



THE AMERICAN FEMINIST[®]

Feminists for Life of America



INNOVATION

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- 69%** are economically disadvantaged.
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- 75%** say that having a baby would interfere with work, school, or the ability to care for dependents.

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And every child deserves a chance at life.

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THE AMERICAN FEMINIST*

*A publication of
Feminists for Life of America*

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Established in 1972, Feminists for Life of America is a nonsectarian, nonpartisan, grassroots organization that seeks real solutions to the challenges women face. Our efforts are shaped by the core feminist values of justice, nondiscrimination, and nonviolence. Feminists for Life of America continues the tradition of early American feminists such as Susan B. Anthony, who opposed abortion.

Feminists for Life of America recognizes that abortion is a reflection that our society has failed to meet the needs of women. We are dedicated to systematically eliminating the root causes that drive women to abortion—primarily lack of practical resources and support—through holistic, woman-centered solutions. Women deserve better than abortion.

Feminists for Life of America is a 501(c)3 organization. All donations are tax-deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

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Fall 2015/Winter 2016

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ISSN 1532-6861

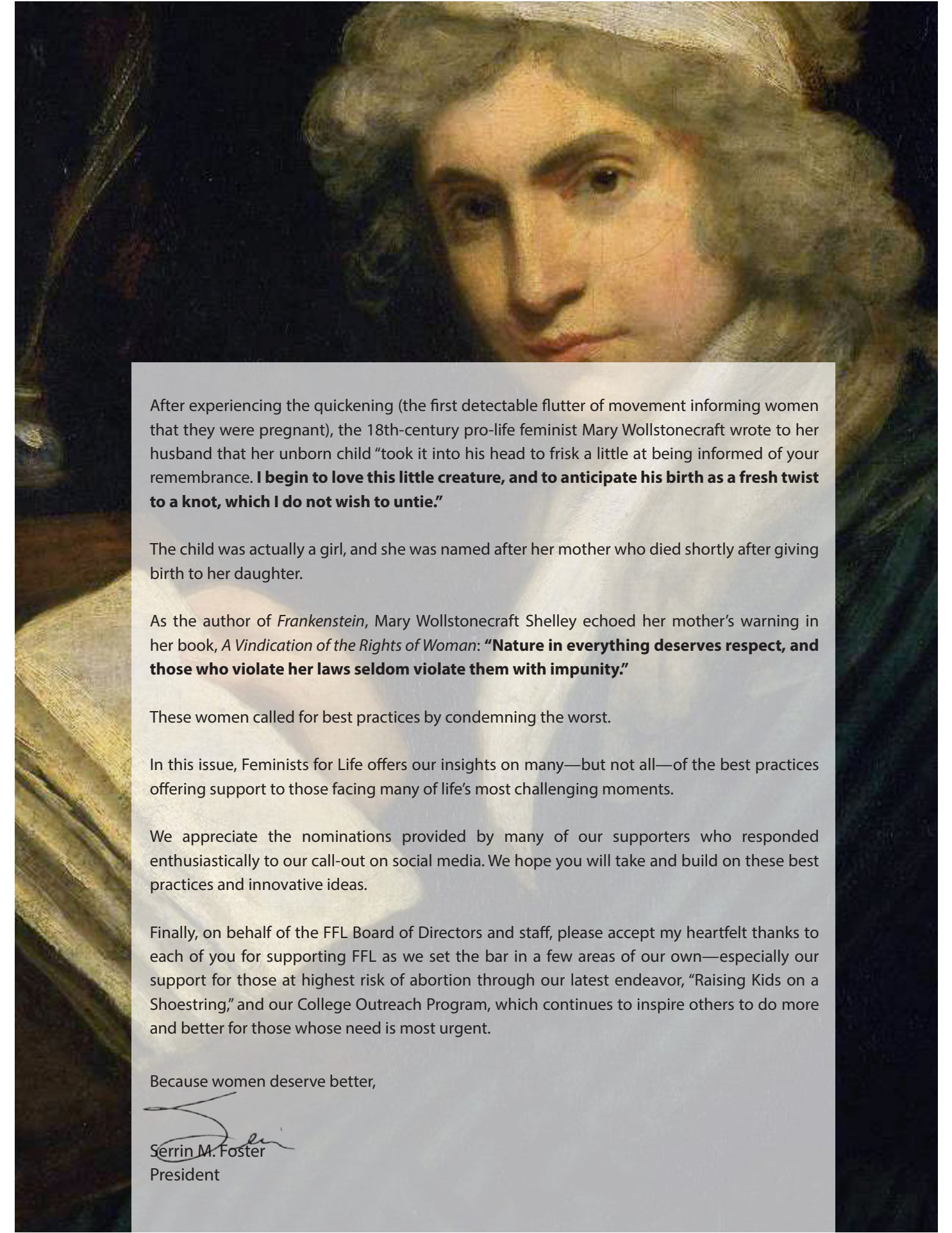
When a man steals to satisfy hunger, we may safely conclude that there is something wrong in society—so when a woman destroys the life of her unborn child, it is an evidence that either by education or circumstances that she has been greatly wronged."

—Mattie Brinkerhoff, *The Revolution*, 2 September 1869

FEMINISTS FOR LIFE OF AMERICA

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A portrait of Mary Wollstonecraft, an 18th-century English philosopher, writer, and feminist. She is depicted from the chest up, wearing a white powdered wig and a dark green dress. Her expression is thoughtful and serene.

After experiencing the quickening (the first detectable flutter of movement informing women that they were pregnant), the 18th-century pro-life feminist Mary Wollstonecraft wrote to her husband that her unborn child “took it into his head to frisk a little at being informed of your remembrance. **I begin to love this little creature, and to anticipate his birth as a fresh twist to a knot, which I do not wish to untie.**”

The child was actually a girl, and she was named after her mother who died shortly after giving birth to her daughter.

As the author of *Frankenstein*, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley echoed her mother’s warning in her book, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*: **“Nature in everything deserves respect, and those who violate her laws seldom violate them with impunity.”**

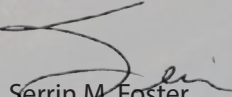
These women called for best practices by condemning the worst.

In this issue, Feminists for Life offers our insights on many—but not all—of the best practices offering support to those facing many of life’s most challenging moments.

We appreciate the nominations provided by many of our supporters who responded enthusiastically to our call-out on social media. We hope you will take and build on these best practices and innovative ideas.

Finally, on behalf of the FFL Board of Directors and staff, please accept my heartfelt thanks to each of you for supporting FFL as we set the bar in a few areas of our own—especially our support for those at highest risk of abortion through our latest endeavor, “Raising Kids on a Shoestring,” and our College Outreach Program, which continues to inspire others to do more and better for those whose need is most urgent.

Because women deserve better,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Serrin M. Foster'.

Serrin M. Foster
President

Above and Beyond: Caring for Pregnant Women

CAROLINE ZODY

Thousands of pregnancy resource centers across the U.S. and in many other countries serve women each day with unconditional support—clearly demonstrating that women deserve better than abortion. As FFL President Serrin Foster says, “We recognize these providers for doing the heavy lifting to support pregnant women. Their efforts make the difference of a lifetime.”

Birthright, Care Net, Heartbeat International, and other pregnancy-care centers guide women through the maze of public and private programs and directly provide resources and emotional support such as:

- Pregnancy tests and information
- Help informing a pregnant woman’s parents or the father of the child
- Referrals for housing (including emergency and temporary shelter)
- Assistance with prenatal medical care (including high-risk pregnancies and addictions)
- Information about childbirth
- Maternity and baby clothes
- Cribs, strollers, and various baby items
- Housing and furnishings
- Parenting classes
- Information about breastfeeding
- Counseling for pregnant women and expectant fathers
- Legal assistance including paternity establishment and child-support enforcement
- Parenting support
- Open, closed, and semi-open adoption referrals
- Postpartum counseling

Feminists for Life also recognizes these innovative service providers:

The Option Line offers online information and assistance as well as a toll-free number to call. In an age when so many young women—pregnant or post-abortive—feel more comfortable making contact online, this service feels personal and welcoming while still being “anonymous” during the first stages of reaching out for help. A center locator works like MapQuest® to find nearby locations for affiliated and unaffiliated pregnancy resource centers.

