

EMBRACE

graceplace
PREGNANCY AND HEALTH CENTER

TRUSTING GOD'S PLAN

Kristin Johnson

Hope that Springs Forth

From Hopelessness - Kayla Posey

GUARDING YOUR HEART

Away from the Hook-Up Culture

2020 Edition

I WILL LAY DOWN IN
peace
& SLEEP BECAUSE YOU.
MY LORD, KEEP ME SAFE.

- PSALM 4:8

WE JOIN THE LORD IN
KEEPING BABIES SAFE



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Kayla Posey



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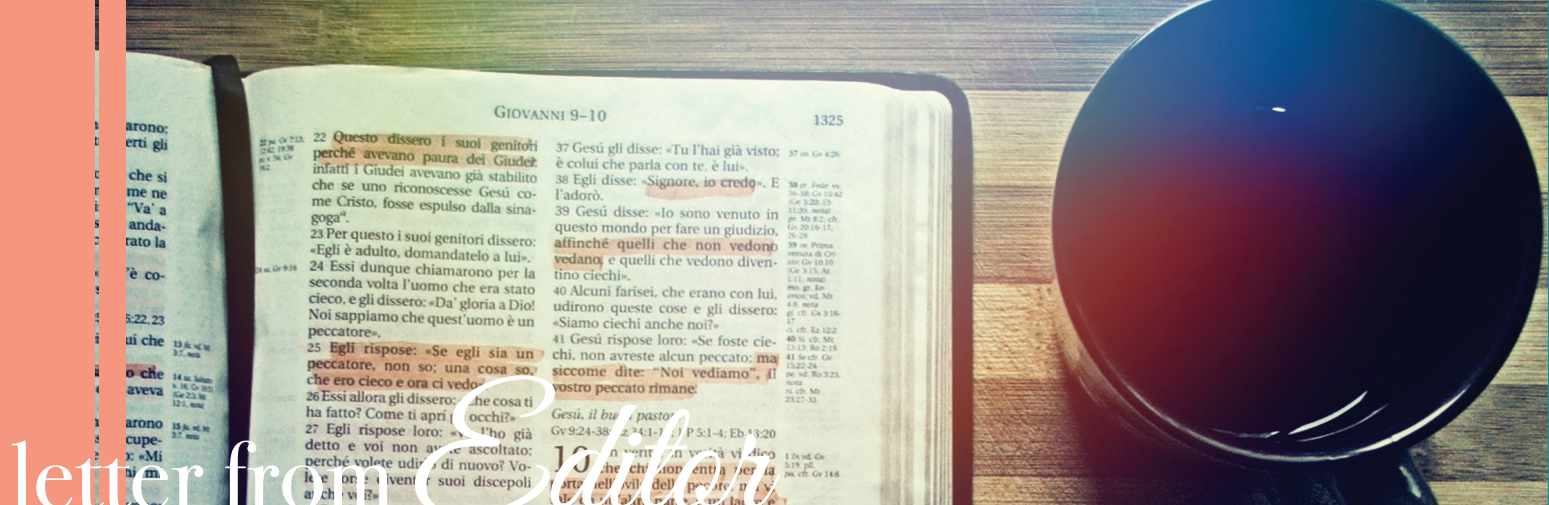
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letter from



Hello!

It is an absolute pleasure to welcome you to our 7th annual publication of “Embrace Grace Place.” This year brought a lot of change, yet our mission remains the same.

As our national quarantine begins to shift toward a gradual re-opening, I am reminded of three critical decisions we have made at Grace Place Pregnancy and Health Center ... our three “Yesses” which we’re committed to now-- and going forward. Here they are:

THANKFULNESS: We are saying “Yes” to thankfulness because we could not be more grateful for those who continue to support us, even through trying times. We realize some have had to step back from financial support, yet others who are in position to do so are stepping up in amazing ways.

Not only this, we receive encouragement from many of you almost daily, and we thank those of you who pray for this work, and for those who come in our door. To all of you helping in so many ways, “Thank you!”

RE-IMAGINING: We chose to say “Yes” to re-imagining our services during this time. Social distancing may have changed some of what we do, but the ability to adapt helps us reach our clients in a meaningful way. We probably would not have chosen this path, but the path came to us. Now that we see the possibilities, even after this time of social distancing is over, we can still apply much of what we are learning.

