



SPRING 2017
newsletter

LIFECHOICES
HEALTH  NETWORK

IT TAKES A TEAM

By: Karolyn Schrage, RN BSN, Executive Director

Her petite frame was curled up in a corner in the interview room. Tears rolled down her cheeks. Her dream to come to America had turned into a horrific nightmare, one she never envisioned. She just wanted to make enough money to send back home so her young son could get an education. Her distrust of law enforcement was evident. In her country a woman has no rights; corruption is all that's known. Her story of exploitation was incredulous...

But, our team was ready. By request, our trained medical professionals were present to offer medical services for those victimized through sexual exploitation. The Choices Mobile Medical Unit was stocked with testing and treatment supplies, blankets, food, and go-bags prepared with clothing and hygiene products. Volunteer interpreters were honored to help, a licensed clinical social worker eagerly joined the team, an after-care victim-specialist was enlisted to offer her expertise, and legal assistance was prepared to assist should the need arise. As the Human Services Committee Chair for the SWMO Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition, I was privileged to serve as the Non-Governmental Organization Coordinator of victims' services.



Compassionate, victim-centered care was our focus. The words of Paul in Romans 12 were continuously brought to mind. **"Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of His body."**

One participating law enforcement agency commented, "...we will be successful with this operation, due in no small part to your dedicated team's assistance." Another agency stated, "I just want to say I am very impressed with your organization, the thought, effort and the amount of time you have put into this mission. **Just know, we as law enforcement really appreciate your assistance.**"

It takes a team! To you, our prayer warriors, volunteers, monthly NETWORK partners, our longtime invested friends - we say thank you! Serving students, patients, and victims in southwest Missouri is an honor and only made possible because **you are on our team!**

Blessings,

Karolyn

Karolyn Schrage
Executive Director



A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a dark sweater, is holding a baby wrapped in a dark blanket. She is looking down at the baby with a gentle expression. The background is a solid magenta color.

A PRECIOUS GIFT

By: Susan Wohlenhaus, clinic team member

Manuela* often frequented our clinic. Her name and history were known by several on our team. Her first introduction was at the age of 18, when she visited us with an unplanned pregnancy that she was determined to terminate. After much counsel, Manuela decided to carry and parent that child. Over the next several years, the Choices Medical team would see her through several pregnancies. Not all of them ended with Manuela choosing life. Sometimes her heart was more receptive than other times but with each appointment she was greeted with love and kindness.

At one point Manuela was able to break away from an abusive situation with the father of her children but soon found herself in another

relationship with yet another unplanned pregnancy. She was sure this man would be different and commit to her forever. Within the first trimester of her pregnancy, Manuela quickly learned this relationship was not what she had hoped. Again, she turned to a Choices Medical clinic and sought counsel. Through many conversations and after many prayers, she chose to place this child for adoption. She knew she never wanted to experience the hurt of abortion again.

Through one of our referrals to an adoption agency, Manuela found a loving family for her baby. It was not an easy journey for her but she knew it was the best decision she could make. In time and with counseling, her fear was replaced with acceptance and understanding. After the birth, Manuela wanted to bring her new friends, the adoptive parents, in to meet with the team who had spent time with her throughout her journey. The young couple was precious with the baby and in their interactions with Manuela. The bond was undeniable between the mothers. A forever friendship had been forged. The new mother stated,

“Our family has grown beyond this baby. We are so thankful for Manuela. We have been praying for her since we found out we could not birth a child of our own. She has given us a precious gift.”

As Manuela held the baby, the new parents and I laid hands upon her and prayed, giving thanks to the Perfect Parent for this perfect gift.

*All names changed to protect the confidentiality of our clients.

CHOICES
MEDICAL SERVICES

UNEXPECTED JOURNEYS:

LifeChoices Assists with Services for Trafficking Victims

The call was unexpected, but we knew we had to respond. At the request of FBI Victim Services, our mobile unit team was called into action to provide confidential, compassionate and essential sexual health services in the Kansas City area. **Operation Cross Country X is a collaborative law enforcement effort to identify and rescue potential victims of human trafficking.**

For two days our team worked tirelessly alongside law enforcement and trauma specialists throughout the greater Kansas City area. The investigation led to the **RESCUE OF FIVE TEENS AND FOUR WOMEN**, as well as the arrests of 12 alleged pimps and 14 alleged johns. Many of those rescued accessed the medical services provided by our team and



expressed deep appreciation for the loving and compassionate response.

We are honored and humbled to serve in this way, not only in Joplin but also throughout the state. Thank you for making the mobile unit and all it accomplishes a reality!



FBI sex trafficking raids in Kansas City area lead to recovery of five teens, four women



LET'S HIT THE LINKS!

Last year's golf tournament was such a great time, and our biggest success yet!



We had 70 players participate and over \$9,000 was raised! Will you add to the fun and join us on the course this year?

