



A Baby's Breath

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A Newsletter from A Baby's Breath

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winter 2005

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A MIRACLE NEVER BORN

By Karen Patata

Christmas 2005 is a joyful time for A Baby's Breath. We have much to celebrate with our third center in Collegeville taking shape. We have clients in every center who turn to us everyday to get help in a time of a crisis pregnancy. We offer our love and support in our services. We show we care with the items that are neatly folded in our Baby Stores. We give the truth with compassion, but sometimes the truth is not enough.

At A Baby's Breath we believe that life begins at conception. We are motivated by the gift of life in our own children and use positive imagery and models of babies as our method of helping a mother to choose life. It's inconceivable to us how a mother who knows it's a child would choose to end her child's life. Every now and then, we have our hearts tested.

We had a client recently come to us to sort out the complications of a crisis pregnancy. She was upset, confused, but willing to listen to the options of choosing life. Our wonderful counselors gave her tissues as she emotionally embraced the prospect of choosing life. Her family was understandably upset and concerned for her future, but we told her if she put a plan together for the next phase of her life – her family will come around. As she sat on our couch her hand was clutching a little 12 week fetal model. She had already seen the ultrasound of her baby who was about 9 weeks old. She left us with plans to return the next week.

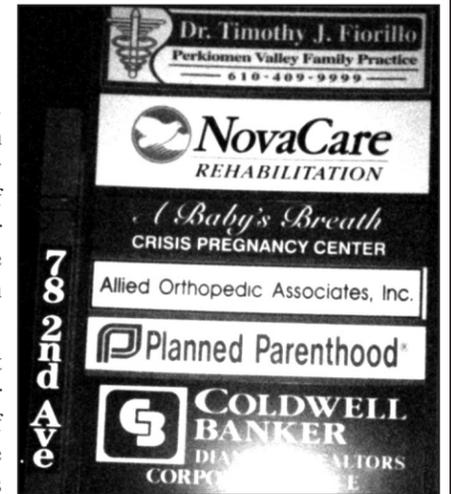
Before her next appointment, she called and told us that she had in fact aborted her baby. She was crying and again upset. Why couldn't she wait seven months to give her baby his/her first breath?

We might not ever understand why.

Her child could have filled the hearts and arms of a childless couple. Her child could have been the one true source of unconditional love. But now her child will be a painful memory.

Over the past five years since our existence we have helped over 300 families. Amen. It is not often that we have seen mothers choosing abortions, but it is not pleasant. We pray for the mom and the baby and the family, we promote spiritual healing, but we never forget the ones we couldn't save. The only thing that could have saved this baby was a law to protect its right to be born.

In this Christmas season we are reminded of one mother who said yes to the miracle of life and whose child was born to save us – even those among us who did not say yes to life.



Our new sign outside the Collegeville Center.

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SILENT AUCTION, JOYFUL NOISE

By John J. Giorgis

On a clear, crisp, star splashed, autumn, Friday night this November, just before the Thanksgiving Holiday, over 150 pro-life people gathered together at the Plymouth Meeting Country Club in Montgomery County. Once inside the Club those assembled were dazzled in the Main Ballroom by a glittering and sparkling display of over 100 magnificently decorated auction Baskets, and a room festooned with balloons, lights, candles and the displays that rivaled the splendor of the night sky outdoors. In addition, multiple "raffle baskets", graced each dining table waiting to be plucked by the lucky winners of the raffle ticket drawing later in the evening. But for now, the arriving crowd simply marveled and mingled as The 4th Annual "A Baby's Breath" Silent Auction prepared to begin.

Of course such a complex event takes months of planning and preparation. Co-Chairs of the event Marie Raquet and Judilyn Arena Ondik were observed greeting guests while taking care of the usual last minute details gracefully before the event began. Founder and President Karen Patota was

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A BABY'S BREATH TESTIMONY

By Paul Burdett

Hello, my name is Paul Burdett and I am a Board member and volunteer for A Baby's Breath. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank all of you for your support of A Baby's Breath Silent Auction, through your support we have been able to open a third center in Collegeville.

We offer life choices for a crisis pregnancy. We offer free pregnancy tests and counseling, pre-natal classes by registered nurses, parenting classes and material assistance. For the adoption path, we offer support and direction for the Mother and family. We have helped over 300 families since our beginning five years ago.

We help Mothers in crisis out of love – love for the Mother and love for her unborn child. I am helping Mothers in crisis because it is of particular interest to me. You see before you a Father of four beautiful children (one is in heaven). I have a lovely wife. I am grateful for the choice of life my Mother gave me because it was not an easy choice.