<http://optionline.org/>

Text HELPLINE 313131

800.712.4357

The Gabriel Project and The Gabriel Network

The Gabriel Project® relies on local Catholic parish communities to respond in a loving manner to the needs of the mother-to-be, regardless of her religion. A trained “Gabriel Angel” from a participating church supports the woman’s choice for life through friendship, encouragement, and prayer throughout her pregnancy. In addition to providing emotional and spiritual support, the “Gabriel Angel” helps the expectant mom with various practical needs.

www.gabrielproject.us

Gabriel Network is an ecumenical effort in the Washington, D.C., area, and part of Project Gabriel. When the executive director attended the annual FFL Pregnancy Resource Forum at Georgetown University, he said, “I’ll make this simple. Tell us what you need, and we’ll work to get it for you.”

www.gabrielnetwork.org

The Guiding Star Project aims to go above and beyond with their pregnancy centers. Inspired by Feminists for Life’s advocacy for women at highest risk of abortion (including students, young working women, victims of violence, those facing financial challenges, and those with dependents), Leah Jacobson founded Guiding Star Centers to be a one-stop shop for pregnant women, offering more than just basic pregnancy resources. Locations provide services such as child care, doula services, and breastfeeding consultations. From pregnancy tests to childbirth and beyond, Guiding Star is committed to supporting women through all steps of motherhood. Their first affiliate is in Tampa, Florida, and was established as a Guiding Star Center in 2015. Its services are impressive and extensive, even offering abortion pill reversal services for women in need. Guiding Star is hoping to expand, and is always looking to gain affiliates to support its holistic, pro-woman message.

www.theguidingstarproject.com

Prepares is a program created in 2013 by the Washington State Catholic Conference. It takes on a new, innovative mission engaging mentors to “walk the journey” with pregnant women, parents, and families who find themselves lacking a healthy support network from the moment a woman realizes she is pregnant until her child’s fifth birthday, with holistic “wrap-around” services. Services include support groups for both mothers and fathers and rapid response and referrals for emergent needs including food, formula, diapers, housing, and clothing, and adoption support and referrals for those parents wanting to place their child.

Catholic Charities’ Spokane Childbirth and Parenting Assistance (CAPA) was honored to be chosen as the model for the new Prepares program.

Once fully realized, the Prepares network plans to provide meaningful, professional, and sustainable support to vulnerable Washington mothers, fathers, and families as they nurture their children through pregnancy and early childhood.

“I’ll make this simple. Tell us what you need, and we’ll work to get it for you.”

The Gabriel Network



FFL President Serrin Foster first heard about this initiative when she spoke to nearly 1,000 people at the first Cornerstone Conference in Washington state in 2014. Instead of asking for money during the collection, they distributed pledge cards inviting people to serve in a variety of ways or to donate to this effort. “This is not only a model for other Catholic conferences, but could serve as inspiration for other faith groups as well,” Foster said. “This echoes what Sargent Shriver said when he and his wife Eunice Kennedy Shriver spoke to me in the late 1990s, suggesting that if each of us could adopt a woman in need, we could end abortion.”

www.catholiccharitiesspokane.org

WHO SUPPORTS GROUPS THAT PROVIDE SERVICES TO WOMEN?

The National Institute of Family and Life Advocates (NIFLA) provides over 1,350 life-affirming pregnancy resource centers with legal counsel, including a legal audit to ensure compliance, employee handbooks, guidelines to ensure compliance with HIPAA, and nonprofit administration.

Through The Life Choice Project (TLC), over 1,000 centers have made a successful conversion to licensed medical-clinic status. By providing medical services, including ultrasound confirmation of pregnancy, PRCs open a window to the womb for abortion-minded patients. ■

www.nifla.org

Birthright International
<http://birthright.org>
1-800-550-4900

Care Net
www.care-net.org
<http://pregnancydecisionline.org>
1-877-791-5475

Heartbeat International
www.heartbeatinternational.org
<http://optionline.org>
1-800-712-4357



Driving to Meet the Need: Mobile Pregnancy Care Units

CAROLINE ZODY

Six days a week, an RV sits in a parking lot in Houston, Texas. It is a vibrant blue, the same color as the mega-Planned Parenthood it sits across from. What almost seems to be an extension of the building is actually acting as a mobile medical unit serving pregnant women. The color of Houston Coalition for Life's Big Blue Bus is, surprisingly, just a coincidence. They purchased the bus and had it "wrapped" in a silvery blue design before Planned Parenthood announced the purchase of the building. Almost 800 women visited the bus in one year, and over 700 chose life. "While it is dwarfed by the size of the Planned Parenthood office building, the impact of the Houston Coalition for Life's mobile unit is disproportionate to its size," said FFL President Serrin Foster, who toured the bus before speaking at the coalition's annual banquet in 2014.

Mobile pregnancy centers have become a powerful new innovation in the effort to provide women with the resources they need. Units offer free pregnancy tests, ultrasounds, counseling, and more. Unlike a traditional brick-and-mortar center, these units are able to travel wherever they are needed most. Other times, like in the case of the Big Blue Bus, mobile units are able to act in place of a stationary pregnancy center because no building space is available. Like Houston Coalition for Life, more and more pregnancy-care organizations are now affiliating with mobile pregnancy-care centers.

Michele Chadwick is the executive director of ICU Mobile, (ICU stands for Image Clear Ultrasound), a successful

mobile pregnancy care center organization. While she is simultaneously pursuing her master's degree in bioethics, Chadwick's daily life is immersed in the pro-life movement. As she has developed in her beliefs and education, her passion has grown for providing holistic services to women facing crisis pregnancies. Now, as executive director, Chadwick has become an expert on what goes into running a successful mobile pregnancy care center.

Although they are certainly smaller than a stationary pregnancy center, mobile units, Chadwick says, "are one of the hardest service models in the health care arena." With so many variables, the business model can be much more difficult than a brick-and-mortar location. Chadwick says preparation is the key to combating this challenge. From proper amenities to staff training, mobile pregnancy centers require a new level of groundwork and planning.

Working in a small space is one of the more obvious challenges that mobile pregnancy centers face. With only a fraction of the space that most stationary centers have to work with, mobile units must focus on making the most of their amenities. A video tour of an ICU Mobile unit on the organization's website shows how a simple RV can be transformed into a comforting, safe space for women facing crises. Using strategic storage methods, ICU Mobile units make full use of their limited space and even offer separate rooms for free ultrasounds. Neutral colors, an inviting couch, and a

FEMINISTS FOR LIFE.org

friendly, clean environment make a small RV feel more spacious and welcoming than one might expect. Mobile units are nothing without a strong, well-trained staff to run them. According to Chadwick, excellence is not an option but a requirement for this type of service. “We care about doing what we do well,” she says. Before staff members begin working in a mobile unit, they are trained extensively on what to expect and how to properly handle situations. “We have real experiences where we are publicly addressed by those that do not want the care that we’re providing at that location,” says Chadwick. Staff members must know exactly how to deal with confrontational situations while still promoting a welcoming message of love and support for women.

While many mobile centers are known for positioning themselves near abortion clinics as a last effort before a woman makes an irreversible decision, Chadwick says this is not always the case. “It’s actually a misconception that we just go to abortion clinics,” she says. “The business model that’s right for that center is really what determines where they go and how often they go.” ICU Mobile focuses on strategically locating their units where women will benefit most from them. Each unit has a unique business model and a specific plan targeted toward reaching the locations where women will best be served.

ICU Mobile focuses on strategically locating their units where women will benefit most from them.

“Our hope is that a mobile unit is proactive and reaches a woman at the beginning of her decision-making experience—not when she’s already determined that abortion is her only option and she’s at the abortion center.”

Houston Coalition for Life’s Big Blue Bus is not only strategically placed in front of an abortion clinic but also, because Planned Parenthood (like most abortion clinics) chose a location in a poor neighborhood, is surrounded by minorities and also close to students attending the University of Houston. Its Baby Blue Bus travels to other abortion clinics in the area that are also located in areas where women are at high risk of abortion.

