

SPRING 2020

# FIRST CHOICE QUARTERLY

CHANGING THE WORLD ONE LIFE AT A TIME



First   
Choice  
for women



## A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

By Cindy Costerison

The Lenten Season is upon us and Easter will have passed, yet it has also become a season of yearning for hope. As we celebrate the Healing Power that we have received through the death and resurrection of Christ, we are filled with gratitude and with the hope we desire so greatly. Gratitude for the freedom we have in knowing Him, but also for the hope we have that He is the Healer and He is the one we can count on. As a church, it is critical that we reach out in every way possible to women who are facing unplanned pregnancies. Care-Net research says that over 50% of Christian women facing unplanned pregnancies would not recommend discussing their decision with someone at their local church. Over 60% say that church members are more likely to gossip about a woman considering abortion than help her understand her options.

I certainly don't believe these assumptions are true, but the fact that this is the perception is troubling! I do not know many Christians who would judge or condemn these women. Our challenge is to find ways to connect with them, to let them know that there is help and hope available. One of the ways this can be done is through our **Life Ambassador Program**. To find information about this life-giving partnership, you can visit our website under **how to help**. We as Christians must be courageous enough to let women know that we care deeply about them and their unborn child.

We cannot expect them to seek us out when they need our support. We are called to be the hands and feet of Jesus, and what better time to express our love and forgiveness than during the Holy Easter season. We can save lives and change lives by sharing what Jesus Christ has done for us. We can share our faith and tell about our relationship with Christ and the difference He makes.

Navigating these uncharted territories is demanding and we are continually seeking professionals, including physicians that are on our Board of Directors for information on how to react. We get news on a daily basis from our partnered affiliates, Care-Net and NIFLA, which we are paying close attention to. And we are praying for our clients, for this ministry and for our partners. We are praying that God will empower us to be up to the challenges we face, and that He will use this time to guide us into a deeper relationship with Him, so that we may serve Him better.

It has been a stressful few weeks at First Choice and our staff is feeling the weight of it. Women are calling the Centers, some needing a confirmation of pregnancy in order to get pre-natal care for themselves and their babies. Some are abortion-vulnerable. What to do is not an easy decision. There will always be an unknown factor to the decisions and choices we make, but the one thing that is not unknown is our God. He created us and He loves us. We can trust Him when it feels like there is nothing and no one we can trust. **Our goal is to be fearless, but not reckless.**

I pray that each of you stay healthy and safe during the COVID-19 crisis. We are so thankful for our friends and families who have come along side us to make sure these services are available. Your generosity has sustained First Choice and we don't take that for granted. Please join us in praying for a resolution to the issues we are facing, to be stronger and better as we move through this time.

*In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. 2 Corinthians 8:2-3 NIV*

## THE WAY TO FLY

**By Kailee McKnight**

*Board Appointed Manager*

The current season of life we are all experiencing is casting a magnificent picture of how our thinking directly affects how we live. One of my favorite books gives this picture vibrantly. "A friend once told me the difference between three of her friends. She said if all three should come to a spiritual mountain, the first would tunnel through it with hard and wearisome labor; the second would meander around it, hardly knowing where she was going, yet because her aim was right, she would get around it at last; the third, would just flap her wings and fly right over it." Who do you relate with most in this picture?

As we all navigate the ever-changing situation surrounding COVID-19, we are seeing this as a spiritual mountain. We are choosing to be the third friend, who flaps her wings to fly right over the mountain! Please know that our focus remains steadfast on the children and families we serve just as it has been for almost 40 years.

**Thank you for your ongoing prayers, love and support. This year began with incredible promise.**

Now more than ever, we are incredibly grateful for your support of First Choice for Women and its mission. We look forward to getting back to meeting the full service needs of our clients in both Delaware and Madison counties as soon as we can. And when we do, there will likely be even more women, children and families looking to us to meet their needs whether through a pregnancy test, an ultrasound or our ParentCare program. Your help today, and always, allows us to meet immediate needs in our communities.



We hope and pray that you stay safe and healthy during these challenging times. We ask that you continue to pray for all of us and this ministry and thank you for being part of the First Choice for Women family.

*"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love and of a sound mind." 2 Timothy 1:7*





## WHAT MATTERS MOST IN MADISON COUNTY

**By Alyssa Ritchie**

*Anderson Center Director*

During this season of pandemic and uncertainty, I find encouragement knowing how hard the Madison County community is working to take care of one another.

While the stores are struggling to remain stocked with basic essentials and families are experiencing loss of income, I see those around me stepping up.

Schools are creating lesson plans for weeks and ensuring children have two meals a day. Food pantries are working overtime to ensure families do not go without.

Churches are gathering for worship in their living rooms and pastors are making phone calls to the check on their congregations. Stores are working hard to stock and restock the shelves, day after day.

Our government, emergency first responders and healthcare workers are proudly on the frontlines trying to keep everyone healthy- and safe. Everyone is doing their part during this time of chaos, and I am honored to be a part of this community.