Her choice was to give birth to her baby after she was raped.

I was born a few years before abortion became the law of the land but I was born to a woman who even in those days would have had a “right” to an abortion. She was raped when she was 18. She was unmarried and lived in a small town in rural Illinois. Only her parents knew about the pregnancy, her other brothers and sisters and extended family did not know. And even her parents did not know of the fact of the rape until years later.

She was sent to an aunt's house in another small town in Illinois about 2 hours away so that no one would know. She was cut off from her family and friends and was pretty much under house arrest for months so that the neighbors would not talk.

But through all this she chose to continue the life growing in her womb. She chose the path of life so that I could take my first breath, just like the motto of A Baby's Breath that goes above and beyond the call of duty, out of love, to see those precious babies take their first breath.

My Mother did not have to wait long, for you see, I was born at 6 1/2 months gestation in 1969 in the back of a taxicab on the way to the hospital. The hospital staff said that it would be better for her if she did not see me. I weighed only 2 pounds, 6 ounces and I spent the next few months of my life in an incubator with double pneumonia but I pulled through, I guess God has me here for a reason. Just as He out of love has willed every child, no matter what circumstances surround that child's conception.

I was adopted by two wonderful people, the Burdett's when I was 6 months old. They could not have children of their own and were very grateful to my Mother that she had chosen to continue her pregnancy and to give me into their care to raise as their own son.

If my Mother was faced with an unplanned pregnancy today and not in 1969, she could have walked into Planned Parenthood and ordered up an emergency contraception kit (if it were available) and she would have more alternatives to have had her pregnancy ended, but

my Mother made a choice that day in 1969, she chose life and I must say that I am eternally grateful for her choice. It was not an easy choice but she had some people in her life to help her. I had people in my life, my parents to adopt me. At a Baby's Breath, there are caring people there to help a Mother in crisis see her child take his or her first breath.

Thank you all for all your generosity this evening at the Silent Auction, it is your participation here and through out the year that allow A Baby's Breath to continue their wonderful work.

VOLUNTEERS/SERVICES

PRE- NATAL CLASSES

Delores Baldassari, RN, *Pre-Natal Class Coordinator*
AnneMarie DeLuca, RN Amanda McLaughlin, RN

PARENTING CLASSES

Margaret Malloy, *Parenting Class Coordinator*
Tim Seiders, *Financial Planner*
Maryanne Crowe

PREGNANCY COUNSELING

Collegeville

Maryanne Gullick, *Crisis Counseling Coordinator*
Maryse Bayard Rita Nelson

Jeffersonville

Margaret Malloy Maryanne Crowe
Connie Edford Jean Coates
Marti Cunningham

Norristown

Maria Berg, *Crisis Counseling Coordinator*
Francine Webster Barbara JanFrancisco
Jennifer Volpe Marie Oakes

BABY STORE

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Kathleen Tomczak
Linda Connor, Barn Attic Coordinator
Chris Baran
Veronica Wolff
Rita Wade

TUTORING

Francine Webster, *Tutoring Coordinator*

POST ABORTIVE SUPPORT

Connie Edford, *Post Abortive Support Coordinator*

ADOPTION SERVICES

Joe Baldassari, Esq., *Legal Consultant*
Laura Garifo, *Adoption Consultant*

**If you want to join our volunteers,
or join the Angel Club,
go to www.ababysbreath.org or call (484) 571-5541**

SILENT AUCTION, JOYFUL NOISE

Continued from front page

holding court near the center of the room as it filled, welcoming one and all to the event with scarcely a moment to catch her breath. Other volunteers circulated through the room offering a ridiculous amount of raffle tickets for a pittance (or so I thought) for one of the 23 raffle baskets or items on each of the round dining tables. I quickly parted with \$20.00 securing 30 raffle tickets and figuring it was slam dunk that I would walk away with the basket of my choice for sure. I put over 20 of my tickets in the gift bag hopper for the movie ticket package and the rest for other prizes that caught my eye such as the Artesian Bread Basket (and the heck with what the good Dr. Atkins suggests!). Of course, circulating the tables deciding where to place my raffle tickets allowed me to find old friends and meet some new ones who had the same interest in winning certain raffle prizes as I did. (*Full disclosure: I did not win a raffle prize... this time.*) Meanwhile the bar was doing a brisk business serving complimentary beer, wine and soft drinks along with Cash Bar mixed drinks. It was very clear, early on, that all the planning and hard preparation work by the Silent Auction Committee was paying off in good conversation, good cheer and the excitement of the hunt!

