

1st Way HeartBeat

WINTER 2021

LIFE... the first way to HOPE

Dear Supporters of 1st Way,

Life is precious and we are so excited to continue serving moms and their babies as this new year begins. Our doors are open at both facilities, 1st Way and Focus Women's Center. We continued to serve through the holidays, and we have been blessed by so many acts of kindness and generosity from donors.

We have included a little collage of photos inside this letter to share how many of you came forward to help make Christmas special for our moms and their children. We handed out over 250 presents to our moms and their little ones. Teresa Young and Kerri Creutz solicited local businesses for Christmas gifts for our clients and had a wonderful response. Madison Ellett spearheaded a toy drive with the National Honor Society chapter at her school, Harvest Christian Academy in Elgin. St Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church's "Giving Tree" provided over \$1700 in gifts cards and cash donations. Turkey dinners were provided for clients as well from the Gospel Grace Church. It was wonderful to be part of the love and generosity that all of you have extended for our moms and babies.

We are also working with Jim Boston, the director of Your Children's Bookshelf. They are providing our clients with new and gently used books for free. We incorporated this new partnership with our Christmas gift giving. Our clients were very thankful to be able to have good books to read to their children.

Over the holidays we were also able to partner with Project Love, the charitable arm of Illinois Right to Life. In working with them, we were able to financially assist a pregnant mom who had found herself in desperate straits. This mother will be giving birth in the next couple of weeks. Everyone is healthy and we are excited to welcome this new little life. The assistance provided was able to give her and her family a step up toward self-sufficiency. The family was so grateful for the support and encouragement.

We are blessed to do what we do in helping new moms see the beauty and value of their life and their baby's life. We have started up our Earn While You Learn classes again. These classes are so essential and especially for first time mothers. Just today we served a young teenage woman taking prenatal classes and her mother is joining to support her.

Our prayer group is meeting weekly to pray for all who come to 1st Way and Focus Women's Center. We pray for clients, volunteers, and our mission. If you would like to participate, please contact 1st Way and ask for Helen.

As we move forward into this new year, we do not know what lies ahead, but we do know how precious the gift of life is. Now more than ever, let us stand strong together for life.

Blessings to you all and Happy New Year.

Judy K. Cocks, Director

Pathway to Hope Banquet

Put a marker on your calendar that we have scheduled this year's banquet to be on Friday, April 23, 2021. Lord willing, we will be able to meet. We will keep you updated as to what we are planning.

OUR MISSION: We are a life-affirming, faith-based, pregnancy resource organization, providing compassionate care, emotional support, educational and medical services to women facing unplanned pregnancies.

- ✗ Confidential pregnancy testing
- ✗ Limited ultrasound scanning
- ✗ Maternity and baby supplies
- ✗ 24-hour hotline
- ✗ Maternity and parenting classes
- ✗ Adoption information
- ✗ Alternatives to abortion
- ✗ Post abortion counseling
- ✗ Ongoing counseling and emotional support

Gifts to 1st Way Made in Honor and Memory

Our Precious Little Ones
Doreen Demehy-Ostrowski
Patricia Griffin
Sophie Latocha
Martha Peters
Gerald & Alice Sullivan
Tara Whitehouse



Ways to Volunteer

Please contact us about the following and we can answer any questions you might have about what is involved.

- ✗ Cleaning windows
- ✗ Hand out and post fliers
- ✗ Facebook updating
- ✗ Volunteer with clients
- ✗ Help organize IT system
- ✗ Organize a baby bottle fund drive – at your church or business
- ✗ If you are bilingual in Spanish, we can always use your skills

Focus Women's Center Update



As I reflect on this past year, I am proud of what we have been able to accomplish with your support. Focus Women's Center remained open during the Covid-19 shutdowns – thanks to the dedicated medical staff and volunteers. By doing so, we were able to provide no-cost, high-quality health care to pregnant women and girls in need.

In 2020, our nurses were able to provide one-on-one care to 56 patients – averaging about 1 new patient per week. Our medical team also provided 54 ultrasounds and performed 13 STD tests. On top of this, in November two of our nurses, Laura and Kendra, completed a course on limited obstetric ultrasound and together they performed over 130 ultrasound scans on pregnant volunteers! They passed the course with flying colors thanks to their hard work and the extra training provided by our RDMS, Gina, and one of our faithful volunteers, Jan.

I feel so blessed to work with such a dedicated team. I am proud not only of the quality of services we are able to provide, but also of the care each patient is shown by our staff. Time and again our patients give us the highest ratings on the surveys they voluntarily complete after an appointment. They comment on how our services are professional, how our staff is comforting, personable, and respectful, how the appointment is very informative and helpful, and how they felt no pressure or judgement. We've had multiple patients refer their family and friends to us – which is the highest honor. I have seen our staff bend over backwards to meet these women and girls in their time of need – even coming in outside of our normal open hours just to accommodate a patient's hectic schedule.

As I look to the new year, I am optimistic our patient numbers will continue to grow. We are taking measures to increase our outreach to those facing crisis pregnancies. Also, we will be providing free ultrasounds to pregnant volunteers so that our nurses can continue to hone their ultrasound skills. Plus, every pregnant volunteer that leaves our center impressed by the quality of our care is a walking testimonial and will help get the word out about Focus Women's Center. With all of this in the works, I am hopeful that 2021 will be the year that FWC establishes its reputation in our community as a safe place for women and girls in crisis pregnancies to come to for reliable information, quality medical care, and judgement-free support as they consider their options.

