

Life Voices

A Newsletter of the Pregnancy Support Center of Alternatives, Yes

Summer 2012



**Pregnancy Support Center of
Alternatives, Yes**

***Empowering Women to
Choose Life***

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"Thanks so much for all your help. The free diapers and baby clothes have been such a help since we are struggling financially, but the parenting classes and your emotional support have meant even more to me. I always feel better about myself as a mother when I leave your office. Thanks!"

J.W.

"I really appreciate the love and support my family receives from the people here. God is working through this ministry in huge ways. God bless each of you for the time you invest in others. Thanks so much!" K.P

"Thank God for Alternatives, Yes and the volunteers and staff there who help mothers and fathers through education and with all the baby items. Your program is not just a hand-out. I can truly say I learned a lot with your help, and I'm a better mom because of it."
B.P

"When I think of everything you've done for me, I cry. Words can't even describe the love and support I found from Alternatives, Yes. It made a difference for me and my babies. You meant the world to me. I only hope I can give back to someone else one day the way you have given to me." T.R

"Thanks all of you so much for helping me and my family. You have done so much for us and never judged or turned us away. God Bless You All." R.H

"Thanks for all your support over the last couple of years. You helped me find a church home, and you encouraged me to get my GED and even paid for it. You have helped give me the confidence to be a good Dad and a provider for my family." J.T.

25 Years

It's our anniversary year!!!
Here's what some of our clients have said about what we've meant to them.

"I came to you pregnant and scared almost 20 years ago. You were the voice for my unborn baby and the reason I chose to give birth to my son. I am so thankful I made that decision. He was the reason I woke every day, even when times were tough. He was the reason I worked so hard to get my college degree and find a good job. He is in college now, and he is such a fine young man. I am so proud of him. Thanks for being the one and only person to tell me I could do it twenty years ago. My son says 'thank you' too."

T.S.

Salt and Light Award

Salt and Light Award

We were humbled and honored to be the 2012 recipient of the **Salt and Light Award for Outstanding Human Service Organization**, presented by Bishop Brandt of the Catholic Diocese of Greensburg on April 19th. The dinner and reception was spectacular, and we were surrounded by friends and supporters. It was a magical night, and we feel truly blessed to have been selected.



Accepting the **2012 Salt and Light Award for Outstanding Human Service Organization** from Bishop Brandt are Andrea Pritts, Executive Director, (left) and Sister Catherine Meinert, Board President, (right).

Here is part of the acceptance speech:

I like to think that the most important thing that we offer to a young lady who walks in our door is **HOPE**.

- **HOPE** that she has enough resources to care for her child
- **HOPE** that she can finish school even though she's having a baby
- **HOPE** that, despite all her mental or physical problems, she **CAN** be a good mother
- **HOPE** that she can carry her unborn child to term, despite things like abuse and instability in her own life
- **HOPE** that she doesn't have to get the abortion that everyone around her is pressuring her to have

Sometimes, all she needs is a little **HOPE** to see that light at the end of a very dark tunnel.

Today, what you are giving me and our entire organization is **HOPE**. In today's society, trying to live a Culture of Life is often challenging. Those of us whose mission it is to protect the unborn and the marginalized often face criticism and are sometimes judged in ways meant to put us down. You are offering us a healthy dose of encouragement by supporting and praising our work. You are telling us that what we do is important. Tonight is an inspiration to all of us at Alternatives. Yes.

If our lives will be judged and measured by our help to the hungry, the homeless, the troubled, and the alienated, then surely God must have a special place waiting for all the volunteers, staff, board, and supporters who have helped us over the last 25 years. I THANK THEM,-- we would not exist without their courage and kindness. Thank you, Bishop Brandt, Catholic Charities, and all of you in attendance tonight. In accepting this award tonight for Alternatives. Yes, we promise that we will continue to be **THE SALT.. AND A LIGHT ...FOR ALL WHO ENTER OUR DOOR...AND ENTER OUR HEARTS. THANK YOU!!!**

THANKS, WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU.....*Gifts Received from December 2011 through July 5, 2012*

It's Been A Record Year for Us. What a Blessing From God. Truly, THANK YOU!

