



FALL 2009

Providing education and health services to empower individuals to make life affirming choices.

You may have seen FirstChoice Clinic's television public service announcements (PSAs) featuring Nancy Kochmann, sharing the story of her daughter Lindsay making an adoption plan in the spring of 2007. We are very grateful to Nancy and Lindsay for their willingness to share their story on how adoption changed their lives for the better. We thank them for their courage and the genuine care they have for others. The passion they both share to protect life and to share that message with others is what will truly transform our culture and help build a culture of life!

The PSA's will air on Channel 6 (WDAY) at 6:35am on the First News program and at 8:55am during the Good Morning America program. Because it is a PSA, it will also be aired randomly at other times throughout the day. Additionally, you can view the PSA's on our website at www.teamfirstchoiceclinic.com.

At right is an interview conducted with Lindsay; she is an incredible young lady who is now a sophomore in college majoring in nursing.

How did you come to the decision that adoption was the best route for you and your baby?

When I was 16, I found myself in an unplanned pregnancy. My boyfriend and I knew that we were not ready to deal with the responsibilities of parenting. I knew that I wanted to go to college to get a good career and that having a baby would make this very difficult. We started going to FirstChoice clinic to get advice about our situation. I got ultrasounds and the nurses taught us about what to expect at each stage of pregnancy. After several weeks they referred us to an adoption agency* that could help us find a family for our daughter. We knew that adoption was the best option in our situation. However, it was a very tough decision to make. At the time I felt like I had failed as a mother to my child because I couldn't take care of her. I know now that I did not fail because she is with a family who can give her the life she deserves.



What advice would you give to other young women who are facing an unplanned pregnancy regarding adoption?

I would tell anyone that is considering adoption to be as informed as possible. To be able to follow through with an adoption, a person has to be able to accept complete responsibility for the decision. For this, you have to know exactly what you are doing and you have to think about the reasons why you considered adoption in the first place. I learned a lot from FirstChoice and I am so thankful for the support they offered during my pregnancy. The adoption agency was also very helpful. There really is no way that you can have too much information.

I've heard young women say that, "Once I see the baby, I know there's no way I could follow through with an adoption plan." What is your response?

To be honest, that was the most difficult part of the adoption. It was very hard to see my daughter, knowing that I would not be taking her home with me. However, I had a lot of counseling about grief throughout my pregnancy so I was a little more prepared to go through with the decision.

*The adoption agency Lindsay worked with was Christian Family Life Services, Fargo www.cflsadoption.org

Historic Report Spotlights Contributions of Pregnancy Help Clinics

The release of a groundbreaking joint services report, **A Passion to Serve, A Vision for Life** is a collaboration between Family Research Council, Heartbeat International, CareNet and the National Institute of Family and Life Advocates.

This report, available at APassiontoServe.com, traces the history of the positive impact of the pregnancy center movement in this country. It presents, in detail, through statistical summaries, case studies and client stories, the extraordinary social service contributions made by pregnancy resource centers, detailing how centers are meeting the needs of women, youth and families.

Pauline Economon, Executive Director of FirstChoice Clinic of Fargo and Devils Lake states: "Clients we serve at FirstChoice are unsure about their pregnancy and seek help at FirstChoice. Our professional, medical staff invests a great deal into the lives of our clients. Some people think you cannot choose life and be stronger; with the support we provide, our clients prove otherwise. What we do in pregnancy help centers is positively transforming men, women, families, our communities and, yes, even America!"

The report also includes endorsements from public figures such as Joxel Garcia, M.D., M.B.A, former Assistant Secretary of Health U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, who states: "Women who are fortunate enough to find their way to your centers are welcomed and receive loving care, access to counseling and education programs, ultrasounds and medical assistance, and referrals to other resources for little or no cost. As an Ob-Gyn, I can tell you that your efforts to assist women in underserved communities help to bring healthier babies into the world. Because of the selfless work you are doing, a culture of life is being built in America".

"If Congress does not explicitly exclude abortion from the health care reform legislation, more women will be pressured to abort their babies," said Heartbeat International President Peggy Hartshorn, Ph.D. "The pregnancy resource movement is dedicated to empowering women with life-affirming alternatives so abortion is unwanted now and unthinkable for future generations."