As more pregnant women in crisis are able to find us – more decisions will be made for life – so from all of us at Focus Women's Center- thank you for your support!

Mary Schurman, Clinic Director at Focus Women's Center

Help 1st Way



Please consider supporting 1st Way by a donation of material items. See the list at right for items we are always in need of:

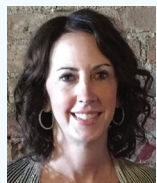
FOR OUR CLIENTS AND THEIR BABIES:

- ✗ Diapers – all sizes
- ✗ Baby wipes
- ✗ Newborn onesies
- ✗ Crib sheets
- ✗ Bottles
- ✗ Laundry baskets
- ✗ Baby food
- ✗ Infant ice packs
- ✗ Teething rings
- ✗ Maternity Clothes

FOR OUR OFFICE:

- ✗ Copy paper
- ✗ Manila folders
- ✗ Toilet paper
- ✗ Paper towels
- ✗ Antibacterial wipes
- ✗ Garbage bags
- ✗ Bottled water

A Volunteer's Story



My name is Gina Villeneuve and I am the newest member of the Focus team. I live in Woodstock with my husband and 2 teenage daughters (16 and 13 years old). I also have a stepson that is a senior at Butler University.

I am a registered diagnostic medical sonographer (RDMS), which is a fancy way of saying ultrasound technologist. I have been doing ultrasound for 28 years.

Over the years, I have had various jobs in several large medical organizations, doctor's offices, and outpatient facilities. I was even a "travel tech" in my earlier years, working for an agency that sent me to different hospitals and doctor's offices, pushing an ultrasound machine from office to office.

Earlier this year I was looking to gain some extra hours. I saw an ad for 1st Way Life Center that said they were looking for an RDMS to do limited OB ultrasounds. This sounded perfect to me, so I applied. Next thing I know, I got a call from Jan. Jan and I used to work together for Lake Forest Hospital about 16 years ago. I was worried that someone we mutually knew was either sick or passed away, but she went on to tell me she had been thinking about me and then my resume had come to her desk. Jan shared with me how she has volunteered with 1st Way for many years and she explained what they do and their mission - and now the rest is history! In my many years, I have never had a job with this mission, but I love it and love what we do.

Gina Villeneuve

QUILTS WE LOVE

Families are like quilts...

lives pieced together, stitched with memories, and bound with love. We are happy to announce the winner of the 2019 quilt raffle was Gwen Salvi. She was thrilled to be able to pick the quilt up before Christmas as it would become a gift for her daughter who is planning on studying oceanography. How perfect is that?

Carol Hudson, our quilter extraordinaire, had already dropped of the quilt for this year. The photo is nice, but once again, please stop in to see, it is truly another work of art. It is called North Stars Animal Sampler. Perhaps this is your lucky year. Raffle tickets are \$5 each of 5 for \$20. Good Luck.



Women's Help Services

1st Way Pregnancy Support Services has been a name which has served us well for many years. A few years back we registered with the state to "do business as" 1st Way Life Center, to help freshen up our look. Recently we registered again with the state to "do business as" Focus Women's Center. We are all one, the same 501(c)3, with the same mission, to save precious little lives. We have made one more change and that is replacing 1st Way Pregnancy Support Services with Women's Help Services. We wanted our umbrella name to be all inclusive of both 1st Way and Focus.

We mention all of this to let you know that when you donate through PayPal or use your credit card, you may see **Women's Help Services** and that is us. All your support goes toward our unified mission. Of course, if you would choose to support something specifically at 1st Way or Focus, we would be happy to honor your request. Donations made by check can be made out to any of our name, 1st Way Life Center, Focus Women's Center, and now Women's Help Services.

Holiday Giving!



Pictured Right:
Matthew Ellett
Madison Ellett
Jordan Gilman



**ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE
CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Donations Made in Honor

Merle & Connie Freund

Addison & Amelia Yager





1st Way Life Center
3714 Fairview Avenue
Johnsburg, IL 60051-6300
www.1stwaymchenry.com

ESTABLISHED 1978

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
McHenry, IL 60050
Permit No. 21

1st Way HOURS

JOHNSBURG
815.385.2999
life@1stWayJohnsburg.com

Mon 9:00 am – 4:00 pm
Tue 9:00 am – 4:00 pm
Wed 9:00 am – 4:00 pm
Thu 9:00 am – 4:00 pm
Fri 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

1st Way and Focus are affiliates of Heartbeat International, NIFLA, National Life Center, Inc.

800 HOTLINE
800. 848. 5683



- This number is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week all across the U.S.
- On average, 2,000 calls a month are received.



LAW FIRM OF KUCZEK & ASSOCIATES
847-940-7780



On Thursday January 28, 2021, at 6:00pm, 1ST WAY LIFE CENTER PREGNANCY SUPPORT SERVICES will be hosting a FREE VIRTUAL Estate Planning/Planned Giving Workshop in partnership with the Law Firm of Kuczek & Associates. Estate planning and planned giving can be confusing, making it hard to know where to start. This workshop will bring you expert advice at no cost to help you navigate the beginning stages of your estate planning strategy and to show how it's accessible to all.

Ted Kuczek from the Law Firm of Kuczek & Associates will be offering his advice on wills, trusts and planned giving options, the importance of planning now, and how a planned gift can help ensure your legacy. Anyone interested in protecting their family from the confusion, complications and legal fees of an incomplete estate plan should attend.