FAITH: Faith becomes more powerful when tested. For our ministry, for all of us individually—and for you, our collective faith is being tested.

As a ministry, we’re choosing to say “Yes” to faith in a new way, knowing that while we cannot see what life will be like on the other side of this pandemic, the One we worship has a perfect view of the future—and He is worthy of our trust. We know that regardless of what is in front of us, God is with us. And that is enough for any of us.

These three “Yesses” will stick with us as we go forward. And go forward, we will. Thank you for walking with us during this time. We see a bright future ahead. And we face this future with an unequivocal, “Yes.”

Anchored in Christ,

Heather Faverino

Heather Faverino
Grace Place Executive Director

EMBRACE graceplace PREGNANCY AND HEALTH CENTER

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Heather Faverino

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Hannah Begay

Grace Place Pregnancy and Health Center exists to offer unconditional care and support with pregnancy issues and healthy lifestyle choices, affirming LIFE in every situation.

Whether a pregnancy test is negative or positive ...

Whether a woman is abortion vulnerable or not ...

Miracles happen at Grace Place everyday!

GRACE PLACE PREGNANCY AND HEALTH CENTER

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graceplace PREGNANCY AND HEALTH CENTER

We are a LIFE-affirming pregnancy resource center. We exist to help women through their pregnancy and supporting both the mother and father by providing the following services at no charge:

- PREGNANCY TESTS
- LIMITED STD TESTING
- PREGNANCY OPTIONS EDUCATION
- PARENTING EDUCATION WITH MATERIAL SUPPORT
- LIMITED ULTRASOUNDS
- POST-ABORTIVE SUPPORT

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Hope

that springs forth from
HOPELESSNESS

..... BY: KAYLA POSEY

I found myself single, alone, and pregnant. I was also unemployed, I did not have a car, and I was not on good terms with my family. My biggest fear was having to face the fact that I was in this alone. My child's birth father was not in the picture because he had tried to push me into an abortion. Being raised in a Christian home, I knew abortion was not an option, but I was not ready to be a responsible parent. What was I going to do? Where could I go?

Since high school, I was convinced I knew more than my family and friends. I thought I could live life on my own terms. I had pulled away from my family and through one bad decision or another, most of my friends were gone too. I began to realize that the majority of the hopelessness in my life was my own making.

Finding out I was pregnant changed everything. Life was rapidly closing in on me. I knew that decisions had to be made and I was not prepared to make them. I decided at this point I better get in contact with my dad. Of all people, surely he would realize my predicament and help me out. I swallowed my pride and agreed to meet him in his office. Instead of the open arms I had envisioned when I showed up both my parents were there and asked me to sit down. Together we developed a list of pros and cons about the realities of me raising my child. The list of cons was excessive in comparison to the pros. I knew that I could not financially support a child and I did not have the stability needed right now to raise a child on my own. In the end, my parents were right. All I hoped for was the answer I wanted; to keep my baby. Instead I walked away with a dose of wisdom and direction for my future.

If you are reading this and can relate to my dilemma so far, swallow your pride and go talk to someone you trust! I chose my parents because they have a way of shining light in those dark places in my life. For me it was clear – it was time for me to realize that my life was not as “cool” as I thought and that at this time, I was not able to provide the life my child deserved. So, somewhere along the way, someone recommended I call Grace Place to discuss the option of adoption.

I did not really know anything about adoption except that my dad had been adopted. He was adopted at birth and grew up in a loving, Christian home by a couple that could not have children of their own. I thought to myself “he turned out pretty good,” so maybe I should look into adoption for my child. Through my dad's story, I was able to see how choosing to place my child with a family that could better provide for the welfare and happiness was potentially the best decision I could make.

I called Grace Place and made an appointment. I agreed to have an ultrasound and after hearing my child's heartbeat

for the first time, it added clarity to my decision. I knew then that adoption was the right choice.

When I left Grace Place that day, I was given a packet that included several pamphlets concerning adoption that contained information on families that were positively impacted by adoption, information on the prenatal care that would be provided, how the selection of the family occurs, and so much more. All of which reinforced the fact that this was the right decision for my circumstances.

