

# BIRTHRIGHT OF PITTSBURGH

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

*—Louise Summerhill, Founder, Birthright International*

## NEW CASTLE PCUC HOSTS BIRTHRIGHT



Paula Smith, executive director of Birthright of Pittsburgh, provided a presentation to New Castle PCUC at a luncheon. Members gave gifts of beautiful infant clothing and donations for Birthright babies. L-R: Vivian Herman, Birthright volunteer, Diane Marcella, executive director, New Castle PCUC, and Paula Smith.

When Diane Marcella invited Paula Smith to speak at the New Castle People Concerned for the Unborn Child (PCUC) volunteer luncheon, she didn't say members were bringing an abundance of wrapped infant gifts, supplies and donations to give Birthright for new mothers and their babies. They just surprised Birthright with their generosity. Although that really isn't surprising, because the organization has a strong, historical tradition of promoting respect for life in a variety of ways.

According to their website, "In 1969 when PCUC (our parent organization in Pittsburgh) was formed, the women stated their mission as follows: "Our mission is to speak for and act in defense of all innocent human life threatened by abortion, infanticide and euthanasia." Through Diane's dedication and leadership as executive director, New Castle PCUC stands in the forefront of pro-life education, activism and protection of the intrinsic rights of young and old.

## Julia Lynn Commemorates 9 Years At Birthright



Julia Lynn has always reached out to lend support as a nurse, volunteer, family member and friend. With a nursing career that spanned 46 years, she has a lifetime of service to others.

If one life breathed easier because you lived, that is success, says Emerson. Julia Lynn, BSN, is leaving Birthright due to family illness and commitments after nine years of dedicated volunteer service. She made a big difference in many lives. “When I began volunteering at Birthright I was looking for a different way to support my pro-life beliefs and Birthright is a really good way to do it.” She never talked to anyone about Birthright who didn’t like it.

“I liked it when I felt I made a connection with a client. I really felt I made a difference,” she said. “I found satisfaction in feeling I was a support system for clients that didn’t have one. I remember a woman four months pregnant and living alone with no support. She delivered a preemie of 2 ½ to 3 pounds and I really felt that we were that woman’s support when she had no one. And that happened on several occasions to me.”

She also supported clients as a parish nurse for eight years with St. John Vianney Parish in the Hilltop area of Pittsburgh. Her work focused on marginalized people in the entire community who were poor, elderly or had health problems that were not being addressed and included referrals from pastors of Methodist, African-Methodist and Lutheran churches.

These parish nurse experiences led her to network with a parish nurse co-worker to provide a referral for another Birthright client who was pregnant and lacked support.

Three years after retiring in 2004, she began volunteering with Catholic Charities Free Health Care Center using her nursing skills. “I’m working with people who can’t afford health care because I have a strong belief that everyone should have health care,” she said.

For the past five years, she has been an associate with the Sisters of Divine Providence in the North Hills serving as local coordinator of the program for two and half years.

She is a graduate of Mercy School of Nursing with a bachelor’s degree in nursing from Penn State University and a master’s degree in nursing from La Roche College in Pittsburgh, Pa.

## Mary Robson Celebrates 10 Year Anniversary at Birthright



Mary Robson performs weekly volunteer duties in the Birthright office. Following a 37-year nursing career, she continues to serve others after retirement by helping women to have their babies.

Ten years into volunteer service at Birthright, Mary Robson, BSN, sits in the office surrounded by reminders of mothers and babies. She began volunteering at the pregnancy support center in March 2003, a year after retiring from UPMC Presbyterian Hospital.

“I went into nursing because I love people and I wanted to help them live the healthiest life they could and take care of themselves. After retirement, I became a Birthright volunteer and a Eucharistic Minister at my parish of St. Paul Cathedral in Oakland. These responsibilities keep me going because what higher goals are there in life than to go outside of oneself for others and to serve the Lord?” she asked with a smile.