Pregnancy help clinics provide all the facts on abortion – from post-traumatic stress disorder to possible medical complications – facts that abortion providers often leave out. Pregnancy centers set the standard for true reproductive healthcare for women.

STOP THE ABORTION MANDATE
Prevent Washington DC Bureaucrats and abortion industry lobbyists from forcing YOU to pay for abortion.
www.StopTheAbortionMandate.com.

THE 40 DAYS FOR LIFE
People from throughout North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota are joining in praying outside the Red River Women's abortion center at 512 1st Ave North in Fargo - 24/7 until November 1st. To register go to www.40daysforlifend.com , call 701-284-6601, or e-mail phc@polarcomm.com



Intern Spotlight

FirstChoice Clinic's internship program educates and trains future community leaders in life-affirming work.

"My experience as a member of the Earn While You Learn program at FirstChoice was one I never could have encountered anywhere else. FirstChoice provided me with the opportunity to develop relationships with women who have nowhere to turn and need a shoulder to lean on; a gift the FirstChoice Clinic happily and skillfully provides. Witnessing first-hand the impact the Clinic has on the lives of the women who utilize its services is something I will not soon forget." – *Brittany Halberstadt (Fargo) Junior at ConcordiaCollege, Moorhead, MN – a Psychology major and Women Studies minor.*



Combined Federal Campaign

If you are a federal civilian employee, employed by the U.S. Postal Service or serve in the U.S. Military, please consider contributing to FirstChoice Clinic through the Combined Federal Campaign. FirstChoice Clinic's CFC number is 94023.

We really need your support this year - On behalf of women and children, please accept our heartfelt thanks.

Regarding the www.CandleInTheWindow.org quote

"You are stronger than you think"

When I saw the quotation on the pink card it struck like a bolt of lightning....this is the common theme with so many clients....after some time these young women are surprised, pleased and properly proud of how far they have come and that when faced with a huge challenge in life they were able to overcome. I love the whole message of encouraging strength and courage which is innate to women. We are made for tough challenges....it is who we are. Our culture has been quite successful in convincing women otherwise... but of course that is where FirstChoice comes in!

*Tracey Frei
(FirstChoice Board member)*

Your Investments are Priceless!



*Nurse Patti,
I want to thank you and all those that worked with me at FirstChoice. I was very lucky to have found a place where I was comfortable and could get information about my options. If I had not met with you I would have had an abortion and probably would have regretted it the rest of my life. You told me about my options with no forcing of me in any way and I really appreciate the time you gave me. Thank you again and again - please let the rest of the staff know how they have helped me.
Sincerely....
(Name left off for confidentiality - this young woman has made an adoption plan)*

Walk for Life 2009

On Saturday morning, September 19 at Lindenwood Park (Fargo) and Rugers Park (Devils Lake), hundreds of walkers and volunteers gathered to raise much-needed funding for FirstChoices' ministries and clients.

Pledge forms and donations continue to come in and the most recent total is over \$40,000! Every pledge given is a gift for the women, families and teens that need your help.

Special thanks to the more than 40 churches and numerous businesses who supported the Walk and the volunteers who generously sacrificed their time. We couldn't have done it without you!

Thanks so much from the FirstChoice Clinic Board, Staff and Volunteers for Holding on to Hope!

FIRSTCHOICE CLINIC WALK FOR LIFE – FARGO

(*Devils Lakes results to be announced)

Churches and Organizations \$1,000 and above

- Bethel Evangelical Free Church
- Sts. Anne & Joachim Catholic Church
- Calvary Evangelical Free Church, Pelican Rapids
- St. John's Catholic Church, Wahpeton
- Triumph Lutheran Church, Moorhead
- St. Anthony Catholic Church
- Calvary United Methodist Church
- St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church, Moorhead
- Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church
- MN Citizens Concerned for Life Perham Chapter
- St. John's Catholic Church, Wyndmere
- Shanley Teens for Life

Walkers - \$1,000 and above

- Lisa Knaust, Wahpeton
- Erin Hill, Kindred
- Jerry Kensok, Pelican Rapids
- Kairouan Moffet, Wyndmere
- Jen & Steve Osvoid, Moorhead



make a sound choice

To create communities in our region that encourage positive, healthy decision making among youth and young adults.

