

First Choice for women

WHEN PREGNANCY WAS'NT THE PLAN...

God Continues to Open Doors at First Choice for Women!

by Lisa Miller

“At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ”~ Colossians 4:3

A few weeks after our banquet, we were approached by the new director of Hope Pregnancy & Health Center (Hope) in Anderson for help. They were struggling with their current business model, as they were only able to see clients by appointment, and wanted to know how our ministry operated. Of course we very happy to help in any way possible.

I shared Hope's request with our Board and they gave me their blessing to investigate what was happening in Anderson and explore what the Lord might have us do to assist them. As I had additional conversations with Chara, the new Executive Director of Hope, it soon became apparent that we had the same vision for our respective communities and the same heart and passion for this type of ministry. I found myself saying, *“Chara, this is a crazy question, but would you be interested in exploring a partnership with another pregnancy center, like First Choice?”* I will never forget the excitement in her voice when she said, *“that is a great idea!”* I told her to check out our website and speak to her Board and I would present the concept to my Board as well. We agreed to pray and see how God would lead.

Those first couple of conversations led to other meetings, and in January the Board of Hope and the Board of First Choice, agreed to an *“adoption”*. Hope Pregnancy Center would become First Choice for Women of Anderson, with First Choice becoming the *“adoptive parents”*, providing infrastructure for the

center. That would include paid staff, services, training, advertising, and oversight so that the Anderson center could strengthen its presence and expand its services in the community. Chara would become our Development Director and provide input, networking assistance and financial growth for the ministry in Anderson.

As you can imagine, there is a lot to be done, and a number of things that will need to fall in place in order to open our doors in Anderson – much of which is greatly dependent upon the support of our collective communities.

Will you cover us in prayer?

Opening in Anderson is going to bring a greater level of scrutiny because we will be a greater priority for the enemy. After all, we are moving into new territory! We know that we need to put on our spiritual armor and that we need people to pray, pray, pray!

Would you consider supporting us financially?

We need your help in raising the additional \$115,000 required annually to operate a second location.

Would you consider volunteering?

We need dozens of new volunteers in all areas: meeting with clients, answering phones, data entry, washing baby clothes etc.

If you have been to my office, you may have noticed a large quote on my wall, *“With God all things are possible”*. It is a reminder that He can make a way where there seems no way. I am very hopeful for this opportunity and am grateful to all who have helped us through the many doors opened for First Choice over the past 30 years.

OFFERING HOPE FOR OVER 30 YEARS

Annual Volunteer Christmas Party

We are so thankful for our staff and volunteers and wanted to share a few pictures from our Feliz Navida themed party. We had great food, fun, and fellowship!



You Make a Difference ♥ Get Involved Today!

- I would like to learn about becoming a First Choice for Women volunteer or board member.
- I would like to be a Life Ambassador for First Choice with my church/group/organization.
- I would like to learn more about becoming a volunteer Abstinence Education Instructor.
- I am considering a gift or becoming a monthly donor, please contact me.
- Please add me to your email list in order to save postage expense.
- I will be a prayer partner and commit to pray for this ministry.
- I would like to be a team captain at the next Walk for Life.
- I would like to be a table host at the next banquet.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____



Dear Leslie and the First Choice staff + volunteers,

Thank you so much for all the love and prayers, listening, support, classes and so much more that you gave me during what is probably one of the most difficult times of my life. Your contributions of time and support will never be forgotten. I love you, and [my son] will be grateful for you too. You are part of my story and I will tell him someday how much you all helped us. When we needed it most, I have great things to say about how much you helped me to choose life for my son and myself. A million times, thank you and I love you all so much. Please keep in touch and I will do the same as I move forward.

Love,

[First Choice Client]

Thank you for supporting this ministry, you make a real difference in the lives of the women, children and families who come to First Choice!

*This note, along with flowers, were sent to First Choice by the client featured in this issue of The Client Connection.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Kathleen Barrett



Kathleen has been part of the First Choice family since 2013 serving as both a receptionist and data entry volunteer. She and her husband of 20 years, Jon, attend Living Hope Christian Church where she acts as a First Choice Life Ambassador.

"Volunteering at First Choice is truly a labor of love and a blessing," Kathleen notes. She is also involved in Operation Christmas Child as a Prayer Mobilization Volunteer traveling to Charlotte North Carolina annually to help process shoeboxes which have been donated by people from throughout the United States. During her free time, Kathleen enjoys reading, traveling and spending time with her 15 grandchildren!

"I'm thankful to be able to serve the Lord at First Choice with the skills He's given me," Kathleen adds. "I want to be a blessing." Thank you Kathleen. You *are* a blessing to our ministry and the clients we serve.

