

# First Choice QUARTERLY



FALL 2022

ISSUE 30

  
First Choice  
FOR WOMEN

**BOARD CHAIR MESSAGE**  
Cindy Costerison



## Seeking the Truth

CINDY COSTERISON, BOARD CHAIR

This will be my last newsletter article, as I rotate off the Board of Directors of First Choice for Women at the end of 2022. The time I have spent serving this unique organization has been many things. It has been fulfilling, fun, and hard work. I have experienced every emotion and have been filled with much joy. I enthusiastically thank the staff, who give of themselves in beautiful ways, every day. I am thoroughly grateful for the many amazing volunteers who unselfishly give their time and their love to serve as the hands and feet of Jesus. How I have seen God move in the hearts and minds of our donors is staggering and thank you is never enough.

We have grown exponentially in the past few years, and I am blessed that I don't see that stopping soon. We have many ideas and visions for the future, and I will forever pray for these to be accomplished long after I leave this position.

As I move on, I want to share a list of books that have been valuable to me as I have traveled this pro-life road. I am committed to and will continue to uphold the sanctity of life. I pray you may find one or two of these books valuable. Some have newer editions but I have used the original publishers here.

1. Abortion Rites, a Social History of Abortion in America, Marvin Olasky, Crossway Books, 1992.
2. The Hand of God, Bernard Nathanson, M.D., Regenery Publishing, 1996.
3. The Secret Life of the Unborn Child, Thomas Verny, M.D. and John Kelley, Dell Publishing, 1981.
4. Unexpected Choice, An Abortion Doctor's Journey to Pro-Life, Patty Giebrink, M.D., Focus on the Family, 2021.
5. The Marketing of Evil, David Kupelian, WND Books, Cumberland House of Publishing, Inc., 2005 (particularly the chapter 9, which discusses abortion).
6. Last but not least, I recently re-read a vital book for all Christians. Its title is Abortion // A Rational Look at an Emotional Issue, by R.C. Sproul, NavPress, 1990. Although it was written 30 years ago, its message is relevant for our time and this culture. It is logical and objective. Scripture quotations included in this article are from the English Standard Translation. Many of the ideas, while not quoted, are taken from this book. There are a few quotes, which are cited.

**For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.**

**My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. (Ps. 139:13-16)**

This passage reminds us that God is active in the womb of a mother, and He intimately knows the child that He has created.

(Interestingly, the Hebrew word translated as “unformed substance” is the Hebrew word for “embryo,” and this is the only instance of that word in the Bible.)

“Listen to me, O coastlands, and give attention, you peoples from afar. The LORD called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named my name. (Isa. 49:1)

Human beings are not accidents.

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” (Jer. 1:4–5)

He set apart or sanctified Jeremiah before birth and called him to be a prophet to nations.

Every day, we have women and men come through our doors who may know these truths, but feel hopeless and that their situation is hopeless. Some do not know these truths.

Our job is to lead them with the love of Christ, being truthful and compassionate. Our job is to offer hope and practical solutions.

Our job is not to change or enforce laws.

Our job is not to guilt, coerce, or preach to them.

Our job is to be bold enough to advocate for life in every situation. Our job is not to fear those who believe differently, but to pray for them.

**Dear and Holy Father,**

**We are in awe that we humans were Your idea. In Your incredible wisdom and creativity, You not only thought of us, You made us, and said it was good. And so, we agree that we humans are important to You. It is an honor to serve You and do Your will.**

**May we always work toward the goals that You have laid out for us. We honor You Lord, the author and creator of life. Thank you for the blessing we receive when we do Your will. I pray this ministry will forever stand for life, and that You will turn the hearts of men to Yourself, so that abortion will become unnecessary.**

**Gratefully and in Your Name, Amen.**





## Pro-Abundant

KAILEE MCKNIGHT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

John 10:10 says, **"I came that you might have life, and have life abundantly."**

When one reads through scripture, it is most likely an intentional time, set apart, to seek how what is read can be planted into their personal life and bear good fruit. This is also what we have sought out to do in the work set before us this year. We have watched Him engage through the entirety of the organization in such abundant ways through our client services, fatherhood, medical and now mobile! Have you gotten tired of me saying WOW!? We are seeing lives saved and changed each week, and we THANK YOU for being part of that story to make that difference in every life that enters through our doors.

