

THE GATE POST

Spring 2011



GATEWAY WOODS
Apostolic Christian Children's Home

Your connection to the work and news of Gateway Woods

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MEET MERCEDEZ

By Mercedes, Resident in the Pregnant Teen Program

Have you ever looked at someone else's situation and thought, "That wouldn't ever be me"? Well if not, I did. All the times I'd hear about this girl or that girl that was pregnant, and I'd think "How stupid can she be?" But when it happened to me it blew my hair back.

It all started when I was 15 years old. I had met a guy at a friend's party; we exchanged numbers and started texting and calling each other. After a while I thought that I was in love and we'd be together for a long time. One time I told my mom how much I cared for him and she told me to be careful. Then, one night he called me and I knew I didn't have any business trying to sneak out after curfew, but I just had to see him. Not only did he want to see me, but he wanted something so valuable and precious...

I felt so guilty afterward for taking advantage of my mother's trust, sneaking out and most of all for giving away my husband's wedding gift. We stayed together until three weeks later when I got locked up for stabbing a girl during a street fight. At that time I didn't think things through and I thought that what I had done was the only solution to my problem. I got locked up two days after I found out that I was pregnant. I thought I was going to die! I cried and cried until there wasn't anymore tears left. I finally convinced myself that I just didn't want it, it's not like it was an actual baby right? Ha! Wrong. I talked to my mother and she was so supportive of me. If it wasn't for my mom and God helping me through those three long months in the Juvenile Center I wouldn't know what to do.

About the middle of April 2010 I was sent here to Gateway to start over and take time to become a better person, prepare to become a mother and most of all to realize the seriousness of my actions. When I first got here, my mind was set to make good choices and do it not only for me, but also for my baby boy. I had a lot of challenges, like where am I going after this? And how do I get there? I wasn't perfect and I had my share of temptations and issues, but I worked through them to the best of my ability and I made it through. It's like God opened my eyes to let me know it's time for a change in my life and it starts right here.

A PEEK INSIDE

A Different Kind of Service • Volunteering
From One Joy to Another • Our Five Services
Career Opportunities • Unplanned Blessings

Five months after I came here I gave birth to a healthy, precious baby boy, the love of my life. I decided to take responsibility for my actions and raise him, not because I had to but because I wanted to. I've never had a single regret that I chose to keep him. I can have one of the worst days ever, but all I have to do is look at him and his pretty eyes and smile and I get the biggest grin on my face. Just thinking of him warms my heart.



"I'm just a walking proof that anything is possible through Jesus Christ."

I know soon I'll be on my own and it won't be easy, but I'm willing to give it my all. Over the last nine years so much has happened in my life, whether jumping from foster homes to residential placements or getting molested by my sister's father. Sometimes I would just sit back and wonder why would God allow me to go through this? But it's not God, it's sin. And there's always a reason. I'm just a walking proof that anything is possible through Jesus Christ. Don't give up or give in just keep pushing because there is a light at the end of each tunnel. Just trust and believe.



“Our ability to provide help to these kids, who many times cannot pay, is a direct result of our generous support base.”

to these kids, who many times cannot pay, is a direct result of our generous support base. I spoke recently to another Home-Based provider in Ft Wayne who said they simply have no option at their agency to provide help to private, non-paying clients. It made me thankful to be part of a team that puts a high value on relationships. Thanks to all who help to give us this opportunity.

CHRIST FIRST. OTHERS SECOND. ALL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

By Brandon Wiegand, Volunteer Coordinator

A DIFFERENT KIND OF SERVICE

By Clint Plattner, Home-Based Services Worker

Bethany and I had served as Houseparents at Gateway Woods for several years. There were many challenges and rewards throughout that time. We learned a lot about the kids and families we worked with and we learned a lot about ourselves. After deciding to leave the Houseparenting role, I became aware of an opportunity to serve as a Home-Based worker for Gateway Woods.

Home-Based Services simply means providing of family related services to the family within their own home. Most of the families are referred to us, although we are able to work with private cases as well. Normally, we meet with each family one time per week for one to two hours and try to help them meet the goals they have set.

