and Service Trends*

- The Marian House transitional program is unique in its holistic programming and comprehensive services.
- Marian House women are courageous and motivated, and graduates have become well-regarded members of their local communities.
- Marian House services are known throughout the community as being high quality.
- The Marian House Staff is highly dedicated, and they provide professional and loving support to the women. A restorative experience has been created, and many of the women have not experienced this in the past.
- Marian House has newly established an outpatient program to provide services to non-Marian House women. It is expected that we will be able to use our expertise to deliver services to more women in an efficient manner. Income from the program creates a diversified revenue stream.
- Marian House has expanded its core program to include behavioral health services.

## Key External Environment Trends

- The economy continues to be strong and donors/foundations respond favorably when they understand how our programs work and the level of success our women achieve.
- Recent changes in the tax law (limiting itemized deductions and increasing the standard deduction) may have a negative impact on giving from individual donors.
- Marian House has developed a very strong reputation among foundations, individual donors, and governmental entities.
- The "Housing First" philosophy of government funders is creating challenges for the ongoing funding of Marian House programs.

## Opportunities for Marian House

- Marian House should continue to build on its strong position/reputation.
- Marian House should consider expansion of its core program, services to graduates, and services to non-resident individuals and families. Opportunities include:
  - Additional behavioral health services
  - On-going counseling services to graduates
  - Employment services
  - Small business development
  - Outpatient services to non-resident individuals and families
  - Nutrition, healthy cooking, and exercise programs
  - Additional services to family program participants, e.g., childcare
- Marian House should assist women who graduate from Marian House to acquire affordable permanent housing.
- Marian House should utilize its strong financial position to explore opportunities to purchase properties.
- Marian House should build strong and active advocates of all of its stakeholders: board members, staff, current Marian House women, Marian House alumnae, past board members, and friends.
- Marian House should engage potential new funders and retain existing funders through sharing the stories of Marian House women.

## 3-Year Direction Fiscal Years 2020-2022

The 3-year period 2020-2022 will be a time of implementation, adaptation, and exploration of future opportunity. There has been tremendous growth over the past 3 years. A \$7 million project was completed (Independence Place) which has significantly expanded our permanent housing options. Also, CARF accreditation was obtained (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities). Lastly, a program to offer services to non – Marian House women was launched. Marian House will continue to deliver the highest quality programs and services our resources will support, while being mindful and strategic in our response to emerging program opportunities and public policies that may affect public support for transitional housing and behavioral health services. Marian House will explore resource development strategies to maintain its commitment to offering transitional and permanent housing and holistic program services.

## 3-Year Goals and Objectives 2020-2022

### Goal I: Mission-Based Services - *The Power of Our Program*

Marian House is committed to sustaining our high-quality programs and related partnerships that advance our mission for women and children in both our transitional program and permanent housing. In order to do this, Marian House is committed to maintaining and growing funding and donor relationships.

### 3-Year Objectives:

1. Design and initiate a study to identify gaps in ongoing services to enable continued success for our women. Example: affordable child care for residents.
  - Create a prioritized implementation plan for recommended additional services.
2. Design a study focused on collecting the necessary data to support and enhance our future funding/donor requests.
3. Understand peer trends and industry direction to determine whether Marian House should establish an electronic patient records data base (clinical notes, resident demographics, data collection). If so, follow up with a feasibility study, including cost benefit analysis and solution options.





## Goal II: Organizational Capacity - *The Power of Progress and Expansion*

Marian House will evaluate options to better support women graduating from our program in finding affordable permanent housing, and to provide ongoing services as needed.

### 3-Year Objectives:

1. Create a committee and complete an analysis of the most efficient way to secure permanent housing for our graduates, taking into account the challenges presented by Housing First funding guidelines.
2. Expand the Marian House owned permanent housing inventory, to increase permanent housing availability by 20%.

## Goal III: Advocacy, Visibility & Board Development - *The Power of Building Relationships*

Our vision is that every member of the Marian House family (board, staff, alumnae, residents, volunteers, and other stakeholders) is active in advocating for, sustaining, and advancing the mission.