One of the unexpected blessings this year is reuniting with two, previously abortion minded, clients who came to receive services and finding out they CHOSE LIFE and chose to bring friends for our services when they had a need! There are moments when we don't find out the ultimate decision because that is an area that we respect their privacy to make that decision. But OH! What a joy! To see the abortion minded return with their children! What a God wink, to hug us and say "keep up the good work!"

Here at First Choice, we want to see transformation, not transactions alone; to be a transformative organization that makes a Kingdom difference for His glory, honor and praise. We are not a come as you are and stay as you were organization. We seek to see you come as you are and become the beautiful transformed individual God has created, continuing to fulfill His plan thereafter, being a life disciple of Jesus Christ. We understand that not all take the offer that is laid out before them, and we respect that. But as Christ followers we know that this is an essential piece to the Kingdom work we do at First Choice.

Thank YOU for your support, your prayers, and all that you give in time, talent and treasure. We would not be able to support such work without YOU!

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## Fatherhood Initiative

SHANNON BRYAN, FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE ADMINISTRATOR

A full year has come and gone since we learned the news that First Choice for Women was selected from among ninety-seven applicants by Care Net to be a part of the Fatherhood pilot project. The staff quickly assessed both centers, making changes and adaptations that would make men welcome. Our social media accounts began to frequently message "Fathers Welcome!" and the reception desk volunteers added a new question when making appointments, "Who will you be bringing with you?" The addition of this simple question began many conversations that allowed us to welcome fathers and has led to a thirty percent increase in consistent service to men in our centers during the project year. These men are accompanying their partners to pregnancy test and ultrasound appointments, engaging in Parent Care sessions, and joining

with other men in Dr. Dad group workshops, gaining practical knowledge about caring for their young children and being supported spiritually by our volunteers.

I came on staff in early June, nine months into the project, and have spent time learning, observing, and getting to know the volunteers and the unique culture of each of our centers. In August, I went to the Care Net National Conference — attended fatherhood sessions, connected with other fatherhood program leaders, and, most importantly, sought wisdom and direction for the Fatherhood Initiative at the feet of our mighty God! The verse that emerged from the conference and encompasses my vision for growing this project comes from Jeremiah 29:7 (ESV) and has long been my heart for our community. **“But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile,”** (as an expat from the great state of Texas, the ‘exile’ part makes me smile), **“and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.”** I am praying and diligently searching for twelve men in the coming year to serve in each center so that any time a man enters our doors, he will be welcomed by a familiar face. Will you commit to praying with me to reach this goal? When we champion and support fathers, we support mothers, children, and families, and this can create life-altering, lifesaving, and life-flourishing results for our community.

## Shannon Bryan

FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE ADMINISTRATOR



Shannon Bryan comes to the role of Fatherhood Initiative Administrator with a passion to seek the peace and prosperity of the city (Jeremiah 29:7) and a background of service to her local church and this community. A native Texan, her husband’s career brought them and their two young children to Muncie fifteen years ago. While raising their now young adult children, she volunteered in a variety of teaching and committee positions at New Life Presbyterian Church and in Yorktown Community Schools. Most recently,

she served as Director of Community Engagement at the Muncie Mission. She is currently a docent at the David Owsley Museum of Art, and is on the board of Orchestra Indiana and Reach Yorktown.

