

# The Better Way

GOING FROM "GOOD" TO "Great!" IN A  
PREGNANCY RESOURCE CENTER.



**Women's  
Care Center** 

Women's Care Center Baby Luna



Original center in  
South Bend, Indiana



## Beginnings

A young professor from the University of Notre Dame founded the first Women's Care Center in 1984. A tiny house, with barely discernible signage, was located next door to the abortion clinic in South Bend, Indiana. **The first year the center served 300 women.**

Today (*as we go to print*), 36 centers in twelve states **now serve over 550 women every day!** Women's Care Center serves more women, in more locations, than any other pregnancy center in the United States.

Many have asked, *"How did this happen?"*

This booklet is dedicated to reflecting on the essential ingredients that helped our center grow from "good" to "great" and become **the largest, most life-saving pregnancy resource center in America.**



"Londyn would not be here today  
**without you**  
and that's the honest truth,"

says Valerie, mom of baby Londyn shown.



Madison, Wisconsin center



## Next Door SAVES LIVES

The first Women's Care Center was located next door to the local abortion clinic. Founder Dr. Janet E. Smith seemed to instinctively know the importance of this location.

When the abortion clinic moved a few years later, it took a while to truly appreciate the "genius" of the original location. Donors provided space and our outreach grew, but we did not move back next door to the abortion clinic until we already had three other centers in the South Bend area.

*You may wonder why "next door" is so important?*

**If we are there** — women come for "second opinions"... they come in the "wrong door"... they even come because they didn't know there was an alternative. **If we are not there** — they will not come.

**There is no more life-saving location for a pregnancy center.** Being "next door" or on the path to the abortion clinic truly saves lives.



*"If it wasn't for Women's Care Center, my girls wouldn't be here today,"*

says Brandi, mom of twins shown.

Brandi was on her way to the abortion clinic when she saw our sign and came to Women's Care Center instead.



Indianapolis, Indiana center

## Visibility IS KEY

Certainly “next door” to the abortion clinic is the first place to look to locate a pregnancy center. But there are other considerations to balance. The busiest, most life-saving Women’s Care Centers have certain common denominators.

- **Almost all are located on reasonably busy streets.**  
*If you are in a quiet cul-de-sac, no one will see you.*
- **Almost all have huge pink signs.**  
*If you are invisible, no one will see you.*
- **Almost all are located in a reasonably safe location.**  
*If you are in the most dangerous neighborhood in your community, no one will come.*
- **Almost all are stand-alone, aesthetically appealing centers.**  
*Locations inside mega office buildings don’t draw well. Even a strip mall is less than ideal.*

Easy parking and accessibility are also important. In the early days, Women’s Care Center opened wherever a generous benefactor offered free rent.

However, time taught that **it pays huge dividends to locate more strategically.** Many times, “next door” to the abortion clinic is best. *But not always.* The center needs to be seen and safe to serve the most women and save the most babies.



**“You never treated me like some ordinary single mom.**

**You made me feel like I meant something,”**

says Halie, mom of baby Ana shown.



York, Pennsylvania center



## Counselors ARE MVPs

*Even more important than location is what is going on inside the center.*

Through a phone-a-thon, Women's Care Center raised \$30,000 our first year; most was plowed into hiring a highly skilled, full-time counselor (as opposed to paying for administration).

**Counseling is a special calling, a rare gift that some have to connect with young women in crisis.** When someone has this gift, the end result is a connection that nearly always leads to a choice for life. For this reason, counselors are carefully selected. They are available full days and at least three days a week. This assures continuity of care and the ability to provide full-time services.

Typically counselors are compensated, as these criteria make it impossible to staff centers with just volunteers. The vast majority of counselors have bachelor's degrees, many in counseling. And, they have direct access to counselors with master's level counseling degrees. All receive a minimum of four weeks of in-house training.

The investment is worth it because the **true lifesavers and heroes** of the organization are, *and have always been*, **the counselors.**



**"The counselors were my angels.**

They were holding me up  
when I was so scared  
and determined to abort,"

says Diana, mom of baby Isaac shown.