### 3-Year Objectives:

1. Create a standardized organizational message that is consistently utilized by all stakeholders to facilitate effective communication and accurate information-sharing to grow awareness of Marian House and its mission. Expand opportunities for formal recognition of board members and volunteers.
2. Improve marketing and communications through more consistent language, expanded communication tools and increasing media presence.
3. Evaluate and restructure the board and the volunteer programs to include formalized processes and policies, and the creation of committees that support the strategic plan and are more reflective of the organization's needs.
4. Expand, improve, and communicate opportunities for board members, volunteers, program participants, and staff members to engage in ambassadorship for the organization amongst their own personal and professional networks, with stated targets for board members to increase accountability.



# Strategic Planning Process Overview and Implementation Agreement



## 2020-2022 Strategic Planning Process

Avancé, LLC facilitated this strategic planning process by adapting its strategic planning framework, focused on the Appreciative Inquiry process, with input from the Marian House Executive Director and all members of the Board of Directors. A record of the strategic planning process and the environmental scan is available in a supplementary document.

## Board of Directors/Executive Director Strategic Plan Implementation Partnership

This strategic plan is intended as an internal management guide for the Marian House Board of Directors, Executive Director, and staff as they work together to implement the plan goals and objectives. Successful implementation of this strategic plan requires a consistent commitment and shared leadership between the Board of Directors and the Executive Director to work strategically, efficiently, and effectively with Marian House resources. To support implementation of the strategic plan from 2020-2022, the Board of Directors and Executive Director will:

### Track & Improve Performance

- Board of Directors, at each board meeting, reviews strategic plan implementation progress to stay abreast of accomplishments and barriers to success with each goal. Executive Director provides reports to the Board which reflect progress toward achieving the strategic plan goals.
- Board of Directors uses the plan as a framework for assessing annual performance of the Executive Director.
- Executive Director uses the plan as a framework for assessing annual staff and consultant performance.

### Align Financial Resources

- Annual operating budget supports actions to advance strategic plan goals and objectives.
- Board of Directors and the Executive Director consider and pursue sources of funds to support new strategic initiatives.

### Update the Strategic Plan

- Staff regularly seeks input from stakeholders.
- Board of Directors takes stock of the external and internal environments and reviews and updates the strategic plan as needed.
- Board of Directors considers the need for a comprehensive review and new strategic direction for Marian House beginning in 2022.

### Review the Operating Procedures and Capacity of the Board of Directors

- All members of the Board of Directors are actively involved in Marian House.
- Board of Directors does a strategic review of its skills and fills any gaps necessary to support implementation of the plan.
- Board of Directors reviews its operating procedures to ensure alignment with the strategic plan.
- Executive Director uses the plan to inform new staff recruitment.

# Acknowledgements

**Marian House extends its heartfelt thanks to the Strategic Planning Committee Members, Board Members and Staff who actively participated in creating this important roadmap to guide our work for fiscal years 2020-2022.**

## Board of Directors Participants

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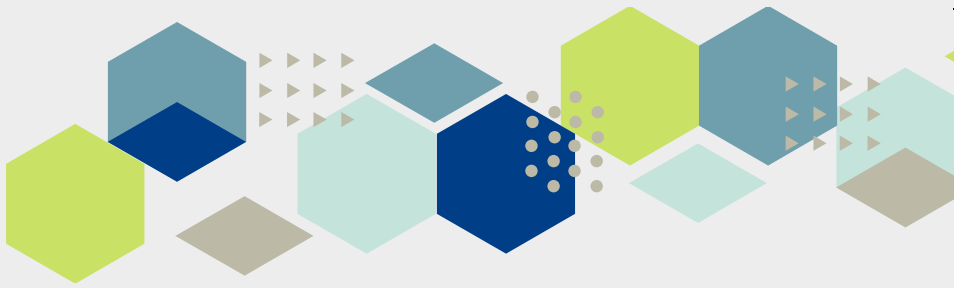
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# Marian House

*Women Moving From  
Dependence to Independence*

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