The past year and a half in the Home-Based department has been a learning experience for me. My previous experience in the Houseparenting role has been extremely valuable to me in this work. One of the differences between the roles that I did not anticipate was the loss of control. When we were Houseparents, we were able to have a much larger influence on the environment of the home. My goal now is to come along side the family and help support them not tell them what they should do. I have had to learn to be an encourager and supporter instead of assuming direct responsibility.

Lastly, I would like to say a word of thanks to our supporters. The Home-Based program at Gateway Woods was originally designed as a means to provide help to kids after they returned back to their homes from our Residential program. Although we now work with families and kids who have had no prior exposure to Gateway Woods, there is still a focus on maintaining relationships with former residents. Our ability to provide help



Brandon Wiegand, Summer Volunteer Coordinator

Gateway Woods is a place that blesses many hurting families and children. For the past few summers it has been a blessing to me as well. I have volunteered there, along with many others, and together we have seen the Lord directly using His people for His purposes in ways both great and small. Whether we were there for a day or several weeks, God taught us about service and the infinite love He has for us, His creation. This summer I am thankful and excited to be the Volunteer Coordinator at Gateway.

We are certainly in need of willing hearts again this year! If you are age 19 or older I ask that you would prayerfully consider coming out. Volunteers work on a many diverse jobs throughout the summer. Whatever your skill set, from the arts to construction and everything in between, you can and will be used! Willingness to serve is the most important qualification. The blessings of serving are many and they are reciprocal; as you trust that God will teach you, and both you and Gateway Woods will benefit.

The experience of working together and meeting new Brothers and Sisters in Christ is just another perk of the job for all of those willing to volunteer. I am looking forward to seeing new and old faces alike! Please feel free to contact me, whether you are just curious or you are certain you want to come out to Gateway. Please remember to pray for Gateway Woods as well, and for the work God is doing there.

Go to gatewaywoods.org, and make sure to check out the volunteer info at: <http://www.gatewaywoods.org/supporters/volunteer>
If you are interested in volunteering please fill out the application form and volunteer reference form at the bottom of the page.

To reach Brandon, call (309) 310-9340

FROM ONE JOY TO ANOTHER

By Nathan and Rachel Mueller, Houseparents

Praise God! Five years ago we called up Gateway Woods' Residential Program Director asking about Houseparent volunteering. He informed us that Gateway no longer had that opportunity and then asked if we would consider a full-time job as Houseparents! This was a big surprise but God spent the next few months working in us and we are so thankful He did. We accepted the job and moved to Leo.

The first few months were a whirlwind of activity between a new job, new church, lots of training and hundreds of new names and relationships. We settled in quickly and started making mistakes even quicker! Letting residents eat worms is not healthy and letting them crabwalk a quarter mile on pavement results in blisters. Our boss was patient though and even let us become the full-time Houseparents in the Maple House. We learned to enjoy living life with the residents in our house. It is wonderful to be paid to play baseball, go to church and teach the gospel. Giving consequences and dealing with angry residents are not as wonderful, but there is much good and growth that comes from those times.



Nathan and Rachel sitting down to dinner with some of the residents in the Maple House.

With five years of Houseparenting behind us now we love this job and ministry more than ever. God has given us much joy and contentment here. Half of our marriage has been lived out at Gateway and it is all that our own four children have ever known, and we would have it no other way.

So, after hearing all of this you are probably thinking we will be Houseparents forever! We thought the same thing. We came here trusting God and now we are relying on Him as we leave what has become comfortable to us. We are moving from one joy to another now as we prepare to be missionaries to an unreached people group in the 10/40 window. It appears that this is the next path that God has for us to walk. This has all been very bittersweet as the reality of the unknown and what we are leaving behind sinks in. We are very thankful for this ministry and all those who support it.

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Be sure to check out our video interview with Nathan and Rachel at [facebook.com/gatewaywoods](https://www.facebook.com/gatewaywoods) in the "Video" section.

OUR FIVE SERVICES

By Jeff Schumacher, Executive Director

When I was asked to write this article for the Gatepost, I had to stop and reflect on our five services. I realized how much Gateway Woods has changed and grown over the past 20 years since I joined the Staff. Our mission to serve troubled children and families remains alive and strong, but how we serve them has changed and developed over time.

