



Patrik Andersson with Max, 4 months old



Katarina Rajlic, 11, from left, Katherine Fasseas, 4, and Suzanne Le Mignot



(Top) Nikita Clark, Mekhi Clark, 12; (front) Madyson Tucker, 6, Morgan Tucker, 4, and Mallk Walker, 8

CANDID **CANDACE**  
 BY CANDACE JORDAN

Event aids families hurt by domestic violence

WINGS hosted its 16th annual Sweet Home Chicago brunch at the Four Seasons Hotel on Dec. 8.

Over 450 guests, including 200 children, got into the spirit of the holidays to help support families affected by domestic violence. The afternoon included visits with Santa, an elaborate buffet, dancing, singing and even K-9 comfort dogs from Lutheran Church Charities.

During the three-hour event, over 200 gingerbread houses from BBC Hollydays were decorated by the kids using a variety of candy choices and frostings. After completion, the houses were boxed up to take home. Dale the Balloon Dude and other artists created custom masterpieces for each little guest, and new this year was an ornament-decorating station presented by JS Creations and Crafts.

Also in attendance was 19th Ward Ald. Matt O'Shea, who recently sponsored an ordinance that entitles city employees to have paid time off while dealing with issues of domestic violence and sexual assault.

"It's a very serious issue that touches every community," he said. "It doesn't matter your race, social status or religion. This is a problem everywhere. I see it in my community, and I grew up with it. More needs to be done."

WINGS owns and manages more than three dozen homes and apartments where clients can live for as long as two years as they recover from domestic violence abuse.

Co-chaired by Meghan Norton and Maria Shideler, the event raised over \$850,000, which will underwrite costs for WINGS' first safe house in the northwest suburbs, which opened in 2005, and for WINGS Metro, its second safe house, which opened on Chicago's Southwest Side in 2016.

Since 2004, the Sweet Home Chicago benefit has raised more than \$9.6 million to support the mission and work of WINGS.

Freelance writer Candace Jordan is involved in many local organizations, including some whose events she covers.

**MORE ONLINE:** Find more photos and video of this event at [www.chicagotribune.com/candidcandace](http://www.chicagotribune.com/candidcandace)

JAMES C. SVEHLA/PHOTOS FOR THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE



Josh Hale and Rebecca Darr, WINGS CEO



Honorary co-Chairs John and Rita Canning



Co-Chair Meghan Norton, Teddy Norton, 2, and Matt Norton



Mike and Melissa Canning with Mikey, 8



Zoey Holland, 16, and Margaux Doran, 16, with the LCC K-9 comfort dogs



Timothy and Kelli Kincaid with Marlowe, 4, Roman, 4