

Martha's House: miracles do happen

By Tim Callahan

Susan Tyler had a vision in 2005.

She envisioned a Christian halfway house in Georgetown County for women coming out of jail, a gateway to spiritual, emotional and educational success and productivity.

But, that's all it was, a great idea. Her needs were great and seemed impossible to fulfill: land, a building, a vehicle, furniture, office supplies, time, prayer and money.

Miracles happen.

Last month, after eight years of working and waiting, Martha's House was dedicated to the Lord. "The Lord kept me going," Tyler said.

"When God gives you a vision, he gives you the provision for that vision," Tyler said. "It is a double wide mobile home on 12 acres, which were both donated. The inside was re-decorated by an interior designer who also donated their time, and all the furniture was donated."

She said they have room for three women but are hoping to expand the trailer to accommodate seven women.

The house is needed, Tyler said, because without it many women will return to an environment that got them in jail in the first place, surrounded by temptations to drink or drug again.

Tyler was never in jail but she was a drunk, she said, and "certainly did enough things to get me in jail." She has been involved for years in a prison ministry. She watched some women give their lives to the Lord, get out of prison, but then do something to be put back in prison. She wondered how that could be.

Continued on page 11

Martha's House: miracles do happen...continued from page 1

By talking to inmates she found they were often overwhelmed by the thought of freedom. In jail almost all decisions were made for them. As a result, they were afraid to reenter society, hounded by questions like where will I live? How can I get a job? Can I stay straight?

That is how Tyler got the idea to provide a safe place [also important as some of the women come from abusive homes] where they can work out these questions with other women like themselves, guided by Martha's House staff.

For about six months, the women will receive instruction in things like positive parenting skills, managing finances, etc., all preparing them for reentry into society.

Most importantly, "the women will receive spiritual nurturing that will provide the environment for each resident to experience God's unconditional love and the power to live a victorious Christian life," Tyler said.

Tyler experienced that love herself after bottoming out with her drinking. There is a reason for everything and Tyler believes that experience prepared her for this ministry.

Why is it called "Martha's House?"

"Martha represents any woman who has lost her way in life for any reason," Tyler said, "and yet still has great value and potential in the eyes and heart of God."

"We believe that through the ministry of Martha's House, that valuable lives can find restoration and healing, not only in this area but, in time, across the country," Tyler said.

The Martha's House board of directors includes: Alvilda Meyers, Libby Ellenburg, Susan Mitchell, Linda Porter, Rick Russ, Dixie Tindal, Tyler and Joe Young.

For more information, call (843) 237-4222 or visit www.marthashouseinc.com