



CLIENT FACES ADVERSE DIAGNOSIS

Adverse prenatal diagnosis ... these three words do not crop up very often in the vocabulary of the general public except by those involved in the medical profession. The phrase refers to conditions affecting the unborn child that can cause severe abnormalities or death in utero, at birth, or shortly after. Trisomy, where an extra copy of a chromosome is present, and anencephaly, a condition where part or all of the cerebral hemispheres are absent, are two such frightening examples.

For the first time in our local Birthright history, according to the memories of our longest serving volunteers, a client received the devastating news of an adverse diagnosis after an ultrasound during her second trimester. Her baby had something seriously wrong which was "incompatible with life." The doctors recommended that Elena, the young mother, terminate the pregnancy immediately.

Just when these tragic events were occurring, Elena's client advocate at Birthright, Lori, was doing her regular follow-up calls as required of all volunteers to insure our expectant mothers are doing well and not in need of any help at the time. After reaching Elena and learning of her client's



(L to R) Volunteers Lori Kayajanian and Donna Falls, along with Director Lily Alarcon on the right, welcomed Paula Stryker of the Embracing Grace ministry to Birthright's continuing education session in November. All women played important roles in helping a young mother who faced an adverse diagnosis.

tragic diagnosis, Lori knew she needed to consult with our director immediately for prayers, advice and available alternatives.

Director Lily contacted Elena who shared the news that she and

her husband had already made the decision to abort the baby. She did graciously listen to Lily who spoke with her at length and urged the client to let God work through her

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A LETTER FROM THE BIRTHRIGHT DIRECTOR

Love, friendship, and hope! As the director of Birthright, I am delighted to share these guiding principles with our phenomenal volunteers as we continue to support all women who are pregnant or may be pregnant. Our former co-directors, Betsy Flanigan and Barbara Carr, have crafted an amazing organization and I hope to live up to the legacy they have left.

To our volunteers, I am looking forward to interacting with each of you and incorporating your ideas and suggestions to make Birthright even more efficient and effective. So far, we have added an extra day, Thursday, and adjusted our operating hours to better suit our clients. Also, we added internet connectivity to allow volunteers access to practical information while serving our clients. In addition, visitors will notice some minor aesthetic changes to the Birthright office.

We will continue to provide quality training to new and existing volunteers to ensure our compliance and level of service are second-to-none. We have been continuously recruiting more great volunteers and their participation is a godsend.

Right now, one of our shortcomings is our supply of maternity clothes because of the constant demand. We are working with a few volunteers who are in charge of maintaining our supplies at optimum levels, and I would like to ask the rest of the volunteers and the public to assist in this endeavor by providing information of any organization or individual who is willing to donate maternity clothes to Birthright.

Our new baby layettes are blooming since we have been lucky enough to receive gifts from the Council of Catholic Women at St. Mary Catholic Church and from the Ladies Guild of St. Jude Catholic Church. These gifts were the product of January baby showers done in Birthright's name. Our sincere gratitude goes out to these generous groups, as well as to many other private donors who bring baby clothes.

But most of all, our sincerest gratitude goes to individual donors, church groups, and civic organizations who donate funds, sometimes on a monthly basis, to support our worthy cause. They are our primary resource for funding to keep our organization and its worthy mission running. Without them the road ahead would be very difficult.

In my short tenure as director, I was privileged in December to assist with a client's heartrending case when she received the tragic news of her baby's adverse diagnosis. I was a personal witness of the team work of our great volunteer force which came together to assist and provide the love and support to this special client until the very end of her pregnancy. We share Elena's inspiring story in this newsletter issue. My sincere thanks and gratitude to all those volunteers involved in this worthy cause. Through the continued support and dedication of our volunteers, Birthright will continue to make advances to better serve all pregnant women during their time of need who seek our help.

God bless you all! — Lily Alarcon, Director



Stefanie Fell presented Lily Alarcon with this framed work for the Birthright office of the now famous "Fetal Hand Grasp" color photo with an accompanying news story. Michael Clancy, a veteran free lance photojournalist, was hired by USA Today to photograph a surgical procedure on a fetus of 21 weeks gestation who had been diagnosed with spina bifida. Read more at www.michaelclancy.com

BIRTHRIGHT OF FREDERICKSBURG, INC.

DIRECTOR
Lily Alarcon

OFFICE MANAGER
Eileen Shea

TREASURER
Barbara Carr

SCHEDULING COORDINATOR
Mary Nolan

COMMUNITY LIAISON
Donna Hart

NEWSLETTER EDITOR
Kathleen Mahoney

WEBMASTER
Lori Fowlkes

HOURS OF OPERATION

*Monday through Friday
10:00 AM to 1:00 PM*

*Tuesday and Thursday Evenings
5:00 to 7:00 PM*

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according to His will. The young mother agreed to consider her words and to reopen the discussion with her husband. Lily promised to meet her for lunch the next day.

Things were happening very fast and the young couple increasingly felt the pressure from the medical community who advised an abortion because of possible bad effects on the mother's health, they said, as well as hinting that she might not be able to have more children if she didn't terminate.

But God was working even faster, as it turned out. We at Birthright were all on high alert and praying fervently for a good outcome. We also were soon reminded that there are no real coincidences in life. Another active Birthright volunteer, Donna F., alerted us that she had a neighbor who could speak eloquently from experience because she too had received an adverse prenatal diagnosis.