Finally, it was time. I called the number and was put in touch with my own personal case worker, Melissa. She arranged for a home visit and I could immediately sense that she was genuinely concerned about me and my baby. I wasn't just another number. Over the next few months, she and I became very close. Melissa picked me up and took me to all my doctor appointments. She made certain all my medical bills were taken care of, (my prenatal care was top notch) and even made sure I had food, clothing, shelter, and that my relationships were healthy, or beginning to heal. Finally, my own bills were manageable, and I was no longer struggling. You could tell she loved being a part of this adoption plan and so did I. Our relationship was just the right mix of personalities and it became one of the brighter times during a stressful situation.



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When my first trimester was coming to an end, we scheduled weekly meetings to go over what was happening in my life and to begin the selection of my child's new family. The adoption prerequisites were well thought out, well organized, and it made the whole process easier. There were many families that wanted a child and each of them had made books – stories about their lives – for birth mothers to review. All of them were really awesome, which made my decision somewhat difficult; my son was going to be able to live a life filled with love, joy and with financial stability well above anything I could have ever foreseeably provided. What a Godsend!

I had to decide on which family I wanted to bless with the task of raising my child, as their own. There were so many qualified families! It was a tough decision, but I kept coming back to two couples. After more prayer than I could imagine, I chose the right mom and dad; the perfect blend to bless my son with a wonderful, hope-filled life. The case worker set up phone calls once a week with the family. His soon-to-be new parents developed a bond with not only me, but my son, and we grew close. During these phone calls I would place the phone on my belly so they could read books and pray over him. The whole process was amazing, and we all looked forward to our weekly conversations.

When the due date came, there were some complications, but I delivered a healthy baby boy! My case worker discussed my adoption decision with the hospital staff, and I was allowed to keep my baby boy in the room with me. Upon discharge, I was given the choice of taking him home and waiting for his new parents to arrive or place him in a transition home. I knew that my mind would change if I spent five days with him. I also knew that it was not logical. So, I chose to place him in a transition home. They did allow me to come over for small visits so that I could love on him. Bittersweet times were ahead; the court date took place, and the adoption was finalized.

The adoption parents arrived on the fifth day to meet their son. As soon as they saw him, the love in both their eyes was more than I could have ever imagined. The love they felt and showed made it clear that sharing my child with them was a miracle for each of us, even though my heart was breaking.

I had to see him go that day, but I have been able to virtually see him grow and flourish through pictures. Through the adoption plan, I was able to choose the terms of how I wanted to receive pictures. I chose to receive them every three months for the first year, and once a year after that, until he turned 5. I was also given updates. These updates weren't just "he's doing good," they shared stories full of details. They shared the amazing journeys he has experienced; vacations he would never have been able to have with me. I knew that I had made the right decision.

Grace Place didn't stop there. They continued to reach out and make sure that I was doing okay. I participated in post-adoption counseling to make sure that I was healing and coping with the decision that I had made. I can't say that this was easy, because that would be far from the truth. It was by far the hardest choice I have ever had to make. Grace Place has well-qualified staff, who helped me with the healing process. I was asked questions that were in depth, to make sure that I was okay. And slowly, I was.

Fast forward four years. I found myself in a better spot and pregnant again. The first place I called was Grace Place. I had a pregnancy test and we talked about how I could keep this baby. There were parenting classes that I could take to help prepare me for caring for a child. I obtained "baby bucks" that were a way to help me "buy" diapers and clothing to make the financial burden easier.

Nine and a half years after placing my first born in a loving home, I am finally in a good spot in my life. I work at a hospital and have a strong, developing career in the nursing field. I have a good job; new vehicle and am in a long-term relationship. Now I can enjoy a fairly comfortable life with my second child.



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For me, being able to bless my first born with a loving family has allowed me to reach a level of maturity that was necessary, I definitely see the hand of God in all of this. Though I made mistakes, God created a new path, filled with an overflowing of blessings. Looking back, I know that my life wouldn't be what it is today without going through with the adoption. Being able to share my child with that family is one of the most selfless gifts I could give. What a blessing my sacrifice is to that family. You know what? They were right! Their world is now and forever better because of my decision, and I'm proud that it turned out that way.

