



Aid for Women

Empowering Women to Choose Life Since 1978

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February-March 2003

Wish List

- 1 Prayers for our clients
volunteers, board and staff
- 2 Mid-weight receiving
blankets
- 3 Newborn to six-months:
sleepers, short-sleeved
onesies (bodysuits), socks
- 4 Rattles
- 5 Pacifiers

Please remember that all baby items should be gender-neutral, suitable for either a boy or a girl (no pink, please).

Aid for Women Board of Directors

Patricia F. Daily, *Chairman*
 Susan B. Couri, *Secretary*
 Roger D. Lewis, *Treasurer*
 Kathleen M. Berley
 Kathleen G. Bindley
 Mary Hallan FioRito
 Mary Anne Goldberg
 Ann W. Jans
 Florence A. Sorensen, *Chair, 25th
 Anniversary Dinner Committee*
 Deborah R. Wells

Staff

Elaine M. Kindler, *Executive Director*
 Sharnina D. Starling, *Director of
 Client and Volunteer Services*
 Sandra C. Hildebrand, *Director
 of Mentoring*
 Noreen T. Kelliher, *Office Manager*

Consulting Editor

Mary Ann Reardon Dilan

Grace and Courage

Aid for Women is changing lives, one woman at a time. Our volunteer counselors have empowered thousands of women during the past 25 years.

They have seen God's grace in action over and over again. They have also seen our clients' enormous courage as they face difficult circumstances head on, yet choose to give the gift of life to their children.

Elizabeth (client's name changed for confidentiality) is one of those courageous clients. She came to Aid for Women bewildered. She gained confidence in her choice, and welcomed the chance to be mentored.

Says Elizabeth, "When I found out I was pregnant, so many thoughts went through my head: No this can't be true! I was married for so many years and didn't get pregnant! There must be something wrong with the home pregnancy test! I'm in my late 30s – going back to school – have no money and, at present, no job – what am I going to do if this is true?"

These thoughts were immediately followed by the elation of being a mother: "Thank you God for this miracle!"

And then came the voice of reason: "Even though the circumstances surrounding this pregnancy were not that pleasant, and the father won't be involved in any way, this is my baby and I want to keep him or her, but I need help." Elizabeth knew that her family would never understand or help. "Most of the people I knew said I should get an abortion, but I knew it in my heart that I couldn't kill this being that was growing inside me."



**"THANK YOU
GOD
FOR THIS
MIRACLE!"**

It was at this time, during which Elizabeth faced both bewilderment and awe, that a friend told her about Aid for Women.

"As soon as I entered Aid for Women's Michigan Avenue Center, I had this warm feeling. Sharnina [director of client and volunteer services] not only made me feel welcomed, but she also seemed genuinely concerned."

"Grace and Courage," page four

PRO-WOMAN/PRO-LIFE

Mary Hallan FioRito, Vice Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Chicago and Aid for Women board member, was named Respect Life Person of the Year for 2002 by 17 Catholic parishes in Chicago's North Shore area. A special ceremony was held at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Glenview, Illinois.

Mary was honored for her years of service in the cause for life, both as the former director of Chicago's Archdiocesan Respect Life Office and as a nationally known speaker on life issues. Mary and her husband, Kevin, were also acknowledged for their commitment to the sanctity of human life during Mary's very difficult and medically complex first pregnancy. Little Gemma, born healthy and beautiful, was on hand as proof of the power of prayer and as a testimony to God's goodness.



*Julie Cooper (left),
Respect Life
Coordinator at
Our Lady of
Perpetual Help,
presented the
award to Mary.*

Aid for Women goes to Washington, D.C.

Eight members of the Aid for Women family attended Speak Out Illinois and March for Life events in Washington, D.C., to mark the 30th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* in January.



*From left: Bob Daily, Jeff Smith, Mari Heavey,
Florence Sorensen, Pat Daily, Elaine Kindler,
Buz Sorensen and Senator Peter G. Fitzgerald (R-Ill.).
Missing from photograph: Sandy Hildebrand.*

The Grace to Know . . . The Courage to Try

*Aid for Women invites you to mark our 25th anniversary of empowering women on
September 25, 2003, at the Chicago Hilton and Towers.*



*Jeff Smith (center) conveys the passion he feels for
Aid for Women's work to some of his guests at a recent
reception promoting the anniversary dinner.*

Entertainment
including Irish singer Dana Scallan, MEP

Reception and Dinner

Invited speakers, confirmation pending:

President George W. Bush

Patricia Heaton
(star of *Everybody Loves Raymond*)

Special guests: Tom and Heather Bresler

Preferred seating will be given for advance ticket sales.
You may order your ticket(s) now using the enclosed reply card.