FAST FACTS

55%

55% of domestic infant adoptions are "fully disclosed". (Meaning that the birth and adoptive families know each other and typically have ongoing contact)*

95%

95% of U.S. infant adoptions have some openness between the birth parents and the adoptive parents*

The Client Connection

by Leslie Hatcher, Center Director

Crisis: a dramatic, emotional, or circumstantial upheaval in a person's life. ~ Dictionary.com

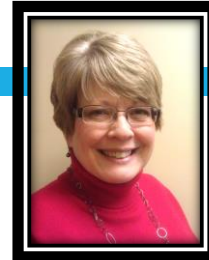
When facing a crisis pregnancy, there are both emotional and circumstantial upheavals in a young woman's life – and there are no easy solutions. The very nature of a crisis pregnancy often involves loss, loss of hopes, dreams, and plans for the future. Although each person's situation is unique, the common denominator of an unplanned pregnancy is grief, regardless of the ultimate pregnancy decision.

For some clients the loss seems too significant, and they choose to terminate the pregnancy. To obtain this immediate resolution to their "problem", these young women risk delayed grief, depression, regret, and higher potentials for substance abuse. That is why we offer an abortion recovery program, *Surrendering the Secret*. It is designed to help women come to terms with the lifelong regret that often accompanies an abortion choice.

Even those clients who choose to parent face a host of challenges; physical, emotional, and financial, to name a few. The First Choice ParentCare program assists families in preparing for the birth of the baby and to help them process the life changes that accompany this choice.

Although adoption is recognized as a loving option, this choice is not an easy one, and often is a long journey for the young women. I met Sara* in May 2016 when she came to First Choice for a pregnancy test. Sara was initially excited about the pregnancy. Unfortunately her boyfriend was not. Off and on for 5 years, the father of the baby stated that he was moving out of state and that Sara should place the baby for adoption. He felt trapped. She was devastated. Though thankful that this couple didn't choose abortion and the baby's life would be saved, our hearts ached for this precious woman forced into the toughest decision of her life.

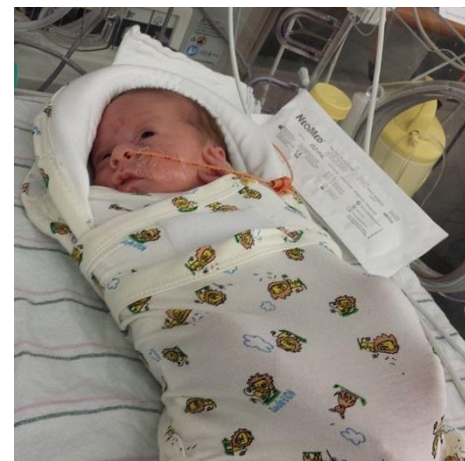
What followed were months of care for the client as she struggled with the decision between adoption and single parenting. We connected her with support agencies,



professional counselors, doctors, and maternity homes, all in hopes of her coming to the right decision for her and her baby. As the months passed, we provided parent education, prayer and a listening ear as she processed her options. Ultimately Sara chose a loving couple to adopt her child. I rejoiced with Sara as she showed me pictures of her baby boy and we discussed her bright future.

Thanks to your continued support, First Choice for Women can assist young women like Sara facing the crisis of an unplanned pregnancy. Through our services and dedicated staff and volunteers we help all women, no matter their pregnancy choice, to see that they are not alone. We will walk this road with them, offering them the hope found in Jesus all along the way. Please pray that God will bring these women to us, and that they will be open to the message we are here to share.

Hope: the feeling that what is wanted can be had. Or that events will turn out for the best. ~ Dictionary.com

WANT TO BE A BLESSING?
BE A VOLUNTEER

Are you, your small group, or anyone you know interested in learning more about our programs or how to become a volunteer? Please contact:

LESLIE HATCHER, CENTER DIRECTOR
leslie@firstchoiceforwomen.org
 (765)286-6085

* <http://www.kinshipcenter.org/resources/blog/open-adoptions-are-a-national-trend-study-finds-that-95-of-us-infant-adoptions-have-openness.html>



SRA Update

by Sharyll Martin,
SRA Director

Year in Review

As we look back to 2016, Sexual Risk Avoidance has had a phenomenal year! We added new schools, additional grade levels in participating school corporations, and ended the year with record breaking student participation!

Currently, SRA is being taught in every public school in Delaware County, as well as private schools and youth organizations. At the end of the 2016 Spring semester, 1,314 students received the *Creating Positive Relationships* curriculum in their health classes. We finished the 2016 fall semester with a whopping 1,685 students! (That's an increase of 22% from the previous semester!) Added together, the middle and high school students participating in the SRA program at year-end was a record breaking 2,999 students!

