



Aid for Women

Empowering Women to Choose Life Since 1978

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New Board Chairman

Susan Barrett was elected Chairman of the Aid for Women Board of Directors and took office on February

1, 2006. Sue has served as a member of the board, officer of the Auxiliary, moderator of the Junior Auxiliary, and volunteer pregnancy counselor.

Sue's dedication to our ministry, her accomplishments thus far and the genuine respect she has earned indicate the strong leader she will be. Also, Sue's valuable business experience equips her well to carry out the chairmanship responsibilities with confidence and professionalism. We congratulate Sue for her generous com-

Aid for Women Board of Directors

Susan R. Barrett, *Chairman*
Susan B. Couri, *Secretary*
Roger D. Lewis, *Treasurer*
Kathleen M. Berley
Patricia F. Daily
Gene DeMuro
Joanne DeMuro
Mary Hallan Fio Rito
Lauretta Froelich
Mary Anne Goldberg
Kathy Shinkle
Florence A. Sorensen
Rita F. Vanek

Staff

Shamina D. Starling-Buford, *Director of
Client and Volunteer Services*
Stephanie L. Klatt, *Office Manager*
Sandra C. Hildebrand, *Mentor Program
Coordinator*



“Two Times Sweet!”

Beautiful twins, Benjahmin and Heaven, were born in 2005. Their mother, Yvette, greatly rejoiced over their arrival. Those of us at Aid for Women who had come to know Yvette during her pregnancy, rejoiced with her.

Joanne DeMuro, an Aid for Women volunteer, has been Yvette's counselor and mentor since Yvette came to Aid for Women when she was about three months pregnant. Joanne reacted to the “blessed event” just as a close family member would have. It was natural she did, because the most ideal kind of mentoring relationship had developed between Joanne and Yvette.

From their own words it is understandable how they have come to mean so much to each other.

From Joanne:

“When Yvette first came to Aid for Women she thought she was coming to an abortion clinic. She wanted to know how far along she was in her pregnancy to determine what she would do. We talked for a while and then she watched the video, [Heart of the Matter](#). After seeing it she said, ‘I can't have an abortion. The baby is no blob.’ Whew!! You can imagine what a relief it was to change the focus from how do we save a life to how can we help her manage her pregnancy.”

“We talked about the mentoring program and she was immediately interested because she wanted someone she could talk to who would offer her support. When she said she wanted me to mentor her, I was happy to accept.”

“In spite of some difficulties in reaching each other, we persisted and began to communicate on a regular basis. One day, I received a card in the mail from Yvette announcing that the news was ‘two times sweet!’ She would be having twins. She planned to nurse both of them, did her research and found how to manage their care. She was then and continues to be an exemplary mother, willing to make many sacrifices.”

“Whenever possible, we have gotten together and those reunions were anticipated with great enthusiasm. It has been an enormous privilege to mentor an individual as courageous and with the generosity of heart Yvette has. I think of my experiences with Yvette and her precious twins as some of my most special gifts from God.”

“Thank you, Yvette, for giving me the gift of you and for giving your children the gift of life. The world is a far better place because of you.”



First Junior Auxiliary Retreat

A pro-life retreat for members of the Aid for Women Junior Auxiliary took place in early December at

Techny Towers. Sue Barrett, Kate Berley and Julie Cooper organized the event. The fifteen young women who attended gathered for a night of prayer, service and education as they reflected on the sanctity of life.

The highlight of the evening was the celebration of Mass just before midnight in the chapel with Father Luke Winkelmann, a newly ordained priest, presiding and Mary Cooper assisting as altar server. Throughout the evening, scripture readings, prayer and silent reflection were offered

in a novena for life.

The young women cheerfully worked for several hours assembling layettes for the pregnant clients who are counseled and mentored at the Aid for Women center. Items received at various showers throughout the year were beautifully packaged with decorative wrapping, ribbons and a personal gift card. The layette gifts evoke a tender maternal response and help the women to start preparing for their babies.

The young women were very engaged and insightful as they explored *Evangelium Vitae*: The Gospel of Life and the call to holiness as it applies to teenagers today. The participants watched videos, listened to speakers and had group discussions.

Watch our next newsletter for an announcement regarding our next Junior Auxiliary overnight which will be open to all young women in high school.