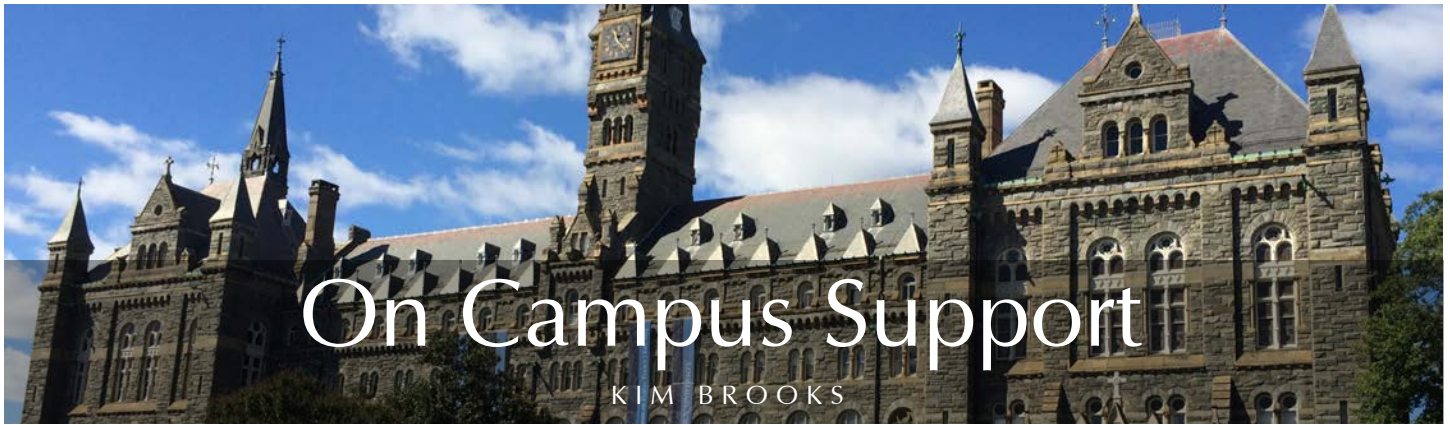
Chadwick is thrilled to see the growth of mobile pregnancy units across the nation. “Together, we’re stronger,” she says. In a society where women are pitted against their own children, mobile units are a new strategy in creating an environment of total, unwavering support for motherhood. “When pregnancy is unwanted, it’s a very isolating experience, and so much of what happens in the community keeps it isolated,” Chadwick says. “Pregnancy, when it’s wanted, is a very community-oriented experience.” It’s time to make all pregnancies a supported, communal, and empowering experience, and, in the words of Chadwick, “There is so much need and so much to do.” ■

Learn more about the mobile pregnancy centers mentioned here:

<http://www.houstoncoalition.com>

<http://www.icumobile.org/>





On Campus Support

KIM BROOKS

FFL's College Outreach Program started in 1994, when then-executive director and now FFL President Serrin Foster began presenting "The Feminist Case *Against* Abortion" on university campuses.

A year later, FFL art director and former FFL Vice President of Communications Lisa Toscani worked with Foster to create a new ad campaign to change the dynamic on college campuses. The ads answered the most pressing questions by pro-choice feminists.

Further confirmation that Feminists for Life was needed on college campuses came from a 1996 Gallup Poll that revealed more girls in high school considered themselves pro-life than pro-choice (47% v. 37%), but by the time they ended their second year of college, more than half were pro-choice. By the time they graduated, 73% were pro-choice.

The FFL Board was considering programmatic work to address the needs of many women at different stages of decision-making, but strategically didn't want to duplicate the work of other pro-life or women's groups. The board also realized that as feminists, FFL had unique credentials within the pro-life movement to reach this group at high risk of abortion. "Our board had more degrees than a thermometer," quipped Foster. "Because of our feminist credentials and especially our legislative victories, FFL could reach those who would not listen to any other pro-life group."

After an FFL board member named Jeanne shared her experience of searching for on-campus resources before suffering a miscarriage while attending a Washington,

D.C., university, Foster realized that she had never seen a visibly pregnant woman on a college campus.

What contributed to this change in attitude and the high rate of abortion among college-age women? The answers were apparent: administrators and professors who overwhelmingly supported abortion, a lack of resources and support that would give women other choices, and little knowledge about child-support enforcement, so women could easily be coerced by threats to withhold financial help.

So Foster approached the director of health services at the same university that Jeanne had attended years earlier. She asked what happens when women receive a positive pregnancy test. Believing that women could not complete their education if they had the baby—even as birthmothers—health services referred them to local clinics that offered abortion.

Most enlightening was when Foster learned that the local abortion clinic had an open house every summer and invited university clinic staff to see the facility. They were clean, staff held women's hands during the procedure, dried their eyes, and took MasterCard and Visa. The director of the university's health services said that "If my daughter were pregnant, I would want her to go to a place like this."

"What about the rest of the choices?" Foster asked. "Can a woman consider marital or single parenthood or adoption options and stay in school here?" The staff hadn't considered it. Foster asked if they would help her create a kit for health centers across the country so that

they could counsel women with the rest of the choices and connect them to support.

They agreed. After the meeting, all but one staff member exited. Turning to Foster and closing the door, she said, “When I was told that I had to meet with an anti-choice leader, I couldn’t believe it. But you asked us what happened when a student learns she is pregnant and made me realize that I wasn’t supporting choice, just abortion. You listened and didn’t yell at us and you asked for our input. So I am happy to help you give women other choices.”

A Georgetown University alum, Megan McMullen, was the executive director of the Northwest Center, a pregnancy care center and maternity home founded by GU alums and serving low-income pregnant and parenting women in Washington, D.C. She shared the counseling manual that became the basis of the kit, along with Rolodex cards to 800 numbers for national pregnancy resource centers, and FFL pregnancy resource brochures. The kits were sent to 650 top campuses.

But more was needed to create a culture that supported pregnant women, parents, and birthparents. Foster went to Georgetown University Right to Life leaders (who had previously hosted her for her speech, “The Feminist Case *Against* Abortion”) to take the next crucial step that would become the crown jewel of FFL’s College Outreach Program.

In January 1997, Foster moderated the **first-ever FFL Pregnancy Resource ForumSM** at Georgetown University hosted by GU-Right to Life. She asked if women had the choice to have children and stay at Georgetown. At that time, a myth had been circulating that if a student was pregnant or parenting at Georgetown, she would have to drop out of school. This appeared to result in women having abortions or dropping out without completing the degree that could have economically empowered the mother and her family.

GU-Right to Life President Preeya Noronha and Vice President Vanessa Clay secured an auditorium for the first Forum. Members posted signs declaring, “Sex Can Cause

Pregnancy!” and asked “Where Have All the Pregnant Women Gone?”

People on both sides of a contentious debate attended, including the underground group, “H*yas for Choice.” Originally there to protest, they accepted an invitation by Foster and GU-RTL leaders to participate along with other audience members in the Forum. Foster swiftly set the ground rules. “This is not a debate about abortion or contraception. We are here to talk about the resources that would support the rest of the choices—marital or single parenthood and adoption options—so that women can complete their college education.”

Though unwilling to share her testimony in person, a friend of a GU-RTL leader wanted others to know what drove her to an abortion. So students and administrators first heard a letter read aloud by the GU-RTL leader. Foster led a discussion to list an inventory of resources available on and off campus. Panelists set goals with the participation of the audience. Attendees established priorities for creating a blueprint for progress and presented the plan to administrators for consideration.

The results of the evaluation taken by all audience members were extremely positive. The only suggestion was to include men on future Forum panels. While it was a coincidence that every department sent a woman to participate, it revealed that many think of reproduction as a women’s issue, to which Foster replied, “If that were the case, pregnancy would not be possible!”



This first event established the model for schools across the nation. Other colleges and universities have followed in Georgetown's footsteps, first by inviting FFL speakers and then moderators to their campuses, taking this crucial first step to open dialogue on their campuses. As Director of Health Education Services at Georgetown University and the only panelist to have participated every year from the beginning, Carol Day believes the Forum is "an opportunity to let people know that there are students choosing to be parents and that the university will support that. It is a good opportunity to say, 'You might not think about pregnancy resources, but we do, and we're trying to encourage students and let them know that pregnancy and parenthood is a reasonable option for them.'" Like Foster, Day has helped others adopt this model by sharing it with other members of the Jesuit Association of Student Personnel Administrators. She has also shared this nationally via a "Paperclip" webinar.

Soon after the first forum, Georgetown opened a daycare facility called Hoya Kids Learning Center. Within the first year, the Department of Health Education Services offered free home pregnancy testing kits and a pregnancy hotline. Two years later, a townhouse a few blocks from the gates of Georgetown University was designated for the use of student mothers and their children. Administrators took steps to ensure that the home was safe from asbestos and lead and that windows had appropriate locks. A team of administrators form a "safety net" to help ensure that no pregnant woman, expectant father, parent, or birthmother will fall through the cracks of available services.

GU-RTL started a volunteer babysitting co-op and continues to organize diaper drives for the local Northwest Pregnancy Center, in addition to hosting the annual Forum. Over the years, pregnant women, parents, and birthmothers have participated in the Forum, sometimes even bringing their children. "Their participation has been essential in helping to identify the resources they appreciated and those they still needed and in helping to educate others on the campus that there is support at GU," Foster said. Foster suggested a similar Forum for the Republic of



Ireland. In 1998, the conference was called "5,000 Too Many," a reference to the number of women who sought abortions in England to get around Ireland's pro-life laws. Fiona Bruton moderated. Her husband, former Prime Minister John Bruton, and members of Parliament from both sides of the abortion debate attended. Foster was the only American invited to speak. She shared the concept first implemented at Georgetown.

