

SPRING 2019

Together *for* Life



First  Choice
for women



Together for Life

First Choice
for women

2019 WALK FOR LIFE

SATURDAY, MAY 18TH

MUNCIE & DELAWARE COUNTY ANNUAL WALK FOR LIFE EVENT

AT WESTMINSTER PRESBYTARIAN CHURCH 2801 WEST RIVERSIDE AVENUE MUNCIE, IN

REGISTER FOR THE 2019 ANNUAL WALK FOR LIFE!

IT'S AS EASY AS 1-2-3!

- Come rain or shine
- Receive a free T-shirt by registering online by April 26th and collecting \$50 or more in online donation sponsorships
- Receive a chance to win great door prizes
- Walk on your own if you can't join us

STEP 1: Register online, by mail, by phone, or with your group leader TODAY.

STEP 2: Ask EVERYONE you know to donate. You will be amazed how many people will say YES!

STEP 3: Bring completed pledge form(s) and collected pledges with you the day of the walk and/or utilize our online fundraising site – it's fun, easy, and friends and family can sponsor you from anywhere in the country!

Share a link via Facebook, Twitter and more! Additional information is available at firstchoiceforwomen.org, by clicking on the [Give Some Help](#) button and selecting [Annual Walk for Life](#) from the [Our Events](#) menu.



GLAD TIDINGS CHURCH

1919-2019

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JESUS SAVES

Glad Tidings Church
munciegt.org

Worship | Learn | Connect | Serve | Reach

Glad Tidings 100th Anniversary
Celebrating 100 years of God's blessings.



Message from the Chair

by Cindy Costerison, Chairperson of the Board

Life today can be difficult to navigate. We live in a world that is in turmoil, hearing voices that tell us what is right and what is wrong, yet when we see it through a Biblical worldview, these perspectives are proven faulty. We are divided in our towns, cities, counties, states, and our country. We make laws that save baby animals, but end the lives of baby humans. And people are angry. Angry at everything they don't agree with, and angry with those who have differing beliefs. They march, they protest, and they make a lot of noise. It is confusing and disruptive to our daily lives.

Where does this divisiveness and animosity come from? John 10:10 says, "*The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy*", but the good news is, it doesn't stop there. It goes on to say, "*I have come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly.*" These were Jesus' words at a time when there was conflict over His claims to be the Messiah. Jesus explained that *spiritual blindness* was the cause of their unbelief.

The thief is, of course, Satan. He wants to destroy our cities, counties, country, and our world. He wants to kill our hopes and dreams and our joy. And he wants to steal our belief in a good and gracious Savior. It is critical that we open our *spiritual eyes*, and filter what we see and hear through the

Word of God. His Word is truth and we can trust in it. We must live out our faith at all times, demonstrating, but not preaching to the world, that there is a truth they can believe in, hope in, and trust.

When many people are surrendering to the ways of the world, we must always go to God. When our humanness makes us want to lash out in anger, or participate in divisiveness, we must resist the schemes of the devil and focus on what we know to be true.

"The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and He helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise Him."
~Psalm 28:7

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- National School Lunch Programs



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SRA Update

by Sharyll Martin, SRA Director

Abstinence Only Education

In our last newsletter, we described the difference between abstinence-only education and comprehensive sex education. The article may have initially caused some confusion about what program we use in our local schools, so I wanted to take a moment to clarify.

First Choice for Women's Sexual Risk Avoidance Program (SRA) uses an abstinence-until-marriage curriculum called *Creating Positive Relationships*, (CPR).

**creating
positive
relationships**

CPR is an Indiana based company located in Carmel. You can learn more about this program, as well as link to the CPR site from the First Choice website at:

<https://www.firstchoiceforwomen.org/services/abstinence-education/>

Abstinence Education Benefits

In keeping with our mission and vision, First Choice uses a curriculum that advises students to consider the facts about the

positive health benefits of waiting to be sexually active until marriage.

An article written by Kirk Johnson and Robert Rector for *The Heritage Foundation*, reports there is strong support, and many benefits, for teaching young people about abstinence – and it just makes sense.

