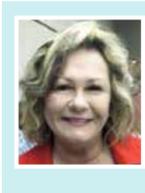




Crisis Averted for Birth Choices in California



Several years ago, Lupe Ramos Watson met Sarah.* Sarah was less than 16 years old and pregnant. She had a history of being passed around numerous foster homes and now she was trying to avoid homelessness. With Lupe's help, Sarah came to Birth Choices, a pro-life center, and she found a network of help to complete her education. She received medical and financial support and housing for as long as she and her baby needed.

Recently, Lupe reconnected with Sarah and was amazed by the difference. Lupe said, "It was heartwarming to see this girl pursuing her education and ready to take her life seriously, with her young daughter by her side." That is the mission of Birth Choices; it seeks to build a relationship with each mother and serve them through this stage of their life.

Birth Choices is able to continue this mission with Liberty Counsel's help. Most clients are facing extreme poverty and oftentimes homelessness. "They feel their choices are very slim, as to how to parent. Here, they find the support that we offer to them to parent or plan out an adoption so that their reasons are based on hope and a commitment from us," said Lupe.

In these situations, the center gives free pregnancy testing combined with a path for hope and life. Birth Choices commits to support each new mother for the first two years of her child's life.

It has been doing this for 27 years and is well on the way to saving 1,000 little lives.

However, California passed a law that requires Birth Choices post a notice on their door that free or low-cost abortions can be obtained. This notice was

required on all advertisements and in its waiting room. This would have completely compromised and subverted the message Birth Choices was trying to communicate with their community!

Epecially when clients are desperate and financially fragile, this message is the opposite of what Birth Choices want to say to them. Birth Choice provides no medical services beyond a free pregnancy test. They operate strictly on private donations. They were unable to hire a lawyer to represent their trampled free speech rights in court.

"We could have had to shut down," said Lupe.

In this situation, Liberty Counsel offered to represent a network of crisis pregnancy centers free of charge and defend their organization, if necessary, all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

That's exactly what had to happen. Liberty Counsel represented Birth Choices through the lower courts all the way to the United States Supreme Court where our case was held while the high court ruled that this law violated freedom of speech. While that was a huge victory, this case is still not over. The U.S. Supreme Court returned our case to the 9th District Circuit Court where we will again defend their free speech rights.

With Liberty Counsel shouldering this burden, Birth Choices is free to offer a path of hope to the new mothers in their community. Lupe, said the main reason new mothers come is, "They want to break that cycle of poverty and build a better life for their family."

Liberty Counsel is doing what it does best, protecting the rights of our clients so they can freely minister to the people around them. That is exactly what Birth Choices is continuing to do.

**Name changed to protect privacy*

Our History:

Birth Choice of the Desert's Pregnancy Help Center has evolved into a full-service non-profit 501 (C) 3, serving the Coachella Valley, unincorporated parts of Riverside, San Bernardino and Imperial Counties. Through our educational programs and referrals, we have helped over 22,000 families since our inception in 1991. Birth Choice of the Desert provides various complimentary services for women who are pregnant and looking for support as they consider their options, including:

- Pregnancy Tests
- Information on All Options a Pregnant Woman is Considering
- Ultrasound Referrals
- Adoption Information & Referrals
- Post Reproductive Loss Counseling
- Shelter Homes
- Infant & Toddler Clothing
- Diapers & Items for Infant Care
- A Teen Pregnancy and STD Awareness Program

Birth Choice of the Desert is a support system for expectant mothers and their babies through the age of two. Our "Earn While You Learn" program rewards participants with "baby bucks" that can be used to redeem items from our baby store. With these services, we at Birth Choice have been fortunate to assist between 80-100 families each month.

When you don't know what to do, Birth Choice of the Desert is here for you. Birth Choice cares about you and your child and exists to share all your options with you, so that you may make informed decisions for you and your child.

What is a Pregnancy Help Center?

A pregnancy help center is a complimentary pregnancy support and education center that nurtures hope and provides informed choices in a safe and caring environment. It is a place that cares for you and your child and assists with your prenatal and parenting needs. They provide caring, confidential choices at no cost to our clients with the sole purpose of providing love, support, and information so that the clients have the proper knowledge for themselves and their children.

PHC's offer material assistance, medical and housing referrals and educational resources to women and men who are facing an unplanned pregnancy.

It is a friendly refuge for a woman of any age who thinks she may be pregnant. A safe place where women can take the time they need to work through their own situation without pressure. Along with the support of carefully trained counselors who are available to them throughout their pregnancy as well as up until the child is two years old.

We're here to listen, care and to offer not only friendship but also the emotional support and material resources a woman or girl may need. Help, encouragement, and hope is just a phone call or a visit away.

Birth Choice provides caring, confidential services such as pregnancy tests and ultrasound referrals at no cost to our clients, as well as offering educational pre-natal and parenting resources to women and men who are facing an unplanned pregnancy. We help people in crisis' pregnancies make well informed and practical decisions for their future. We provide hope by letting clients know they are not alone and inform them about methods and risks of a pregnancy, options for open adoption, parenting and fetal development.

How can a Pregnancy Resource Center help me?

We know our programs make a positive impact in the lives of young parents and a lifelong impact on their children. All our services are free such as; pregnancy testing, pregnancy counseling, material assistance, adoption referrals and post reproductive loss counseling. Our Earn While You Learn (EWYL) Pre-Natal and Parenting courses reward participants for their success by offering Baby Bucks to be exchanged for goods in our baby store. A main focus here at Birth Choice is to build stronger families, stronger communities and a generation of loving and prepared parents.