FFL designed a **Pregnancy Decision QuestionnaireSM (PDQ)** with the help of Dr. Pamela Smith, who in 1995 had testified in support of a ban on partial-birth abortions, citing the damage this procedure could do to women's future fertility. FFL circulated the PDQ on campuses to make people think more carefully about abortion as well as to educate them about the impact of pregnancy on students.

In 1998, Foster's Forum moderator outline became the basis of the **FFL Pregnancy Resource SurveySM**, the results of which soon became the basis of a model resource guide and later an FFL national map and directory.

Ten years after FFL's College Outreach Program began, a study by Guttmacher Institute (then the research arm of Planned Parenthood Federation of America), revealed that abortion rates had decreased by a whopping 30% among college-educated women.

Foster's speech to a bipartisan group of pro-life Michigan state representatives and senators inspired the **Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Act**, which offered an incentive to schools to provide pregnant and parenting students a single location on campus where they can acquire information about resources and support. The bill was overwhelmingly supported by Democrats and Republicans in the State House and Senate and was signed by Michigan's pro-choice governor in 2004.

After administrators at Pepperdine University in California asked for recommendations, FFL staff defined a vision for a "dream campus," which the staff named "FFLU" in 2005. Together with policies and communication strategies developed over the years, FFL continues to hone and share our "Tools for Schools."

Also in 2005, FFL first worked to introduce the federal **Elizabeth Cady Stanton Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Act**, which, if passed, would provide \$10 million in grants to 200 colleges and universities for annual pregnancy and parenting resource forums and a central office to coordinate and promote ongoing resources and support on and off campus.

In 2008, FFL revealed results from its 2007 national survey of pregnancy resources and support, "Perception Is Reality." The study clearly showed a widespread perceived lack of basic resources on college campuses. Often help was either unavailable or not well communicated, leaving pregnant and parenting students to feel unwelcome and unsupported. "The study confirmed everything we feared to be true—and makes the case for the pregnancy resources on campus grants," Foster said.

That same year, FFL introduced the first **Rally for ResourcesSM**, a pregnancy and parenting resource fair designed to raise campus awareness about the needs of pregnant and parenting students. FFL's Rally for Resources also stirred popular support for the Elizabeth Cady Stanton Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Act (2005,

2007), which ultimately inspired the Pregnancy Assistance Fund in 2010.

On February 15, 2006, the birthday of Susan B. Anthony, FFL held the first-ever **Capitol Hill briefing** on the needs of 4.5 million parenting students, as well as millions of students who become pregnant and need resources and support for marital and single parenting choices and various adoption options. Serrin Foster moderated the briefing. Panelists included Carol Day, who outlined the progressive program at Georgetown that has included Forums and a central campus location for help. Student perspectives were shared by married and single parents and a birthmother. Congresswoman Melissa Hart, who first introduced the Elizabeth Cady Stanton Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Act into the U.S. House on November 9, 2005, made a special appearance at the briefing. The bill enjoyed bipartisan support and passed in the House as the "Hart Amendment."

In 2010, FFL's Elizabeth Cady Stanton Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Act became the core of a new law that provides grants to states through the **Pregnancy Assistance Fund**. States awarded grants from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—will for the first time—distribute funds to eligible institutions of higher education, which will match a portion of the funds received, to conduct a needs assessment on campus and within the local community and set goals for improving access to resources for parenting students.

University and college grant recipients will set goals and annually assess their performance in meeting the needs



of pregnant and parenting students regarding health care, housing, child care, and flexible scheduling (such as telecommuting programs) and in finding sources of practical assistance, such as maternity and baby clothing, food (including formula), furniture, and more. A similar fund component will benefit pregnant teens. Pregnant women subjected to domestic violence, sex assault, or stalking may also be aided by programs receiving **Pregnancy Assistance Funds**.

Also in 2010, FFL created a **model website** and template, instructions for creating a **guide to local pregnancy and parenting resources**, and startup materials for a volunteer babysitting service for student activists.

As Students for Life of America's interest in pregnancy resources increased, FFL approached SFLA to house and manage the **national directory and map**. A joint announcement was made at a pro-life conference at Yale University in September 2014.

FFL continues to contribute by sharing FFL Pregnancy Resource SurveysSM with SFLA staffers who often participate in FFL's Pregnancy Resource Forums.

Over the years, FFL has provided thousands of pro-life leaders, as well as pro-choice activists, with "**Pro-Woman Answers to Pro-Choice QuestionsSM**" and in 2014, **FFL sent out "First Wave Feminists: Remarkable Pro-Life Women[®] and Other Suffragists You Should Know,"** an issue of *The American Feminist* **documenting our pro-life history, to thousands of women's history professors teaching gender studies—the first effort of its kind.**

Every year, Feminists for Life continues to attract the best and brightest interns and hosts the annual **Capitol Hill Intern Briefing** to inform students from across the country who are interning on the Hill and in other third-party organizations. While Foster moderates the event, the students are able to hear from other FFL speakers who are mothers, birthmothers, and survivors of rape and

domestic violence. Foster is inspired by her father, who was a parent while in college.

Notable Outcomes

Feminists for Life's call to action and entrepreneurial efforts to address the unmet needs of pregnant women, expectant fathers, parents, and birthmothers inspires change on many campuses:

Pro-life students raised funds for diaper decks on campus for thousands of student parents at the **University of California at Berkeley** and have hosted many FFL speakers as well as hosting FFL Forums.

After a number of FFL lectures, **Boston College** and **Boston University** were among the first to create tailor-made resource guides. Both have hosted numerous FFL forums. Two men at **Boston College** used FFL ads to paper the campus one Wednesday night. They dubbed themselves the "Midnight Riders."

Loyola Chicago Students for Life filmed a video that answers the question of a woman who is pregnant and scared asking, "What can I do?" by offering support.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nru_FL4tVq4

In preparation for an FFL Pregnancy Resource Forum, the administration of **Pepperdine University** put together a task force in support of pregnant and parenting students. Two-time Emmy winner Patricia Heaton and Serrin Foster met with representatives of the university's departments and health services staff and asked for recommendations. They created a handout for women who receive a positive pregnancy test to ensure they know the school will be supportive so that they can complete their education. The brochure contained listings of available services. Foster recommended inclusion of policies to address the needs of men and to counsel women who had already sought abortions. After the Forum, the school built housing for families, ensuring that it was built to code with children in mind.

Students for Life at **St. Louis University** started an endowment fund with the support of a major donor. Originally for housing, the fund has expanded to whatever the pregnant or parenting students need, including housing, diapers, clothing, etc.

Stanford University changed policies for graduate students who were pregnant and parenting and wanted to attend school part time. Until then, parents had to choose between their families and going to school full time.

After Foster asked students during a lecture at **Wellesley University** if they had ever seen a visibly pregnant woman on campus, they all pointed to one woman in the audience.

Because she couldn't stay in the dorm after her baby was born, and financial aid was not available for off-campus housing, pro-life and pro-choice students held a rummage sale and raised almost \$4,000, which enabled her to finish her last year. The pro-choice mother paid it forward, starting a group called "Sister's Keeper."

A **University of Virginia** student was concerned about the unmet needs of parents in grad school when she heard Foster make "The Feminist Case *Against* Abortion." She started a babysitting club and years later wrote to say she had become pro-life.

Upon the invitation of Abbott Placid Solari and the Monks of Belmont Abbey to expand on their property adjacent to **Belmont Abbey College**, the Board of Directors of MiraVia (formerly Room at the Inn in Charlotte, North Carolina) set out to complete a strategic planning process. Charged with leading the research phase, then Executive Director Cindy Brown (now FFL Board Chair), discovered FFL's website, College Outreach Program and FFL's summary of abortion statistics revealing that unmarried, college-aged and college-educated women have the highest percentage and highest rate of abortions in the U.S. Armed with these statistics highlighted by FFL, and

with some guidance from FFL President Serrin Foster, the Board decided in 2005 to raise the funds for and to build a unique residential program specifically designed for pregnant college women and their babies.

Opened in 2012 under the leadership of MiraVia Executive Director Jeannie Wray, pregnant student mothers and their babies are able to live in the 10,000-square-foot facility for up to 24 months, free of charge.

Residents are able to continue their college education while living at MiraVia, either at Belmont Abbey College or at another local or online college, as well as receive a myriad of services, such as life skills classes, material assistance, professional counseling, tutoring, child care, and around-the-clock access to professional staff. In addition, Abbot Solari and the monks provide spiritual support to the mothers and babies, and Belmont Abbey College President Dr. Bill Thierfelder offers scholarship assistance to qualifying student mothers. ■



Editor's notes: The author wishes to acknowledge Stephanie Kaefer and Lauren Sumner who contributed to this article.

