

Our Staff

EXECUTIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE
CEO Michele L. Gorman, Ph.D. Co-Founder and

My name is Michele Gorman, and Refuge House is a creation of my heart. I co-founded Refuge House in 2002 and have continuously served as Executive Director. However, I've worn many hats associated with the operation from its inception, including that of Case Manager and Program Director. I am committed to Refuge House, its families and the children it exists to protect and nurture. I enjoy making myself available any time, to any family or child in need and feel the agency continues to thrive and grow because I love it just as a parent should love a child.

I know that love first hand, after being a foster parent for over five years. In 2004 I was blessed to adopt a little boy from the foster care system. This truly lends greatly to my understanding and appreciation for the challenges foster families face, as well as a keen understanding of the dynamics of foster parenting. Additionally, I have a special compassion for the children who have entered the foster care and adoption system.

I'm a native of Seattle, Washington, and came to Texas in 1992. I earned my Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Jacksonville College in Jacksonville, Florida. Additionally, I'm certified in non-profit management by Center for Non-Profit Management and Brookhaven College.

I have many years experience in the State of Texas in developing and operating Child Placing Agencies, in addition to advising representatives from other states in the area of foster care and adoption program development. I have been actively involved as a panel member for various State of Texas legislative boards in addition to serving on the board for other foster and adoptive care organizations.

I enjoy speaking on the importance of fostering and adoption, and educating everyone from potential foster families to lawmakers on the critical needs of these children, and the very important role volunteers, donors, foster families, adoptive parents, lawmakers, caseworkers and other supporters play in giving children a second chance at stability, security and love.
Austin Taylor Technical Liaison and Office Generalist

My name is Austin Taylor and I have had the privilege of working for Refuge House since September of 2009. I was born and raised in Dallas, Texas and moved to Kansas in 2005 to attend Kansas State University Salina. During this time I pursued my degree in Business Administration while working full time as the Operations Manager two restaurants. After finishing my last classes for my associate's degree I felt in my heart that it was time to return "home" to Dallas. That following year I married my wife and began working for Refuge House. I honestly feel that it was my true calling to come and work for an organization that brings so much to those they serve. I was able to whiteness this first hand within the first few months of starting at an event that encompassed the Dallas and San Antonio Foster Parents, Children and Staff. Seeing this showed me the importance of what Refuge House does and still even now when I think about that day it brings a smile to my face. During my free time I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, anything that involves being outdoors, cooking and attending sporting events.
Jim Gorman Receptionist

I was born in Ottumwa Iowa a while back. Right after my birth my family relocated to Seattle Washington. Seattle is the place of my youth. After high school, I attended and graduated from the University of Washington, go Huskies. Upon graduation, I began my professional career with the Boeing Airplane Company (5 years); then moved on to Safeco Insurance (15 years). Then relocated to Las Vegas Nevada where I worked for Southwest Gas (9 years) and then Citigroup (13 years). While working for Citigroup, I transferred to Texas in 2004. Since that time, I have watched my grandson grow mentally and physically.
DALLAS Gail Martin, LCSW, LCPA Administrator

My name is Gail Martin, I have been with Refuge House since we took our first family September, 2004. Prior to working with Refuge House I worked at Timberlawn Psychiatric Hospital from 1980 -1992. My great claim to fame there was submitting a proposal to open a half way house for adolescent who need to transition from long term inpatient back into the community, implementing that plan and then going on to open the first 7 day treatment program along with Glen Pearson, MD. As some of you may or may not know, back then an adolescent could come to Timberlawn and remain there for several years. They essentially grew up in a psychiatric hospital, a travesty that no longer exists. From there I was working in private practice and with employee assistance program for a couple of years, ended up working for 18 months with Ellis County Mental Health, and then eight years with Nelson Residential Treatment Center. It was here that I had my first exposure to foster care. My heart ached for these children who had often been thrown away by biological families, foster families, and the system. It seemed that what was forgotten was the horrendous beginning that many of these children experienced in young life and when they acted out their feelings of abandonment, rage over their neglect and abuse, and general absence of love and nurture, they simply were thrown away again. When I came to Refuge House, I saw the possibility of being a part of the larger picture that would provide a child coming into foster care, or one having been in the system, an opportunity to avoid that devastating road to an RTC. Sometimes we

have been successful, sometimes not, but over all I have maintained a sense of hope and expectation that our families uniquely share that same goal of helping a child who was lost in a spiral of neglect, abuse, and abandonment to find a home where they feel loved and accepted. As most of you know I have tried for two years (now going on three) to retire from Refuge House. I kind of move in and out of full time, contract, part time, just anytime affiliation with Refuge House. I can only assume that when God is ready for me to truly retire from Refuge House, He will close the doors. But, as long as a door is open, even if it is a crack I will be here championing the cause with each of you.

Lisa Angell, LPC Treatment Director Kelsey Batista, LCPA Adoption Director

My name is Kelsey Batista and I am the Adoption Director at Refuge House. I have worked for Refuge House since February 2008 and have held several different positions within the company. I was born and raised in Springfield, OH before attending Cedarville University in Cedarville, OH. In May 2007 I obtained a Bachelors degree in Social Work and a Minor in Bible. I was married to my husband in August 2007 and we relocated to Dallas, TX a few months later. Shortly after moving to Dallas I became employed with Refuge House and have worked here since that time. I have enjoyed working with many of our families and children throughout both the fostering and adopting process. My desire to work in the Social Service field started in High School and during my time with Refuge House this desire has only increased. I love being an advocate for the children and families in our care, and the best part of my job is seeing a child find their forever family. During my free time I enjoy reading, traveling, volunteering at my church, and spending time with my bulldog, husband, family and friends.

Danielle Plana Case Manager

My name is Danielle Plana and I am a case manager for Refuge House. I was born and raised in Irving, Texas. I received a B.S. in Psychology and B.A. in Child Development & Learning from UT-Dallas. I'm a certified mediator with experience in Advanced Conflict Resolution and Alternative Dispute Process. I have experience working with juveniles as an Intern for Dallas County Juvenile Department, as well as working with children and families in an education setting. I feel a great sense of satisfaction when helping others overcome challenges and improve their lives. I love reading, kickboxing, wakeboarding, watching basketball and baking sweets for my friends and family.

SAN ANTONIO Vianey Reinhardt, LPC, LCPA Treatment Director

I am a native Texan who was born and raised in the Rio Grande Valley. I moved to DFW to attend college at the University of North Texas and have been rooted in this area ever since. God has blessed me with a beautiful family: my husband of 18 years and four fantastic children. Faith and family is very important to me and my top priority. It is because of my love for family and children that I gravitated toward the field of human services and ultimately foster care. I believe this work is a ministry. The care and protection we provide the children we serve is our opportunity to be a vessel for God and His great love and mercy. I have been working in this field for over 15 years. I received my Master of Arts Degree in Psychology from UNT and studied under some of the best psychologists during my fellowship at the Yale Psychiatric Institute. I spent the next 11 years working as a therapist and ultimately as Clinical Director at a residential treatment facility for children and adolescents. In 2007, I began working with Refuge House in the role of Foster Family Trainer and in January 2010 transitioned into my current role as Treatment Director of the San Antonio office. I continue to be blessed to work with some of the most amazing families and children and see positive change and growth occurring each day.