



Aid for Women

Empowering Women to Choose Life Since 1978

8 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603 • Telephone: 312-621-1100 • Fax: 312-621-1972
E-mail: info@aidforwomen.org • Website: www.aidforwomen.org
February 2001

The Mothers and the Babies Say "Thank You"

Thank you to every person, family, foundation, church, and corporation who contributed to Aid for Women in 2000.

Thanks to you, we served 2,118+ clients from January to December last year. We are excited by the vision and hope of what the Lord will do through us in 2001.

Your financial, gift-in-kind and prayer support enables us to be available and ready to minister. Your gifts will bring the vision to fruition.

Your contributions are sincerely appreciated and truly needed.

Aid for Women

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No Regrets from Facing the Truth

Raquel and Javier Cruz could not love their daughter more. And they couldn't be any more thankful that Jacqueline Luisa was born nearly six years ago. Their joy comes through the telling of their story.

For Raquel, her visit to Aid for Women in 1994 provided the anonymity she wanted. The test result confirmed that she was pregnant, but she was scared and needed help. Coming from a faithful Catholic family, her parents were going to have severe difficulty in accepting this out-of-wedlock pregnancy.

Javier came with Raquel that August day wanting her to choose an abortion. They weren't married; she was in college; he didn't have a job — how could they raise a child?

The first-trimester vacuum aspiration abortion he saw on an educational video they watched together caused him to completely change his mind.

The truth made the difference.

Raquel and Javier received the information they needed on fetal development, healthy prenatal care, community resources, and some guidance on how to tell their parents. They left the center elated, because, although they knew this would be very difficult, they knew they would get through it together.

Their first stop was to buy their child's first bottle and bib. Raquel says, "Taking care of myself and my baby became more important than the shame of being pregnant outside of marriage." Today Raquel isn't shy about talking with coworkers who confide in her that they're pregnant and considering abortion. She always talks about the positive aspects of having their babies and the difference motherhood made in her life.

Javier, too, has become an advocate for parenting, often telling friends, "Don't get an abortion, you may regret it later. Step up and be a man." Becoming a father and husband motivated Javier to find work; he went from no employment to two full-time jobs to provide for his family. "Accepting this responsibility got me on the ball," Javier says.

They were married in April of 1995 and Jacqueline was born in June. Javier's parents were more supportive from the start, ready to welcome their third grandchild. Raquel's parents eventually came to accept the situation and their marriage, and now love their granddaughter a great deal also.



Jacqueline Luisa Cruz

"No Regrets..." page two.

Counseling Times Two — With Clients and on the Board

Mary Ann Lusk began as a volunteer with Aid for Women in May of 2000. She started counseling clients one day a week during her summer break from MBA studies. She warned us, "I'm going to have to stop when my classes start again in the fall."

August came and went and, instead of stopping, Mary Ann increased her counseling schedule to two days per week, much to the benefit of our clients and delight of staff and fellow counselors.

In her own words Mary Ann says, "Prior to coming to Aid for Women, I already had and believed in a deep respect for life, but after I began working with pregnant women of all ages I realized that deep down the majority of women did also. What was missing was someone to educate them about their options, the risks associated with abortion and, most importantly, when human life really begins. I began to real-

ize that these women believed that it was their choice to 'remove a blob of tissue,' when in reality the choice was about life, a life they created."

"I do this because I believe in women and their choice of life for the unborn."

Mary Ann Lusk, Volunteer Counselor and Board Member

Mary Ann's passion is education and she works hard to make sure that we're giving the most accurate and most comprehensive information we can to our clients. She feels strongly that young people especially need to know the very basic facts of human reproduction.

Many of the clients Mary Ann counsels simply do not know how a child develops in the womb, at what speed the entire person is fully present, or when the heart starts beating. She believes that our calling at Aid for

Women is about compassionate care for both the unborn child and the pregnant woman.

In January, Mary Ann began her three-year term as a member of Aid for Women's board of directors. For the foreseeable future, she will also continue as a volunteer counselor.

We are thankful for her professional skills and experience in management, sales, and customer service. Her commitment to our clients is an inspiration to each of us. Her energy is a constant reminder than we can never grow weary in empowering women to choose life.



"No Regrets..."

"This was the hardest thing we've ever gone through," they say in unison, "but we have no regrets." Raquel concludes, "I tell people, my daughter has made me the person I am today. Even before she was born, being pregnant changed how I looked at everything."

Imagine Raquel's surprise and delight to find out that one of her good friends from James H. Bowen High School is now working at Aid for Women. In a casual conversation with the mother of Sharnina D. Starling, Raquel found out that Sharnina is now director of client and volunteer services at Aid for Women.

Raquel and Javier were thrilled to see the changes at the center and glad to know that the ministry has expanded in the past five years. They are strong and vocal advocates for educating young people about the realities of abortion.

It's wonderful to see the beautiful fruit in this family's life from the seeds that were so faithfully planted nearly six years ago. The ministry of Aid for Women moves in increasingly wider circles because of the good work of our volunteers and board of directors, supported by the faithful donations of caring individuals.

