

# A Place To Call Home

*Brevard Rescue Mission seeks to break the cycle of homelessness for single women with children. In the past four years, the group has served more than 100 individuals.*



Facility manager Wendy Behrhorst, left, and CEO Stacia Glavas, right, share a smile with a resident of Brevard Rescue Mission's "Casa Carol" transitional living program. BRM is solely supported by local organizations such as churches, corporations and civic groups as well as private individuals.

Photos courtesy of Brevard Rescue Mission

by Jennie Kriete  
Community Contributor

In 2013, Brevard County Schools identified 1,830 school-aged children who are homeless and have no stable place to call home. Children in this situation endure a lack of safety, comfort, privacy, inadequate health care and, most heartbreaking of all, hunger. Half of all homeless children attend at least three schools in one year, and none know the security of an uninterrupted schedule or sense of community. Lack of affordable housing and basic life skills are the primary causes of homelessness, and a single mother, either unemployed or making minimum wage and struggling to afford basic needs, represents the most vulnerable of Brevard County's homeless families.

Since 2009, more than 100 homeless individuals have found refuge at Brevard Rescue Mission's transitional living program called "Casa Carol," located in Melbourne. Brevard Rescue Mission seeks to break the cycle of homelessness for single women with children. Like a beacon, the Casa Carol program guides families from darkness to light. Through

a unique and effective 12- to 24-month program, the women and their families are assisted with an array of services that ultimately empower them to live in healthy independence without government support.

Upon entering Casa Carol, each family receives a key to their own, brightly furnished apartment. For most, this is

the first time they have their own space, a place to call home. Every family is assessed, and a case plan with mutually agreed upon goals is developed. The mothers address their problems regarding education, job training and placement, parenting and homemaking, while they receive psychological, financial and legal counseling as needed.

The program is unique in that it provides shelter for young mothers and children with no place to go, but also equips them with the tools, self-esteem, resources and skills they need to succeed. Residents of Casa Carol are personally accountable on a daily basis for the development of the skill sets required to transform their lives from fragility to self-sufficiency as household heads.

The resident children are blessed to attend three sessions a week of Kids' Club, which teaches basic life skills such as manners, respect, nutrition, managing money, and safety. The children also participate in the Summer Reading Bud-

dies program, enjoy basic sports training twice a month, and receive tutoring from BRM volunteers all year long. Supporters provide summer camp and other enrichment opportunities, including sleepover camp, when age-appropriate.

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Brevard Rescue Mission is solely supported by local organizations such as churches, corporations and civic groups as well as private individuals. Anyone interested is invited to join generous volunteers and donors in helping Brevard County's precious and vulnerable neighbors transform their lives and help ensure that one less child has a sleepless night. Visit [BrevardRescueMission.org](http://BrevardRescueMission.org) to see a four-minute video and to learn more about the 501(c)3 organization.

*Jennie Kriete is the director of development and communications for Brevard Rescue Mission. She has lived in Brevard County for the past 20 years and is an active volunteer at Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Community, the Junior League of South Brevard and her children's schools.*



Over the past four years, more than 100 homeless individuals have found refuge at Brevard Rescue Mission's transitional living program called "Casa Carol," located in Melbourne. Here, women and their families are assisted with an array of services to achieve healthy independence.

**HELP** Brevard Rescue Mission works to permanently break the cycle of homelessness in families by providing homeless women with children the following resources:

housing, access to health care, transportation, education, nutrition, job training and life skills in a safe, Christ-centered residential setting. The 12- to 24-month program is designed to lovingly transform families from dependency to self-sufficiency through daily accountability, personal responsibility and goal advancement. Visit [BrevardRescueMission.org](http://BrevardRescueMission.org) to learn more about the 501(c)3 organization and how you can be a part in helping its mission.

## WENDY BEHRHORST FACILITY MANAGER

Merritt Island resident Wendy Behrhorst is the new facility manager for Brevard Rescue Mission. Behrhorst graduated from MIHS in 1980 and Furman University in 1984. In Oregon, she was a counselor at a halfway house. She has also worked as director of operations for Space Coast Marine Institute, a residential, court-committed rehab program for juvenile delinquent boys. Behrhorst is an active member of Georgianna UMC and recently traveled to Belize on a mission trip with her church. She is a wife and mother of four boys. Her experience working in operations and in nonprofit agencies makes her an ideal fit for BRM.

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New facility manager Wendy Behrhorst of Merritt Island serves the children of Belize during a recent mission trip. Behrhorst graduated from MIHS in 1980.