**Shannon says, “I am so thrilled to be a part of the team at First Choice and look forward to helping to further expand our reach — supporting fathers and connecting them to local churches in this community.”**

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***I immensely enjoy volunteering as a receptionist two days a week. I love meeting our clients or potential clients who visit the center. I have just a few minutes, as the initial contact, to help them feel welcome and at ease. Genuine care and concern for each other and our clients is very evident at First Choice. I am serving God in a way that I never expected, but He knew my heart and opened the path to First Choice!***

**Cheryl Farrell**

# One Woman Shares Her Experience with the Abortion Reversal Pill

MELISSA SMITH



It was a typical day at First Choice for Women when Katie\* came into the office with her boyfriend. She was requesting a pregnancy test. Her test was positive, and they were likely to carry. No red flags. They were looking forward to coming back for the ultrasound appointment.

Two days later, she called the office, asking to speak with me. She asked me about abortion procedures. Since we had already built a relationship during her first appointment, she trusted me when I asked her to come into the office so I could speak to her. She came in just hours later with her father. The situation with her boyfriend, father of the baby, had changed. I spoke truth to her that day and also gave her hope. We went over all our information, even the pamphlet about the new abortion reversal pill that we had just recently received. Katie left that day knowing that she was cared about and that I had spoken truth about all her options.

A few days later, I decided to send her a text message to check on her. She advised me that she had a date for her abortion. My response was, "I know this is very hard, Katie. We are here for you if you need someone to talk to and to process your feelings. Please let me know if you would like to come in and talk again." I never heard back from her.

On the day of the procedure, I sent her another text, just letting her know that she was in my thoughts and that I was praying for her. I told her what I had before: "God has a plan. We don't know why things are happening the way they are, but God does, and we are here for you." Again, I never heard from her.

But God! I was sitting at my son's baseball game when my phone dinged. It was Katie. Her words were, "I couldn't go through with it. I took the first pill and instantly regretted it. In a moment of panic, I realized that it was really my life versus my unborn child's life, and I was choosing abortion because I felt like that was the best quick fix. But I no longer felt relief. I felt guilt and trauma, and I was so very sad and remorseful. I was deeply regretting my decision to have an abortion. Then I remembered you! You gave me information on the abortion reversal pill, and I had that folder in my car! I immediately called the hotline, and they got me to a physician right away."

Now, Katie is almost due and carrying a beautiful, healthy baby boy. First Choice was there to provide the tangible information requested and to show her unconditional love and compassion. A seed was planted at that first visit. We talk almost weekly, and she is attending a church in her hometown. She and the father of the baby are working on their relationship.

My last message from her stated, "People who want to walk this journey with you are not on every street corner, but you meant it when you told me that you weren't going anywhere, no matter what. Now, every day, I will be able to look at my son, knowing, and fully knowing, that he is a miracle and a fighter. I can do this! I am just so grateful that I never have to wonder who he would've been, and instead, I get to watch his little life unfold right before my eyes."

*\*Name changed to protect privacy*

# Karen Haller

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

This quarter's Volunteer Spotlight is on Karen Haller. Karen has served in Delaware County as a ParentCare mentor and receptionist for five years. Karen heard about First Choice many years ago at her church, Westminster Presbyterian, when volunteer Debbie Rose shared about the ministry. Although God tugged at her heart to volunteer, she was busy raising three children, so she supported First Choice in other ways, waiting for the right season to volunteer in the center. "I am passionate about displaying compassion and loving-kindness to our clients," notes Karen. "I enjoy welcoming them and getting to know them."

Karen and her husband Ken have been married for 33 years. She enjoys reading, traveling, walking, and spending time with family. One of her daughters, Mikaela, is currently training to join her mother as a volunteer at First Choice.



## They offered me a judgment free space

"I am grateful for the support I received from FCW during and after my pregnancy. FCW is a great place to go for if you are looking for support with your pregnancy and baby. They welcome people with warmth and love in their heart. FCW supported me with resources like baby products and also with pregnancy and parenting education. Most importantly, they supported me emotionally. I can't thank them enough. They offered me a judgment free space where I could share my feelings and say whatever I wanted to say. Thank you so much, First Choice for Women."