Despite the commotion around us, First Choice continues to be present for the clients and communities we serve. Protocols have been implemented to ensure safety and

we are proudly continuing to provide pregnancy tests, diapers, wipes, and baby food/formula to anyone in the community for FREE!!

It is because of YOU that we are able to provide these services. Your material and monetary donations allow us to provide struggling women in the community with the materials and mentorship they need.

Women like Tricia\* who comes for diapers every week for her beautiful daughter. Tricia has been coming to First Choice since finding out she was pregnant almost 2 years ago. "You guys are like my family!"

Women like Megan\* who comes weekly to classes earning her crib. She uses her baby bucks to prepare for the arrival of her son who only months ago- she had no intention of carrying to term. "I did not think I could afford a baby right now, but his room is full thanks to First Choice and I cannot wait to be his mom!"

YOU are making a difference in the lives of the women and children we serve. YOU are empowering these women as they become parents. One life at a time...we are changing the world!

On behalf of everyone who serves at First Choice for Women- I want to say THANK YOU for having the courage to take a stand for life during this season, and always.

*"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28*



**WANT TO SAVE & CHANGE LIVES IN EAST CENTRAL INDIANA?**  
CONTACT KAILEE MCKNIGHT - BOARD APPOINTED MANAGER - [ADMIN@FIRSTCHOICEFORWOMEN.ORG](mailto:ADMIN@FIRSTCHOICEFORWOMEN.ORG)

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## ABSTINENCE UPDATE

**By Sharyll Martin**

*SRA Director*

Although the spring semester was interrupted on March 16, and students will not be returning to their classrooms at all, lessons were provided to 517 participants. Teachers have been provided material so they can create e-lessons for their students. Our team visited nine of our 23 classrooms.

So often my team and I come face to face with young people who do not trust others and who cannot talk to their parents. If parents knew more about what their child needs from them, it could make a world of difference. Children need to hear words like:

- **I love you.**
- **I'm proud of you.**
- **I'm sorry.**
- **I forgive you.**
- **I'm listening.**
- **This is your responsibility.**
- **You've got what it takes.**

At the same time, parents are afraid they are losing their kids. They see them growing up, heading into adulthood, and they wonder if their child is "gonna make it." Parents do want to have conversations with their kids but they don't know where to start. I think mirroring what we say to eighth grade students in Creating Positive Relationships is helpful:

- **Talk about everyday stuff and do that every day.**
- **Try to understand the situation from your child's point of view.**
- **Be honest and direct. Make more requests and less demands.**
- **Make "I" statements. Do not go on the defensive.**
- **Try not to argue or demean your teen.**
- **Don't ridicule or criticize their viewpoints.**

We have another gifted Abstinence Instructor who lives in Madison County. Angie Kerr finished training in January and went directly to school the week after! She is doing a great job. The students had wonderful comments about her time with them and the content she shared. Thank you, Angie! Welcome to the team!



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

**By Annie Young**

*Volunteer*

For almost a year now, Annie Young has shown up to volunteer each Thursday with a smile and a contagious love for the women she works with. She is passionate about her role as a ParentCare mentor and those around her stay encouraged by her heart to help others and advocate for life.

**“I just wanted to be one of the people who was not afraid to walk across the picket line for these women.”**

As a long-term supervisor in the retail industry, Annie knows all about the importance of loving and serving a community. She is dedicated to lending a hand to those around her.



Annie and her husband of 36 years, Todd, are the proud parents of one son and one precious granddaughter. They proudly take on the role of church treasurers at Daleville United Methodist Church where they have attended for the past few years.

Thank you, Annie, for all your passion and dedication to our ministry!



## MUNCIE CLIENT SERVICES UPDATE

**By Leslie Hatcher**

*Muncie Center Director*

As staff and volunteers at First Choice for Women, we don't always get the opportunity to see, firsthand, the fruits of our labor on the "front lines of LIFE" in Delaware and Madison counties. As we pour into the lives of our clients we hold on to the promise in 1 Corinthians 25:58 "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

**But when we DO get the opportunity to see how God has used us, it is an amazing blessing.**

Cheryl\* and Kirk\* came to First Choice for a pregnancy test...with a baby in tow. They looked familiar. Upon meeting with them I realized that I had met them before, in 2018, when they were facing an unplanned pregnancy. At that time both were seriously considering abortion. They ultimately chose life but after many attempts to engage them in our ParentCare program, they did not come back to First Choice. Yet, here they were today with that little boy sitting in his car seat looking at me with his big brown eyes. I was overwhelmed. What a blessing from the Lord!

When single mother Kathy\* first met with us in 2018, parenting another baby was the farthest thing from her mind. She and her boyfriend had even made a down payment and an appointment with an abortion clinic. The Holy Spirit intervened and they left determined to "work something out". Months later I received a call from Kathy. "I thank God for you and our prayer together that God heard and answered. Things definitely haven't gone as I had planned but God is taking care of us." Kathy continued, "When she was first born I thought of the conversation we had. I remember feeling like I had no other option but abortion, and I still carry a lot of guilt for ever considering it. I knew in my heart I couldn't do it and you and God showed me that. I can't imagine my life without her!"

