



# Aid for Women

*Empowering Women to Choose Life Since 1978*

8 South Michigan Avenue Suite 1100, Chicago, IL 60603 • Telephone: 312-621-1101 • Fax: 312-621-1972  
E-mail: info@aidforwomen.org • Website: www.aidforwomen.org  
May-June 2003

## Can You Help with Our Wish List? We need:

- 1 Volunteer pregnancy counselors for weekdays, Saturdays and for the At-Home Hotline (please see training dates on page three)
- 2 Volunteer baby-shower coordinator
- 3 Volunteer clerical or administrative assistant
- 4 Unisex mid-weight receiving blankets (yellow, green, purple, white)

### *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  
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 in the Crossroads*

Crystal Matthews

It was this time about a year ago that I stumbled upon a crossroad in my life. I was a single mother with a very young son, I had little money and I learned that I was pregnant again.

Confusion clouded my mind as I sought a way to deal with my dilemma. Finally, I reached the conclusion that abortion seemed the best solution. A little late and hesitant, I arrived at the clinic.

Earlier that same day, my prayer for forgiveness and hope started to seem totally in vain.



*Crystal Matthews holds her daughter, Sidney,  
close to her heart.*

As I approached the abortion-clinic doors, Bill and Joyce introduced themselves to me. When I stopped, they asked me what my intentions were for being there that day.

I explained my situation, and they told me about alternate options besides abortion. And Bill told me about an organization called Aid for Women.

At that point, I believe just the name "Aid for Women" embedded hope into my heart once again.

*"Crossroads," page two*



*Crystal had an opportunity to tell her story to many people on Saturday, April 12, 2003, during a service in Holy Name Cathedral, Chicago. Crystal and her two children received a personal blessing at the service from Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I., Archbishop of Chicago.*

After Joyce and Bill told me all these things, I decided to put my plan on hold. A voice, perhaps God's, encouraged me to look into what Aid for Women had to offer.

Upon arriving at the pregnancy resource center, I met one of their wonderful pregnancy counselors, Sharnina. She and I talked about my situation.

Sharnina really listened to my concerns and fears. She spoke of many ways that the Aid for Women programs and referrals could help my unborn child, my young son, and me.

Offers of clothing, toys, Pampers and various basic needs were extended to us. I was also given the telephone numbers and addresses to facilities that could provide shelter for us.

Sharnina convinced me that there are people who care and organizations that really help. Knowing this made it possible for me to have my daughter.

Aid for Women's compassionate staff, variety of resources and their determination to help needy women of society is truly a blessing.

I am proud to speak highly of this God-sent organization. Thank you for giving me the chance to voice my story.

## Courage Through the Tears

Kathy (names changed to protect confidentiality), in her mid-30s, came to Aid for Women for a pregnancy test. In her own words, she's a mother of "two wonderful boys," aged 13 and 11 years old.

She confided to her volunteer pregnancy counselor that she wasn't married to, but very much in love with, her baby's father, Joe. He's very sweet and loving to her—when he decides to come around.

Even though Kathy loved Joe, and money wasn't an issue, she couldn't see having his baby because of the way he treated her. She confessed that he was emotionally abusing her.

Kathy's test result was positive. She marveled over the models of

unborn babies on display and at how much even an eight-week old baby is developed in the womb. "They look like real little babies!" she said. She wasn't aware that a baby's heart starts to beat as early as 21 days.

Her counselor listened to Kathy for quite a while. She poured out her feelings until her tears followed right behind. Then the two of them discussed her pregnancy options, but with each suggestion Kathy felt there was no hope.

Her counselor helped Kathy see that she is already a great mom with strength and courage. Then the counselor gave her pamphlets and information on all her options, including a referral for an ultrasound exam.

At this point, Kathy was still contemplating abortion but wasn't so sure about it anymore. As she left, Kathy thanked the counselor for her help and gave her permission for follow-up contact. That same day, her counselor mailed an encouraging card to Kathy and suggested she call anytime to talk.

The very next day Kathy contacted her counselor. Kathy was pleased, and a little surprised, that the counselor had taken the time to write a personal note to her. Kathy wasn't sure what to make of her relationship with Joe, but she knew for certain that she didn't want to have an abortion.

It took a lot of courage, but Kathy decided to parent her baby.

  
*The Grace to Know . . .  
The Courage to Try*

Please join us as we celebrate 25 years of service on

**Thursday, September 25, 2003**  
**Grand Ballroom**  
**Chicago Hilton and Towers**

Our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary gala will include

**Pre-dinner Reception**

**Entertainment**

Including Irish singer **Dana Rosemary Scallon**

**Silent Auction of Art 'Celebrating Family'**

Featuring the work of Robert Dewar Bentley, William Chambers, Mark McMahon, Bruno Certo, Margo McMahon and Dennis Smith.