**-Nilima Hakim Mow**



# Expect the Blessing

LESLIE HATCHER



In the past few months, our country has been facing a formula shortage that has affected so many families. We have seen fear and desperation in the faces of clients who have searched everywhere for the specific formula their baby needs. How does a family care for their child when they can't get the necessary supplies? How do they find the loving care and encouragement they need? They come to First Choice. And by meeting a client's material needs, we often have the opportunity to minister to them on a deeper level.

One day, a group of six people walked into the center: a couple with a baby in a carrier, a 17-year-old girl wanting a pregnancy test, her boyfriend, and her mother. The couple with the baby said that they had been here before for a pregnancy test and an ultrasound, so when their friend needed services, they knew where to take her. We reminded them about all of our support services to families. Then the couple heard a woman at the front desk getting formula. They asked, "Do you have formula? Gerber?" When we told them we did, they looked at each other, and the girl teared up. She could not find formula anywhere and was giving the baby applesauce in a bottle! We were able to give her two cans. When she gave us her name to make a ParentCare appointment, we realized that she had been an abortion vulnerable client in 2021, but we had never been able to reach her to find out her pregnancy decision. When we mentioned that we remembered her, she started to cry, "I can't believe that I ever considered aborting my baby." We comforted her and reminded her that all that was in the past. She had made the right decision, and we were thrilled to see her again and to meet her baby!

What a great day! Praise God for His provision of her material needs and the opportunity we had to comfort her. Thank you for your continued support that makes these life-impacting experiences possible.

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## Faith Church



At Faith Church, they believe it is their job to love God wholeheartedly, love one another unconditionally, and to build a bridge between the two. Pastor Walt Weaver is their lead pastor and Pastor Carl Lamp is over care and outreach.

Faith Church has something for everyone! They welcome people from all walks of life into their community.

At Faith Church, the vision is love. They believe that when people have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, their lives are transformed forever. Forgiveness, acceptance, grace, and purpose can be found when we enter into a personal relationship with Jesus as our Savior.

Their prayer is that God will allow Faith Church to be a place where you can begin a relationship with God, belong to a community of believers that helps you grow and become everything God has called you to be.

They have their main event on Sundays at 10:45 a.m., both in person



and online. During the service, they have programs for infants through children in fifth grade.

They want their services to be for everyone, so dress however you feel comfortable. They are just thrilled that you have joined them, and they want their congregation to be focused on the service, not what everyone is wearing. So dress up, or dress down. A variety of styles is found at the service.

Faith Church is committed to a creative, compelling, and challenging presentation of God's truth. Their format is accessible to anyone, no matter where they are on their life's journey. This time is set aside for communication with God from their hearts.

They have live, upbeat music with a full band that leads them into intimate songs of worship. Everyone worships in their own unique way — some clapping and raising hands, others quietly reflecting on the words. At Faith Church, you're welcome to do what comes from the heart in praise to God.

In every service, you will hear a relevant, straightforward message, based on the Bible, which will help you develop a growing, vibrant relationship with Jesus Christ.

Faith Church offers many ministries: Faith Kids, Re:MIX Students, Connecting Young Adults, Community Groups, and Empowered to Connection.

Faith Church has adopted Valley Grove Elementary School and Cedar Ridge Apartments to serve. They also serve The Christian Center and First Choice for Women. They strongly believe that great opportunities make great moments when you say YES. Faith Church wants to be YES people to Madison County, surrounding areas that need help, and all over the world. If you hear Jesus knocking, say YES!

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## Bessie Smith, RN

NURSE MANAGER



In April, First Choice welcomed Bessie Smith, RN, to the staff as Nurse Manager. Bessie will provide client medical care and oversee medical services operations.

Bessie has been a licensed registered nurse for over thirty years. She is a graduate of Amarillo College in Amarillo, TX, and has experience in various healthcare areas including med/surg, pediatrics, OB/GYN, school nursing, home health care, and cross-cultural nursing. She and her husband served as medical missionaries

in Honduras, Central America, for several years. Since returning to the States, they have traveled back to Honduras with medical teams to provide care to people in under-served villages.