## Love DON'T PREACH

Women's Care Center's counseling model is steeped in certain fundamental promises:

### COUNSELOR'S PROMISES

**I promise** to welcome all who walk through our door as though they are family.

**I promise** to meet every young woman where she is, and not where I think she should be.

**I promise** to listen, to love, and to first try to understand completely her issues before I offer support.

**I promise** to be with her every step of the way — from confirmation of pregnancy until years after birth.

**I promise** to refrain from judgment and to love unconditionally every woman we serve, regardless of what she ultimately chooses.

We recognize that each young woman is in a different place in her walk with God, so we do not actively evangelize. Instead, counselors strive to be Christ's heart and hands.

*We simply love.*

In an environment of love, each young woman recognizes her own dignity and feels genuinely valued. Counselors are 100% open and transparent with every woman regarding medical information and all of her pregnancy options. This creates a relationship of trust, which empowers a young woman to make decisions about her pregnancy that are rooted in a clear understanding of her own goodness, strength and beliefs.

In this non-judgmental environment, *almost always*, women choose life for their babies. And they return over and over for continued support. We are blessed to witness the miracles in a woman's life that emanate from this most important decision for life.



**"This place is way more than just help to have a baby!"**

says Anna Karen, shown with baby Lea.



Bismarck, North Dakota center



## Homelike CENTERS

At one time, Women's Care Center offered STI testing and prenatal care (through all nine months of pregnancy). But our "medical" centers were not nearly as successful to our core mission. We learned that if we want to serve the most women and save the most babies, we had to focus on what we're really good at. **Those extra medical services don't save unborn babies lives.** We experienced nurses so busy doing STI testing and prenatal care that they couldn't do a same day ultrasound. We experienced a clinical feeling (with paperwork and clipboards) intruding on the peace and comfort we seek to offer women.

When you think about it, we can't compete with abortion clinics by being more medical. We have to love more. We want beautiful centers (in warm, earthy colors) that feel like home. **The non-clinical atmosphere helps women feel truly welcomed and safe, the first steps in a choice for life.** This is a marked contrast to the sterile, cold, medical feeling of the abortion clinic. And this is the environment where, **nine times out of ten**, women choose life for their babies.



"I really needed support.  
I went from total unhappiness at the start  
to **'this is so wonderful!'**  
says Angela, mother of baby Jerica shown.



Baltimore, Maryland center

## OPEN *Full-time* PLUS

To save money, Women's Care Center has opened centers on a part-time basis. But we don't anymore. Certainly, it is tempting to offer hours that are convenient for volunteers and counselors, but we learned that does not work well.

Pregnant women in crisis don't conveniently come from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. If they come at 4:00 p.m. and we are not open, we lose them. And because in established communities 50%–70% of new clients come from a previous client referral, we lose those referrals as well. **It is important to have competitive hours with the abortion clinics and other resources women have available to them.**

Bottom line, Monday – Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., is the minimum. And evening and/or weekend hours are even better. Our history has taught us that **the most life-saving centers are open 40+ hours a week** to be accessible to more pregnant women and save the most babies.



"I never want Alejandro to feel like I didn't want him.  
**He has brought so much happiness into the house!"**

says Catalina, mom of baby Alejandro shown.





Ultrasound in Elkhart, Indiana

## Ultrasound

### — THE MOST IMPORTANT TOOL

**There is an ideal.** History has shown us that our centers that achieve it have unbelievable success...*sometimes as high as 95%* of their abortion-vulnerable pregnant clients choosing life for their babies.

#### THE GOAL IS THIS:

Every woman (if she has any risk factors for abortion) gets an ultrasound early (by six weeks), preferably at her first visit. To bond with her baby, she also hears her baby's heartbeat.

**The heartbeat makes it real.** We have learned that it is a mistake to delay an ultrasound until 10-12 weeks or withhold a heartbeat. By 10-12 weeks, the vast majority of abortion-minded women have already aborted.

And if a woman is at high risk, frequent (even weekly) scans are important. And for all, if the first scan is early, a second scan at 10-12 weeks helps a woman "fall in love" with her baby.

**Ultrasound not only helps a woman choose life, but also plays a key role in helping her bond with her baby and take steps to have a healthy baby.**



"I was set on abortion...but the **ultrasound changed everything.**

I thought WOW! This is so amazing that, as a woman, I can create life!"  
says Sarah, mom of baby Jack shown.



