



Aid for Women

Empowering Women to Choose Life Since 1978

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*Beautiful
babies abound!*

Turn to page 5 for more stories
and photographs of babies
recently born to our clients.

"We Made It"

A photograph of a beautiful young girl was slipped under the door of our center a few months ago. On the back of the photograph, these words were written:

"Eleven years ago someone in this office helped me decide to have this baby. Thank you for keeping me from making a huge mistake. I'm graduating college this year and N. is now 10 years old. We're fine. Please tell [volunteer counselor] Rita Lech that we made it. J. C."

Many of our clients stay in contact with Aid for Women after their initial visits, either through participation in the Mentor Angel program, scheduling a follow-up visit, or visiting the center after their babies are born.

However, sometimes after a client visits Aid for Women, our counselors are unable to reach her for follow-up. While we encourage clients to continue their relationship with Aid for Women, some women choose not to share their personal contact information with us. Our policy is to ask permission to call a client, and we also always ask if we may leave a message at that phone number. Sometimes, though, when our counselors attempt to call a client and ask how things are going and if there is anything further we can do to help, they often find the phone number is disconnected, or that a false phone number had been given to us.

Whatever level of anonymity or privacy a client prefers, we are grateful for the great step of faith each woman makes by calling or coming into the center. And while we may never know in this lifetime what happened to a particular woman or her baby after they leave our office, we continue to lift each of our clients and their babies daily in prayer.

And sometimes we are blessed and encouraged to see the results of our efforts, when former clients such as J. C. come back to say thank you.

Luke 17 tells the story of Jesus healing ten men, and only one returned to give thanks. In the same way, we may see J.C.'s gratitude as representative of the countless women throughout the past 27 years who have received assistance from Aid for Women, but may never have returned to share their appreciation. Thank you, J.C., for encouraging us with your heartfelt testimony.

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Program Coordinator*

Spring Luncheon a Success!

The first annual Aid for Women Auxiliary Spring Luncheon on Saturday, April 16, was a great success. Approximately 150 people enjoyed a delicious lunch, good fellowship, and the heartwarming stories shared by New York Times bestselling author Joan Wester Anderson.



(Left) Guest speaker Joan Wester Anderson signs copies of her original books on angels for luncheon guests Marty Doherty Wendt and Cathy Kiley.



Sue Barrett and Kathleen Berley, co-chairpersons for the event

(Right) Mary Lou Gorno and Mary Anne Goldberg enjoy the afternoon.



(Left) Peg Hanlon, Jane Galt, and Jan Shields share engaging conversation.



Sisters Kara Forest and Erin Hildebrand greet arrivals at the reception area.



Former board member Sherrill Albion and daughter, Holly Ebner.



Welcome, Inalej!

Congratulations to Director of Client and Volunteer Services Sharnina D. Starling-Buford and her husband Wydrick on the joyful arrival of their daughter Inalej Elon, born February 28 at 6 pounds, 4 ounces, and 19.5 inches. Inalej joins big brother Jelani, now four years old.

Raffle prize winners:

- Steamboat Springs - Sheila Hulseman
- Night at the Symphony - Janeane Doyle
- Waterford Vase - Nancy Stokes
- A Day of Beauty - Kathy Goldberg

Thank you to the entire luncheon committee who made this event possible, particularly Co-Chairs Susan Barrett and Kathleen Berley. We look forward to next year's event! Mark your calendars now for Saturday, April 8, 2006.

His Ways Are Not Ours

By Jane and Don Colleton

(The following article appeared in the bulletin of St. Mary Catholic Church in Evanston, where Jane and Don Colleton are the Respect Life Coordinators. Jane is a member of the board at Aid for Women.)

The contradictions characterizing John Paul's papacy ought to convince us that God's ways simply are not ours, but are better than we could ever imagine.

Consider, for example, the Pontiff's physical infirmities. In his decline, some found him useless and urged his resignation, unable to comprehend the corporate value of his witness, the holiness of suffering or its redeeming effect on man. (*Col 1:24*)

But others seemed better able to grasp at these things, to sense in them the mystery of God's way. (*1 Cor 2:1*) They appeared to accept in this Vicar of Christ the sublime dignity of the human person centered ultimately on the gift of likeness to the One who created him (*Gen 1:27*), and his membership in Christ's body (*1 Cor 6:15*), rather than on performance according to worldly measures.

Perhaps that is why so many listened so closely in the end days to what John Paul's dying was proclaiming, even though just then it seemed he could not speak at all.

So said the Apostle long ago: when we are weak, 'tis only then that we are strong.



Pope John Paul II
1920 - 2005

©Grzegorz Galazka

John Paul II's friend, Archbishop Comastri, told Vatican Radio about his last visit with the Pope. An excerpt follows:

"When I found myself before the Pontiff, I felt an indescribable emotion, and at that moment images came to my mind that the television transmitted on Good Friday night, when it focused on the pope's back, with the Crucifix before him. Seeing him in his bed of suffering, I said to him: 'You truly are the Vicar of Christ to the end, in the passion you are living with an edification that moves the world.'