Social science data shows that teens who abstain from sex:

- Are less likely to be depressed or attempt suicide
- Experience fewer occurrences of STDs
- Have fewer out-of-wedlock children
- Are less likely to live in poverty
- Are more likely to have stable and long-lasting marriages as adults

This article also reveals findings on academic performance in teens who practice sexual abstinence. Sixty percent (60%) are less likely to be expelled from school; fifty percent (50%) are less likely to drop out of high school, and are **almost twice as likely to graduate from college.**

To read the entire article go to: <https://www.heritage.org/education/report/teenage-sexual-abstinence-and-academic-achievement>

First Choice has already brought the abstinence-only message to thousands of students this school year. Recently, a Central High School sophomore wrote, "these lessons helped me further understand why abstinence is important to practice, because it is worth it throughout your life. [It] showed me the consequences of what sex could lead to and how to avoid the infections and diseases. It helps me consider relationship commitments and acknowledge self-goals."

Another Central student gave permission to publish his CPR poem: "Having clap isn't great Abstinence means that you can wait!" (See why we enjoy working with these kids!)

Student comments are one of the many reasons we do this job, and they are written proof of the impact the abstinence message is having in their young lives.

If you would like to see firsthand what is so great about teaching Sexual Risk Avoidance to young people, please contact me before the school year ends to observe a class. I'm praying you will!

WANT TO HELP GUIDE OUR YOUTH?

Volunteer to be an SRA Instructor and help educate our youth about healthy relationships and the importance of abstinence. Contact us today to learn how you can make a difference!

SHARYLL MARTIN, SRA DIRECTOR
abdirector@firstchoiceforwomen.org

(765)286-6085

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

JANET POWERS



Janet Powers has been a volunteer with First Choice for Women in Muncie since 2016. She serves in the ministry as a ParentCare Mentor and a post-abortion recovery program leader.

“As a retiree, I felt this was my time to give back,” notes Janet. “I enjoy connecting with the clients, praying with them, and just being there for the moms through their pregnancy journey.”

Janet attends CommUNITY Church and enjoys quilting, sewing, gardening and raising chickens. She and her husband of 30 years, Charlie, love spending time with their nine grandchildren.

Thank you Janet for your commitment to the clients of First Choice for Women – we appreciate you!

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 at our Muncie location?

Please Contact:

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

Client Connection

by Leslie Hatcher, Muncie Center Director

Fathers Matter

Our ministry is called First Choice for **Women**, but we all recognize the important role fathers play in the lives of their children. The article “*Fathers’ Involvement and Children’s Developmental Outcomes: A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Studies*,” notes, “An active fatherhood role not only reduced the frequency of behavioral problems in boys and psychological problems in young women, but it also had a positive effect on cognitive development, along with decreasing delinquency and economic disadvantage in low-income families.”

At First Choice, we welcome the dads, step-dads and grandfathers who come each week to our center.

Sixteen year old Nate⁽¹⁾ and his girlfriend are expecting a baby in June. Nate heard about our services from an agency staff member who encouraged him to participate. Upon learning he was going to be a father, Nate shared, “I was in disbelief at first. Everything else I was doing, partying, everything - it’s gone, over, done. I knew I had to ‘man up’ and do what I needed to do for my baby.”

Currently Nate is working toward earning a crib and mattress set and hopes to continue attending ParentCare classes after the baby is born. “I have some nieces and nephews, so I knew the basics about childcare, but the worksheets and homework have helped me learn about all that could happen, like if I sleep in the same bed as the baby, it



could die of SIDS,” (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).

Nate has been meeting with volunteer mentor Dee Moore who recognizes the value of educating young fathers. “ParentCare is an important tool to prepare young people for parenthood. I’m impressed with Nate’s desire to learn how to be a good father. I’m looking forward to continuing to meet with Nate and to eventually meet his baby!”

Would you like to make a difference in lives of dads, moms, grandparents and babies? Join us in our vision to achieve a community in which every child is wanted, cared for and nurtured!

Children in Fatherless Homes are:⁽²⁾



(1) To protect our clients’ privacy, names have been changes.
(2) <https://www.fatherhood.org/fatherhood-data-statistics>

Together for Life!

Thank you for making the 2019 First Choice for Women of Anderson & Madison County Annual Banquet a wonderful success!

Because of the generosity of our sponsors and caring people like you, nearly \$25,000 was raised to give hope to women who are faced with an unwanted pregnancy, provide material support to families in need, offer healing to those who have suffered from a past abortion, and instruct young people in the importance of abstinence before marriage.





Operations Overview

by Lisa Miller, CEO

With the passing of winter, we see the cold fade to warm, and spring burst forth with brilliantly beautiful arrays of color and new growth popping up over the landscape like a Bob Ross painting. These are the seasonal changes we expect in Indiana - in fact, we look forward to them!

The immense joy I feel when spring arrives accurately reflects the excitement I have with all the amazing changes we are experiencing at First Choice for Women!