Spiritual Renewal and Volunteer Appreciation

Aid for Women board members, staff and volunteers came together for a day to reflect, pray and give thanks in January at the Metro Achievement Center in Chicago.

The director of the center, Sharon Hefferan, offered a warm welcome followed by an excellent presentation. Her message, delivered with great insight and much humor, highlighted the ways which we can sanctify our work as well as sanctify ourselves and others through our work. She showed through practical examples how our work and everything we do, from what we consider to be most important to what seems trivial and worthless, can be transformed into constant prayer. The deliberate offering of all to God and being ever conscious of our intention will lead us to strive for perfection in holiness.

There was an appreciation ceremony to honor all the Aid for Women volunteers for their generous work and significant contributions to our ministry. Sharnina Starling-Buford, Director of Client and Volunteer Services, and Sandy Hiltebrand, Mentor Program Coordinator, presented awards to the volunteer counselors and mentors. Certificates of appreciation and "Let Me Live" precious baby feet lapel pins were given to all the volunteers. Those who have served more than one year received crystal

crosses inscribed with the words, "You are the light of the world."

Tribute was paid to Diane Pietrzak for her outstanding dedication and contributions to the pro-life movement. Her tireless efforts in promoting the sanctity of life and the protection of the unborn were acknowledged in a poem composed and read by Pat Daily who then presented a special gift to Diane from Aid for Women.



Rev. Edward Maristany, our retreat master, gave a beautiful talk on divine filiation. He emphasized, "It is not sufficient for you to know that you are a child of God. You need to experience that relationship, nurture it in your heart, and develop it throughout your spiritual journey. At each stage of your life the consciousness of your divine filiation, the joyful realization of being a son or daughter of God, should be the atmosphere in which your life unfolds. It should permeate every thought, word, and deed."



Reconciliation, Eucharistic adoration with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and celebration of the Mass concluded our wonderfully uplifting day of spiritual reflection and renewal.

Client Reunion Christmas Party

The great success of the long awaited Client Reunion Christmas Party heralds a new and special Aid for Women tradition. The party took place on the morning of December 3rd in the parish social hall at Old St. Mary's Church in Chicago.

Therese Carroll, chairman of the event, was elated with the outcome and said, "Just seeing how much fun everyone was having, especially the children of our clients, was enough to warm our hearts on a cold winter morning. Our Santa and elf were perfectly delightful the way they entertained and presented gifts. Best of all was the way clients introduced their babies to one another, to their counselors and mentors and to all their Aid for Women friends."

The reunion was planned and hosted by the Aid for Women Auxiliary with other volunteers and staff helping. Laima Braune, Kate Berley and Noreen Kelliher organized the collection and delivery of donated gifts and refreshments. Sharnina Starling-Buford, Director of Client and Volunteer Services, took individual Polaroid pictures of the children with Santa. Music was provided by pianist Mary Rita Clifton, volunteer counselor and mentor, and violinist Stephanie Klatt, our office manager. Sandy Hildebrand, mentor program coordinator, made the decorations.



Bonanza Boutique 2006

The next client event, the Bonus Program Bonanza Boutique, is scheduled for Saturday, June 17th. Donations of new baby equipment, baby clothing and maternity clothes, books, toys, etc. are greatly appreciated. Gift cards for baby stores and maternity shops are very useful, too. All the boutique items will be displayed in our conference room, which will be set up like a store, and clients participating in the incentive program will have the opportunity to make purchases with the "bonus bucks" they have earned. This year we expect at least twice the number of client shoppers we had last year.

At Auxiliary Spring Luncheon



Profoundly inspired by working alongside Blessed Mother Teresa, Susan Conroy has remarkable experiences and stories to share at the second Aid for Women Auxiliary Spring Luncheon held at the Woman's Athletic Club in downtown Chicago on Saturday, April 8th.

Susan traveled to Calcutta, India during her college years at Dartmouth to work with Mother Teresa. She was a volunteer in a children's orphanage and the Home of the Dying in Calcutta. Through her work she found hell on earth, but she also found a deep sense of peace and incredible happiness.

With Mother Teresa's permission, Susan authored the book, Mother Teresa's Lessons of Love and Secrets of Sanctity, which was published in the Spring of 2003. It became a best-seller and is currently in its 4th printing. A second book she wrote, Praying in the Presence of Our Lord with Mother Teresa, was released in the Spring of 2005.