*"H*ya" is the correct name for the group H*yas for Choice as it is not officially recognized by Georgetown University.*

If you are a student leader needing free materials or are interested in hosting a lecture followed by an FFL Pregnancy Resource Forum, or a telecommuting internship, please contact coordinator@ffloncampus.org

*Check out *Feminists for Life's Tools for Schools*, which includes model policies, resources and support, and communication strategies. <http://www.feministsforlife.org/model-policies-and-handbook>*

Smart, strategic donors are wanted to invest in this program. Please go to www.feministsforlife.org/support



Raising Kids on a Shoestring

Feminists for Life is thrilled to announce our BRAND NEW Raising Kids on a Shoestring website filled with free and frugal resources and creative solutions and practical support that pregnant women, expectant fathers, and parents—including adoptive parents and parents of children with special needs—deserve. All of the great information FFL had in the earlier magazine has been updated and expanded at www.kidsonashoestring.com—and there are new sections and fresh content throughout:

Pregnancy and Childbirth
Feeding Your Infant
Pampering Mom
NEW Paternal Support
Your Special Needs Child
NEW Birthmothers
Affordable Adoption
Healthcare
Clothing
NEW Safety
Food & Nutrition
Child care
Housing, Utilities, & More
Money Management
Transportation
Education
NEW Workplace
NEW Family Law
Recreation & Fun
Do's & Don'ts for
New Mommies

“We’ve never said that being pregnant, placing a child for adoption, or parenting is easy, but we continue to do our

best to make it easier,” said Serrin M. Foster, president of Feminists for Life. “Raising Kids on a Shoestring’ builds on—and goes well beyond—our earlier versions started in 1994. The website is soooo accessible and easy for moms and dads on the run to navigate!”

Supportive family and friends, as well as volunteers and professionals, will also want this directory of practical resources and solutions. In addition to helping pregnant women, expectant fathers, and struggling families, this magazine will become an effective tool for pregnancy care centers, social workers, military chaplains, parenting-support groups, food banks and shelters, and an array of counselors and advisors at colleges and universities and in religious communities.

As FFL staff, volunteers, and interns worked tirelessly to update and enhance “Raising Kids on a Shoestring”—adding more and more valuable information about free, frugal, and creative solutions—it grew to the size of a small telephone book! So Foster decided to create a new website rather than another print version.

“This is our BIGGEST next step to systematically eliminate the reasons that drive women to abortion—primarily the lack of resources and support.”

Serrin M. Foster,
President of Feminists for Life

According to the Guttmacher Institute (the former research arm of Planned Parenthood):

75% say they have abortions because they lack resources and support at work and school.

69% are economically disadvantaged.

61% of women who have abortions are already mothers.

“Women need to know that it is against the law for anyone to coerce them into an abortion by threatening to withhold child support, that schools and employers can’t discriminate against pregnant women, and where to find help if they are victims of violence.”

“Women need to know that there are thousands of pregnancy resource centers across the U.S. waiting to help them, who will love them unconditionally—no matter what.”

“Women need to know that there is help for parents of special needs babies, and if they are unable to raise a child with special needs, they can place the baby for adoption.”

“Women in college need to know that the law requires schools to uphold Title IX to fight pregnancy discrimination and to adhere to the Violence Against Women Act—and that students can help us work with administrators to transform their schools to support pregnant women, parents, and birthmothers.”

“Yes, we DO care about women after they have given birth, their children, and fathers, too,” Foster said. “We already know from people who stumbled upon the website that others also want to help.”

Individuals who want to help are urged to download our new campaign ad in the “about us” section of the website and post it now at local libraries, grocery stores, pregnancy resource centers, places of worship, women’s resource centers, doctor’s offices, and free clinics, at family resource centers on military bases, and all over campus.

Individuals who have additional ideas for the the national directory of free and frugal resources and creative solutions are invited to email info@feministsforlife.org.

Share your ideas on our NEW Facebook page—dedicated solely to free, frugal, and creative solutions—not a place of debate.

Organizations are encouraged to include the campaign ad in their newsletters and link via their website to :

www.kidsonashoestring.com

Abortion is a reflection that we have not met the needs of women. In the tradition of our feminist foremothers, Feminists for Life addresses those unmet needs of women that drive women to abortion.

“This is the kind of help women who have had abortions say would make a difference,” Foster said. “This is what pregnant women say they need. This is what student activists say they want to put directly into the hands of women and counselors on campus. This is what parents want, need, and deserve.” ■



We who refuse to choose between women and children live the legacy of Susan B. Anthony and the other early American feminists.

Please consider leaving a legacy by including Feminists for Life of America as a beneficiary of your estate so that our work may continue. Let us know so that we may properly acknowledge your gift.

EMPLOYERS MEETING



THE NEEDS

CHERYL BLAKE

In order to balance both their careers and their family lives, pregnant women, parents, and birthmothers are seeking a more supportive culture at their jobs. Enhanced productivity and lower turnover rates are two major reasons that more and more family-friendly companies are accommodating the needs of parents who work outside the home.

Benefits that enrich the work environment for parents include the **Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)** mandate of 12 weeks of unpaid leave following the birth or adoption of a child, financial aid for adoptions, and making lactation rooms available. In the “Raising Expectations in the Workplace” issue of *The American Feminist*, **FFL’s Family-Friendly Workplace Evaluation** outlines the basic legal rights of birthparents and adoptive parents and suggests several areas employees might examine to see if their jobs are supportive of mothers and fathers. For instance, are there opportunities for alternative work situations like shared jobs or telecommuting? Does the health care plan cover dependents? Is the workplace safe and free of toxins? Does the company assist with child care? What about family calls during work hours and leave for adoptive parents?

The “Raising Expectations” issue also addressed the increase in flexible work schedules. A compressed workweek can offer a proactive solution to some mothers and fathers trying to juggle schedules. Working three longer days instead of five shorter ones accommodates parents who need more days at home during the week. Telecommuting, even for only part of the week, can be similarly advantageous. Another flexible option is job sharing, which allows two people to continue to contribute to their field while combining their hours into one full-time position. The employees have more time for families, and the employer does not lose their expertise.

According to a 2015 survey by Care.com Workplace Solutions, today’s young parents are very concerned about family benefits in their workplaces, with about two-thirds claiming they would switch jobs for better family-related

perks. Employees suggested improvements such as help in finding good child care, some financial relief for that care, and emergency backup care. On-site day care, as well as referral systems for both ongoing and emergency care of children, alleviate some of the worries of mothers and fathers working outside the home. Some companies help resolve the cost issue with pre-tax spending accounts.

Ease of leave for mothers, fathers, birthmothers, and adoptive parents permits the employees to adjust to life-changing events. Beyond the 12 weeks of unpaid maternity leave required by FMLA, family-friendly companies offer benefits including paid leave for dads as well as for moms. Some provide a gradual re-entry into jobs to a mom returning to the workplace after the birth of a baby. Adoptive parents and birthmothers also get time off. Several companies offer financial assistance for adoption. Another perk is to offer mentors and other resources to guide the employees who are parents through the company processes. Companies like DEMDACO provide private lactation rooms and refrigerators for breastfeeding mothers and allow parents to visit the on-site day-care facilities during the workday. All of these family-life benefits enrich the company’s culture and improve the lives of the parents who work there.

All kinds of companies, large and small, are upgrading their benefits to enhance the lives of their families. IBM, for example, has made *Working Mother’s* Top 100 Best Companies list for the past 30 years. The corporation offers 14 weeks of paid maternity leave and six weeks of paid paternity leave in an effort to attract the best employees. Also available is a family-resource program to help employees find child care, plan adoptions, and get elder-care referral services—a plus for employees charged with the care of aging parents. The company will even reimburse 80 percent of adoption-eligible expenses, up to a maximum of \$5,000, and IBM offers a Dependent Care Spending Account, into which employees may contribute up to \$5,000 of pre-tax money per year to help with child care. The company also

has a Special Care for Children Assistance Plan, which aids financially for services to children with disabilities or developmental or learning disorders. The company's most recent innovation is to provide home shipment of breast milk for women who are nursing but also traveling for the company. Another large corporation that supports employees who are breastfeeding is Mercy Health System. In St. Louis, Mercy Hospital was recently named a *Missouri Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite*. The hospital provides Internet resources, lactation consultants, individual pumping rooms, and a lending library. On-site child care is a benefit for any of the hospital's employees.

At about 2,000 employees, Netflix falls into the range of mid-size corporations. The company, however, has made itself stand out with a recent announcement allowing parents up to one year of paid leave. Another example of a medium-sized company is Hagerty Specialty Car Insurance, which offers lactation rooms, flexible job scheduling, and up to \$5,000 toward adoption expenses.