"With his suffering, the pope has written the most beautiful encyclical of his life, faithful to Jesus to the end. I knelt down, I asked him for his blessing and the pope moved his hand lightly. I realized he wanted to bless me, but again he weakened. Then I rested my head on the pontiff's hand, I wept and I stayed a few moments in silence."



"Christ didn't come down from the cross. Christ left when his work was done."

~ Pope John Paul II as quoted by Peggy Noonan

Couple Shares the Value of Marriage and Parenting

On March 19, volunteer counselor and mentor Joanne DeMuro and her husband Gene shared their insights in the annual Mentoring In-Service training program entitled, "The Value of Marriage and Parenting."

The presentation was drawn from the DeMuros' personal experience in 33 years of marriage, as well as through working with hundreds of engaged couples through various marriage preparation programs, including at the present time, PreCana and FOCCUS.

The couple covered the essentials, dynamics, and communal effects of relationships, and then went on to explore family, marriage and parenting, and how these concepts can relate to our work in reaching out to the clients of Aid for Women.

Thank you to Gene and Joanne for sharing their wisdom with the group, so that we may be better equipped to serve and guide the young women and men who come to our door.



*Diane Pietrzak, Gene and Joanne DeMuro,
Sandy Hildebrand and Stephanie Klatt*

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:

Angeline and Daniel Farrell

By Linda Farrell Carey

Marjorie Fuller (mother)

*By Beverly Fuller
and Sandra Mal*

Arthur Grams

By Robert and Melanie Mauser

Lorraine Hartray

By William Hartray

Lucille P. Malia

By the Wall Family

Berenice S. Mimmack (Collins)

By the Wall Family

Helen Norris

By Fred and Jeri Schmidt

Alice Rattenbury

Margaret Tucker

Aurora Salgado

By Nereida Pereda

The six babies we’ve lost

By Carrie and Stefano Mereu

David Lee Valadez

By Philip and Kay Corridon

In Honor Of:

Gina Acacia

By Kettly Acacia

Henrietta Biroshchik

By Fred and Jeri Schmidt

John Gardner

By Philip and Kay Corridon

Mary Anne Goldberg

By Janet Reid

Tommie W. Grigsby

By Henrietta F. Johnson

Margaret Hattesky and Annie Smith

By John R. Leonard

Marie Henly

By Lucille R. Johnson

Charlotte Humlick

By Elaine Pollak

Bill Keen

By Philip and Kay Corridon

Laura Keil

By Karina and Paula Mendez Keil

Mr. and Mrs. William Kunkel

By Rev. Ronald Kunkel

Aniela Lalka

By Magda Lalka

Mirosława Lalka

By Malgorzata Lalka

Mary Jane McCloskey

By Tom McCloskey

Thomas Edward McKiernan

By Mary B. McKiernan

Margene Meis

By the Aaron Meis Family

Katherine Morter

By Frank and Bonnie Johnson

Mother Angelica

By Catherine and William Murphy

My Girlfriend

By John Michael Nona

Jackie Naylon

By Ann Knapick

Our Blessed Mother

By Anonymous

Rita Przybylski

By Rita Swarczewski

Angela Richards

By Dernise Dasne and Olette Joseph

Mary Schindler

(Terri Schiavo’s mother)

**And all mothers who have
lost their children**

By Anonymous

Carmen Isabel Schuch

By Sofia and Patrick McDonald

Carolyn Thomas

By the Meis Family

Rosemarie Trylovich

By Rebecca Trylovich

**Women who choose life for their
unborn children**

By Anonymous

In honor of my Granddaughter, Bella

By Janet LaRue (Romig)

“My granddaughter Bella is almost 8 years old now and only alive because I talked my daughter out of a partial birth abortion being foisted on her by Planned Parenthood. I made a baby quilt that is displayed in your offices on Michigan Ave. I want you to know Bella is wonderful and that we will always remember the people at Aid for Women that helped us to keep her alive.”

~ Janet LaRue (Romig)

(Janet’s story was featured in our Spring 2000 newsletter)

Being Blessed and Becoming a Blessing

Recently, a 26-year old client from Chicago, “H.,” found Aid for Women by searching the internet and coming across our website (www.aidforwomen.org). She came into the center in late April for a pregnancy test and referral for medical insurance resources, and was seen by volunteer counselor and board member Kate Berley. The client, who herself had been adopted, was so im-

pressed with her experience and the services and support provided at the center, that she decided to make a financial donation to Aid for Women before she left.

H. was also interested in learning about volunteering opportunities at the center sometime in the future. Her baby is due around Christmastime, and we continue to keep H., her baby, and all of our clients in our prayers.

Wish list:

- ❖ *Volunteer counselors for home hotline*
- ❖ *Overhead projector and/or laptop projector (for giving presentations)*
- ❖ *Gift cards for baby or maternity stores*



Look at me!



Emily JoeAnne ~ born January 14, 2005, at 8 pounds, 8 ounces, to mother Linda.



Kelly – born September, 2004. Kelly's mom was mentored by volunteer counselor and mentor Erin Neese.