Kick off for the New School Year

Make a Sound Choice (MSC) has kicked off the school year with partnerships with over 40 North Dakota schools and youth service organizations! From Minot to Fargo - and all points in between - 12 to 18 year olds will be getting education on goal-setting and healthy decision making as a result of these partnerships. Evaluation results from NDSU continue to show positive impacts of the program across all benchmarks. Give us a call (701-297-7548) to see if your students' school takes part in our character and risk avoidance education programs!

Broaden the Reach

Thank you for the great turnouts in Bismarck and Fargo!

In response to the threatened loss of federal funding at the end of the current grant year, Make a Sound Choice partnered with Pal-Tech, Inc. of Arlington, VA and the US Health and Human Services department to host "Broaden the Reach" meetings in Bismarck and Fargo. These meetings were designed to provide clear information about the need for school based abstinence education programming, as well as specific information about the effectiveness of FirstChoice Clinic's Make a Sound Choice program. Attendees included representatives from several state agencies, state legislators, educators, and concerned citizens. Awareness has been raised in our region regarding the tenuous federal funding situation and the fact that participating schools do not want to see this program go away. We urge YOU to take action! You can still make a difference - contact your lawmakers and urge them to support separate funding for abstinence education.



YOUTH IN ACTION- Tremendous Success

Make a Sound Choice hosted its first annual Youth in Action: Leadership and Equipping Event on Tuesday, September 22, 2009 in Fargo. Over 200 middle and high school students from 20 different schools/groups attended accompanied by adult chaperones. The day was packed full of great speakers, high energy and fun learning. Julie Carrier (Washington DC) presented "Four Keys to Success" followed by Greg Tehven (Minneapolis) sharing his story about the formation of Students Today Leaders Forever (STLF). After a "taco bar" lunch, students were divided into gender specific groups to hear about issues that affect them. One of the adults remarked that it was the best event that he had ever taken students to! Stay tuned for information about the next Youth in Action, tentatively scheduled for September 2010.



REBECCA MEIDINGER- Community Outreach Coordinator

Rebecca is primarily responsible for recruiting teachers and counselors to attend our 2-day trainings to increase saturation of programming in the state and region. Rebecca has served as a speaker for the Make a Sound Choice program for several years. She comes from a background of youth ministry in a local church, with a special interest in sexual purity. Rebecca brings commitment and competence to her work with youth.

FAST FACT

According to a recent analysis of the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth, among females aged 15-44 years initiating a new form of contraception, 9% using birth control pills and 17% using condoms became pregnant within the first year. Teen birth control pill users were twice as likely as users 30 years or older to become pregnant within the first year of use.

Reference: Kost K, Singh S, Vaughan B, et al. Estimates of contraceptive failure from the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth. Contraception 2008;77:10-21.

2010 Banquet

Promises to be the Best Yet!



FirstChoice Clinic's 2010 Annual Fundraising Banquet is scheduled for **Monday, March 1 at the Fargo Holiday Inn.** One of the communities most anticipated events, the banquet not only provides an important part of our funding, but has become the area's pro-life "family reunion"!

This year we are looking forward to our keynote speaker Kay Cole James – Founder and President of the Gloucester Institute, an outreach and education initiative for young African Americans. The Gloucester Institute focuses on developing solutions for the challenges facing communities today, utilizing lessons learned from the civil rights movement, including recognition that the first civil right is life itself. Kay has worked to advance the pro-life cause for three decades in the highest levels of government, including the Reagan and both Bush presidential administrations.

BE SURE MARCH 1 IS ON YOUR SCHEDULE – YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS THIS ONE!

Where is your next investment headed?

We're all looking for wise investments and when it comes to finances, perhaps one of your best investments is FirstChoice Clinic.

Consider this: Your investment in FirstChoice results in lives saved, hearts and minds changed and a concerted effort to help our culture embrace life. Additionally, you also receive a tax deduction!

We invest in our retirement, we invest in education and we invest in many other worthy endeavors. Why not add "creating a culture of Life" to our list of sound investments? Your gift to us – of any amount – helps makes it happen.

"Culture reflects priorities. If a nation forgets God and makes pleasure and things the focus of its attention (In Dow we trust, not in God), culture will reflect that. But those who are pro-life and Christian can exercise a saving influence that serves as a counter force for good...The pregnancy centers are the key component in saving lives in an anti-life environment...I know these people...There just are not any better pro-life organizations."