How does the EWYL Program work?

Our Earn While You Learn program helps break cycles of unpreparedness, broken families, neglect or abuse, by providing the proper tools and knowledge so that our clients may be better prepared for parenthood. Through this program, our clients form healthy bonds with their parenting instructors and walk out of our center with much needed items for their babies as well as pride in their sense of accomplishments. The lessons they learn are crucial to the emotional and physical wellbeing of their babies and equips them with the proper guidance and instruction to reach their full parenting potential.

Help us not just give a hand out but give a hand up.

We offer these complimentary services to all women and families in need and are here to provide education, information, and guidance. Here at Birth Choice we provide emotional support for those seeking help during their pregnancies as well as coping with decisions they may have already made. Ultimately providing love, care, and assistance for all women in need.

What services does a Pregnancy Center offer?

Free Services include:
 No Cost Pregnancy Test
 Free Ultrasound Referral
 Medical Care Referrals
 Shelter Home Referrals
 Transportation Assistance - Bus Pass (1 per parenting class day)
 Community Resource Information
 Counseling for Reproductive Loss Healing
 Material Assistance: i.e; baby clothes, layettes, pampers, misc. items, etc.
 Educational Guidance: Adult pre-natal/parenting and Teen Outreach Programs
 Speaking engagements to Schools or Social Club Groups

What qualifications are needed to participate in a PHC and how can I be a part of one?

Our services are free to the public and do not require any form of payment or qualification. As a client, we maintain all confidentiality about your consultation.

Are you passionate about what we're doing? Let us know! We are always looking for volunteers to help us make our vision a reality, we'll help you find a way to volunteer that best suits you. We're excited to have you join the team! Birth Choice of the Desert is a 501(c)3 charitable organization and is supported by donations only. Financial gifts are always needed, welcomed and appreciated.

Other ways to help:

Donate diapers, gently-used baby clothing, strollers, bassinets, etc.
 Get your church or another group involved by sponsoring a Baby Bottle Drive or Baby Shower.

Birth Choice Funding

Birth Choice of the Desert is a life-affirming organization and we are proud to serve our community with a positive message of Love and Hope to those in need. As a non-profit organization, we rely solely on private donations. Help us continue being a "Voice of Love" to the women and men who need our services by supporting us today!

Volunteer

Consider becoming a volunteer. It is a rewarding experience. Call (760) 775-5683 or email at bcidprc@gmail.com to learn more about volunteer opportunities.

We have a "Volunteer Positions" list that a person can review. If there is an area that is of interest to someone, we will provide training for the position. There are times when a woman just needs someone to listen and we can help you be that special someone. Or, if you have a passion to help the center grow with its tech needs, admin needs or events, please contact us at 760-775-5683.

Birth Choice of the Desert is funded through the generosity of private donors in the Community. Social Clubs from throughout the Valley host fundraisers and material assistance events. If you are interested in helping by hosting a "Baby Bottle Campaign" or "Baby Shower" for one of our unborn, please contact us at 760-775-5683.

Do I need to be a pregnant mom?

We offer services and classes for pregnant moms and moms of toddlers up to the age of 2 years old.

We also offer counseling sessions for post reproductive grief loss and classes to any family member who is raising a child up to 2 years old. Court mandated parenting classes are also offered as a benefit to our community members.

How do PHC's help teens?

We offer a Teen Outreach Program using the Rise Above Project (RAP) It



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is intended to provide valuable and relevant information to teenagers by learning to set S.M.A.R.T. goals, gain value clarification through exploration, learn about adolescent development (emotional and physical) and human sexuality from a holistic perspective, develop a sense of competence and self-efficacy through community service learning, and enable teens to make informed choices about their sexual activity. This program does not focus on the teens past choices, but rather it is presented so that a teen can make wise and healthy decisions, now and in the future!

The content of the presentation is directed to all teenage levels and degrees of sophistication and delivers a positive message on four primary objectives; 1) Self-awareness- to assist teens with identity and value formation while focusing on their strengths and capabilities to develop the resiliency to confront life's stressors 2) Healthy behaviors - to promote the development of healthy behaviors, self-care, and emotional intelligence, thereby empowering teens to make positive life choices that will allow them to achieve their educational and occupational goals; 3) Life Skills - support the acquisition of valuable life-skills in the areas of relationship, communication, decision-making, etc., that are needed to be healthy, self-sustaining young adults; and 4) Sense of Purpose - provide teens with a sense of purpose, increasing knowledge of their own worth as they contribute to their communities through meaningful community service through mentoring.

By setting the foundation for these primary objectives for the teens, they will be empowered to have higher self-worth and set better standards for their life, thereby reducing risky behaviors, including sexual activity, and school dropout. Teens will be able to understand the impact of their responsibility in shaping their future by being more aware of the risks on their health and relationships that their choices may have.

Call us at 760-775-5683 for more information on how to schedule a teen program in your area.

How do PRC's help Men?

We offer various classes including parenting, reproductive loss grief counseling, and general counseling to men interested in learning and healing. We find that our male clients/ fathers are extremely willing to work on their parenting skills in order to be reunited with their children.

How do I learn more?

Please call or visit our center at: 79440 Corporate Center Drive, Suite 106, La Quinta, CA - just south of La Quinta High School. And, soon to be open at 74303 Highway 111, Suite 1A in Palm Desert, CA. Or, if you would like to speak/text with one of our trained counselors, you can call/text our 24 Hour Hot-Line at 760-984-4155. We are here for you.