Being that I am a Christian, I leaned on my faith to fill the void. I found and focused on my favorite verse, Isaiah 40:31, which reads, "... those who wait for the LORD will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles; they will run and not get tired; they will walk and not become weary." Maybe this verse can help you in your times of confusion and worry too.

I thank you for allowing me to share my story and provide a bit of light to at least one gray area of my life that we may have in common. May God bless each of you, and remember, this world is a better place, simply because you are in it!





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..... BY: KRISTIN JOHNSON

Earlier this year, Shawn and I sat on the couch chatting while the kids cleaned up Legos scattered across the living room floor. I read a headline from a 2019 article out loud to Shawn in disgust: "Catholic New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham Vows to Sign Bill Legalizing Abortions Up to Birth."

Our son, Slade, who is 7 years old, overheard our discussion and asked "What's an abortion?"

We did our best to explain this super incomprehensible thing in such a way that his young mind could comprehend... not an easy task! As we talked about it, our sweet-hearted boy broke into hysterical crying. Through his sobs, the only verbal response he could muster was "How could a mom kill her baby while it's still in her belly? The baby doesn't even get to do the things God wants it to do!"

Gut-wrenching ...

Not many people know Shawn and I's story of when we were pregnant with our oldest, Khloe.

The first trimester was brutal with all-day-morning-sickness (I still can't figure out why it's called "morning sickness" HA!). It was so bad in fact, that I lost weight instead of gaining it. Generally, I was miserable and disliked every minute of being pregnant.

But, before we knew it, we made it to the halfway mark.

During one of our routine appointments, the doctor heard something a little off with Khloe's heartbeat. She referred us to get a 3D Ultrasound so they could get a better idea of what was going on.

While the 3D Ultrasound appointment was certainly nerve-racking, I'll never forget what an exciting experience it was really being able to see our baby girl for the first time in some detail. Her cheeks were so round and chubby. We thought for sure she was going to come out looking like the Michelin Man. We of course were immediately head over heels for the little chunk and all the misery of pregnancy instantly became worth it.

After about 30 minutes of enjoying the images of our baby girl, the ultrasound tech excused herself from the room

and told us the doctor would be right in to discuss the ultrasound.

Before long, the doctor came in to give us the news of what they discovered. She let us know that Khloe had an issue with her heart valves not closing correctly, and without missing a beat or elaborating any further, out of her mouth spewed "Your fetus has down syndrome, and we recommend that you terminate the pregnancy." She went on to say that while the ultrasound wasn't 100% positive proof, she was confident in it, and if we wanted further confirmation, we could have an Amniocentesis test performed (this is basically a test that sticks a needle through your belly to take a sample of the amniotic fluid which surrounds the baby in the womb; sounds terrible, right?).

At that point, I don't remember what else the doctor had to say. I was in complete shock and disbelief at what I had heard. I remember looking at Shawn, heartbroken and horrified at the mere thought of what the doctor was suggesting. So many thoughts raced through my head. WHAT?! No really, what?! Surely, she wasn't serious. How could someone be so flippant with life? This is my baby she's suggesting that I get rid of. How dare she!

When the doctor finally stopped talking to ask us how we wanted to proceed, we immediately told her that terminating our pregnancy was absolutely NOT an option, and that we weren't interested in having an Amnio done either.

The doctor was utterly appalled that we would even consider moving forward with the pregnancy. She asked how we could possibly think we'd be able to care for a child with such special needs and told us how selfish we were being, knowingly choosing to bring a child into this world who would struggle for the rest of her life.

Through tears of heartbreak, we let the doctor know that not only would we love our baby no matter what God had in store, but that we were prepared to do whatever it took to make sure that she had an amazing life.

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The next several months were spent praying and trusting that God had a plan.

Since we were considered high risk at that point, we were required (and lucky enough) to have 3D Ultrasounds done every few weeks through the remainder of the pregnancy. Each time, they let us know that Khloe's heart hadn't made any changes toward healing, and that we needed to be prepared to deal with it after she was born.