Bessie is excited to be in medical ministry once again. She is committed to assisting First Choice in fulfilling its mission "to share the grace and truth of Jesus Christ and uphold the sanctity of human life by serving those facing unplanned pregnancies, by promoting premarital sexual abstinence, and by caring for those hurt by abortion through health services, education, mentoring, material assistance, and biblical principles."



## Karissa Shaffer

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

Join us as we welcome our new Development Director! Karissa Shaffer joins First Choice for Women with seven years of new business development experience at STAR Financial Bank, where she most recently served as a Treasury Management Sales Officer (TMO). In this role, Karissa managed a treasury client portfolio of over \$135 million and was recognized as the bank's most profitable TMO for 2021. A graduate of Trustointe's Sandler Sales Mastery (2019) and the Academy for Community Leadership of Muncie and Delaware County (2019), Karissa is currently a member of Altrusa International Club of Muncie and Kingston Avenue Baptist Church of Anderson. Karissa has been involved with First Choice since 2019 in various roles including ParentCare volunteer, Development Committee member, grant-writing volunteer, and as a ParentCare client. Karissa currently calls Anderson home, but has lived in Maine, Arizona, Illinois, California, and Virginia. A graduate of Regent University, she holds a bachelor's degree in International Studies, with a minor in International and Homeland Security. As a wife and mother, Karissa's passion is spending quality time playing with and educating her girls. Karissa is a voracious reader, enjoying studies on economics, education, and biblical exegesis, in particular. Her other hobbies include photography, hiking, baking, options trading, and writing.

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## Creating Positive Relationships

BETHANY JONES



Talking to your kids about relationships and sex can be so difficult. Many parents avoid it or procrastinate because they don't feel comfortable discussing these subjects. This year, our Healthy Relationship Education program is adding a new approach to teaching healthy relationships and abstinence education.

- **87% of teens aged 12-19 say that it would be much easier for teens to delay sexual activity and avoid teen pregnancy if they were able to have more open, honest conversations about these topics with their parents (The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, With One Voice).**
- **46% of teens 12-19 say that parents most influence their decision about sex. By comparison, 20% say friends most influence their decisions (The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy).**
- **Almost one-third of teens aged 12-17 say the conversation should start even earlier – at age 12 or younger (The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy (2007). Kiss & Tell: What Teens Say about Love, Trust and Other Relationship Stuff).**

We passionately desire to empower parents to talk to their kids about hard things. We are now offering a free education program to churches and Christian schools to encourage and help parents and youth leaders communicate with their children and teens in a healthy and productive way. Our parent guide will be given to each parent who attends the session.

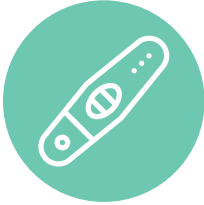
To schedule a speaker from our Healthy Relationships Education program for your church or school, please contact Bethany Jones at:

**[Bethany@firstchoiceforwomen.org](mailto:Bethany@firstchoiceforwomen.org)**

We had one of the best banquets we have seen in the history of First Choice in October with 700 guests! We greatly appreciated how Karen Pence shared our mission and vision in a powerful way. Including annualized giving and pledges, we have raised over \$110,000 so far! THANK YOU!



# How Your Donation Helps First Choice



**\$9**

Average cost of a pregnancy test

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**\$60**

Average cost of a car seat

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**\$100**

Average cost of a bassinet or pack and play

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**\$200**

Average cost of a crib and mattress

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**\$250**

Average cost of an ultrasound

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**\$1,200**

Average cost to save a life  
*(From initial engagement to on-site counseling & education)*

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**\$1,400**

Average cost to serve one client for a year  
*(From pregnancy test to ongoing parent care)*

# Yes, I want to change the world— *one life at a time!*

If you would like to become a monthly giver, go to [FirstChoiceForWomen.org](https://www.FirstChoiceForWomen.org) and click the “Donate” menu OR complete this form and mail it to [3020 N Oakwood Ave, Muncie, IN 47304](https://www.FirstChoiceForWomen.org).