Autumn Amya Jasmine – born April 3, 2005, to mom Yashica. Autumn was 6 pounds, 5 ounces at birth.



Kevin – Kevin and mother Juanita recently made several follow-up visits to the center. Kevin is turning one year old this June.



Client feedback:

“I want to thank you and all of the wonderful people that make up this great organization. You have given so many women a chance and a brighter future. You have opened so many eyes and in so many different ways, we just wanna say thank you! I will speak for us all because I know we all appreciate everything. You guys are truly a blessing plus an inspiration.”

~ L.B., 20-year old client who gave birth to a baby boy late in 2004, in a message written on a Christmas card to Aid for Women

“My experience of Aid for Women was very comfortable. It felt like I was at home. Thank you very much.”

~ C.F., 19-year old client in May, 2005

“I was very happy with the people and would recommend it to any woman.”

~ A.F., 30-year old client in April, 2005



In Perspective: Strong and Steadfast in the Storm

Diane R. Pietrzak, executive director

“God does not call us to be successful; He calls us to be faithful.” ~ Mother Teresa

The battle is the Lord’s. We’ve read the end of the book – His book, the Bible – and we know who wins. Ours is simply to do what we are called to do today – no more, and no less.

As our cover story illustrates, we may never realize during this lifetime the full impact of our work in crisis pregnancy ministry. But through the grace of God, someday we may be astounded to see tremendous ways in which our small offerings have affected the lives of so many.

This ministry can be very challenging at times, and it can be tempting to become discouraged. Aid for Women has faced a series of trials this spring. In February, flooding from a burst pipe on our building’s 17th floor caused severe water damage to the ceiling in both our reception area and staff room.

In March, an article posted on a radical political website directly attacked our center. The writer had visited Aid for Women posing as a troubled young pregnant woman, and wrote that our services were designed to deceive women into giving birth by telling them that it is a *baby* they are carrying.

While her arguments were clearly without merit, it is disheartening to see the mental gymnastics and defensiveness which allows those favoring abortion to believe and justify their point of view.

And just a few weeks ago, while recruiting volunteers at a local Catholic university’s career fair, one of our staff members was aggressively confronted by two separate pro-abortion advocates.

How shall we respond when such opposition comes our way? With discouragement, despair, or division?

In doing pro-life work, we are engaged in a spiritual battle: as John Paul II so eloquently described, a battle between a “culture of life” and a “culture of death.” As such, we may often find ourselves under attack. These challenges present opportunities for us to learn to rely even more completely upon the Lord as He continues to guide and strengthen us, correct us when needed, and encourage us onward.

One of my favorite bible passages is John 16:33, in which Jesus says: “In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” Difficulties *will* arise; but the way to respond to such adversity is to journey THROUGH it, with Jesus at our side.

Thank you for your partnership with Aid for Women. The support which you give – through financial donations,



your time and talent in volunteering, and especially your prayer support – is so crucial and encouraging to this ministry, especially during such difficult times.

The first few months of 2005 have been trying times for the larger pro-life community as well, as the entire world watched the debate on the value of human life play out in the tragic Terri Schiavo case, as well as in the beautiful example of a poignant end to the earthly life of one of our generation’s greatest heroes, Pope John Paul II.

I am writing these words on May 18, on what would have been John Paul II’s 85th birthday. I personally was honored to see “JPPII” in person several times, beginning in Denver in 1993 for World Youth Day, and again in 1999 when he visited St. Louis. Former board chairman Mary Anne Goldberg was privileged to travel to Rome during the official mourning period following his death, joining with millions paying their respects to this godly man.

I feel a special connection between this pope and Aid for Women, in that John Paul II was elected to the papacy on October 16, 1978 – just ten days after Aid for Women was officially incorporated and began its life-saving ministry on October 6, 1978.

Throughout these past 27 years, our community has continually sought the Lord and dedicated all of its efforts to Him. In a special way, I wonder if Pope John Paul II’s blessing was on and continues to be with all pro-life ministries. As the abundant coverage of his life demonstrated, he was a man who spoke clearly and consistently of the inherent dignity of the human person, and the need to respect life in all of its stages, from “womb to tomb.”

It is this God-infused respect for the human person, for ALL life – the troubled young pregnant woman, the vulnerable baby in the womb, and the confused, unprepared new father – that is the guiding belief behind all of the work that we do.

As we continue to labor in God’s vineyard, let us imagine our dear John Paul II and all the hosts of heaven cheering us on, as we reap a harvest of abundant new life! May we press forward toward the goal, as Philippians 3:14 encourages us to do, that someday our Lord may look upon each one of us and say, “Well done, my good and faithful servant.”

Tom Bresler and the courageous women who founded Aid for Women 27 years ago trusted God to lead this ministry, as Karol Wojtyla trusted in God’s call for him to lead the Catholic Church on earth. In both of these callings, God has been faithful. May this knowledge give us strength as we journey forward.

***“In this world you will have trouble.
But take heart! I have overcome
the world.” ~ John 16:33***