Special Memorial Monetary Gifts Received

In Honor of Alternatives. Yes Receiving the Salt and Light Award, from:

- Michael J. Walker Foundation
- St. Vincent DePaul Society, St. Pius Chapter
- Maryann Chury
- Walt & Rosemary Hudock

In Honor of Lainie Wilson.....from Barb Keefer

In Memory of Ann Idzik.....from Joan & John Benyak

In Memory of Margaret Gmitter....from Joan & Donald Smith

In Memory of James John Krueger....from Ewald & Audrey Krueger

In Honor of Blessings Received.....from Maryann Chury

In Memory of Alexander Wisnewski (father) on his birthday....from Maryann Chury

In Memory of Rose Wisnewski (mother) on her birthday....from Maryann Chury

In Honor of the Life-Saving Work of Alternatives. Yes....from Mary Catherine Wallace

In Memory of Walter Ulerich....from Kimberly Show

In Memory of Janet Thomas....from John & Danielle Daley

In Memory of Janice Dillon....from Brian and Janel Mudry

In Honor of Sister Catherine Meinert's Installation as new Provincial Superior.....from Juliane Rebitch

In Honor of Sister Catherine's discussion in a Post-Gazette Article....from Clara and Julia Trimarchi

In Memory of Jeffrey Chaya....from Mary Catherine Wallace

**Grants & Financial Gifts
Over \$25,000**

Catholic Charities Poverty Relief Grant
The Marilyn K. Kiefer Foundation Grant
St. John the Evangelist Connellsville Special Collection
The Michael J. Walker Foundation
Board of Directors Essay Contest Funding
Anonymous through Community Foundation of Fayette County
Anonymous
St. Therese DeLisieux RC Church Souper Bowl of Caring Collection
St. Rita's RC Church Souper Bowl of Caring Collection
St. Mary's RC Church, Export, Pro-Life Funds Grant
Buchanan Church of God Monthly
Everson Evangelical Monthly Gift
Cherry Tree Alliance Easter Offering
19 Individuals

Other Miscellaneous Gifts

Baby Shower, Giving Tree, and Special Collections Baby GiftsConnellsville Catholic Churches Combined Christian Mothers Advent Party....St. John's and Trinity Lutheran Churches Ladies Group....Girl Scout Troops 5388, 53025, 55081, and 51367.....Conn-Area Catholic School.....Red Hat Ladies....Jacob's Creek United Methodist Church....Pleasant Unity United Methodist Church....Everson Evangelical....St. John the Evangelist Uniontown Christian Mothers....Knights of Columbus Council 3334 Mt. Pleasant

Homemade Baby Blankets & Hats....Pam Remaley....Carolyn Shelky & Friends .. Laurel Highlands Knitting Guild.....The Knifty Knitters...Marilyn Shallenberger

Other Unique Giving.....

-Connellsville Presbyterian Church Free-Will Offering at Nativity Open House
-Bob and Bernie Edwards.....Masses, Prayers and Large Basket of Candy for Clients

-Connellsville Catholic Combined Churches Youth Group...Baby Bottle Boomerang

-Connellsville Church of God Women....Mugs filled with Goodies for Mother's Day

-New Meadow Run Community...Books for clients entitled "Why Children Matter"



2012 Pro-Life Essay Contest Winners

Why Life is a Gift

by Hannah Judy, 1st Place Winner, Middle School,
7th Grader at Geibel Catholic Middle High School

Life is an amazing gift. A lot of people might say their life is just getting up early and going to work, an everyday routine. That is why many people wonder why life is called a gift. This is why I believe life is a gift.

A little over three years ago my family was blessed with a very special gift. That gift was a boy named Max. Max was born with Down's Syndrome. We did not know what to expect, and we were all scared. But he is the best thing that happened to us. A lot of people think that life is just life, but it's so much more than that. You don't realize how lucky you are until a miracle comes into your life. Max has brought my entire family closer together. In so many ways he is a gift from God.