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June 25th was a beautiful, hot, sunny day. I woke up at 5:30 that morning in a crazy amount of pain and knew it was the day we had been anxiously awaiting. At 7:11pm, after a long day of labor, we welcomed our sweet baby girl into the world. Her blonde hair, blue eyes and tan (okay, it was jaundice) skin were the most perfect combination. She was absolutely gorgeous, and 100% HEALTHY. She was not born with Down's and her heart issue was almost undetectable. In fact, the pediatrician told us that it would heal itself within a few months (which it did!).

Today, Khloe is a gentle hearted 4th grader. She puts all

people before herself and she loves life. She is happy, healthy, smart and full of spunk. Truly one of the gentlest souls the world has ever known.

I thank God every day that he put Khloe on this earth. Through our journey, He taught us that He is bigger than any doctor, any test, or any scary thing that we can ever face. That His plan is perfect. That even when we think we can't handle something, He's in control.

Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you. – Deuteronomy 31:6

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REACH

When you support Grace Place Pregnancy and Health Center, you help us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to a broken world. Consider the facts:

- Approximately 45% of New Mexico woman who give birth, do so after an unintended pregnancy.
- 57% of babies born in San Juan County are to single women.
- In America, 1 baby is aborted every 25 seconds, making it the leading cause of death in our country.
- In 2010, 47% of women in America said that their pregnancy was unintended. 4 out of 10 of these were terminated by abortion.
- In 2014, 59% of women in America who chose abortion had at least 1 previous birth.
- Women who visit Grace Place for their pregnancy test often comment that "they were grateful someone was there to listen to them and not judge."
- The families who have been involved in our Earn While You Learn Program often say "The ladies at Grace Place are like family to us."

SERVE

Our caring staff and volunteers serve our clients day to day through a variety of services, which cost our clients absolutely nothing, thanks to the generous support of our donors.

Grace Place offers unconditional care and support through the following services:

- Free pregnancy tests
- Pregnancy options education and support
- 24-hour phone hotline
- Limited Ultrasound
- Adoption information and referral
- Classes and Education
 - Prenatal
 - Labor & Delivery
 - Parenting (up to 2 years old)
 - Abstinence
 - Fatherhood Program
- Material Services, i.e. diapers, baby clothes, cribs
- Post Abortive Bible Study/Support

LOVE

As a volunteer or donor you are participating with us to love the women and babies of San Juan County unconditionally.

As a volunteer or donor you have the opportunity to offer hope to those who feel they have no hope.

As a volunteer or donor you are helping to save the lives of future generations.

SPECIFIC WAYS YOU CAN HELP:

- Donate new or gently used baby clothes.
- Donate diapers and wipes.
- Monetary contributions.
- Donate your time as a client advocate.
- Donate your time as a fundraising volunteer.
- Donate your time as a sonographer.

Sources for statistics used: Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) and New Mexico Department of Health





Guarding Your Heart away from the HOOK-UP CULTURE

..... BY: HEATHER FAVERINO

When we think of pro-life ministry, we most always think of helping a mother and her unborn baby when the mother is considering abortion. However, if we want to make unplanned, unwanted pregnancies that may lead to abortion unthinkable in the future, we must teach young people to guard their hearts. “Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows out of it.” Proverbs 4:23 (NIV) There is an extraordinary amount of wisdom in this verse.

So how do we teach young people to guard their hearts in a hypersexualized culture that is constantly bombarding them with messages of sex in music, television, social media platforms, internet, and even among their peers? First, we must understand what they are faced with and that “dating,” among young people looks different today than in past decades. Sexting and porn are usually their first “sexual experience.” Surprisingly, the average age of a child the first time they see internet porn is 11 years old. They do not even have to be looking for pornography; it is programmed to find them. Porn, sexting, and the “hookup culture” is constantly in the face of many of our young people.

The hook up culture is defined as a culture “that accepts and encourages casual sex encounters, including one-night stands and other related activity, without necessarily including emotional bonding or long-term commitment.” Author of “Let’s Talk About S.E.X: Equipping Parents to Tackle Sex and Dating with Truth and Tenacity,” Talli Moellering, sees young people twenty and even thirty somethings waiting to get married, relying on “hooking up” and living together to “test the waters” before settling down. In our current society, just 20% of adults between eighteen and twenty-nine are married. The average American man is almost twenty-nine when he marries for the first time, and the average American woman is almost twenty-seven. For a fifteen-year-old teen, marriage seems like a thing of the past, and as the divorce rate continues to grow, the young community continues to look for alternatives to committing for life.

