

Answering the call to be houseparents

July 26, 2024

STCH Ministries houseparents are on the frontlines of ministry daily, serving children who need a place to call home.



Mark and Becky
Martin (Courtesy
Photo)

Many of the ministry's houseparents initially felt called to serve children in another way. For some, it was as a teacher or a bus driver. For others, it was as foster families or pastors. However, for all of them, God eventually called their hearts to minister in a specific way—as houseparents caring for the children who call Boothe Campus home.

A little over 30 years ago, Mark and Becky Martin were unsure what God had in store for their family next. Mark had become disillusioned with working for Shell Oil Company, so he was becoming more open to God's call.

The Martins stumbled across an ad in the *Baptist Standard* for STCH Ministries, expressing a need for houseparents. Shortly after, Becky attended a ladies' conference in West Texas where two of the speakers at the conference were from STCH Ministries. Becky began to sense God's calling and went home to tell Mark.

Sensing the call



Courtesy Photo

Mark was not as receptive to the idea initially. “Miraculously, I was able to remain silent as God revealed the calling to Mark,” Becky said.

She did not want to pressure him, but she continued to feel the pull toward this type of ministry.

Every message they heard from multiple pastors in multiple churches all spoke of children in need—at least in the Martins' eyes—which they understood as the Lord revealing his plan to them, Becky said.

Mark suffered a crisis of faith, because he did not want to become a houseparent, but Becky stayed steadfast in her pursuit of the Lord's direction.

Over time, Mark's heart opened to the idea of becoming a houseparent. He clung to the story of Jonah as he started to surrender to God's will for their lives.

Slowly, every obstacle began to break, opening their path toward STCH Ministries. Both the Martins became joyously aware this was God's plan for them. In August 1994, they moved to Boothe Campus.

Upon arriving, the Martins moved into Dimmick Cottage with their two biological sons, Caleb (7) and Jacob (5). They were anxiously excited about this new opportunity and went in with open minds.

Over the years, they have seen many children come and go from Dimmick Cottage where they have stayed throughout their 30 years of ministry. They watched as their sons grew up interacting with the boys in their cottage. Jacob is now on staff with STCH Ministries, serving as the social services director for Homes for Children.

Houseparent rewards



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The Martins reflected on the most rewarding parts of being houseparents and how it impacts not just themselves, but the lives of those they serve.

“One of the most rewarding parts of being a houseparent is hearing from some of our ex-students about how their lives are now,” Becky said.

“It’s extra special to see them committed to being the best parents they can be, to know that their time at STCH Ministries is now something they can remember as a positive chapter that brought healing and growth.”

Mark included: “Seeing the families they are building trying to break the cycle that led to them being placed in care is special. It is also always interesting to hear what kind of memories they have of the time they spent here.”

When asked what being a houseparent means they shared, “It has always meant being an example, modeling a lifestyle that is centered on Christ.

“As older houseparents, I love the idea that we’re demonstrating what it looks like to stick with relationships even when it’s not easy—to stick with a job, stick with a marriage and to stick with Jesus through all that life brings your way. They see plenty of examples of disposable relationships. This isn’t that,” Becky continued.

Long-term call



Courtesy Photo

When the Martins initially came to STCH Ministries Homes for Children, they did not know how long they would be staying. They shared their biggest prayer since before coming has been “that God would make it clear when it is time for us to go, just as he did that it was time for us to come.”

STCH Ministries has been blessed by the Martins’ dedication over the last 30 years, but not nearly as blessed as the children they have cared for.

They are the ones whose graduations, baptisms and weddings the Martins have attended—the ones who return for holidays or special occasions and whose lives were shaped deeply by the love and dedication they received while at Homes for Children.

“I am grateful to Mark and Becky for faithfully following their calling on the Boothe campus since 1994, providing loving care for children where they can thrive,” said Greg Huskey, vice president of campus ministries.

“If you feel called to serve as a houseparent at STCH Ministries Homes for Children, we would love to talk to you,” Huskey continued. Visit <https://www.stchm.org> for more information or to apply.