Who's New

If you missed the press release in the Harold Bulletin or the email-blast sent out by First Choice last February, you can meet our new Center Director of Anderson and Madison County, Alyssa Ritchie, on Page 8!

We began talks with Alyssa last fall, and were very excited to have her begin leading our Anderson Madison County team earlier this year. Please reach out to Alyssa if you would like to learn more about First Choice, how we are making a difference in the community, or how you can become a part of the great work happening there!

First Choice for Women is also welcoming Kailee McKnight to the ministry. Kailee joined the team in late February as our new Office Manager and brings immense passion and exemplary skills to the organization. You can learn more

about Kailee and her extensive history with First Choice on Page 6!

We are very excited about these two ladies and believe they complement the exceptional volunteers and staff already serving in the ministry.

What's New

Some change comes unexpectedly, but that doesn't necessarily mean it's a bad thing. For instance, a few weeks ago I received a call from our landlord informing me that he was putting the building that houses our Anderson facility up for sale.

Initially I panicked, but then I remembered Philippians 4:19. *"And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."* First Choice is God's ministry, and He will help us find the perfect place - a place with easier client access, additional parking, and room to grow our ministry.

With this change comes opportunity to sow into the community. If you or someone you know would like to make a building donation or capital contribution, we would be honored to discuss the possibility.

First Choice is a 501 C 3 not-for-profit, and all gifts are tax deductible as permissible by law.

What's Next

Over the past few months the Board of Directors has developed a new Three year (2019-2021) Strategic Plan that includes the following objectives.

- Create and a Implement New Development Plan
- Create a Board Development Plan

- Develop a Volunteer Recruitment Strategy
- Create a Client Marketing Plan
- Develop a Comprehensive Succession Plan
- Implement STD/STI Testing
- Implement a Safety & Security Plan
- Locate a Permanent facility for the Anderson Center
- Identify Satellite Locations for Muncie
- Identify Satellite Locations for Anderson

Although this may be our most challenging Three Year Strategic Plan yet, we are confident that this type of forward thinking will equip the ministry for growth. Additionally, these objectives will enable First Choice to reach more women and families in need, while furthering our influence in the communities we serve.

We hope you are as excited about these opportunities as we are, and look forward to partnering with you on this bold new adventure!

WANT TO MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE FOR LIFE IN EAST CENTRAL INDIANA

First Choice for Women is compassionate ministry committed to helping women and families in our community. Are you are interested in learning more about how you can make a difference in the life of a young mother?

Please Contact:

LISA MILLER, CEO

lisa@firstchoiceforwomen.org

(765)286-8798



First Choice Welcomes New Office Manager

by Lisa Miller, CEO

First Choice for Women is excited to welcome our new Office Manager, Kailee McKnight!



Born in Tennessee, Kailee and her parents moved to Alexandria, Indiana when she was in the first grade. Graduating from Alexandria High School, this Madison County native has a heart for helping others.

Kailee is a devoted wife to her husband, Jeremy and mother of three young daughters. She loves spending time with her family and especially enjoys traveling, reading, writing poetry, making meals for the Muncie Mission, and helping her church family.

Kailee was placed for adoption at birth. God knew her future from the beginning and would use her experiences to make a difference in the lives of women and families through the First Choice ministry.

Kailee began volunteering at First Choice over 7 years ago, giving as

much of her time as life permitted. She has participated in, and co-lead our *Surrendering the Secret* post-abortion study; provided advocacy services to women facing an unplanned pregnancy; and helped with a variety of administrative support services, including a short stint as Administrative Assistant in 2014.

Kailee has also shared her personal testimony with multiple churches and women's groups on behalf of First Choice, in hopes of demonstrating how *God causes all things to work together for good* (Romans 8:28). Conveying a message of hope and grace through her own adoption story, sharing of a time when she too faced an unplanned pregnancy, and the life altering choices that ultimately lead her to accepting Christ as her Lord and Savior.

"God never had a 'plan B' for my life" Kailee stated. "When I was younger, I had dreamed of one day opening a place that could help women who were faced with circumstances similar to those I had experienced. Then I found First Choice for Women! Although only God knew what laid ahead, in a sense, I felt that my dream had come true and I was doing what I had been called to do for His glory."

Kailee has already proven to be a valuable asset to First Choice for Women and continues to use her skills and experience to help the ministry achieve its' mission throughout East Central Indiana.

Kailee holds an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Business Administration, and plans to complete her Bachelor's Degree in Human Services. We believe God has placed her at First Choice with a purpose and are very excited to have her in this role! We look forward to seeing what the future holds for Kailee in this ministry!