Paula Stryker and her husband Richard of Spotsylvania, the parents of three, had received in 2011 the tragic news from an ultrasound at twenty weeks gestation that their baby had heart and brain abnormalities that would not allow her to survive. In a recent continuing education program for Birthright volunteers, Paula related how she felt upon hearing the results: "It was the hardest day of my life."

Elaborating during her presentation, Paula explained that, as people of faith with a strong belief in the sanctity of life, the Strykers knew they were going to support their daughter. Paula promised God that she would carry her as long as He wanted. Corrine Catherine Stryker was born on December 17, 2011, and lived a little under two hours.

Who better to console and counsel our young Birthright mother in so much distress? Paula was Heaven-sent and an invaluable counselor. With the promised support and prayers of so many, as well as those of their own families, Elena and her husband decided against terminating the pregnancy and to leave everything in God's hands.

Baby Faith Aracely arrived on December 15, 2014, about 2 PM. In addition to her parents, this little angel from Heaven was welcomed by a multi-generational family group that included a great grandmother, grandparents, her siblings, cousins, and close friends before going back to God about midnight.

Paula Stryker is the founder and director of Embracing Grace, a ministry that offers peer support and a network of resources for women



As a keepsake for her parents, Birthright of Fredericksburg commissioned a special baby blanket personalized for little Faith Aracely who lived about ten hours after her birth on December 15.

and families who receive a life-limiting diagnosis and who choose to carry their child to term. The group is made up of fourteen families who receive support from the Catholic Diocese of Richmond as well as from St. Patrick Church of Spotsylvania, part of the Diocese of Arlington.

Embracing Grace stands ready to help anyone facing an adverse prenatal diagnosis.

Contact information for this ministry: embracinggracepeer@gmail.com or 540-809-9901

SOME 2014 STATISTICS ABOUT OUR CLIENTS WHO CAME FROM THE CITY OF FREDERICKSBURG AND THE COUNTIES OF STAFFORD, SPOTSYLVANIA, KING GEORGE AND CAROLINE:

- PREGNANCY TESTS ADMINISTERED..... 606**
- MATERNITY CLOTHES DONATIONS 198**
- NEW BABY LAYETTES..... 105**
- PHONE INQUIRIES..... 541**
- OFFICE VISITS 839**

MEMORIALS

Donations to Birthright of Fredericksburg were made in memory of the following deceased friends of life. May they rest in peace!

Lorraine Marshall Mostyn
by Bernie and Kathy Mahoney

Betty J. Glancy
by Birthright of Fredericksburg Volunteers

Eleanor Mitchell by Anonymous

Cathy Thompson by Bernie and Kathy Mahoney

Robert J. Sullivan
by Birthright of Fredericksburg Volunteers

Barbara K. Mertens by Ed and Mary Kenney

Lifesavers: Birthright gratefully acknowledges donations from the following groups and individuals that have come in since our last listing in our Summer 2014 edition.

St. Mary of the Immaculate Conception Church

St. Mary Council of Catholic Women

St. Jude Women's Guild

Wee Cycle Wardrobe

Happily Ever After

From the Heart Stitchers

Knights of Columbus #4034, St. Mary Church

Knights of Columbus Battlefield Council, St. Patrick Church

Ladies Auxiliary K. of C. #10246, Battlefield Council, St. Patrick Church

Catholic Chapel Community at the Naval Support Activity, So. Potomac Spotsylvania Hospital Gift Shop

Echo Northrup Grumman (Paul Gohmann)
Helen Quattlebaum

Elizabeth Zollman

Marguerite Dineen

Elizabeth Dyer

Stephen Dunham

Mary and Ed Kenney

Marie Savage

Agnes Darnell

Jim and Gladys Bowen

Sandra Glancy

Jacqueline Armstead

Mary Gilholy

Mary Jane Flynn

Frank Petranka

Alden and Eileen Clark

Helen and Mark Cimini

Peter and Marjorie Adams

Philip and Kathleen Marzec

George and Colleen Warner

Carol and Ronald Byram

Betty Glancy

Matthew Glancy

Barbara Loving

Pierre and Irene Payette

Douglas Meyer, MD

Ernest Dawson

Eddon and Mary Ullmer

Carol and Christopher

Rooney

Brooke Kingsley

Kristen Dineen

Jane Sherry

Patrick and Stefanie Fell

Thomas Mukunnemkeril

Stephen Davezac

Rebecca Brown

Donna Landis

Henry Frydel, Jr.

Richard and Barbara

Wareing

Carolyn Berta

Richard and Carleen Delio

Fern Patterson

Sue Pennino

Megan Moore



To Remember and Honor Those We Love

You can remember those you love with a tax-deductible donation to Birthright of Fredericksburg, Inc. We will mail a special note to the person you designate. Simply use this form to make this special donation:

Special Birthright Donation

In Honor of _____

In Memory of _____

Designate the person you would like a special note sent to here:

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

We Need Your Support ... Birthright is a non-profit, charitable organization supported by contributions. We are exempt from federal income tax under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue code, and all donations are tax deductible. We are independent, non-political, and non-sectarian. We're committed to help women in crisis, single or married, regardless of age, race or religion.

- I would like to train as a Birthright client advocate. Call me!
- I would prefer to work in some other capacity such as office work, clothes sorting, fund raising, etc.
- I cannot volunteer at this time, but here's my donation for charitable works.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____