Family-friendly policies are not limited to sizable companies; small corporations and nonprofits can likewise offer substantial perks to their employees who are moms and dads. The Law Office of Diedre Wachbrit in California has made the list of *Working Mother's* best small companies for women ("small" defined as 15 employees or fewer), with adaptable work situations and lactation rooms. Flexible schedules are the norm, with compressed workweeks, telecommuting, and shared jobs. Moms have worked from as far away as Tennessee and Ireland, and the firm's CEO is a La Leche League leader. Powell and Tiller Dental Practice in Austin, Texas, a small business that is family-friendly, offers phased-in re-entry for moms returning to work, lactation rooms, and on-site child care. Feminists for Life employees telecommute, and meetings are arranged around the ever-changing schedules of caregivers.

FFL's new website *Raising Kids on a Shoestring* (www.kidsonashoestring.com) is a good source for



determining rights during pregnancy. Moms and dads in the workplace however, have more options than ever before to help them balance family and work life. Innovations in the work culture are indeed encouraging, as companies realize their employees have higher job satisfaction, making them more productive and less likely to look elsewhere for employment, when their family needs are addressed. Higher morale and lower absenteeism follow. Family friendliness is a plus for both the employees who are parents and for their employers. ■

"Like" FFL on Facebook!





SURVIVING SEXUAL —ASSAULT—

ELISE HUNTLEY

According to **RAINN** (Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network), 1 in every 6 women in America has been the victim of attempted or completed rape. These victims are three times more likely to suffer from depression, four times more likely to contemplate suicide, six times more likely to suffer from PTSD, 13 times more likely to abuse alcohol, and 26 times more likely to abuse drugs. Sexual assault affects people across all boundaries and, much like other social injustices, intersects with abortion. Sexual assault is a pro-life issue.

After the Feminists for Life office opened in Washington, D.C., in 1994, FFL joined the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. As the only pro-life group active in the campaign to pass the original Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), we see how the conversation has changed. More people recognize sexual assault and domestic violence as critical issues that should not shame victims. Recognition is only the first step. How do we end it?

In 2014, the White House accelerated efforts to end sexual assault with the launch of the “**It’s On Us**” campaign. This campaign is focused on college students and encourages bystander intervention. Through a series of PSAs featuring a variety of celebrities, the campaign encourages everyone to do his or her part in the fight against sexual assault. This campaign also sparked a movement on college campuses. Schools throughout the United States have made their own videos featuring student leaders and are encouraging students to take initiative. FFL President Serrin Foster served on the original task force that passed VAWA. According to Foster, who advocated for on-campus services during coalition meetings, “It is important for every student—including pro-life groups—to know who is the officer on campus responsible for implementing government guidelines in the case of rape or domestic violence. We care about the victim (male or female), and if she is pregnant, we care about both of them.”

Mariska Hargitay, who plays Olivia Benson on *Law and Order: SVU*, started the **Joyful Heart Foundation**. This foundation has launched **End the Backlog**, which is focused on raising awareness about the over 70,000 rape kits

that are sitting in storage and waiting to be tested. **End the Backlog** also raises funds to enable getting the rape kits tested. **Joyful Heart** also created the first **No More** public service announcement. No More is dedicated to spreading awareness of the crime of sexual assault to encourage bystanders to say, “No more! We have been quiet for too long.”

In addition to spreading awareness and encouraging intervention, many groups are working to provide support for survivors. RAINN’s website offers information about how to help a loved one who has been sexually assaulted. For example, they provide a directory by ZIP code for finding local counseling centers. RAINN also operates both the National Sexual Assault Hotline and the National Sexual Assault Online Hotline. **Notalone.gov** is another resource for survivors that was launched with the White House’s initiative to fight sexual assault. This site provides information to schools and students about responding to sexual assault and also about prevention. There is also a search engine to find local resources and support.

Women are not the only victims. Much less discussed are men who have been sexually assaulted. **1in6** is an organization dedicated to helping men who have had unwanted or abusive sexual encounters. 1in6 also offers resources and support to family and friends of men who have been sexually assaulted.

But there is one more group that must not be forgotten: the survivors who become pregnant as a result of their attack. RAINN estimates that in 2012, 17,342 pregnancies were the result of rape. Where are the resources for these women? Abortion is a perpetuation of the violence that these women have already endured. They need pro-woman and pro-life resources and support. Survivors should be informed of nonviolent solutions to an unplanned pregnancy. Some of these solutions include: raising their child, looking to a family member for help raising the child, and open and closed adoptions. “It is important to know that many counselors who work with survivors support abortion as a ‘way out’ of a relationship with an abuser,” cautions Foster.

“FFL encourages these women to seek options that are the best for them by working with a qualified counselor at a pregnancy resource center. They can take them through the maze of resources and support depending on their choice to raise the child or relinquish the child for adoption. They can also provide local referrals for legal assistance.”

Hope After Rape Conception board member Shauna Prewitt has studied and raised awareness of the absence of legal protections for women who conceive through rape. Many states do not have any laws on the books to address this, and rapists can often demand custody and visitation with the child, further tying the mother to her assailant. FFL continues to advocate for all states to have protections for both mother and child written into state law. Rebecca Kiessling, a family-law attorney and speaker who was conceived in rape, has advocated tirelessly for the rights and dignity of children conceived in rape. No one should be judged for the circumstances of his or her conception, yet often, a woman facing pregnancy from rape is offered only one choice: abortion, a thought that FFL speaker Joyce McCauley-Benner challenges.

Ms. McCauley-Benner was raped while working her way through college and discovered she was pregnant, and she didn't know if the father was her boyfriend or the rapist: “When I chose single motherhood, it was hard. Finding resources and returning to my hometown college were challenging. But I persevered through it all and tapped into a strength within myself I never knew I had. We, as women, can sell ourselves short sometimes. The status quo will tell us we can't do it, we shouldn't do it, or force us to choose between our dreams as women and our desires as mothers. The status quo will tell us that the paternity of the child matters more than the mother. The status quo will tell us you cannot heal from rape if you have the child. The status quo will tell us that we will be overwhelmed, that we are not creative or strong enough to endure a crisis. But I am here to tell you: We deserve better. I said *'No' to the status quo and achieved my own victory over violence.* I said that Joshua McCauley's mother

meant more than the paternity test result. I said that you can heal from rape and bear a child. I said that I am more creative and powerful than any injustice done to me. I am victorious over violence committed against me.” ■

R E S O U R C E S

RAINN

www.rainn.org

The Joyful Heart Foundation

www.joyfulheartfoundation.org

End the Backlog

www.endthebacklog.org

No More

www.nomore.org

It's On Us

www.itsonus.org

Not Alone

www.notalone.gov

1in6

www.1in6.org

Save the 1

www.facebook.com/Savethe1

Recommended reading: “Forward Into Light” and “Hard Cases, Exceptional Choices,” both past issues of *The American Feminist*.





SEX TRAFFICKING
— BREAK THE SILENCE —

JOYCE MCCAULEY-BENNER

Maybe you've never been arrested, convicted, or did any time. Never kissed a boy you've had a crush on, or never hung out past your curfew. Never been in an abusive relationship. Never smoked pot a day in your life. Never considered stripping just to get by.

I'll tell you what we've done. We've spent many nights alone and helpless. Probably never made it past eighth grade. We've been hit, arrested by the system. Abused by our boyfriends. We've imagined flying away from all the pain.

We're gaining self-worth back. We've written it all down to share what hurts. Some of us are out, some of us remain in. Some of us are in danger, all of us are scared. None of us know what makes us so different, but we all know what did. Listen to our stories because now we're breaking the silence.

—Dominique, age 17

I never met Dominique. But I did meet many other girls who share her story. Her experiences are shared by tens of thousands of girls and boys throughout our country and the world—from small-town Ohio to rural Nepal to the big cities in the United States—it's happening everywhere.

It's called Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE), and it's a form of modern-day slavery. It is a specific form of human trafficking, where bodies are sold for sexual gratification. Most Americans think of sex trafficking as an international crime. Few realize how many girls just like Dominique are affected right here in the United States. Girls and boys of all ages are sold against their will, either by force or coercion, with no resources and little hope of escape. Until now. **A new generation of abolitionists is being born, rallied, and organized.**

While these forms of modern-day slavery are everywhere, sometimes they are often hidden in the shadows of our streets.

Toledo, Ohio, was fourth in the nation for the recruitment of young girls for sexual-exploitation purposes, partly due to a community that was wrestling with poverty, structural racism, and lack of job opportunities.

Our close proximity to numerous interstates, waterways, and airports made it easy to traffic people out quickly, a sobering reality for anyone going up against injustice. I decided to take a job as a case manager and advocate for women and girls affected by CSE. I quickly learned we would have to be vigilant.