Troubled by a past abortion? We can help.

Abortion can be one of the most traumatic experiences in a person life and First Choice for Women is here to help.

Our *Surrendering the Secret* post-abortion recovery program is a 6 step biblical healing model for women who feel they have never completely healed or recovered from an abortion experience, or that a past abortion may be affecting their current quality of life.

Surrendering the Secret is designed to bring women together who understand the need for seeking peace with the past and desire a better understanding of God's plan for making the most painful losses of our past work for His glory!

Our mission is to provide a supportive and confidential environment that facilitates healing and restoration while bringing a sense of hope and purpose for the future.

Call our 24-Hour CareLine at (765)286-6060 for help today.

No gift to your mother could ever equal...

Honor your mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, or friend by giving a special Mother's Day honorarium or memorial gift in her name.

Your gift will help young moms who have decided to give life to their baby despite pressure to end their pregnancy. It took great courage for them to follow their convictions and choose life...

...and many more are in the process of making additional life choices that will impact them and their children forever.

Will you help us be there for these young women by honoring a special person in your life and give in this meaningful way?

Your generous gift empowers First Choice for Women to support these young ladies at this important time in their life by providing ultrasounds, education, practical assistance, and most of all, hope ...

... hope that the Lord gives us; "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope..." ~ Romans 12:12

Of all the gifts you could provide, giving this special gift today will make a difference for a lifetime, and perhaps an eternity.

We'll acknowledge your gift with a beautiful card of appreciation per your instructions on the certificate below. Simply return your certificate and gift **on or before April 30, 2018** (this will ensure that the recipient will receive the card by Mother's Day on May 12, 2019).

What better way to honor a special mother than by helping another mom during her time of great need.

...her gift to you – Life!

Yes! I'm giving a gift to honor a special mom...

Gift Designation: Muncie Center Anderson Center

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

Check Enclosed **Charge my credit card** (complete section below)
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Charge me \$ _____ on the ____ day each month

Printed Name: _____

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MD2019

YES! I want to become a monthly giver. Go to www.firstchoiceforwomen.org, click the DONATE menu button OR complete this form and mail it to:

First Choice for Women
 3020 N Oakwood Ave
 Muncie, IN 47304



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Name: _____

Notify: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ Zip: _____



To Everything There Is a Season

by Alyssa Ritchie, Anderson Center Director

In Ecclesiastes 3:1, God informs us that, *"to everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under the heaven..."* As a devoted Christian and woman of God, this scripture has proven to be true time and time again throughout my life.

As First Choice for Women moves forward in 2019, I am honored to be the new Center Director of Anderson and Madison County. My hope is to ignite those I meet with a desire to make a difference and serve God alongside of our ministry. I feel so blessed to have been called to lead our center into a new season of growth and excitement!

About Me

My name is Alyssa Ritchie, my husband, Matthew Ritchie, and I are blessed to be the parents of our three wonderful children. Our family attends Madison Park Church of God and we actively serve through our church missions.

I have spent 6 years in the Human Services field and look forward to using my skills and experience to benefit the women and families in need throughout Anderson and Madison County.

When I am not working, I enjoy spending time with my family. Our children are very active in clubs and athletics, which keeps us *on the go*, but we are always looking for activities that allow us to spend quality time together. We love the outdoors - hiking, fishing, kayaking

- spending time in and around the water are our favorite things to do.

In my personal down time I enjoy reading, writing, and snuggling with my rescue babies (I have 6 rescued animals).

Vision for the Future

During this new season for First Choice in Anderson and Madison County, we want to ensure that every member of our great community knows about First Choice for Women and the variety of free services we offer.

We are also dedicated to partnering with the other organizations that serve our community. Together we can help ensure that the women, men and families in Anderson and Madison County are receiving the assistance they need to fully care for themselves and their children.

As we approach our two year anniversary in Anderson, one of our goals is to expand center hours so that we can better meet the needs of our community. With expansion and growth, comes the need for additional volunteers to serve in the ministry. Together, our staff and volunteers are prayerfully seeking those special people called from the Anderson and Madison County churches, businesses, and educational institutions to work alongside First Choice and surround the women and families of this community with love, compassion, and prayer. The more volunteers we have available to serve, the more hours we are able to open our center to the public and allow Jesus to shine His light over the community as women and families

prepare to make life-affirming choices.

Galatians 6:2 states "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ".