Young people need practical help understanding how to counter the message that casual sex is not that big of a deal. Conveying the message that “hooking up” makes things more complicated is not an easy task. Hooking up can lead to shame, guilt, secrets, pain, soul ties, commitments they cannot get out of and could potentially lead to an STD or unplanned pregnancy. Purity or abstinence seems

impossible when the culture around them says “everyone is doing it,” or “it’s just sex, it’s not that big of a deal.”

Sharing with our young people the positive social norms is especially important and lets them know if they are not engaged in sexual activity they are not alone. Here are some counter active truths as reported in a 2019 Survey by (Ascend) a Sexual Risk Avoidance Organization:

- Although culture is increasingly sexually explicit, most young people are not having sex.
- Most young people support reserving sex for marriage, both in general and for themselves.
- More than 80% of 18-19-year old’s say they do not like the idea of casual sex.
- Between 1991 and 2017 the percentage of high schoolers that never engaged in sexual intercourse increased by 32%.
- In the past 26 years the percent of high school females who are waiting to have sex until marriage increased 27% and males increased by 38%.
- Among 15-17-year old’s, 69% of boys and 72% of girls have never had sexual intercourse.
- Among 15-17-year old’s 52.4% of boys, 60.3% of girls have never had any sexual contact with the opposite sex, which includes sexual activities that are not limited to sexual intercourse.

In 2016 the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported:

- 61% of high school students report they have NOT had sexual intercourse.
- 59% of male high school students.
- 64% of female high school students.

One of the most challenging aspects of pregnancy center ministry is engaging the negative test or non-pregnant client in a meaningful way that inspires her to make future healthy lifestyle choices. Often the negative test client “checks out” after she finds that her test is negative. She may be so excited to not be pregnant that she is incapable of hearing anything else and wants to leave immediately. How do we introduce spiritual truth and impart to them that God has a plan for their lives and sex in marriage is good and worth waiting for? Depending on her spiritual walk and whether God has already placed others in her life to plant seeds and nurture them, the opportunity to share this truth becomes a challenge at best. Many are closed to a spiritual message, so we engage them on a

different level and that is usually “the physical.” Although nearly all (83%) sexually experienced young girls have used some form of contraception, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) continue to be at epidemic levels among young

SURPRISINGLY, THE AVERAGE AGE OF A CHILD THE FIRST TIME THEY SEE INTERNET PORN IS 11 YEARS OLD. THEY DO NOT EVEN HAVE TO BE LOOKING FOR PORNOGRAPHY; IT IS PROGRAMMED TO FIND THEM.

people. This is why we offer STD testing to every negative pregnancy test client (if they are positive, they will have testing when they receive prenatal care). According to the 2019 Survey by Ascend; young people between the ages of 15-24 contract 10 million new STD’s each year, 40% of sexually active young girls have at least one STD, and half of

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Other videos are found at nchoch.net and click on picture under video archives.

all new STDs are found among young people (15-24), even though they only represent ¼ of the sexually experienced population. Most STDs are present without any symptoms. The client may be relieved that her pregnancy test was negative today, however, she is at risk for a sexually transmitted disease and should be tested. After receiving an STD test the client is scheduled to return to Grace Place for the results. This gives us another opportunity to educate her about the risks and how sex outside of marriage is unhealthy in all areas of her life.

Grace Place tests for both Chlamydia and Gonorrhea; the two most prevalent sexually transmitted diseases in our area. The highest Chlamydia rate in New Mexico for 2017 was found in McKinley County (904.2 per 100,000), followed by Cibola County (898.4 per 100,000) and San Juan County (864.8 per 100,000). The highest Gonorrhea rate in New Mexico for 2017 was found in Cibola County (445.5 per 100,000), followed by San Juan County (334.8 per 100,000) and Bernalillo County (306.0 per 100,000).