Complete coverage of the luncheon will be in our Summer Newsletter.

Memorial and Honor Gifts

A special gift is a meaningful way to remember a friend or a loved one at the time of his or her death – or in life by honoring that person's accomplishments and character.

In Memory Of:

Larry Cincosta

by Marie Dattioli

Catherine Craycroft

by Tim and Carin Levandoski

Herbert Fox

by Mrs. Nancy Fox

Elba Gaeta

by Dorteia Babau

Sally Garrett

by Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Garrett

Arthur Grams

by Melanie Mauser

Mark Heitzman

by Terence and Josephine Noetzel

Ann W. Jans

by David and Joanne Lewis

Betty Lou Kansteder

by Karen Dailey

Fryderyk Kuta

by Anna Kuna

Rev. Francis Lewis

by Margaret T. Lewis

Loella Loesch

by Leona J. Koopman

Elena Robles

by Dorteia Rabau

Nora Rose Roemer

by Dave and Mary Roemer

Lisa Rouse

by Patrick and Mary Moorhead

Steve Tipton

by Nancy Radis

by France Judith Gornet

John T. Walsh

In Honor Of:

Association of Marian Helpers

by Dorteia Rabau

Sue Couri

by Julia M. Gaspari

Mary E. Donovan

by Rita Inserra

Mary Rose Favero

by Nannette Favero

Mrs. Nancy Fox

by Jane Wells

Mary Anne Goldberg

by Janet Reid

**Our grandchildren – Logan, Connor,
Julia, Lauren, Olivia and one to be born**

Dec. 14, 2005

by Arthur and Maryann Seymour

Mr. Bill Hoover

by John McDonald

Mrs. Mary E. Hughes

by Kris Hughes

JPW

by anonymous

Anne Krystoflac

by Michelle Krystoflac

Sharon Leone

by Madlyn Daniel

Gerald R. Ryan

by Rita Inserra

Joan Skagerberg

by John Skagerberg

Joan Skagerberg

by Kathleen Skagerberg

Genevieve Melofchik

by Ellen and Ronald Triani

Emily Nadbielny

by Eleanor Nadbielny

Mr. and Mrs. Philip Roemer

by Dave and Mary Roemer

Phil Vella, Jr.

by Phil A. Vella

Rita Weber

by Rita Inserra

Barbara J. Zywicki

by Robert A. Zywicki

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mitment and assure her of our prayers and support.

“I am truly humbled to serve as chairman of an organization which brings so much hope and support to women in the Chicagoland area who find themselves in a difficult pregnancy situation,” acknowledges Sue. “Our committed board members, staff and volunteer counselors continue to inspire and energize me. While focusing on the protection of the unborn, they serve our clients in a manner which brings to mind the Peace Prayer of St. Francis--where there is doubt, they bring faith, where there is despair, hope, and where there is sadness, joy. Our grateful organization thanks Patricia Daily for selflessly giving so many years of service, most recently as chairman under which Aid for Women has grown and prospered. Finally, I ask you, our most generous and committed supporters, to keep me in your prayers, that I may be filled with the grace and wisdom necessary to lead our organization into the future.”

Lovingly, Joanne DeMuro

From Yvette:

“I had no idea what to expect when I randomly chose the Aid for Women organization in the Yellow Pages. That same day I placed the call, I also met with counselor, Joanne DeMuro.”

“I believe Joanne is one of God’s friends, an angel, who was sent to help me listen to my heart. I was able to realize that the truth about who I am as a person, what I believe in, and the answers to whatever I may be unsure about lies within my heart, the soul of who I am.”

“It was there, in my heart, where truth prevailed over evil and peace overcame my fear, and where life became the most important thing ever.”

“Joanne was not only a patient listener, but a very compassionate counselor with words of wisdom and also, a wonderful friend. The Aid for Women organization was a comforting experience during my pregnancy. I felt safe and cared for because the counselors are either mothers themselves or inspiring mothers-to-be. It’s like a support group for all pregnant women, regardless of age, race or religion with bountiful resources.”

“I am now a mother for the first time of twins, a boy and a girl, both healthy.”

“So I say thank you to the Aid for Women organization and counselor, friend Joanne DeMuro for all your support.”

Sincerely, Yvette