



Making a House a Home

As a house manager, Cynthia Turner carries on a vital ministry to our clients—she lives with them.



LIA: As a house manager, what do you do for the LIA clients on a day-to-day basis?

Cynthia: Well, we eat together every evening, and we talk. I pray with the clients, and if they are in a state where they can't seem to pray, then I pray *for* them. I am very intentional about reminding them of God's love in all of our interactions. The clients sometimes come home from the LIA campus pretty broken and worn out from dealing with their past. Sometimes it's hard for them to swallow that there is a God who still loves them even after all they've been through or done. I encourage them when they're low, correct them gently when they are not respondent to the house rules, and just generally try to help them stay on track in their recovery. I do this in a positive fashion, not from an authoritarian stance.

LIA: What are you passionate about?

Cynthia: I'm passionate about seeing people live a higher quality of life, whatever their life situation is. I don't expect unsaved people to behave like Christians, but even people who don't know the Lord deserve to live with certain rights, honor, and dignity simply as human beings. At the Memphis Urban Ministry (MUM) I serve people who are oppressed by poverty. I tell them, "Just because you're poor and impoverished, you don't have to be neglected. You don't have to be treated unfairly." So I am an advocate for people to live life at a higher level. Now, when I am working with a Christian, I want to see them live up to the higher standards of Scripture, and to know what those standards are. I am also passionate about seeing people who are being abused get out of those negative situations.

LIA: In *The Source* program, people wind up living together who normally would not have chosen to be housemates, and conflicts may arise. Have you seen God use that conflict to bring about healthy changes in people's lives, though it might be momentarily unpleasant?

Cynthia: Yes, I have. First, I have to say that I and the other house managers do a lot of praying. We "lace" the house with prayer: we pray before new clients come in, we pray on a daily basis, and we just ask God to distinguish and remove any spirits that might cause an adverse affect in the house. So we try to promote a house of harmony. And when there is discord—which is actually very seldom—then we sit down and take the role of peacemaker. If Joe and Steve are having a conflict, we will sit down with them and help them talk through their differences. It's true that our clients didn't choose to live with each other, but compared to the level of potential conflict that could arise, what actually happens is minimal. Since I have been here, no one has been flat-out disrespectful. And at those times when someone isn't doing well, and they need to just go off on their own, we respect that.

LIA: Did you have any past experiences that God used to prepare you for this job?

Cynthia: Coming to understand people and learning that not everyone is the same has prepared me to work here. I've had opportunities to interact with different people groups, different socio-economic classes, and different cultures. Serving in my church and ministering to women in transitional housing helped prepare me for ministry in general. I would say my training in school and even now in seminary, where I'm working on my Masters of Divinity at the Harding Graduate School of Religion, has helped me understand how to dispense the mercy that has been granted to me, and not be judgmental of people where they are. And living with other people in college and seminary helped prepare me for the communal environment of the LIA residential house.

LIA: Before LIA, had you known anyone who struggled with sexual brokenness, whether homosexual or not?

Cynthia: Well, myself. I was engaged in sexual immorality in my own life 15 years ago before knowing God and receiving His healing and deliverance. The number one question that every client—every single one—never fails to ask me is, "Did you go through the program?" And I have to tell them, "I did not. I didn't go through it the traditional way that you're doing. However, I went through my own personal program where God took me, brought me out of the darkness of sexual immorality—from cohabiting and pre-marital sex—" And I don't say this like I'm waving a flag, but because I want our clients to know that thanks to my personal struggle, and from the issues in the lives of people I grew up with and those I've ministered to, I can understand where they are coming from, whether they happen to struggle with masturbation, pornography, homosexual behavior, premarital sex, or just sensuality. It all comes under the same umbrella of sexual immorality, and I have never viewed the homosexual issue as being in its own special category or any worse than any other sexual sin.

(continued on reverse)

Making a House a Home (continued from front)

LIA: What have been the biggest “God sightings” you’ve seen since coming on staff, in your own life or in someone else’s?