-Cal Thomas, America's #1 nationally syndicated columnist



In Celebration and Thanksgiving of...

To honor special individuals, the following gifts were sent to FirstChoice Clinic...

In Thanksgiving for our children and grandchildren
Given by:
John and Janet Klocke

In honor of Fr. Terry Dodge
Given by:
John and Janet Klocke

In honor of Fr. James Ermer on his birthday
Given by:
John and Janet Klocke

In Honor of Fr. Michael Hickin
Given by:
Jack and Doreen Kennelly

Glenn Ihli's Recovery from accident
Given by:
Janice Ihli

Michael Kinkle's College Graduation
Given by: Susan Kinkle

In honor of Fr. Jared Kadlec
Given by:
John and Janet Klocke

The Birth of Seth Marc Kramer
Given by:
Larry and Judy Huotari

In Honor of the Lake Region Life Walk
Given by:
Joyce Voigt

In Loving Memory of...

The following individuals made memorial donations to FirstChoice Clinic in loving remembrance of...

Art Beyer
Given by: Frank and Mary Gaffrey Knier

George Blasky
Given by:
Paul and Barbara Loegering

Herbert Bodensteiner
Given by:
- Ron and Ottilia Tellinghusen
- Jerry and Kathy Bodensteiner

Bruce Carlson
Given by:
Bruce and Vicki Larson

Keith Cihak
Given by:
- Ron and Ottilia Tellinghusen
- Paul and Barbara Loegering

Bea Duval
Given by:
Larry and Susan Richard

Margaret Mary Douville
Given by:
Mark and Jennie Rivard

Stanley Grotta
Given by:
Wallace and Diane Lueck

Paula Pribula Hamman
Given by:
Karen and Gerald Beutler

Madeleine Hase
Given by: Adrian Richard

Margaret Jean Hemphill
Given by:
Matt and Susan Noah

Wally Hilgers
Given by:
- Frank and Mary Gaffrey Knier
- Roland and Patricia Lackmann

Terry Hunter

Given by:
Wilford and Wilda Brown

Evelyn Jones

Given by:
Wilford and Wilda Brown

Sharon Knutt

Given by:
Leo and Lillian Bittner

Bud Larson

Given by:
John and Bernice Eberle

Dale LaBine

Given by: Jo Ann LaBine

Stacy Morgan

Given by:
Charlene and Jerry Christenson

Sharon's Parents

Given By:
James and Sharon Puppe

Hazel Richard

Given by: Adrian Richard

Tom Stine

Given by:
Larry and Susan Richard

Maurice Strom

Given by:
- Bruce and Terri Dahl
- Don and Mary Kay Schott

Aunt Ragna Woodbury

Given by:
Wayne and Patti Hegseth

Sophia Woodrow

Given by: Judy Estenson

Alfred Young

Given by: Donna Young

MISSION

FirstChoice Clinic is a nonprofit Christian clinic providing education and health services to empower individuals to make life-affirming choices.

VALUES

The mission rests on a foundation of Christian values and guiding principles that drive our actions and influence the choices that we make in our day-to-day business operations:

- We uphold the sanctity of every human life which is core to our ministry.
- We uphold sexual integrity throughout life; saving sexual expression for marriage and faithfulness within marriage.
- We maintain a respect for marriage and family, recognizing this as a God-given institution.
- We reach out to those in need with love and compassion.
- We demonstrate integrity through professional, confidential and trusting relationships with our clients, the community and each other.
- We seek to demonstrate our faithfulness by being true to God in our day-to-day ministries.

FirstChoice Clinic (founded in 1984) is a 501(c)3 charitable organization, all contributions are tax deductible.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Marilyn Loegering – *President*
Jerry Kensok – *Vice President*
Jim Dunkel – *Treasurer*
Joy McCormick – *Secretary*
Spencer Berry, M.D.
Tracey Frei
Wade Sandy

CLINIC MEDICAL DIRECTORS

Richard Vetter, M.D. (Fargo)
Heidi Bittner, M.D. (Lake Region Center)

PROFESSIONAL VOLUNTEER

George Economon – *Special Projects Director*

ULTRASOUND IMAGING

Jan Carson, M.D.
Margo Ames, RDMS, RVT
Kim Rayl, RDMS
Jane Stein, RDMS

STAFF

Administration
Pauline Economon, RN, MSN, MA – *Executive Director*
Kim Wagner – *Field Representative*
Susan Richard – *Special Events Coordinator*
Vicki Larson – *Outreach and Events*
Patti Allex – *Administrative Assistant*
Dorothy Flood – *Administrative Assistant*