At the core, Gateway Woods still has a strong Residential program that has grown from two to five houses. Besides our four regular Residential homes, we have one home that serves specifically pregnant teens and teen moms.

Our Foster Care program was the second program to be established as a part of Gateway. We license Christian foster homes throughout northeast Indiana to serve children in need. Generally these children do not need as much structure as a Residential facility offers.

Our Adoption program is able to license Christian families in Indiana that have a desire to open their hearts to children who need a forever family. We are excited that we have hired Natalie Hoerr (Bloomington) to help us earn our license in Illinois to operate as an adoption agency. This expansion will allow us to serve Illinois families and children as well.

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“Thank you all for your support both in prayer and through financial gifts that support our mission to troubled children and families.”

Gateway Woods School actually has two education-focused programs. The on-grounds school serves both children that are placed on our campus and students that come to our campus daily as a part of our Day-Treatment program. These Day-Treatment students are in need of more structure than is provided by a public school.

Our fifth department addresses many of the issues we face in a different way. Our Home-Based serves struggling families from

within the home itself. Our Home-Based workers meet with parents and children in a practical counseling role in their own environment. God has blessed this program immensely and many hearts have been changed since its inception.

Gateway Woods theme this year is “Walking in Faith.” This seems so appropriate because it is what we find ourselves doing day in and day out. It is a great opportunity to witness how our Lord consistently supplies all our needs. Thank you all for your support both in prayer and through financial gifts that support our mission to troubled children and families.

2011 SCHOLARSHIPS

Every year, Gateway Woods awards scholarships to students enrolled in undergraduate or postgraduate work leading to a degree in a social services field. The scholarships are available to any member of the Apostolic Christian Church or friend who attends on a regular basis.

A description of the scholarship and application are available on our website: GatewayWoods.org/supporters/scholarship or by contacting Ross Feller by phone (888) 443-4283 or email ross.feller@gatewaywoods.org. Applications need to be submitted by **June 15, 2011**.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES AT GATEWAY WOODS

We are very thankful that God continues to provide us with the right staff. Here are some career opportunities waiting to be filled. Please go to gatewaywoods.org for more information or call us at 888.443.GATE (4283)

Job Title	Job Duties	Qualifications
Assistant Houseparent	Assist Houseparents in a supportive role as a third adult in the household helping to meet the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the residents. Work closely with brothers and sisters whose hearts and lives are dedicated to a common mission with an eternal reward.	Be at least 21 years old and have good communication skills, teamwork skills, self-motivation and flexibility. Be sensitive to the special emotional and physical needs of Gateway Woods’ residents and have a dedication and love for young people.
Alternate Houseparents	Provide days off coverage for Houseparents while maintaining continuity of discipline and expectations in the home. Help in the maintenance of buildings, grounds, vehicles and other areas of Gateway Woods properties.	Possess good communication skills, teamwork skills, self-motivation and flexibility. Be sensitive to the special emotional and physical needs of Gateway Woods residents. Have a dedication and love for young people. Have and show respect and esteem for one’s spouse.
Teacher’s Aide	Work with and support Teachers, supervise students in the vocational/community service programs, and carry out additional tasks that further the students’ education.	Possess good communication and teamwork skills, self-motivation and flexibility. Have the ability to fairly and firmly apply appropriate discipline. Have a sincere interest in and understanding of the spiritual, emotional, physical and educational needs of our children.

DON'T FORGET!

We know that your calendar's are already starting to fill up for the summer so don't forget to pencil in the Gateway Woods Annual Auction on **August 6th!**

UNPLANNED BLESSINGS- 35 YEARS OF SERVING CHILDREN

By Tim Sauder, Church Relations Director

2011 marks the 35th year since the first child arrived on our Christian campus. As our own lives march on through time, we reflect thankfully upon the past as well as look faithfully to the future. As we do this it seems appropriate that Gateway's theme this year is "Walking in Faith."