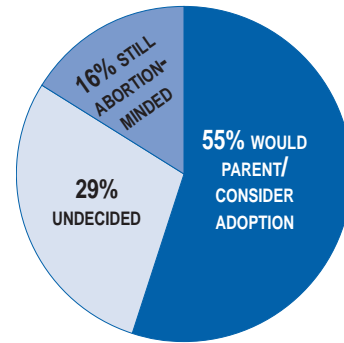
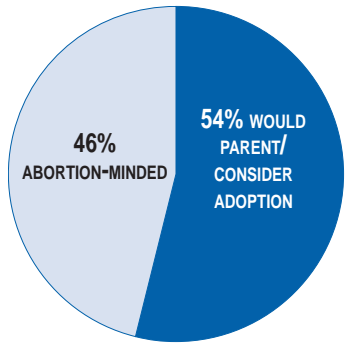
Aid for Women 2002 Annual Report

CLIENTS SERVED

Intent Before Counseling

598 Pregnant Clients

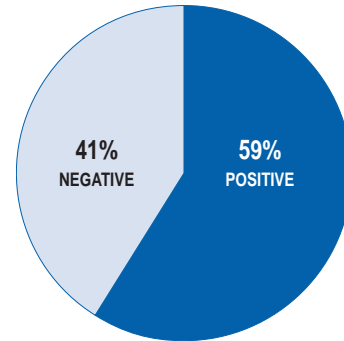
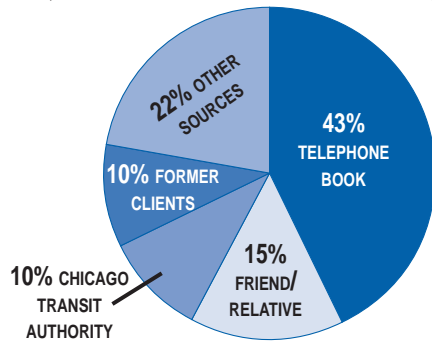
Intent After Counseling



At least 135 mothers were spared the pain of post-abortion aftermath because their children were born, rather than aborted, through the work of Aid for Women. Results were even more positive for clients who agreed to an ultrasound exam and follow-up counseling, or who were in the Aid for Women mentoring program.

1,825 Client Appointments
1,012 Abortion-Seeker Calls Logged

1,013 Pregnancy Tests Completed



30 Counselors and 13 Mentor Angels Donated 2,750 Volunteer Hours

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

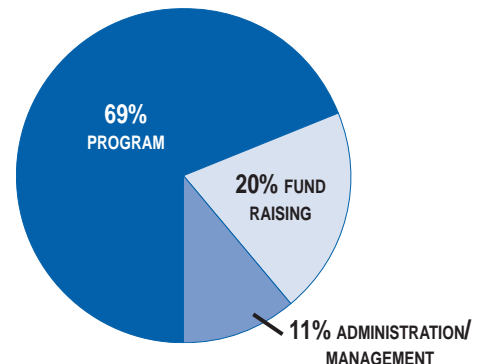
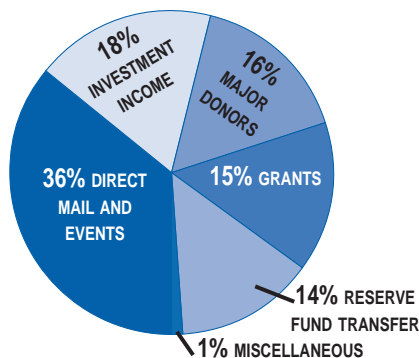
24,000 Aid for Women Newsletters Distributed
Presentations to 88 High School Students, 31 College Students, 51 Youth, 964 Adults and 4,750 Families at 26 Locations

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

Financial stewardship to our ministry partners is a high priority. The following charts give an overview of our fiscal year ending December 31, 2002, prior to the annual audit. We welcome requests for our independently audited financial statements.

