irthright of Pittsburgh, Inc.

"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 (1968)**

46 Years in Pittsburgh!

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Great-grandmother gave life-giving words

By Paula A. Smith

A young mother, Karyn (not her real name), who sat across from me in the Birthright office about 15 years ago, has a teenage daughter now. Although time has passed, I will always remember the influence her daughter's great-grandmother had in her life before she was born.

Karyn stopped in the office late one afternoon and asked for a pregnancy test. Her boyfriend was waiting in the car across the street with their six-months-old baby.

When the test indicated positive, she simply said she could not have this baby.

"Why?" I asked.

"I already have a baby," she said. "And a five-year-old."

I invited her to sit down so we could talk and she agreed. She was calm but certain she was not going to continue her pregnancy. She explained her boyfriend was the father of their baby he was watching in the car and the unborn baby she might be carrying. He was not the father of her older child. She did not want him to accompany her for the pregnancy test because she did not want him to know the result. Although he loved her, she did not want to marry and spend the rest of her life with him. She was not planning to tell him the test was positive.

As we spoke, she repeatedly resisted the idea of carrying her baby to term if a doctor's examination confirmed her pregnancy. Then she paused. She told me there was something I said that reminded her of her

grandmother's words. She said she knew her grandmother would say to her, "If you can raise two children you can raise three." With tears in our eyes, she made a decision to keep her baby and would not seek an abortion. For nine months she hid her pregnancy under large sweaters and pants because she was reluctant to tell her father, who helped her with child care, that she was pregnant.

On the day she was admitted to the hospital to deliver her baby she revealed her pregnancy to her father. When she gave birth to a new granddaughter he was not upset.

In years that followed, Karyn called me from time to time mostly to thank me for encouraging her to keep her daughter. If I wasn't in the office, she would share her story with a Birthright volunteer and ask them to tell me she called. The last time I spoke with her she said, "Every time I look at my daughter I am so happy I had her. Thank you so much."

It's been a long time since I've heard from her, but every so often I pause and think about a young mother who chose to keep her baby because of her grandmother's words.

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In Loving Memory of

Frances & Robert McFadden in memory of George "AL CHIZ"
Jerilyn & John Glass, in memory of her mother, Helen Ribovich
Mary Matsakis in memory of Helen Ribovich
Rebecca and Demetrios J. Matsakis in memory of Helen Ribovich
Potomac Air Lodge 1976 in memory of Helen Ribovich
Julia & Raymond Severns in memory of Helen Ribovich

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Thank you for...

Appeal letter donations
Baby clothing, diapers, baby items, handmade baby booties & quilts
Charitable gifts
Financial support
Organization donations
Parish donations
Red Rose Day Collections
& lovely handwritten notes to Birthright

Birthright Volunteers Commemorate 10 Years

Maria Harper with husband, Bob

Paul Hoffmann

Maria Lourdes Joves-Harper was born and raised in Manila, Philippines. She is one of seven children of a military father and a mother who was a teacher. In 1981, she came to the United States to pursue a doctorate at the University of Pittsburgh. She assumed various research and teaching positions in the University of the Philippines prior to 1981, and worked in similar positions at the University of Pittsburgh mostly as a technical writer until she retired in 2015.

Maria and her husband, Bob, go camping and tandem-biking. She strongly believes in giving back to the community and sharing her time, talent and treasure.

"Jesus said, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, (John14:6),'" Maria said. "Birthright service is a loving way to affirm the truth that we are all endowed with a right to life and privileged to share our gifts with those who need our help."

She has volunteered in different capacities with Birthright of Pittsburgh. As a couple, they started volunteering on Red Rose Days at St. Paul Cathedral with Rita Cunningham, founder of Birthright of Pittsburgh. Volunteering makes their lives more fulfilling.

Paul Hoffmann is surprised it's already been 10 years since he became a member of Birthright of Pittsburgh. Originally from Waukesha, Wisconsin, he obtained a computer engineering degree at Marquette University. He earned a master's degree in the University Of Pittsburgh's Intelligent Systems Program. When he started working at Compunetix as a software engineer he decided to offer his services as a Birthright volunteer.

"I've been able to work with other volunteers to set up our organization's website, compiled a binder of community resource and referral information that help Birthright volunteers to better serve clients, as well as having fun creating a LEGO playground for an art show fundraiser we held one year! It's been a privilege to help in some small way to support Birthright," he said.

Paul's LEGO project.

Did you know?

Restrictions on Abortion

In Pennsylvania, the following restrictions on abortion were in effect as of April 1, 2017:

- A woman must receive state-directed counseling that includes information designed to discourage her from having an abortion, and then wait 24 hours before the procedure is provided.
- Health plans offered in the state's health exchange under the Affordable Care Act can only cover abortion if the woman's life is endangered, or in cases of rape or incest, unless individuals purchase an optional rider at an additional cost.
- Abortion is covered in insurance policies for public employees only in cases of life endangerment, rape or incest.
- The parent of a minor must consent before an abortion is provided.
- Public funding is available for abortion only in cases of life endangerment, rape or incest.
- An abortion may be performed at 24 or more weeks after the woman's last menstrual period only if the woman's life or health is endangered.

Guttmacher Institute