Assisting Marie and Judilyn in executing their flawless planning were the other members of the Silent Auction Committee: Master of Ceremonies Vince Arena (ABB Vice-President and Board Liaison to the Silent Auction Committee), Sarah Vaughn Brakman, Barbara Fritz, Barbara Janfrancisco, Mary Larkin, Emily Rebalsky, Dave and Betsey Russo, Patty Sosnader, and Dorothy Swedkowski who were assisted by numerous other volunteers who assured that the event went smoothly. In addition the Silent Auction Committee was assisted by Kathleen Tomczak, who helped make the baskets, Glen Sosnader, who got a deal on the long stemmed roses that were sold to patrons that evening and Drs. Bob and Sara Bentz (of Cooley/Bentz Dental Associates) who sponsored ABB so that the Country Club would host the event. They also negotiated the food for the evening (more on the food in a moment).

The event was brought to order (so to speak) at 8:00 p.m. when Master of Ceremonies and Vice-President of ABB welcomed the happy crowd and introduced ABB's Spiritual Director Fr. Sweeney, Pastor of St. Eleanor's Parish in Collegeville who, led us in the Opening Prayer. Then Board Member Paul Burdett was invited to the dais where he gave a powerful and moving speech, a tribute really, to his biological mother, who chose life for him and then put him up for adoption after having been raped. It was also a tribute to his parents who raised him and the powerful good that comes when we choose Life. It was also a poignant reminder of the importance of the work A Baby's Breath does.

Vince then launched the festivities officially by instructing the crowd in the procedures for making a bid on one of the 102 Silent Auction items. Featured items for bid ranged from vacation getaways to sports memorabilia to baby and children toys to crafts to music lessons to tickets to sports and cultural events and much, much more. He also invited the attendees to enjoy the buffet and promised to return later in the evening for the live auction and the open bidding on 11 special items.

Lines quickly formed around the 10 tables displaying the Auction items and registering bids. Noting those lines I decided to try my luck at the buffet. And while I did have luck with an auction bid I confess that my “luck” was very good at the buffet table! I was also very glad I had heeded the advice given me by an attendee at last years auction, which was “...don't eat dinner.” Sadly my friends who sat with me at my table had in fact eaten dinner earlier and were dismayed they had! As well they might be, with a buffet featuring stuffed mushrooms with crabmeat, char-grilled vegetables,), a bread station, sesame chicken, a sautéed Hot Beef hors d'oeuvre, a pasta station with three pastas and

sauces (Ravioli, penne and fettuccine) and more. There was also massive platters of crudités and robust cheeses. Rounding out the menu there was a coffee and dessert station that consisted of numerous sweet cream and custard filled mini pastries and éclairs.



Marie Raquet, Judi Arena-Ondik, Silent Auction 2004-5 Co-Hosts, Patti Sosnader (center), Silent Auction 2002-3 Co-Host

After looting (and enjoying a repeat visit) to the buffet I circulated the auction tables chatting with other attendees on the numerous items on display. I soon found a basket of toys beautifully wrapped and ribboned – perfect for my 7 month old granddaughter for this Christmas – and soon was engaged in a quiet (it is a Silent Auction!) but intense bidding war with someone else who had their eye on the prize. About every 15 or 20 minutes I would wander by and see that the same bidder (by their assigned bidding number, I never saw them) had bid over me. Much to ABB's delight I was not to be discouraged and eventually made the winning bid! It was my first successful auction bid! That was fun!

Suddenly, two and a half hours had gone by and Vince Arena was at the microphone announcing the start of the Live Auction event. This genuine live auction was for 11 special items such as for a pair of round trip airline tickets to anywhere in the country, 76er's tickets, Flyers tickets, tickets to see Beauty and the Beast with dinner, golf packages, a ring, artwork and also for an item that turned out to be the highest bid of the evening. That unique and exciting item was for The Satisfying Suppers Interactive Dinner Party for Eight. The personal chef and business owner of Satisfying Suppers, who comes to your home and prepares and serves the dinner, and also teaches you how to do this, gave a mouthwatering overview of the service before the bidding, which clearly justified the spirited bidding for the service. The entire room erupted into sustained, enthusiastic and joyful applause when the service was pronounced “SOLD!” to the winning bidder for \$1,000.00! (Now if the winner would just invite me to the dinner...)

This magical evening ended just after The Live Auction with the thanks of our gracious Master of Ceremonies to everyone who makes A Baby's Breath happen.

Karen summed up the successful evening nicely by noting that ...“the Silent Auction of 2005 will allow our centers to continue to breathe.” And that is something to make a joyful noise over, as this year's Silent Auction attendees would surely agree.

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