I was recently chatting with a friend and we both agreed that had we known ahead of time all the challenges, burdens and stresses waiting for us in marriage, parenting or some new job, we would have hesitated more cautiously before leaping into those pursuits. But God allows us to move forward in a kind of naïve optimism—walking and trusting Him one day at a time, similar to Abraham who chose to obey God's call in the present while trusting Him for the future. "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it" and "Faithful is He who called you, who also will do it." That's also the way it is with a ministry like Gateway Woods.

Over the years, as each of our services was launched it was not always because of in-depth market analysis or some airtight business plan. More often it was a dedicated staff person stepping out of their comfort zone because they encountered a problem and saw themselves as part of the solution. They convinced others that it was simply the right thing to do. Later our leaders came on board as they saw how the new venture fit with the mission of Gateway and that adequate money was available to embark on a new service to meet urgent needs and point the lost to the cross. Consequently, Gateway Woods has developed into a respected provider of quality family and children's services in Northeast IN and beyond. (See "Key Dates" sidebar)

There is a phenomenon known as "unexpected consequences" where a supposed solution creates repercussions more serious than the initially targeted problem. The cure becomes worse than the illness. We have witnessed a different phenomenon we might call "unplanned blessings." Even though these aren't a part of our official stats and outcomes, which include over 3,800 clients served (434 in 2010), 241 staff members employed in our 35 years (55 currently on staff), 75 Board Members (11 on current

Board) plus thousands of volunteers, lives were being shaped and molded for further service in surprising ways.

While the Lord has been weaving a tapestry with a pattern for observers to see clearly, He has also been working behind the scenes creating a more complex network of threads that result in blessings only He could predict. While we were simply obeying by helping children, God was working in the lives of His servants and the served. While we thought we were planting tiny seeds in this little plot, He was preparing whole fields and farms as He multiplied 30, 60 and 100 fold. How so?

Almost without exception our Staff members over the years have testified that they came to Gateway to help, and ended up being helped. They came to bless, but in turn, were themselves blessed. Their marriages have deepened, their insights into their own kids and parenting patterns have been Biblically transformed and, what was to be a temporary service, often became a lifestyle and lifetime of ministry. Our local congregation and community have been expanded and strengthened by those who caught the Gateway fever and have remained in the area as a parent-like network of support for former residents and current staff immersed in the trenches with at-risk kids and families.

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KEY DATES IN OUR HISTORY

- Residential Care – 1976
- Child and family counseling – 1979
- Independent living – 1986-1992
- Third group home – 1988
- Foster Care – 1989
- Family services in Illinois – 1994-2006
- Gateway Woods School Program – 1997
- Gateway Woods School Building - 2003
- Home-Based Services – 1998
- International and domestic adoption – 2001
- Pregnant teens and teen moms program – 2005
- Fourth group home: The Cypress House – 2007
- Fifth group home: The Pine House – 2009
- Adoption in Illinois – 2011

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See an exhaustive list of key dates in Gateway Woods history at [facebook.com/gatewaywoods](https://www.facebook.com/gatewaywoods) in the "Notes" section

They became foster parents and adopted, changed college majors and professions, became ministers and elders, and launched other child caring ministries and missions. We have had former Staff members serve in China, Bolivia, Guatemala, Jamaica, Haiti, Eastern Europe, Africa, Mexico and Japan. All have learned the necessity of prayer and the reliability of our faithful Lord.

Our Board Members have developed respectful, intimate and “war buddy” like friendships with brothers from across the Midwest. Serving sacrificially here has often spawned deeper involvement at Gateway or elsewhere. Some have later joined our staff while others have ended up on Boards or in leadership of service organizations like Casa Vida y Esperanza in Magdalena, Mexico or other mission and relief organizations.

Whether Staff, Representative, Board Member or volunteer, many have left a bit of their heart here. But those same people have also taken a bit of Gateway with them to their next God-ordained station. We stand back in awe and are compelled to give glory to God, “the author and finisher of our faith.” We are inspired and energized to walk further in faith as the unique and beautiful tapestry continues to be woven by His skillful hand.



“As our own lives march on through time, we reflect thankfully upon the past as well as look faithfully to the future.”

Change Service Requested

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here

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