My aunt, his mother, with the help of our whole family decided to go ahead with her pregnancy when she was told her baby is going to have special needs. We could not imagine life without Max. My grandparents are retired and babysit Max a few times a week. I believe this was their special gift. They are so very close to Max. The only words Max says on a regular basis is Pap-Pap. My aunt says he goes to sleep saying Pap-Pap and wakes up saying Pap-Pap. We get to spend a lot of time with Max. When we go visit him, my sisters and I race to see who gets him first. Max is truly a gift of life. When he looks at you your heart just feels warm. We love him so much. Life is a gift, a gift from God. We need to believe God has a plan for all of us and right now God's plan is for us to take good care of this beautiful gift of life, Max

Announcing the 2013 Pro-Life Contest Sponsored by Alternatives.Yes Board of Directors

OPEN TO STUDENTS IN GRADES 6th- 12th

Theme: Life is a Miracle

9th – 12th Grade: Multimedia Contest open to groups and individuals; 2-5 minutes in length; any combination of slides, video, voice, animation, and music.

1st Place \$150 cash prize

1 Honorable Mention \$50 cash prize

6th – 8th Grade: Essay Contest, 300 - 400 Words

1st Place \$100 cash prize

2 Honorable Mentions \$50 cash prize

See our website at www.pregnancy-support.com for rules and eligibility, or call us and we'll send out a flyer. Entries must be **postmarked by January 22, 2013.**



Why Life is a Gift

**Bethany Coldren, 1st Place Winner, High School Division
9th Grader, Connellsville High School**

To understand one reason why life is a gift, I think of life as a symphony.

In a symphony or an orchestra, the instruments strive to work together to create beautiful melodies and harmonies. However, if one section of the symphony is asked to play alone, the music played might not make sense if heard by someone who is not a performer in the symphony. Why? Not every instrument plays the melody in a song. For instance, the percussion section keeps a steady, solid rhythm going in a piece of music. If you walked in on a symphony practice and heard the percussionists playing by themselves, you would not understand what they were playing. Yet all together, the entire ensemble plays each of their individual parts during a performance, building off of each other in order to create one voice. Life is the same way. Sometimes, we might not understand what our purpose is, even wondering, "Why was I born?" But, the truth is that we all share a similar purpose: we were brought to grow and develop on this Earth to benefit the lives of the other people around us. The apostle Paul wrote, "We are many parts but all one body." This is true: as one brick builds up a house's foundation, and as one instrument builds off of another in an orchestral work, we were placed where we are now to do something for the improvement of humanity. Whether we change one life or change the entire world, our actions build off others' actions and vice versa. That is one important reason why every life is a gift: though we may not know it yet, our lives can make an impact on the rest of the world.

Another important reason that life is a gift comes from the notes that I recently took in my Biology class. We were learning about cell specialization. Basically, this term means that specific cells are uniquely suited to carry out their own specific functions. To put it another way, everyone has their own special talents and abilities. After Paul discusses our being "many parts and all one body," he goes on to talk about our talents. "Everyone has gifts," he says. "Some people are designated by God to be first, apostles, second, prophets, third, teachers," and so on and so forth. This is another example to why life is so special. Not all of us are destined to be the next Michael Jackson or the next Michael Jordan. Each one of us has our own, individual gifts and purposes. Some of them (and these are only a few of the endless possibilities) are as follows: singer, teacher, brick layer, carpenter, doctor, nurse, volunteer, artist, engineer, waiter, hairdresser, helper, and most importantly, *mother and father*. These final two gifts are, to put it in the best way, gifts from God above. Not everyone has the chance to be a mother or father. Though right now, a sixteen year old girl may be pregnant and not wanting to deal with giving birth to her child, she will soon find out that, just through one newborn infant, a person can and will be changed forever. Our gifts are not always what we want them to be. Someone may dream of being an opera star one day, but then come to find that their destiny is to work in a shelter for homeless women and their children. You will never know what your gift or talent is until you recognize that life is a gift and that life is worth living.

In conclusion, life is a precious gift given to us by God. We each came into the world with a purpose to improve the world in little or big ways, and we each have a special gift to use throughout the course of our life. To end, I would like to quote a song that is very popular as of right now: "I'm beautiful in my way, 'cause God makes no mistakes. I'm on the right track baby, I was born this way." Consider those words when you wonder if your life really is a gift.