One-Time Gift

Recurring Monthly Donation

\$25

\$50

\$100

\$500

\$1,000

Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Check Enclosed

Charge my Credit Card (complete section below)

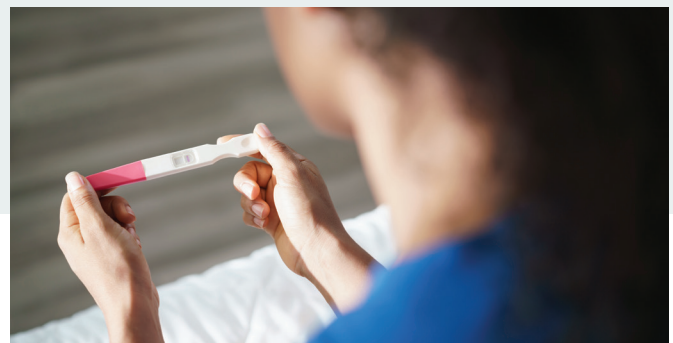
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First Choice for Women is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit ministry; donations are tax deductible as permissible by law. TIN# 35-1695860



# Interested in other ways to give?

## WISH LIST

Size 4, 5, and 6 Diapers • Baby Hygiene • Baby Bottles • Boys and Girls 18 mos - 5T Clothing

### SHOP WITH AMAZON SMILE

If you shop on amazon.com you can give to First Choice through Amazon Smile. Simply go to smile.amazon.com, log into your account and search for and select First Choice for Women as your charity of choice. For every purchase you make, 0.5% of the money spent will be given to First Choice. You get the same stuff, at the same prices, and your purchase helps First Choice protect the unborn and show compassion to women facing pregnancy decisions.



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You shop. Amazon gives.

### KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM

To designate First Choice for Women as your charity of choice in the Kroger Community Rewards Program visit the website, set up an account and enter DW443 or UU404 when it asks you to enter a "NPO#" (non profit organization). When shopping at Kroger and using your Kroger Plus Card, you can give to First Choice. This program allows Kroger Plus members to designate First Choice to receive a percentage of what they spend at Kroger.



### CHOOSE LIFE LICENSE PLATE

Ordering a Choose Life license plate is as easy as 1-2-3.

Visit <http://www.in.gov/bmv/2620.htm> to find the Choose Life plate. Select "Order or renew your plates online" and enter your information. Your new specialty plate will arrive in the mail within 14 days!

You can also get a Choose Life license plate at your local BMV. Every year your plate is registered, \$25 will go toward the pregnancy resource center in your county.



### MAKING A QCD

Over age 70 1/2, have Traditional IRAs, and interested in potentially reducing your income taxes??? Please discuss with your CPA/ tax preparer if using the Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) would be beneficial to you. Upon reaching age 70 1/2, account holders of Traditional Retirement Accounts (IRA, 403b, 401K, etc.) must take an annual Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from the account. The IRS permits the account holder to send the RMD (or more up to \$100,000) directly from the Traditional IRA only, to a 501(c)(3) as a QCD and therefore not have to include the withdrawal as taxable income. With the 2018 tax law changes that increase the Standard Deduction, many people will no longer itemize and therefore get no tax benefit from making charitable contributions. Utilizing the QCD allows people to continue to make contributions and eliminate those gifts from taxable income. Please discuss this strategy with your CPA/tax preparer if you are over age 70 1/2, have Traditional IRAs, and are interested in reducing your income taxes.

### ESTATE GIFT (IN YOUR WILL)

The most popular way of providing long-term support for a meaningful charitable organization is to make a gift in a will. With some foresight, you can make a gift in your will that fulfills specific planning goals as an integral part of an estate plan.

# Thank you to our sponsors!

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# Upcoming Events

## Baby Bottle Fundraiser

Choose the date that works best for your church or business!

## Sanctity of Human Life Month

January 23, 2023

## Walk for Life

Saturday, May 20, 2023  
Mounds State Park, Anderson, IN

## Annual Fundraising Gala

TBA

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Thank you Pridemark Construction for keeping our drive clean to keep our clients, volunteers and staff safe!



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