Callers and clients like Robson’s cheerful disposition when she answers the phone along with her willingness to listen and offer suggestions for resources to assist them. In her years at Birthright, she has helped hundreds of mothers bring their babies to term, performed pregnancy tests, provided emotional and practical support, friendship, community referrals and baby clothes. She loves to see the clients’ babies and never considers her work completed if her services are still needed after the delivery.

“Sometimes people say that pregnancy care centers only care about saving the baby but not the mother. It makes me furious because to be pro-life is to care about all stages of life, including the mother’s. I continue to provide emotional support to pregnant women since I started in 2003 and I think these calls let them know that someone cares,” she said.

Besides helping clients, Robson likes volunteering with Birthright because of the special bond of support she feels with fellow volunteers who see the value of human life. “What kept me going at Birthright are the wonderful volunteers I serve with. We have had volunteers from Albania, Poland, Korea and China.” She added, “And I like that we’re a quiet organization that helps anyone without expecting anything in return.”

Robson has a bachelor’s degree in nursing from St. Louis University in St. Louis, Mo.

## **WE KNOW WHAT A “GIFT” YOU ARE!**



Birthright knows *volunteers* are gifts. The commitment and time you freely give to serve others without any expectations in return are valued and never taken lightly. You are not only a gift to Birthright, but to our mothers-to-be, their unborn babies and the community.

Like special gifts, the thoughtfulness and kindness inside your heart is waiting to be discovered underneath the ribbons, bows and wrapping paper of our lives that hides them—but we know they’re there. The frightened teen who thinks she might be pregnant, the stressed-out mother of three children who just found out she’s pregnant again or the young woman whose boyfriend wants her to have an abortion, will see your gifts when you begin to talk with them.

They will gently reach inside your heart to unwrap, open and find your compassion, understanding and support to have their baby. And that’s just what you want them to do. You are hoping to give your gifts away. Because when you give gifts of yourself, you are giving *love*—and that’s the *very* best gift of all.

*Don't keep your lovely gifts in wrapping paper, call: 412-621-1988 to register:*

### **NEW VOLUNTEER TRAINING SESSIONS**

**DATE:** Saturday, April 13, 2013

**TIME:** 1-4 p.m.

**PLACE:** Birthright office

“Everybody can be great. Because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve.... You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.” Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Minister, Civil Right Activist

## MAINSTAY OF BIRTHRIGHT



The nautical definition of “mainstay” is, “*A strong rope that serves to steady and support the mainmast of a sailing vessel*” (Free Dictionary, online). What a perfect comparison of donors to Birthright! Without strong, consistent support, Birthright would not sail through uncharted waters. We gratefully acknowledge the following gifts received from January-February 2013:

Anonymous Donors

Holy Spirit Parish, Millvale, Christian Mothers-Baby clothes, diapers and baby items

Gary Lee Killian-Donation

Mary Anne Mansell-Baby quilts and clothing

Katie and Heath Miller-Baby clothes, supplies and items

Sacred Heart Parish, Shadyside-Epiphany Party-Infant gifts

Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Parish-Donation

Saint Frances Cabrini Parish, Aliquippa-Donation

David Simon, M.D.-On behalf of Susan M. Simon-Donation

Paul Stamatakis-Annual pledge

## In Loving Remembrance

A donation was given to Birthright from  
Clement Larkin in memory of *Eleanora Larkin*



## RED ROSE DAY PARISHES



**Thank you** for holding a Red Rose Day collection  
at your parish from January to February 2013:

St. Damien of Molokai Parish, Monongahela  
St. Joseph Parish, O'Hara Township  
St. Malachy Parish  
St. Margaret of Scotland Parish  
St. Raphael Parish  
St. Regis Parish, Oakland  
St. Richard Parish

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Birthright of Pittsburgh is a non-profit,  
501(c) 3, charitable organization since 1971.

We are non-political, interdenominational,  
with no regard to race, income or age.

We provide compassionate and practical  
alternatives to abortion. Free services.

This newsletter is a free, quarterly  
publication. Call to be placed on list.

Editor: Paula A. Smith