Crib Club in Chicago, Illinois

## SUPPORT *Every Step* OF THE WAY

When a woman is considering a choice for her pregnancy, it is **important to offer her a path to becoming a successful mother.** **THE PROMISE** that we will be with her every step of the way — *from confirmation of pregnancy until years after birth* — has saved so many babies from abortion.

It is vitally important to provide ongoing education, support and assistance...**after a woman makes a choice for life.**

This is an area for creativity. Get volunteers involved!

Provide counseling, education and classes.

And we offer incentives through our Crib Club (baby “store”).

Women earn cribs, diapers and new baby clothing by participating in education and taking steps to becoming more self-sufficient and nurturing mothers.

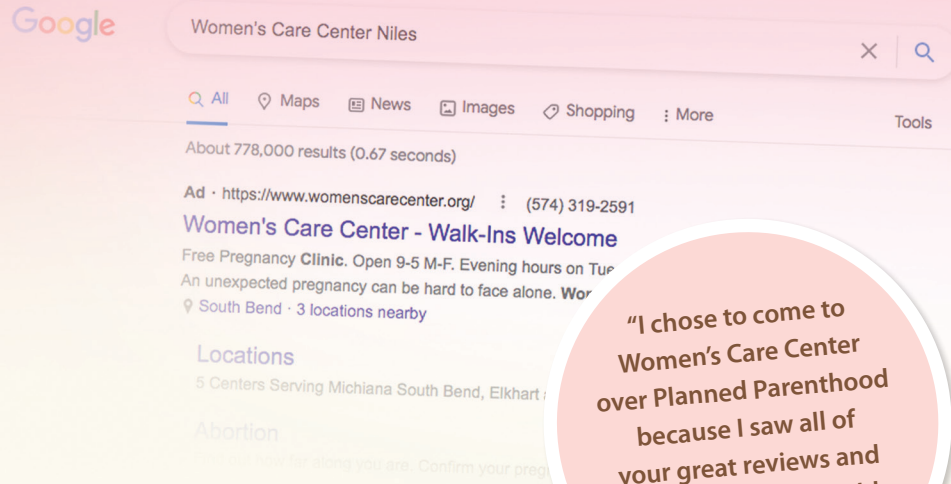


**“When I first came to Women’s Care Center, I was blown away.**

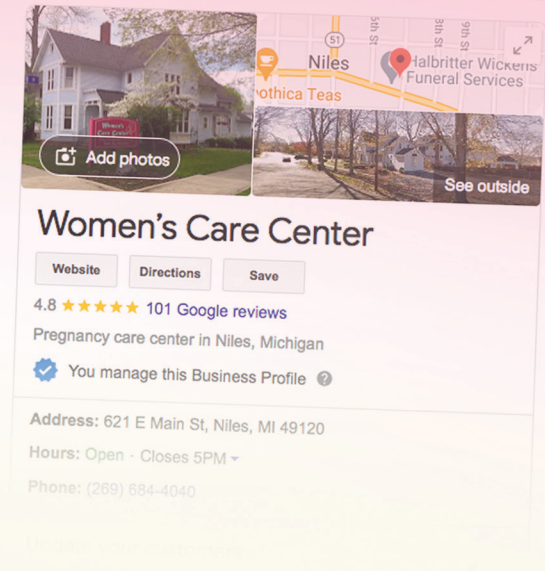
Some moms don’t have the education or the right resources to have a baby,”  
says McKenna, mom of baby Kaia shown.



Niles, Michigan center



"I chose to come to Women's Care Center over Planned Parenthood because I saw all of your great reviews and knew this place would be welcoming."



# Internet

## REACHING OUT MOST EFFECTIVELY

We live in an age where women worried about unplanned pregnancy search the Internet for services helpful to them. With a great location, great sign and great counseling, **there is one more difference maker...** *Internet visibility.*

At Women's Care Center's newest centers, **over 75% of women served come through the Internet.**

It is important that a woman searching for help sees a professionally designed Google+ page for the center that includes 5-star reviews. (Encourage satisfied clients to leave positive reviews.) An investment in paid Google (and other) ads is very cost effective.

Internet is powerful. **It is important that a woman searching "free pregnancy testing" or "abortion" sees our pregnancy center.** This is the best way to help more young women have the opportunity to choose life for their babies.