Very Good News

In November we instituted a new follow up process with our clients. The decisions our counselors are hearing from clients after a visit to Aid for Women are very good news:

- S. came to us in early December and even after counseling remained abortion minded. One week later our counselor learned that she had decided to parent her baby because of what she had learned at Aid for Women.
- Last March, A. came for a pregnancy test and left our center still abortion minded. We were thrilled to learn just recently that she decided to keep her baby.
- T. came to Aid for Women last June but left undecided what to do. After periodic telephone conversations, we learned in January that she had a little boy in November and loves her son very much.
- One December client came abortion minded. After counseling she left undecided, but after her ultrasound exam, H. was excited to tell our counselor that she is going to parent her baby.
- A mother of several children took to heart information on adoption and, after careful counseling, has decided to release her next child for adoption, rather than end his or her life.

These are only a few of the good-news stories that are true and possible because Aid for Women is here, ready to minister to women of all ages.

Because we care about the woman herself, encouraging choices that are healthy and wholesome for her, we are also able to minister to the child. And through them, we minister to the husbands, boyfriends, parents, friends, and family.

Instruments of Christ

Anna McLain, Office Manager

My involvement in the pro-life movement began in January of my sixteenth year. There was a well-established teen pro-life group in my neighborhood and, upon my mother's urging, I phoned the group and went to my first meeting.

One of the leaders of the group, Veronica, a high school senior, was filled with zeal for the cause. Many times she drove us across the Chicagoland area to attend a picket or protest. That particular January we went to one such picket at a west-suburban abortion clinic. There were a handful of "regulars" there, the truly devoted ones who sacrificed their mornings every Saturday.

The snow was piled up on either side of the sidewalk where we stood, and the street was covered in a dark slush. A large vehicle drove by and the driver screamed angrily at us. The vehicle drove by again, this time speeding and hugging the curb, and then again, ultimately covering me with slush from head to toe.

What happened then I will never forget. One of the "regulars" wiped the slush off of my face with his hand and I strongly felt the presence of God. I know that it was Christ, present in this "regular," who was extending His hand.

I have been greatly blessed for having encountered many people like this who have heroically acted as instruments of Christ. I have also been blessed with parents devoted to truth. My mother taught my four siblings and me at a young age about the humanity of the unborn. We saw the pictures of the unfortunate ones, those aborted. That early education fostered in me the belief that abortion harms women and children and, from there, I have been continually encouraged by the great devotion I see in those who work for the cause for life.

My path has led me to Aid for Women and I am so grateful for that. My daily work has many similarities to what I had been doing before coming to Aid for Women, only now I'm able to offer this work for a life-giving ministry. Through Aid for Women I have again been touched by yet more instruments of Christ — I am blessed. Thank you, God!



You Would Smile, Too

Why are all of these women so happy? Each, in her own way, has empowered women to choose life. They have contributed to Aid for Women's ability in 2000 to serve 2,118 clients and answer several hundred telephone calls by volunteering in critical positions. The smiling faces here represent volunteer counselors, the auxiliary group Friends of Aid for Women, members of our board of directors, and prayer partners. Together, all of these women make it possible for us to be ready for ministry each week, able to give beautiful layettes to our pregnant clients, and they keep us encouraged as we work toward fulfilling our vision.



There is a volunteer place for you at Aid for Women. Please call today to see how we can help you fulfill your desire to make a difference in the lives of a mother and her child — and in our culture for life.



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Trust Women with the Truth

Our nation has just marked the 28th anniversary of the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decisions, *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*, in which abortion on demand at any stage of pregnancy for any reason was made legal as a protected right under the U.S. Constitution. We at Aid for Women sincerely mourn the 40-plus million children who were never born.

We also feel sorrow for the 40-plus million women, men, and families whose lives have been wounded by abortion. Most of all we pray daily for a society that will once again respect the sanctity of all human life, from the

moment of conception — when the egg is fertilized by the sperm — to the moment of natural, un hastened death.

I challenge the defenders of legalized abortion to trust women with the truth. Since there are 27 out of 34 international studies, and 13 out of 14 American studies, that show a direct link between an increased risk of breast cancer and induced, elective abortion, one would think that women would be given this life-or-death information. Every other cause of breast cancer receives publicity. One has to assume that abortion advocates prefer their profits to the health of the mother.

I also challenge abortion providers to inform women honestly of other scientifically proven physical and psychological risks of abortion (the Elliot Institute website www.afterabortion.org has comprehensive information on the sequelae related to abortion). Our counselors know from caring for our clients that when a woman is given the truth, she has the instinct and intelligence to make the healthiest choice for herself. And since she is then choosing life for herself, she by default chooses life for her child.

Trust women with the whole truth — they can handle it.

With our sincere thanks...



Julie Cooper retired from the board of directors in December after six years of selfless service. We are grateful to her and her family, and

very glad that she will continue her association with this ministry by volunteering as a Friend of Aid for Women.



Sandra Hildebrand was given the *Praesidium Vitae* (Defender of Life) Award by the board of directors in recognition of her service as interim executive director and director of client services. Her willing-

ness to fill these positions allowed Aid for Women to prepare for a major transition with-

out detriment to our clients. Sandy joins Tom Bresler as the only two recipients of this prestigious award.



Aid for Women is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization funded by tax-deductible gifts from private contributors.
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