There is so much more than just the physical risk of sex outside of marriage. Sex is a powerful and intimate act. Young people who have casual sex often experience emotional difficulties such as doubt, fear, rejection, low self-esteem, regret, anger, emotional discomfort, guilt, and depression. Sexually active young people are more likely to



feel depressed and are far more likely to attempt suicide than those who are not having sex. Thus, all the reasons we encourage our young client towards abstinence outside of marriage.

For the cohabitating client it is particularly challenging to engage them about abstinence until marriage. Couples that choose to live together instead of committing to marriage

may be in for some disappointing surprises. Cohabitation leads to less healthy, more volatile relationships. Break-up rates are 5 times higher than those that marry. Serious physical violence, emotional abuse, decreased sense of ongoing happiness and fairness in the relationship are 2 to 5 times higher. Sexual infidelity is 2 to 8 times higher with cohabitation and there are much higher rates of risk-taking behaviors such as drug use, carousing, and dangerous driving

Negative test clients who are given this information may initially appear uninterested, but often in a follow-up conversation, we find that clients sometimes reconsider their lifestyle choices. For every person that walks through our doors, we are responsible for sharing this life-altering information. When a client leaves Grace Place, we pray for God to send others into her life that will reinforce our message. Having the courage to go forward with the truth whether social, medical, intellectual, or spiritual takes confidence in the Holy Spirit to speak through us. It is not about us but about what God can do through us. Because the human heart is an emotional and spiritual entity, the struggle in our heart is nonphysical and as long as we live this side of heaven we will be in a spiritual battle. What we at Grace Place long for is that our young clients would

know that to experience the very best God has for them is to accept His truth over the lies of today's culture and to handle their hearts with as much care and good sense as they can, guarding their minds so that sin cannot activate and trickle down into their hearts. " ... for everything flows from it"

Philippians 4:8 Paul tells us how we are to guard our hearts and minds: "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things." Doing so will help guard your heart against sinful influences that so desperately want to get in the way of your faith.

God can change and touch every heart. This is our prayer. He is a Waymaker!

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Life Valued

Melissa Montoya - Grace Place Volunteer



..... BY: MELISSA MONTOYA

From the moment I walked into Grace Place Pregnancy and Health Center I fell madly in love. I will forever be grateful for my dear friend, former Grace Place employee Wendy Curtin for inviting me into the center. Wendy knew I had a passion for life and wanted share Grace Place with me. My first experience at Grace Place was helping to sort baby bottles in preparation for their Mother's Day baby bottle fundraiser. It quickly became apparent how important the community is to Grace Place not just for prayers, or for volunteers, but financially as well.

Grace Place relies on donations from businesses, individuals, and churches. They do not receive any government funding. I immediately knew I wanted to be a part of helping to raise funds for the center and I was asked to be on the planning committee for the first Steps4Life Fundraising Walk in 2014. That first year our team was overwhelmed as we witnessed God's hand in everything from the training, the volunteers, the church liaisons, and the funding that came from our first walk. We raised \$76,442 which exceeded our goal of \$55,000. This walk became the second biggest fundraiser for Grace Place (the first being the fundraising banquet). Through the years with the ups and downs and uncertainty in our economy God never failed to provide, while helping to bring \$500,000 in the next five Steps4Life Fundraising Walks. I feel complete knowing that I am part of such an amazing team who share the same passion and desire to support Grace Place in this manner. I often doubt my abilities or strengths to serve our Lord fully and to give Him all the Glory but my time working with Grace Place has definitely eased my worries and increased my faith. I will forever be grateful.

Obviously, it is not just about the money raised but the why. The money I have helped raise has ensured that the doors of Grace Place remain open and it keeps all services free to those that come in. Many of the services offered include pregnancy testing, options counseling, STD testing, parenting classes with material support and abstinence classes but the best and most important in my eyes is the ultrasound. The ultrasound offers the mom an opportunity to meet her baby for the first time. It also gives her the chance to fully understand that a baby is present and with the support of Grace Place she can choose life.

The beauty of Grace Place is not that they just save babies lives, but they know the importance of the family structure. I watch in awe their passion for each mom that walks through their doors and I know each one is welcomed with open arms. Most are scared, worried and looking for an abortion. Most do not understand they have options and a support system. Along with all the parenting classes they also have a Man Cave that gives supports to dads. They also have a beautiful and fully stocked Baby Boutique in

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which parents can earn baby bucks to buy clothes, diapers, and save up for a car seat or baby bed.