Client Services
Patti Killoran, RN – *Nurse Manager*
Renae Setter, RN – *Staff Nurse*
Renee Johnson, RN – *Fertility Care Nurse*
Debra Roesler, RN – *Client Educator*
Elysia Bates – *Client Educator*

LAKE REGION CENTER

Pam Kenner, LPN – *Director*
Darlene Schoenfish, RN, BSN – *Staff Nurse*
Luanne Krein – *Administrative Assistant*

MAKE A SOUND CHOICE

Kay Kiefer, RN – *Director*
Heather Bjur, MA, LAMFT – *Field Supervisor*
Lora Miller – *Administrative Assistant*
Roberta Johnson, MSW – *Resource Coordinator*
Rebecca Meidinger – *Outreach Coordinator*

FIRSTCHOICE - FARGO

1351 Page Drive, Suite 205
Fargo ND 58103
701-237-6530

FIRSTCHOICE - LAKE REGION

1031 7th St. NE
4th Fl. – Mercy Hospital
Devils Lake, ND 58301
701-662-2229

1-888-237-6530
www.teamfirstchoiceclinic.com
www.firstchoiceclinic.com
www.makeasoundchoice.com



Lake Region

FirstChoice Clinic Lake Region Life Walk stay tuned for final results we will report in our next newsletter. Current total is at \$10,000 raised for FirstChoice – Lake Region!

The Results of Your Investments are Priceless

"We think FirstChoice Clinic was a great experience for the both of us because they let us know what to expect before, during and after pregnancy. Not only that, they also let you earn points to use towards getting things you need for baby. The people there are really nice and help with any questions you have. Also the homework they give out is fun and very helpful. It's great for new parents that don't know what to expect, for single parents that have an unplanned pregnancy and don't know what to do and feel alone, and for parents with other children expecting another as well. We both loved the class and wish to continue after our baby is born. Thank you, FirstChoice!"

Lake Region Clients - Ashley and Vincent, pictured with nurse Darlene Schoenfish, RN



Education

Values

Health

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

CLIENTS

701-237-6530
888-237-6530
www.firstchoiceclinic.com

ADMINISTRATION

701-237-5902(p)
701-237-0363 (f)
www.teamfirstchoice.com

MAKE A SOUND CHOICE

701-297-7548
www.makeasoundchoice.com

Question: How does abstinence education address the problem of the more than 40% of teens who choose to be sexually active?

Response: Here's the problem you run into with a separate message for the sexually active teens - it is how the message is delivered and who is delivering it. I have spoken with doctors who are strong abstinence advocates but view a teen who is sexually active as a medical emergency. The doctor will try to move the teen back to abstinence but in the meantime offer them tools - birth control - to at least reduce the risk of more physical consequences. This is a delicate balance because the doctor doesn't want to enable the teen or condone the activity but they believe it is their job as a medical professional to first help them reduce the risk as they move them toward the healthiest lifestyle.

Contrast that with a contraception-centered educator ("safe sex") who is saying, "You are going to be sexually active and that is okay, just use protection....now let me demonstrate how."

The other issue is...just how effective are teens at using birth control, particularly condoms. Dr. Stan Weed's study showed that no comprehensive sex ed program showed a consistent and correct use of condoms among teens for more than 3 months. A big issue is "pleasure and passion." Girls tell us that their boyfriends don't like using condoms. Also, in the heat of the moment, we are asking teens to have the necessary self control and discipline to correctly and consistently use a condom. I don't know many teens that do anything consistently and correctly. Their underdeveloped teen brain is a big factor in their emotional decision making and judgment.

So are we really providing protection for teens when we promote condom use or are we providing a false sense of protection?

Additionally, parents should have a major voice in what is taught and how it is taught. I go back to the drunk driving analogy. We don't identify those teens that will most likely drive drunk and create a separate class to show them how to minimize the risk of drunk driving... i.e. wear a seat belt. We tell them "Don't do it and here is why..." We need that same message to teens regarding sex.

Dan Bailey, Executive Director www.justsayyes.org