But that wasn't the end of the blessing. Kathy then asked if she could bring her little baby into First Choice so I could meet her!

God is working, in the seen and the unseen, in the known and the unknown. Thank you for your partnership of making life-changing, life-saving moments like these possible.

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**CONTACT KAILEE MCKNIGHT - BOARD APPOINTED MANAGER**

**ADMIN@FIRSTCHOICEFORWOMEN.ORG**



## CHURCH SPOTLIGHT

### *University Christian Church*

This quarter we feature University Christian Church (UCC) as our Church Spotlight. Serving the Muncie community since 1929, University Christian is located at 2400 N Nebo Road. Sunday worship service is at 10:30 am with Sunday school at 9:15 am.

University Christian is a non-denominational Christian Church with an average Sunday attendance of 240 people. They desire to be known in the community as the place where life change happens – the church that doesn't just go through the motions but expects, encourages, and equips members to be in a perpetual state of spiritual growth.

Pastor Steve Huddleston and his wife Pam came to University Christian Church in 2004. "I am so grateful to serve with a congregation that is so genuine and unified," said Pastor Huddleston. "They have a heart for outreach and a strong faith in God's leading."

"We also have a long term vision for our church," pastor Huddleston continues. "Our elders have an annual retreat where they pray together seeking God's direction for UCC, and then set goals for each ministry team accordingly. Everything we do is to 'fulfill our mission of 'bringing others to Christ, building them up in Christ, and sending them out for Christ.'"

Within the church walls, they offer many opportunities for those wanting to grow in their faith. Some of those programs include include X-Factor Youth Program, Charged Up Children's program, Women's Bible Studies, Men's Discipleship and Leadership groups, Senior's ministry groups and Home Fellowship groups. Wednesday evenings offer Come and Be Fed, a fellowship meal and time of Bible study for the whole family.

"Not only do we want to make a connection with people within the church, but we also go out into the community through a month of activities called 'Be the Church,'" continues Pastor Huddleston. "We mobilize the entire church family challenging them to reach out and serve others."



"This culminates in a service day where we assist various organizations like Second Harvest, the Muncie Mission, Habitat for Humanity, and Reach Yorktown Ministry. Our desire is to show people the love of Christ and hopefully lead them to Christ. Supporting First Choice is another opportunity to do that. Anytime you have the chance to partner with an organization that is not only saving lives but saving souls, that's something we need to be doing."

One of UCC's Sunday school classes, The TNT Class, also supports First Choice for Women, as one of their mission offerings. Evelyn Tomlinson has been a member of University Christian since 1975. "This group has been meeting for years," notes Evelyn. "TNT used to stand for '20's and 30's' but now we are all more like 70's and 80's!" They meet weekly to study the Bible and have monthly fellowship events. "We believe that it is important to help support First Choice because we want to help women choose LIFE for their babies. This is a way that our small group can make a difference."

University Christian is also home to First Choice volunteers, Rachel Grile and Kelly Green, who has served as a ParentCare mentor for 5 years. "I enjoy connecting with the moms and helping them learn to be better parents," shares Kelly. "I was a teenage mother myself and I had a lot of family support but often wondered about those who did not have that support. First Choice is a great way to fill in those gaps."

Thank you Pastor Huddleston and the congregation of University Christian Church for your support of First Choice for Women! For more information visit [www.universitychristianchurch.com](http://www.universitychristianchurch.com).

# THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

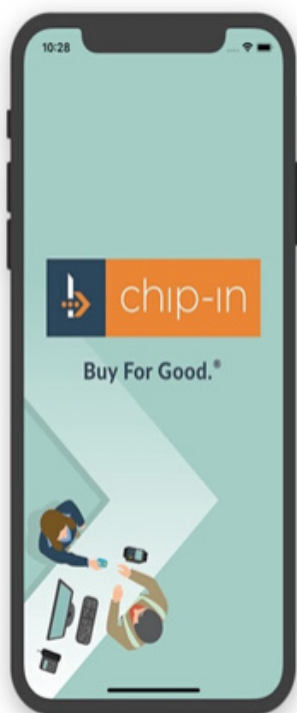
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## DID YOU KNOW?

You can support First Choice for women by using the Chip-In app. Here's how:

- Download the Beyond Chip-In App
- Select First Choice for Women as your non-profit
- Check out the businesses in your local Muncie community that provide "offers" to give back to First Choice

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## TODAY'S NEWS

### Charitable Deductions Changes

- The new CARES Act provides a new \$300 above-the-line charitable contribution deduction for individuals who take the standard deduction. They may donate up to \$300 cash to First Choice for Women, Inc. with a corresponding reduction in taxable income.
- 2020 limit suspended on individual charitable deductions (100% of AGI) for taxpayers who do itemize.
- Corporate charitable deduction limit increase from 10% to 25%.

### *First Choice for Women, Inc.*

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