My own experience as a mom has helped me to understand (to a point) the pain these mommies are feeling with an unplanned pregnancy. I never wanted an abortion, but early on when birth control was the hot topic, I had a doctor who would not let me leave without some sort of birth control. I chose the birth control pill. My first pregnancy was “unplanned” but only in the sense that I felt safe knowing that I could choose when I wanted a baby, but my birth control failed, for which I am thankful. My husband and I were blessed with a beautiful baby boy.

After my first child my doctor talked me into an IUD for birth control since the pill did not prevent my first pregnancy. Imagine the idea of being told it did not “prevent” my pregnancy. I was young and did not understand the effects the birth control would have on my body or the risks of getting pregnant with an IUD (which is not supposed to happen). In a few short years, I found myself pregnant again. I immediately went to the doctor and I was told that I would probably lose my baby. They suggested a DNC to remove the baby, which I refused. Again, being young I did not understand what all of this meant, but I knew in my heart that I needed to give that baby a chance at life. A few days later I was rushed to the hospital and had emergency surgery from a ruptured tubal pregnancy. Not only did I lose my baby, but I also almost lost my life. I was then told the reason my child died was because I chose the IUD, which has a side effect of causing tubal pregnancies. A mother should never hear those words. By the grace of God, I was blessed with two more healthy beautiful babies.

I do not feel any mom would ever intentionally terminate their baby whether it be via elected abortion or a form of birth control if they understood all the facts and risks. I also believe that no matter how hard we try to prevent these babies God has a bigger and much better plan. I believe the key to saving babies lives, mom’s lives, and the life of the family is education.

- Education of abstinence
- Education of self worth and respect
- Education about birth control
- Education that life starts at conception
- Education about abortion and the physical, mental, and spiritual risks
- Education on forgiveness
- Most of all the education of Gods love and is plans for each of us.

And this is truly what makes Grace Place the most valuable resource in our community. Today, I still help with the Steps4Life Fundraising Walk. I also serve on the Board of Directors ensuring a place for moms and dads to come (for free) for years to come.

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Helping my life partner through all her stages of pregnancy has been the most beautiful and eye-opening experience. I am truly blessed, and the coronavirus has only brought us closer together. We are beyond excited to bring a beautiful baby boy into this world to make our family of 3 into a family of 4. Mommy and Daddy love you Shealynn and Brayden. #coronavirusconfessions

- Rick

My Father-In-Law came down with the coronavirus and it's only by God's gracious hand that he is still here with us today. After about three weeks of being in the hospital with so many ups and downs my husband got a call one Friday evening from the Doctor telling him that his dad's heart

had stopped 4 different times and they didn't think he was going to make it through the night. My husband and I and many others from around the country prayed that night for a miracle. God gave us that miracle! My Father-In-Law made it through the night and really started to improve dramatically from that night on. So after 33 days in the hospital (most of them in ICU), 20 days on a mechanical ventilator, and 17 days in a care facility, my Father-In-Law got to go home. He has been doing so well since then and has now gained back most of his strength. Every time I see him, I know I am looking at a walking miracle. God is still in the healing business!

- Hannah

During quarantine we saw a steady increase in phone calls, texts and emails from women who are faced with an unplanned pregnancy and seeking abortion information or services. We encouraged them to come in to explore ALL their options. In early May, a girl reached out through our 24-hour crisis line through text message. Her text read "I would like to schedule a pregnancy test and if pregnant an abortion." When she came in she shared that she is not with the father of the baby anymore, she is doing her best to put herself through school and feels that bringing a baby into the world with all that is going on is very scary. We talked through her options, answered all her questions, and listened to all her concerns. She agreed to schedule an ultrasound appointment and allowed us to check in with her leading up to that appointment. She has yet to tell anyone that she is pregnant and comes to the ultrasound alone. She remains undecided in her decision but during the ultrasound is amazed at the development of her baby. Before she leaves, we pray with her and we are hopeful she will choose life. Weeks later, she sends us a text that read, "I am keeping my baby and I thank you for helping me make the right decision!"

- Heather



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- Jeremiah 1:5

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