"If I hadn't gotten an appointment at Women's Care Center first, I would have gone to Planned Parenthood and **I probably would have aborted,**" says Reannin, mom of baby Agnes shown.



La Grange, Illinois center



## ASSEMBLE *Great Advisors*

When Women's Care Center was small and local, but wanting to grow, we received some great advice. A former development leader from the University of Notre Dame advised, *"Get a magnet on your board!"*

"Magnets" are beloved community leaders who are generous with their time and resources, who know people with the capacity to give and who attract others like themselves to this mission. Since then, we shoot high when recruiting new board members.

In every new community, it takes a strong local group of champions to ensure success. Whether this is a formal advisory board, an event committee, a capital campaign committee or just an informal group willing to step out in faith, these are the people that grow this mission. And it would be impossible without them

For this reason, Women's Care Center tries to make participation ***easy***. We don't want to overburden busy and successful people. Meetings are limited to an hour. In between meetings, we strive to keep everyone updated on important things going on at the center, but we don't want to involve them in minor problems and personnel issues. **Instead, we want the focus to be on mission and how best to grow.**



"The great thing about Women's Care Center is that they don't judge people.

***They genuinely care about them and the unborn."***

Lou Holtz, former coach and sportscaster,  
Chicago advisory board member

*(shown with our Volunteer President and Executive Outreach Director).*



Original center as it looks today  
in South Bend, Indiana



## Success RAISES MONEY

In the early days, our mantra was *"We need money, or we might have to close our doors!"* We mistakenly thought desperation was the most important thing to communicate to donors.

However, as time went on, we began to fully understand that **donors are partners**. Without passionate supporters, it would be impossible to save so many moms and babies.

We started meeting with donors personally. We focus on success stories. Proper presentation is crucial. We find talented photographers to take pictures of our clients and skilled graphic designers and writers to professionally prepare all of our appeals and newsletters. And if we have an important new project to save even more babies, we communicate this to donors.

Bottom line...SUCCESS, *properly communicated*, has raised all the money needed. Not extra for sure, but always enough.

It is important to remember...**if not for the involvement of generous donors, this mission would not exist.**



**"I keep thinking of what my life would be like without Women's Care Center.**

**It makes me cry, because I just love this baby so much,"**

**says Kahri, mom of baby Lexzie shown.**



Columbus, Ohio center

ABORTIONS IN  
COLUMBUS HAVE  
DECLINED 58%\*  
SINCE OPENING  
HERE IN 2008.



\*data through 2022

## SUMMING IT *Up!*

It may be surprising to think of a pregnancy center as a “business.”  
But in a way, it is.

After serving **over 350,000** women at Women’s Care Center, we  
have learned some fundamental principles. **It is not good enough  
to have good intentions.** There is something much more important:  
**Results, excellent results!**

This means more women coming through the door.

This means not only helping women choose life,  
*but also helping them create a life.*

This means valued donors who provide the resources needed  
*to save the most moms and most babies from abortion.*

Every community with a Women’s Care Center has seen exceptional  
declines in abortions. The road map is easy to follow. If you want a  
**results-driven ministry that provides the highest impact on  
the life issue,** Women’s Care Center has found the way.



“Now that we’re married, everything is different.

**Before, we were two people  
who loved each other and had a baby.**

**Now, we are a family,”**

says Karla, shown with Brandon and her growing family.



ALL BABIES,  
MOMS AND DADS  
SHOWN ARE  
ACTUAL WOMEN'S  
CARE CENTER  
CLIENTS.

## Women's Care Center Core Values

**"We Bleed Pink!"** — Our woman-centered and life-affirming model is unique, and we are excited about the clear vision we share.

**Radical Hospitality** — We welcome all who walk through our door as though they are family.

**Get It Done Spirit** — We are proactive, solving problems before they become bigger. And no job is too small.

**Servant Leadership** — We listen, love and first try to understand. We lead with humility and joy, mostly through example.

**Growth Minded** — We are fearless and creative in seeking to reach the most women with the best care.

### **TOGETHER, we will reach our 10 YEAR GOAL:**

**to serve 100,000 women a year by 2032.** One woman at a time.

If you want to establish a Women's Care Center in your community, we would be honored to work with you.

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