And we are. With the help of renowned researchers and other abolitionists across the country, a network of hope continues to grow. More resources and support for trafficking victims are forming every day, as the hard work of survivors and advocates raises awareness of this dark crime. Nationally, the Polaris Project is leading the way with a human trafficking hotline, 888-373-7888, as well as offering policy advocacy, a data-analysis program, advisory services, and global programs. These aspects together form the web to trap the spread of trafficking. For example, the data-analysis program maps the extent of modern slavery. It traces the networks involved and where the victims are coming from and going to, and thus can take seemingly isolated incidents and connect them within the larger framework.

These are incredibly powerful tools that will help tear down what is a \$150 billion profit-making industry. This information is then shared with law enforcement, advocates, and policymakers, so that tough laws and supportive services can be designed and implemented. The Polaris Project covers all forms of human trafficking, which can include labor trafficking as well as commercial sexual exploitation.

www.polarisproject.org



Best Practices and Innovative Solutions for working with victims of CSE:

1. Be survivor-informed—Learn from those who experienced it. Do not assume you know what is best for a victim without understanding what she has been through. Dominique is a young woman involved with GEMS. Her poem teaches us a lot.

GEMS (Girls Educational and Mentoring Services) is based out of New York City and serves all of New York state. “GEMS’ programming is gender-responsive, trauma-informed, developmentally grounded, strengths-based, social-justice-oriented, and culturally competent. GEMS’ founding principles reside in survivor leadership and transformational relationships.”

www.gems-girls.org

2. Build authentic relationships—Sr. Mary Kuhlman runs Sisters in Shelter, a transitional home in Ohio for victims of sex trafficking. Her program offers a safe place to stay, intensive case management, and perhaps most important, authentic relationships. “Much of what survivors have experienced has been resources in exchange for exploitation. We want to show them that healthy relationships are built on mutual respect and [that] care and concern is freely given.” Her experiences echo other advocates in the field. “Rescuing” isn’t easy. It’s not just about the sexual exploitation. It’s knowing that half the crime was the mental manipulation and that recovery is a long journey.

THE AMERICAN FEMINIST®

3. Be in it for the long haul—After Hours is a ministry that reaches out to men and women in south Los Angeles. Without intervention, many victims of commercial sexual exploitation become involved in street-based prostitution as adults and may still be under the control of a pimp. Compounded years of abuse, trauma, exploitation, rape, and drugs make for a very difficult intervention. Counselors at After Hours note:

“Keep in mind when wanting to begin this type of ministry [that you have] to **adjust your expectations of ‘results’**; you need to be in it for the long run. In the time I have been working with After Hours, we have had the privilege of seeing women come off the street and into rehabilitation homes. But many of those women have ended up going back to their pimps. It is a really long road to recovery. And not many girls will make the decision to leave the streets in the first place. Results for us are learning a girl’s real name, rather than her street name. These women have learned not to trust people in their life, so you will have to be consistent in building a relationship with them week after week and year after year. They will not trust you easily, and you will need to earn their respect.” ■

www.afterhoursministry.org

Learning more and spreading awareness are just the first steps anyone can take.

1. Check out the websites listed here. Read the stories.
2. Go to Polarisproject.org and find your local connection.
3. Post fliers in key areas: truck stops, motels, laundromats, etc. A flier is ready to download at the Polaris website.
4. Also on the website is a widget that can be embedded into your website or blog.
5. If you ever see anything suspicious, call the hotline at 888-373-7888, or text INFO or HELP to BeFree (23373).
6. Learn the warning signs of trafficking and how it harms at www.traffickingresourcecenter.org.



HELP FOR THOSE FACING INTIMATE
— PARTNER VIOLENCE —

ELISE HUNTLEY

One in four women will experience intimate partner violence (IPV), often referred to as “domestic violence,” in their lives, according to Safe Horizon. IPV includes actions taken by a spouse or ex-spouse or partner to coerce and control. The tools of abusers include verbal and psychological abuse, financial control or manipulation, intimidation, physical violence, forced sex, coerced pregnancy, abortion, or sterilization.

Most of us don't understand the evolution of verbal abuse from intimate partner abuse to outright physical punishment, and ask, “Why doesn't she just leave?” The simple answer is, “If she could, she would.” But it is so much more complicated than that. She needs guidance and support from those who understand her and who can help her work through a flexible safety plan, perhaps a domestic violence shelter, and possibly legal assistance.

FFL member Johanna Young explained what happened to her when she addressed students at FFL's annual Capitol Hill briefing. “I was 19 years old and a first-year student attending an out-of-state college when I became involved with a fellow student. I didn't see the signs but he eventually began physically, mentally, emotionally, and sexually abusing me. I wanted to escape his abuse, but by late November, I had gotten pregnant and remained in the relationship because I had believed that I needed his support. He was anything BUT supportive. He had already torn down my self-esteem before I got pregnant, so by this point I truly believed him when he said I wasn't good enough to be a mother..... I was completely terrified and had never felt so alone in my life... So I hid my pregnancy from most everyone, including my entire family.”

The **National Domestic Violence Hotline** is a resource for survivors who either don't have access to a nearby shelter or are in too much danger to reach for help and risk getting caught by their dangerous partner. The hotline is free and available to anyone 24/7. This service is provided by trained staffers who are there to listen to survivors or to help them figure out a safety plan.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline also has statistics and information on their website for anyone interested in learning more about domestic violence. Awareness and education are a part of the National Domestic Violence Hotline's mission in their effort to help survivors. They offer suggestions and tips for getting away safely and also have a search engine in order to find domestic shelters nearby.

The **National Coalition Against Domestic Violence** puts effort into affecting public policy on domestic violence and provides programs and education. **Safe Horizon**, based in New York City, provides a variety of services to survivors. They have several hotlines not only for survivors of domestic violence, but also for those who suspect that someone else is being abused. Safe Horizon has both counseling services and legal services that are easily accessible both online and at Safe Horizon shelters in all five boroughs of New York City. Their shelters are something that makes Safe Horizon unique.

So why do women stay in harmful and dangerous relationships if there are resources available to help them? Often women stay because they feel as though they have no other option. They feel as though they can't support themselves financially or that their partner will come after them.

Allstate Foundation has launched a campaign called Click to Empower. **Click to Empower** offers helpful suggestions for talking to a friend or family member if you fear they are in a violent or dangerous relationship.

Allstate also offers financial information to help women take their lives back. One of the main reasons that women stay in harmful relationships is that they don't have financial security and rely on their violent partner. The **Allstate Foundation** has suggestions and also webinars to educate women on how to control their finances and gain financial independence.

Another reason that women stay in abusive relationships is for their children. They reason that an abusive father is better than no father. Or they fear that the abusive father might sue for custody of the child. This is an especially big risk for pregnant women in violent relationships. If physical abuse doesn't cause a miscarriage, the woman might consider abortion. She might rationalize that it would be better not to bring a child into her dangerous world. Women in these situations are often coerced into an abortion, worn down by months or years of abuse. What these women need are non-violent solutions. They need someone to be there to offer them help and support, and also support in choosing life—including their own.

Johanna Young took her abuser to court and later had three children. Before graduating from college she became determined to improve the lives of other women. She told students at the FFL Capitol Hill briefing, "I want *better* for other women who might be trapped in a relationship with an abuser. I want *better* for pregnant women who may feel more vulnerable because it isn't just them anymore. I want *better* for student parents like me, so that no woman feels forced to choose between their education and their career plans. This is why I support efforts on campus to educate women and men about domestic violence. This is why I helped bring Serrin to my campus, George Mason University, to start the discussion about the lack of resources and support for pregnant students."

Feminists for Life was proud to serve on the task force that ultimately passed the Violence Against Women Act. FFL President Serrin Foster wants students—including pro-life student groups—to know that they should share the contact information for the campus counselor who is responsible for implementing the Violence Against Women Act on campus, as well as off-campus resources. "Saving a woman's life is just as important as saving the baby's." ■

HOTLINES & RESOURCES

Allstate Foundation

www.allstatefoundation.org/domestic_violence.html

Break the Cycle

310-286-3383 | www.breakthecycle.org

Choose Respect

chooserespect.engagethecrowd.com

Click to Empower

www.clicktoempower.org

Futures Without Violence

415-678-5500 | www.futureswithoutviolence.org

Men Can Stop Rape

202-265-6530 | www.mencanstoprape.org

National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

www.ncadv.org

National Dating Abuse Helpline

866-331-9474, 866-331-8453 TTY

www.loveisrespect.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline

www.thehotline.org

National Domestic Violence/Child Abuse/Sexual Abuse

Hotline 800-799-SAFE (7233), 800-787-3224 TTY

www.ndvh.org

National Drug & Alcohol Information, Treatment, & Referral

Hotline 800-662-HELP (4357)

National Sexual Assault Hotline

800-656-HOPE (4673) | www.rainn.org

National Suicide Prevention Hotlines

800-SUICIDE (784-2433), 800-273-TALK (8255),

800-799-4889 TTY

www.hopeline.com | www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Safe Horizon

www.safehorizon.org

If someone you know is pregnant and needs help, refer her to a pregnancy resource center near her.