**Dinner**

**Client Stories**

**President George W. Bush**

(Confirmation pending)

Award Presentations

**Mother of the Year**

*Praesidium Vitae* (Defender of Life)

Special Guests

**Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.,  
Archbishop of Chicago**

**Tom and Heather Bresler**

**Preferred seating will be given  
for tickets purchased by June 30, 2003.**

Order your ticket(s) now on the enclosed reply card, or send your name and daytime telephone number to [tickets@aidforwomen.org](mailto:tickets@aidforwomen.org). We'll call you back to take your reservation. Please do not send credit card information to us by e-mail.

**Training Dates for Volunteer  
Pregnancy Counselors**

Please join us at an upcoming session. You're eligible for this free no-obligation training if you're a woman, at least 18 years old, and available for two or more hours on a weekday or a Saturday.

**Orientation** 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Introduction to Aid for Women and our volunteer positions.

**Level One Training** 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Session covers the L.O.V.E. Approach counseling techniques, listening skills and more.

This training is required to staff the At-Home Hotline.

**Wednesday, June 18**

**Saturday, September 27**

*Lunch and refreshments are served.*

Space is limited, so please make your reservation today by calling Sharnina D. Starling, director of client and volunteer services, at (312) 621-1101.

**New Board Member Brings  
Many Gifts to Aid for Women**

We welcome Roger D. Lewis to the board of directors as treasurer. Roger works for Americans United for Life, a national legal and educational nonprofit, and brings many skills to his new role with us, including a male perspective and a passion for the sanctity of human life.



*Aid for Women's directors at the April 2003 board meeting. Seated from left: Pat Daily (chairman) and Roger Lewis (treasurer). Standing from left: Florence Sorensen (chairman, 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner), Mary Hallan FioRito, Ann Jans, Kate Berley and Susan Couri (secretary). Missing from the photograph: Kathleen Bindley, Mary Anne Goldberg (non-voting Senior Council member), Elaine Kindler (non-voting executive director) and Debbie Wells (Baby Basics class leader).*



## The Babies Say Thank You!

Thank you very much to everyone who responded generously to our need for layette items.

To a pregnant client, the lovely finished layette is a tangible sign of her unborn baby's humanity—seeing it may be the moment when she accepts that she is a mother.

Heartfelt appreciation goes to Father Dan Mayall, Karen Wenzell and the parishioners at Holy Name Cathedral, Chicago, for their generous January contributions of baby items and cash.

Deep appreciation goes to Father Hal Stanger, Julie Morrison and the Women's Club of Holy Cross Church, Deerfield, for an exceptionally successful March parish-wide shower and collection. Aid for Women began at Holy Cross Parish, and it's encouraging to have so many parishioners still supporting and helping our clients so generously.

It's always encouraging when young people reach out to help others in need, so we're grateful for contributions from the Pro-Life Club at St. Scholastica High School, Chicago, and the fourth grade students at Sacred Heart School, Lombard. The eighth-grade confirmation class at Our Lady of Perpetual Help School, Glenview, not only donated items that will help our moms, they also created at least 100 beautiful gift cards to put in the layette packages.

For individual donations we say a big thank you to Angela Grason, Sue Hubbard, and Colette O'Regan.

We have a constant need for new, gender-neutral, newborn to six-month items. If you can host a baby shower, please contact Elaine M. Kindler, executive director, at (312) 621-1101. It's easy to organize a shower and it's a great way to introduce your family, friends and fellow parishioners to Aid for Women.

## Extended Hotline Soon

Soon Aid for Women volunteer pregnancy counselors will be able to answer Hotline calls from the comfort of their own homes (see training dates on page three).

Hotline hours will be extended to serve clients from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Saturdays.



*Counselor Colleen Buck provides cheerful assistance as she answers the Hotline at the center.*



## Others Ways You Can Help

### Praying

Check "I will pray" on the reply form, and please pray right now for more clients, volunteers and resources.

### Volunteering

Aid for Women has no outreach without the volunteers who counsel our clients or help us behind the scenes. Explore the many opportunities for you to make a difference in the life of a mother and her child.

## Perspective

Elaine M. Kindler, Executive Director

In October of 1978 a courageous group of men and women—inspired by the sanctity of human life—began reaching out to teens and women facing unexpected pregnancies. Since then, because of many dedicated volunteers and financial supporters, Aid for Women has helped more than 60,000 clients through direct services and Hotline counseling.

The hope then, and the hope now, is for the day when we won't be needed anymore—because mothers will choose life for their children over abortion at every stage of their pregnancy.

Until that day, Aid for Women continues to reach out in love to inform, counsel, serve, encourage, and empower women of all ages, races and religions to choose life.

The education starts where the woman is—what she knows and what she doesn't know—about con-

ception, fetal development, parenting, adoption; and about the risks of STDs, HIV/AIDS, abortion and its aftermath.

An unqualified acceptance of contraceptive use has created a culture that glorifies sexual activity without consequences. But there are consequences. And, more often than not, the woman is expected to bear these alone.

She pays dearly—with her physical and psychological health—and too often with the very life of her child.

Aid for Women is here so that she won't be alone—and so that she won't need to pay such a heavy price. We are changing and saving lives, one woman at a time.

You have a role to play in this critical work—your time and talents (volunteering in some capacity), and your treasure (financial support). There are still thousands of vulnerable teens and women to be reached.