Cynthia: Working here at Love in Action has really allowed me to see the power of God working on individuals in an intentional and purposeful way: breaking them, healing them, and restoring them. I see that through just about every cycle of clients coming through *The Source* program, and that reinforces my own faith in Christ. A lot of people come into the program angry at their parents, angry at their abusers, angry about what they’ve done in their lives. I get to see God show them that yes, what has happened is a bad thing and it shouldn’t have happened, but now, as it says in Ephesians 6:12, their fight is a spiritual one, not against flesh and blood. I always ask the clients how they are each day when they come back from campus, and the first week they usually say, “Oh, it’s good. It’s fine.” But by the second week they start answering, “Things are terrible!” And that’s when I know that “the process has begun,” and I get to sit back and watch it! And I also know then that it’s time to kick in and do whatever I need to do for the clients: pray more for them, be more present with them.

LIA: When someone is gaining freedom from sexual brokenness, there is often a lot of spiritual opposition, and some of it is aimed at those who are helping them break free. Have you experienced any spiritual opposition since you came to LIA?

Cynthia: Yes, I think any time that you make an allegiance with God to help his people, it increases the activity in your life. There is more distraction from the enemy... I have to really be intentional about staying in God’s word and keeping my spiritual being healthy. And the moment that I don’t, I can see the activity rise. When I undertake to help someone in prayer, I can feel the darkness that surrounds them and surrounds the house. When other people start to irritate me more, when distractions come, when my own sin gets thrown in my face, that’s a sign to me that the spiritual warfare around me has increased.

LIA: How would you suggest that supporters of LIA pray for the life in the house and for our house managers?

Cynthia: For the house managers, that we remain healthy both in our spiritual and our physical being, and that we remain merciful, staying mindful of the mercy that was shown to us. As for our interaction with the clients and those who come into the house, please pray that God’s spirit will continue to hover and rule in the house. With the door being open to so many different spirits, it can really be a “den of thieves” if we don’t pray for God’s spirit to be present.

LIA: Do you have any closing comments?

Cynthia: I really pray that supporters of the ministry and those who read the newsletter will be instruments to open people’s eyes to the healing that is happening here. I really encourage people to talk to their friends about Love In Action. It’s a wonderful ministry, a hidden treasure. Before I started working here, I didn’t even know it existed. We need to dispel the misconceptions and the myths that are attached to this ministry, to enlighten both the Christian and secular world with accurate information. It’s so taboo in the church. I mean, God forbid we talk about anything related to sex in the church! But sexual immorality is so prevalent in the church, from the pulpit to the front door. People are dying to hear a message of hope and healing, and that’s the message we have here at LIA.



A Word From Tommy : We are continually grateful to our donors, who make possible the ongoing professional development of LIA staff. In October I attended the American Association of Christian Counselors conference in Nashville, where I heard many great speakers and learned a lot. Of the many tracks to choose from, I followed the one on addiction. Mark Laaser spoke powerfully on the issue of sexual addiction and how debilitating a sin it really is, and I gleaned information from other speakers on how personality, food, drugs, development, and many other factors affect someone’s reaction to life which can manifest in addiction. Bringing the different pieces of our complex humanity into Love In Action’s discipleship program continues to make us better able to minister to people where they are. As a staff body, we are encouraged to see how the information God has blessed us with is useful for “teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:16-17, NIV). Please pray about making a one-time or monthly gift to Love In Action. Your support helps keep our counselors “sharp” and “fresh” through opportunities for ongoing training!

In His Service,

Tommy Corman, Acting Director

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Event	Location	Date	Time
Source Residential Move-In Dates	LIA Campus	Call to Schedule	1:00 pm
4-Day Intensive	LIA Campus	Call to Schedule	9:00 am
Family Freedom Intensive	LIA Campus	Flexible dates, call for details	
Within Reach Support Group	LIA Campus	Tuesdays, call to enroll	7:00 pm
Love Won Out Conferences	Metropol. Ch. of God, Birmingham, AL	November 7, 2009	8:00 am

To make a donation, please call 800.201.4129 or donate online at www.loveinaction.org.