Healing from Abortion

CHERYL BLAKE

Qualified counselors help patients cope with their grief for many types of reproductive loss, including miscarriage, adoption, infertility, stillbirth, and the death of a child shortly after he or she has been born. But when it comes to abortion, additional resources are available for those seeking help. These may include help from the groups listed below or a referral to a more local group from a pregnancy resource center. While some might suspect that pregnancy resource centers and post-abortion healing programs founded by pro-lifers would condemn a woman for having an abortion, the opposite is true. Help and healing is offered to women who have had abortions and also to those who have brought women to clinics and those who have performed abortions.

Abortion Recovery International (ARIN) is a good starting point for anyone looking into restoring her mental and emotional well-being after an abortion. This wide-ranging network offers an online Abortion Recovery CARE Directory, which lists worldwide programs that adhere to the principles of confidentiality and compassion. Their list of resources includes links to online studies, recovery outreach, informational websites for men and women

suffering the effects of abortion, books about post-abortion recovery, and models for therapy. They encourage prospective recovery counselors to first involve themselves in a group where they can learn about the grief and trauma specific to abortion.

Growing out of Dr. Theresa Karminski Burke's model for support groups of post-abortive women, **Rachel's Vineyard** now offers over 1,000 weekend retreats annually across the globe. Their website helps to pinpoint locations and times. In 2003, this model of healing became one of Priests for Life's many ministries, and the weekend experiences are hosted in both Catholic and interdenominational settings.

Project Rachel, a ministry of the Catholic Church since 1984, has a nationwide network of counselors who are especially prepared to help deal with post-abortion grief. Their therapists and spiritual directors offer compassion and healing to anyone who is suffering in the aftermath of an abortion: men and women, families, Catholics, and non-Catholics. Their website, the National Office of Post-Abortion Reconciliation and Healing, offers pages for fathers

and grandparents and an extensive reading list. Site links include Lutherans for Life and **Reclaiming Fatherhood**, a site devoted to the effects of abortion on men.

The latter site refers to current research on the impact of reproductive loss on men, including information about an ongoing study they can join. The Alliance for Post Abortion Research and Training is conducting an online study to investigate the effects of abortion on four populations, including men whose female partners have experienced abortion.

Some church organizations also offer **Project Joseph** ministries, which are support groups and spiritual retreats focused on the needs of men suffering from the impact of abortion. Many Catholic dioceses have information on Project Rachel and Project Joseph ministries in their areas, and their websites also have links to local memorials, healing retreats, and other useful information. The St. Louis Archdiocese, for instance, has a page dedicated to Post-Abortion Syndrome, or PAS, and its symptoms.

Memorials are an important part of healing. **The National Memorial for the Unborn** in Chattanooga, Tennessee, was created in 1994 to help mothers, fathers, and other family members to heal after the loss of a child to miscarriage or abortion. The organization offers brass name plates, brick pavers, and certificates of life as tangible means of honoring the lives of the babies. The pavers can be installed on a garden walkway at the memorial, and the brass plates are attached to a wall at the site. A virtual wall on the organization's website directs inquirers to the location of a particular name. Also on the website is a list of affiliated memorials around the United States.

Another organization that provides resources for those in spiritual and emotional pain after an abortion is the **Sisters of Life**, a Catholic order of nuns. Their outreach focuses on a program called "Entering Canaan" that was developed with Theresa Bonopartis to help suffering women and men through the healing process. The process includes days of

reflection, monthly groups, weekend retreats, special date gatherings such as on Mother's Day, and yearly renewal retreats to support continued healing. The **Franciscan Fathers of the Renewal** have also lent their assistance as the ministry expanded to serve men.

The Silent No More Awareness Campaign was conceived by Georgette Forney, president of Anglicans for Life, while working on the "Women Deserve Better® than Abortion" campaign. She was joined by co-founder Janet Morana, Executive Director of Priests for Life. Silent No More provides an opportunity for women and men who regret terminating their pregnancies to share their experiences. After going through a period of healing, those who regret their abortion often share their personal experiences publicly. They are powerful witnesses to the damage that results from ending a pregnancy. While not a traditional healing program per se, Silent No More members assure others who regret their abortions that they are not alone and help connect them to healing programs. Actor Jennifer O'Neill and Dr. Alveda King, niece of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., are involved with the campaign as spokespersons who convey their message of life's agony resulting from abortion.

Help with recovery from reproductive loss is available in many forms, from professional counseling to therapy groups to religious retreats. Just knowing there are others who are similarly suffering from such a loss can alleviate some of the pain, and memorializing the lost life is a positive step toward healing. As in any process of recovery, seeking support is a good beginning. ■





Baby Hospice: A Loving Farewell

CAROLINE ZODY

In 1994, Alexandra was born with a lethal genetic disorder. She weighed 3 pounds and had 12 fingers and 12 toes. She lived just 45 days, but her short life continues to make a difference. In 2008, **Alexandra's House** was founded in Kansas City, Missouri, for families that were struggling with the death of an infant or an impending death. "This experience brought to the surface a hidden problem," says the staff of the house that bears her name. "Medicine, with its immense technical advancements, can diagnose fatal fetal defects early in pregnancy. Often parents of gravely ill, unborn babies are alone in their grief, in their search for information, and their need for support. While hospice services exist for adults, it is limited for babies, especially those still in the womb. Grieving families should not have to do this alone."

Many hospitals have perinatal hospice and palliative-care programs linked to either their pediatric ward or their hospice care team. But there are other hospices, like Alexandra's House, that are providing innovative care for families who have received a disheartening diagnosis. Alexandra's House focuses on providing support for parents dealing with a devastating diagnosis, and also helps parents

grieve after losing their child. They host peer support groups to help families share and socialize with other parents who have been through what they have. There are groups for both expected losses, when the parents know during pregnancy that their child is going to die soon after birth, and also unexpected losses, such as miscarriage, SIDS, or other illnesses that affect the child after birth. The house provides burial clothing and memorials for parents who have lost their children. There is also counseling for parents who chose to terminate their pregnancy and are now either regretting their choice or even just questioning their past decision. Volunteers provide care packages to parents and also visit one-on-one with families to offer support for them.

George Mark Children's Hospice is a hospice in California for newborns up to young adults aged 25 years. George Mark Children's Hospice has nine beds for patients. The bedrooms also have an extra bed for a family member or other caregiver and a private bathroom.

The hospice also has a variety of programs to offer support to families, including bereavement programs.

The hospice has a therapeutic pool, individual therapeutic bathrooms in all the rooms and a variety of art and play rooms for the patients. George Mark Children's Hospice was one of the first children's hospices in the United States.

Angela Hospice in Michigan is focused towards helping parents who receive a diagnosis that their unborn child will either not survive or will be born with a life-limiting illness. The hospice works with the parents to develop a birthing plan and then offers them counseling and bereavement support. The hospice also helps the parents remember their child by securing a lock of hair, handprints, memory book, and other mementos of their child.

Zoe's Place is a baby hospice located in the United Kingdom. What makes them unique is that they have a facility to care for children up to age five who have a life-threatening or life-limiting condition. At the hospice, there are beds for up to six children at one time. There is also a light-sensory room and hydrotherapy pool. The light-sensory room both stimulates and relaxes children, depending on their personality and condition. The pool has heated water and jets that provide physical therapy for children and also gives them a place to be free and splash around. The hospice is staffed by nurses, a physiotherapist, and also a play leader. This team sees to the child's medical, social, emotional, and physical needs and supports their development. FFL President Serrin Foster stayed overnight with the staff and children during her speaking tour of universities in England in 1999. "The love and devotion of the staff for the children and their families is palpable and powerful. The ratio of staff to a baby or child is impressive. For those with long term care issues, parents and families receive respite care. When a baby dies, special care is taken to allow a grieving parent the time they need to stay with the baby before they say their final goodbye. Knowing the high divorce rate among parents with children facing long and fatal illnesses, Zoe's Place also helps the family remain intact." ■

R E S O U R C E S

Alexandra's House
<http://alexandrashouse.com>

George Mark Children's Hospice
www.georgemark.org

Angela Hospice
www.angelahospice.org

Zoe's Place
www.zoes-place.org.uk

Perinatal Hospice Directory
www.perinatalhospice.org



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