While believing there is a season for everything, I also stand firm in the belief that as Christ followers we are called to love and serve just as Jesus did. There is a great need for compassion and support in the Anderson and Madison County area, and a great need for people like you.

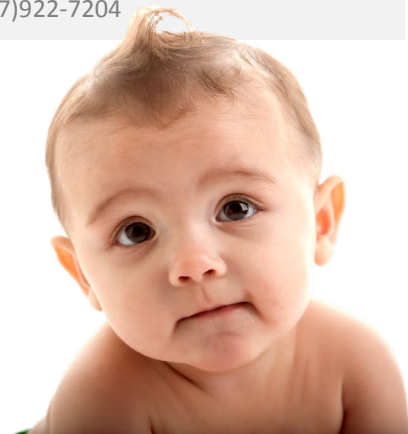
As we venture into this exciting new season, I encourage you to search your heart and prayerfully consider partnering with us. There are many opportunities to make a real difference in the life of someone in need through First Choice, right here in Anderson and Madison County. I look forward to all God has in store for this ministry and I look forward to hearing from you!

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 at our Anderson location?

Please Contact:

ALYSSA RITCHIE, CENTER DIRECTOR
fcamcdir@firstchoiceforwomen.org
 (317)922-7204



Community Connections

Thank you for making a difference in the lives of those who come to us in need each week.

Cardinal Catholic Council students volunteer in donation maintenance!



Hooked on Helping knit and crochet group blessed First Choice with beautiful handmade blankets!

TrueLight Baptist Church small group helps with a big mailing!





In each issue of *First Choice Quarterly*, we like to take the opportunity to highlight one of our supporting churches, and recognize their involvement in the community. Anderson's **Kingston Avenue Baptist Church** is in the spotlight this quarter.



Lead by Pastor Tim Overton, the church is located at 5403 Kingston Avenue Anderson, IN 46013. This small, 50 person gospel-focused congregation has shared the Word of God for over 50 years.

Kingston holds weekly Sunday school classes at 9:30am, worship services at 10:30am, and Sunday evening services at 6:30pm. They also offer midweek services on Wednesday evenings at 6:30pm.

Kingston Avenue values building relationships within their church family and provides dinner before their midweek services, at 5:30pm.

This gives the congregation an opportunity for fellowship before worship, prayer and deliverance of the Word.

Kingston Avenue Baptist Church offers many opportunities and encourages small groups, involvement within the community, and youth engagement. Young people have an opportunity to participate in monthly youth group outreach programs, as well as the ability to attend camp annually. The women of Kingston Avenue are passionate about God and enjoy a monthly Saturday journaling class where they are able to write, pray, and share their love of Jesus.

Kingston Avenue proudly hosts an annual Easter egg hunt with a carry-in luncheon, a firework show in July, and a fall festival that includes a Trunk or Treat. These fun family events are free and open to the entire community. Pastor Overton stated, "We want to be a place of refuge where people in our community are able to find Jesus, enjoy time with their families, and come to a place where they can transform their lives. We welcome anyone to walk through our doors".

Pastor Overton, a long-time supporter and former board member of First Choice is passionate about the ministry. He was pleased to claim his

recruitment of former board treasurer and current CEO, Lisa Miller. Pastor Overton states, "She has hung the moon with her sense of excellence! It is amazing to see what Lisa has been able to do in her position and I am so proud of all she has accomplished."

In his second year at Kingston Avenue, Pastor Overton shared, "Last year, our church decided to add First Choice for Women to our budget. We give each month and encourage other churches to do likewise. Our church," Concludes Pastor Overton, "enthusiastically supports First Choice for Women because this ministry truly saves lives. Mothers and fathers are challenged to treasure life. At First Choice, they are offered opportunities to learn how to physically care for themselves and infants, as well as develop parenting skills. All training is done from a Christian perspective that lovingly offers the Gospel. Testimonies of lives saved and changed demonstrate why this ministry is worthy of support."

First Choice for Women appreciates Kingston Avenue Baptist Church and THANK YOU for partnering with us!

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.



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Designation: Muncie Anderson

One-Time Gift **Recurring Monthly Donation**

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\$1,000 \$2,500 \$5,000 \$10,000 \$_____

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

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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:



**3020 N Oakwood Ave
Muncie IN 47304
Or
1817 N Madison Ave
Anderson, IN 46011**

Get a Choose Life license plate today!



Visit: <https://www.in.gov/bmv/2620.htm>

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Christian Congregation Church



Barb Kollath

Bethany Whitcomb



First Choice for women 3020 N Oakwood Ave Muncie IN 47304

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