

Birthright OF PITTSBURGH, Inc.

The City of Pittsburgh's First Pregnancy Support Center, Founded in 1971

201 South Craig Street, Pittsburgh, PA 412-621-1988 Volume 38, No. 2 Spring 2009

A challenge to advocate for the unborn

By *Sister Joan Murray, S.C., Birthright of Pittsburgh volunteer*

As a volunteer with Birthright of Pittsburgh for four years, I am able to implement my values on human life with a supportive organization. I believe that society challenges citizens of pro-life daily to advocate for the most vulnerable among us, the voiceless unborn. During these difficult times, Birthright is a beacon of hope.

On March 4, 2009, I attended the University of Pittsburgh Health Fair as a representative of Birthright of Pittsburgh. I was given the opportunity to speak with students and interface with organizations interested in reaching out to the college population. Many students willingly examined the fetal models I had brought. They discussed stages of growth and development of individual models. This provided an opportunity for students attending the health fair to think about the life process. They were also interested in obtaining brochures that described fetal development I had available on the table. One of the brochures that appealed to some of the students is entitled, "Forgotten Fathers." One young male student even remarked that pregnancy involved him as well. The importance of being there to provide this information cannot be underestimated.

In addition to the special opportunity of participating in the health fair, I volunteer weekly, often twice a week, in the Birthright office in Oakland. I answer phones and engage pregnant mothers in compassionate conversation to establish emotionally supportive relationships and encourage them to have their babies. I am also available to provide pregnancy tests and all Birthright services are without charge. Guidance and community referrals to agencies provide more assistance during pregnancy. Fortunately, Birthright maintains an extensive listing of referrals that include adoption agencies, breastfeeding information, car seats, child care, counseling, financial assistance, insurance, parenting, food and baby clothing. Birthright also gives free layettes, clothing and baby items.

I perceive Birthright to be a genuine gift in a very politically and economically unstable time in our society.



Sister Joan prepares materials to present fetal growth and development.

Excerpt from a recent presentation at a respect life meeting



By *Paula Smith, Executive Director, Birthright of Pittsburgh*

“Some of you are just beginning in the pro-life movement and some of you have been involved for nearly 40 years and more. I know that each one of you is dedicated to the protection of life in all its’ forms: a growing baby, a child or adult with a disability, the dying, the aged and the frail.

“We believe that difficult decisions of life and death are not in our hands. It is our Creator alone who determines the ‘quality’ of our lives and calls us home when our life’s work is finished.

“No one has the right to terminate the life of another no matter how small, old, imperfect or unworthy that life may appear to others. We are ‘wonderfully’ made in His image.

“God has instilled a desire in our hearts and called us to protect what He has created. This is our invitation and this is our responsibility. And we know this. The voice in our heart is like the call of Jesus as He stood on the shore of Galilee saying to humble fishermen, ‘Come, after me and I will make you fishers of men.’”

In 2007, there were 36,663 abortions performed in Pennsylvania. The 2007 figure is a 44.3 percent decrease from the 1980 total of 65,777 (the highest annual number ever recorded in Pennsylvania). The 2007 figure represents a decrease of 68 or 0.2 percent from the 36,731 that occurred in 2006. The lowest annual number occurred in 1999 (34,494).

-Statistics from the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

“THIS IS BIRTHRIGHT OF PITTSBURGH CALLING...”

One day, if you haven’t already received a call, you might pick up the phone and hear the pleasant voice of Helen McNally, volunteer and Red Rose Day coordinator, for Birthright of Pittsburgh. She takes her volunteer time seriously and throughout the year calls parishes and sends introductory and reminder letters for Red Rose Day collections. In addition, she maintains records, mails supplies and provides literature. Helen fulfills a significant role because Red Rose Day is Birthright’s major fundraiser and we rely on the financial support we receive in order to maintain an office, purchase supplies, train new volunteers and meet our expenses. We simply could not operate Birthright without the generosity of the many parishioners in Pittsburgh and the surrounding community. You really do keep us going! Fellow volunteers lend Helen a hand with phone calls and paperwork to support her service and we acknowledge their assistance as well. Listen to their voices and you’ll hear “angels” for Birthright.



*Helen McNally
Red Rose Day Coordinator*

BIRTHRIGHT CONTRIBUTORS

Birthright sincerely thanks the following parishes and individuals for their most generous Red Rose Day collections and donations from December 2008 to March 2009:

Holy Spirit Parish, West Mifflin
Sacred Heart Parish, Shadyside
Saint Basil Parish
Saint Bernard Parish
Saint Margaret of Scotland Parish

Saint Regis Parish
Saints Simon and Jude Parish
Saint Susanna Parish
The Oratory



A SPECIAL THANKS FOR ENRICHING THE LIVES OF MOTHERS AND BABIES

Henny Adorante
Appeal letter contributors
Aquinas Academy
Susan and Nelson Caro and family
Edward Casassa
Anne L. Dailey
Helen DeCesare-Infant clothing
Thomas Fowler
Mrs. Paul Gaffney
Brian Hegarty
Holy Spirit Parish, West Mifflin-
Christian Mothers & Women's Guild-
Baby clothes, baby items,
blankets & donation
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Knights of Columbus-Bellevue Council #1400
Suzanne M. Koble
Lawrence Lepidi
Robert Ling
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Mary Anne Mansell – Baby quilts and infant clothing
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clothing and baby items
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Casimir Pellegrini, Jr.
John and Betty Philips
Catherine Ryan
Sacred Heart Parish, Shadyside-
Awakenings families -
Epiphany party clothing gifts
Saint Angela Merici Parish-Junior Ladies of Charity-
Handmade baby blankets
Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Parish-Donation
James B. Schmitt-
In memory of wife, Mary Theresa Schmitt
Colette Schreiber
Dr. David Simon-On behalf of Susan M. Simon
Roger Smith
Wendy S. Taylor
The Sienna Group
United Way contributors – #224- Birthright of
Pittsburgh
Lance Yoezle

Birthright was overwhelmed by the abundant donations of baby clothing, supplies, diapers and items provided by the students of Aquinas Academy. You filled our office, storage room and hearts! Thank you all for the countless gifts that will be given to new mothers for their little ones. We are most appreciative! The handmade card is so sweet!

Thank you to Mary Harrill and the North American Martyrs Parish Stitching Angels for the beautiful hand crocheted and knitted preemie and infant sweaters, hats, booties, blankets, stuffed toy, diaper bag and preemie outfits. We are grateful for the many lovely



Loving hearts and hands give to Birthright Babies

gifts of clothing and kindness that are stitched with love for babies and moms.



Abby Dowling (L), AmeriCorps volunteer and Shannon Crissis (R), coordinator, Healthcare for the Homeless, Kidstart Program, provide a presentation to Birthright volunteers at March meeting.

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ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Birthright needs your prayers, assistance and financial support. We are interdenominational, nonprofit and nonpolitical. Dedicated volunteers help girls and women encountering unexpected pregnancies.

"It is the right of every pregnant woman to give birth and the right of every child to be born."

Louise Summerhill
-Founder of Birthright-

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Call **412 621-1988** to be placed on the mailing list.
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