In the Classroom

One of the more challenging, as well as rewarding, aspects of being in the classroom is the opportunity to answer questions. When



Muncie Southside Middle School Students Creating Positive Relationships Session

a young teen knows they can ask *anything*, they do! "Can a girl die having a baby?" "What if a person is asexual?" "Why do people want to look at porn?" "Should I tell an adult if I know someone who is sexting?" At times, even the instructors are unsure as to how to answer some of the questions, but with the help of the teacher (and occasionally a little research) every question is given an answer. Putting forth this extra effort builds trust and rapport with the students – and when they tell how happy they are that you came to their class, and that they want you to come back the next week – you know you made learning the importance of abstinence fun, and can't help but feel blessed!

If you would like to learn how to become a sexual risk avoidance instructor and discover this blessing for yourself, please contact me for further information.

WANT TO HELP OUR YOUTH?

Volunteer to be a Sexual Risk Avoidance Instructor and teach our young people about abstinence through our *Creating Positive Relationships* curriculum. Contact us today!

SHARYLL MARTIN, SRA DIRECTOR
abdirector@firstchoiceforwomen.org
 (765)286-6085

Shop on Amazon? Support First Choice by Shopping

Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchase to First Choice whenever you shop on AmazonSmile!

- **AmazonSmile** is the same Amazon you know. Same products, same prices, same service.
- **How do I shop at AmazonSmile?**
To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may also want to add a bookmark to smile.amazon.com to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile.
- **Which products on AmazonSmile are eligible for charitable donations?**
Tens of millions of products on AmazonSmile are eligible for donations. You will see eligible products marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail pages.
- **Can I use my existing Amazon.com account on AmazonSmile?**
YES, you use the same account on Amazon.com and AmazonSmile. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings are also the same.
- **How do I select to support First Choice for Women when shopping on AmazonSmile?**
On your first visit to AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com), **before you begin shopping**, you need to select **First Choice for Women, Inc.** as your charitable organization in order to allocate donations from eligible purchases. AmazonSmile will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation.

For more information please visit http://smile.amazon.com/about/ref=smi_ge_rcl_lm_raas



Operations Overview

by Lisa Miller, CEO

Dear Friends of First Choice,

I can't tell you what a blessing it is to be serving God in this position! Over the past 3 years I have had the privilege of watching the Lord grow this effort by leaps and bounds! I recall jumping for joy when we received our used color printer/copier/scanning machine, and tearing up when the brand new computers arrived, all within my first few months at the center in 2014. In 2015 we launched our ultrasound services and transformed the outside of the building to match the beauty of the inside - AND NOW we are seeking to open another facility in Anderson! How awesome is our God!

God continues to do great work here through the staff and friends of our ministry. Nothing gives me more joy than to see the look of love on a young woman's face when her baby, once considered a "mistake" or a "problem" has become the light of her life. The gift of hope we share with these women is nothing short of a miracle.

In 2016 the Lord continued to work through His people to make it another amazing year. We saw **23 babies saved, with a total of 30 since we began performing ultrasounds** in October of 2015. We had 322 spiritual discussion (including the sharing of the Gospel)!

Other 2016 statistics include:

- Client Visits: 2,161
- Ultrasounds: 219
- New Clients: 320
- Parenting Classes: 1,218
- Pregnancy Test: 263
- Baby Food/Formula: 875
- Cribs: 37
- Diapers: 12,348

On the financial front, our 2016 objective was to increase income by 3.8%, we saw an increase of 8%. (Praise God!) While our income was still less than our annual budget projections of \$265,215, we were able to finish the year with a positive cash flow of nearly \$18,000 by reducing expenses. Ultimately ending the year with \$225,304 in cash contributions and \$28,177 in material and in-kind services donations.

We are truly grateful for all those who have, and continue to, support this life-saving - life changing work through financial giving, as well as giving of their time and talents to make a difference in the life's of the women and families who come to us in need each year. Thank you with all our heart!

A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU!



Thank you to the Matheny's!