\$292,591 Total Income

\$300,007 Total Expenditure



Grace and Courage *(continued from page one)*

“I remember getting this intense sense of relief – relief that someone understood how I felt and accepted me in spite of my sin.”

Elizabeth continues, “She assured me that this baby has a right to life just as any other person. After that I decided to leave everything in God’s hands and proceed with faith that things will somehow fall in place.”

Aid for Women equipped Elizabeth to take practical steps to prepare for the birth of her baby: “I registered at a Catholic hospital and signed up with the KidCare assistance program, which paid all of my doctor and hospital bills. Everyone at Aid for Women has a warm, welcoming, understanding and accepting approach. Sandy has been a continuous source of emotional support and strength for me.”

Says Elizabeth, “Now I am the proud mother of a beautiful daughter. She is a bundle of joy and the light of my life.”

“I feel that my life suddenly has a deeper purpose,” continue Elizabeth, “and there is a profound reason that this child came into being. I don’t have the

money to take full-time classes any more, but I did get a job. My family still hasn’t accepted my daughter, but my belief in God has strengthened. Talking to people like Sandy always gives me the needed boost to venture forth with faith that things will eventually get easier.”

Elizabeth thanks God for the understanding staff at Aid for Women: “I know that I wouldn’t have had the heart to get an abortion, but the wonderful people who work and volunteer at Aid for Women echoed my conviction, and that gave me the confidence and courage to do the right thing. I certainly have no regrets.”

Elizabeth speaks of her hopes for other pregnant women in crisis: “Every pregnant woman in a dilemma needs the opportunity that Aid for Women gave to me. I also hope that every woman in a similar situation decides not to have an abortion. Even if she’s not able to keep her baby, she may be able to give this blessed gift to a childless couple or someone else who may have the good fortune to be able to take care of her baby.”

Sandy Hildebrand, director of mentoring, gives her perspective of Elizabeth’s story: “I happened to be at the Center the first time Elizabeth came to Aid for Women, and Sharnina introduced us. Looking back, it was that day that our very special and close friendship began.”

Sandy says that Sharnina explained the Mentor Angel Program to Elizabeth, who was quick to understand how it could be an advantage for her and her baby. “The welfare of her child has always been the most motivating factor in Elizabeth’s decisions making. She thoroughly reviewed all the resources we presented to her and followed through with those she considered the best.”

Saying that there is no limit to Elizabeth’s expressions of gratitude for the help she has received from Aid for Women, Sandy says that, “Her sincere appreciation and success make us realize that the ongoing support and encouragement through the Mentor Angel Program can result in great benefits, especially for our struggling clients. Elizabeth and her beautiful daughter give witness to the valuable mission of our ministry.”

Perspective

Elaine M. Kindler, Executive Director

This is Aid for Women’s 25th year of service to teens and women to empower them – to prevent unwanted pregnancies and unwanted abortions, and to give them respect, truthful information, assistance, and resources for real choice. Over the years, hundreds of dedicated volunteers have had the courage to try to help both mother and child.

The grace of God and the wisdom of the ages show us that being pro-woman necessitates being pro-life. Whether you think it ought to be this way or not, it’s true. The act of abortion is a massive injustice to the one being aborted. But it is also a grave – sometimes fatal – injustice to the mother who is expected to pay for her place in society with her own flesh and blood.

Thirty years of abortion on demand have made a folly of the promises abortion advocates made to women as the *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* deci-

sions were handed down in 1973. But just as slavery came to be seen as the horrible evil and injustice that it is, so too will legal abortion be exiled from our social practice and laws.

Dr. Theresa Burke puts it this way in *Forbidden Grief*, “Once a woman is pregnant, the choice is not simply between (1) having a baby and (2) not having a baby. The choice is between (1) having a baby and (2) having the experience of an abortion. Both are life-changing experiences. Both have significant psychological consequences, either contributing to or hindering a person’s mental health.”

Let us work in solidarity and pour our efforts into ministries that offer women real choices, which don’t harm them or proffer empty promises. And let us speak up for and defend the right to life of our sisters and brothers yet to be born, who from the depths of the womb cry out: We want life!



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