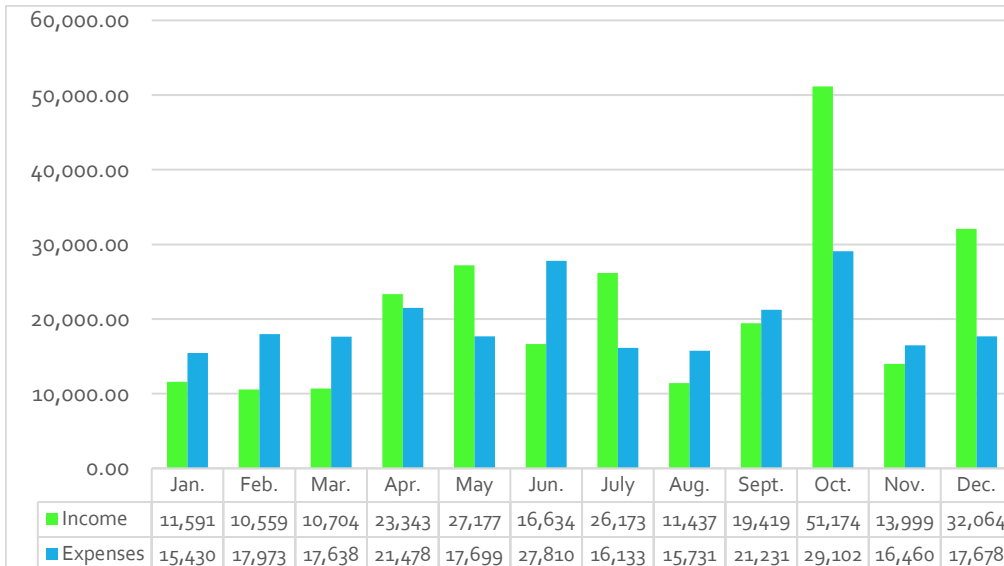
Bryan Matheny and his daughter Brooklyn donated two brand new crib and mattress sets over the holidays as a special Christmas present to our clients. Thank you Bryan and Brooklyn!



Thank you Alpha Kappa Alpha!

First Choice is very grateful to the members and alumnae of Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority who volunteered to sort baby items as part of the BSU Homecoming activities.

2016 Income: \$254,279 & Expense: \$234,369



*includes miscellaneous refunds, rebates and tax return income as well as expensed values of distributed material items

WANT TO BE INVOLVED?

There are many ways to become involved in the ministry - everything from washing and sorting baby clothes, to helping with grounds and building maintenance, to stuffing envelopes and data entry. Contact us today to learn how you can make a difference!
info@firstchoiceforwomen.org
 (765)286-6085

We ♥ and Appreciate our Community!

A huge THANK YOU to Cliff and Stephanie Johnson, as well those who participated in this amazing diaper drive! First Choice for Women received a total of 12,237 diapers!!





Presidential Perspective

by Todd Lail, Chairman of the Board

Dear friends of First Choice for Women,

In this last election, there was a lot of discussion tied to individuals being pro-life or pro-choice. Many of the pro-choice arguments attempted to communicate that being pro-choice is being pro-women, while being pro-life is being anti-women. After being part of the First Choice for Women ministry for more than two years now, I have heard many stories of women who are very thankful that they received the needed support and encouragement to keep their child. Additionally, women who for years have been trying to cope with the fact that they aborted their baby, have expressed their gratitude to First Choice for helping them come to peace with their decision through our post abortive recovery program. Therefore, I

struggle to see how a pro-choice position is truly pro-women.

First Choice for Women describes itself as a "compassionate arm of the pro-life movement". It is the compassionate part that I have been most impacted by, and the part that is so often misrepresented in order to score political points. We exist to help men and women and define helping as guiding them into the good and perfect will of God. No matter what their current situation or circumstances may be, First Choice provides the help they need without judgment or condemnation. Our staff and volunteers show love and grace to clients by sharing the truth, by providing for many of their material and emotional needs, and by praying that God will open their hearts and minds. Everything we do is aimed at sharing the practical love of

Jesus with as many people as God will bring our way.

As mentioned in an earlier segment of this newsletter, God may be putting before us an opportunity to reach even more people by working with Hope Pregnancy Center in Anderson. Together, there are a lot of synergies that could make both centers more effective in our common mission to love well those who God brings to us. Please keep this expansion of First Choice for Women to Anderson in prayer as we work through the final details of the best way to move forward.

May God bless you and keep you!

Todd Lail, Chairman
Board of Directors



YES! I Want To Give the Gift of Hope Today!

One-Time Gift **Recurring Monthly Donation**

\$15 \$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500
 \$1,000 \$2,500 \$5,000 \$10,000 \$_____

Check Enclosed **Charge my credit card** (complete section below)

Master Card Visa

Card# _____

Expiration: _____ / _____ Three digit CVC (on back of card): _____

Billing Address: _____

Charge me \$ _____ on the _____ day of each month

Name: _____

YES! I want to become a monthly giver. Go to www.firstchoiceforwomen.org, click the GIVE SOME HELP button then click on the DONATE menu **OR** Complete this form and mail it to:

First Choice for Women
3020 N Oakwood Ave
Muncie IN 47304

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Visit: <http://www.in.gov/bmv/2794.htm>

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