Links for Life 2017 will be a four-person scramble and is going to be held at 1:00 on Friday, April 28th at Carthage Municipal Golf Course. The day will include a pre-round lunch, team gifts, door prizes, friendly competition – and a good time for all! Registration is \$400 per team and space is limited, so begin gathering your team now! **We hope to see you out on the course!**

REGISTER YOUR TEAM

Visit www.lifechoices.org/golf or call Jordynn at 417.623.0131

P.S. There are still a few spots open for hole sponsors – this is a fun and easy way to show your support for LifeChoices and to gain exposure to the 70+ players on the course!





EQUIPPING MOM & DAD

By: Clarke Cayton, Intervention Services Director

LifeChoices' parenting classes extend the impact of our ministry beyond the rooms of our three clinics, by offering ongoing practical support for young families. In 2017, our prenatal education classes have expanded from 4-week sessions to 8-week sessions! **Since the addition of our men's advocacy services, father participation is up to 90%!** We are so privileged to have pediatricians, embryologists, and physician's assistants that volunteer their time to train up the next generation of new moms and dads.

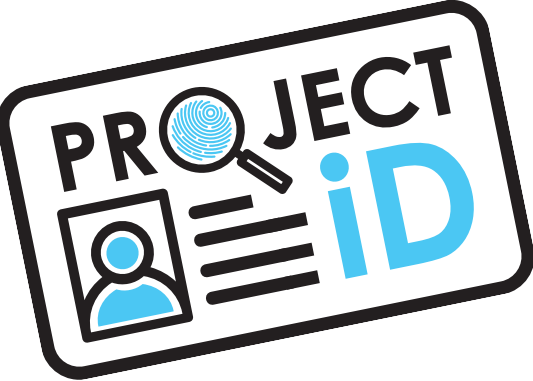
In addition to Prenatal Education, we also offer a 4-week class called Basic Parenting Skills, where many of our class participants are referred to us by the judicial system as they are working case goals for family reunification. Recently we had one couple that immediately began to show an amazing transformation as they applied the skills learned in this class. Even after the class concluded, they requested ongoing training and support. **After 4 months of investment, they were reunified with their four children!** It was an amazing accomplishment. LifeChoices was able to celebrate their hard work and success by blessing them with a special family dinner.

We are excited to be rolling out our new Practical Fatherhood class this year! As you know, we are convinced that dads are just as important as moms in the lives of their children. We want to further our investment in young men by equipping them to step into fatherhood with confidence. Most of our clients have not grown up with dads that they could look up to and deeply fear repeating the mistakes they experienced in their childhood. **We believe every man has it in him to be a great dad; they just need someone in their corner to show them the way.** These classes are free to attend and open to anyone in the community.

FOR MORE
INFORMATION
ON
UPCOMING
CLASSES

CONTACT
CLARKE AT
417.623.0131





Exciting growth is on the horizon for our school-based education programs! This fall we will pilot a brand new program, created by the LifeChoices team, for 5th and 6th graders at Carthage Middle School!

Project ID is a 5-day, pre-teen risk-avoidance and empowerment program. Our curricula are medically accurate, culturally relevant and age-appropriate. Throughout the 5 days students will learn about basic puberty, self-concept, decision making, problem solving skills, how to have healthy relationships, and how to create boundaries in relationships

and on the web. Students will be taught using interactive lessons, group activities and games, and take-home exercises that will encourage conversations with parents and trusted adults.

The goal of Project ID is to empower pre-teens to make healthy choices about life, friendships, their own self-care and safety by equipping them with tools to overcome the growing risks facing their generation.

In light of the changing youth culture, we are impassioned to stand in the gap with families and educators in protecting, equipping and empowering our children. We are honored to partner with the Carthage community and school district in bringing this new program to their students this year!



LINKS FOR LIFE GOLF TOURNAMENT

Our 4th Annual Golf Tournament is right around the corner! Visit www.lifevoices.org/golf to register today!



CHANGE FOR LIFE BABY BOTTLE PROJECT

We'll soon begin making plans for this year's baby bottle project! For more information contact Jordynnn at 417.623.0131 or to register your church, business, or group to participate please visit us online at www.lifevoices.org/events



SAVE THE DATE! ANNUAL BANQUET

More information to come soon!

EXCITING NEW EVENT!

WHITE BASS FISHING TOURNAMENT

For the first time ever, LifeChoices will be hosting a White Bass Fishing Tournament on July 29th. Keep checking www.lifevoices.org/fishing or call Jordynnn at 417.623.0131 for more information on sponsorship and registration details!



LIFECHOICES

HEALTH + NETWORK

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Want to receive our monthly updates?
Sign up for emails at lifechoices.org/getinvolved



SAVE THE DATE

MOTHER'S DAY, MAY 14TH

THROUGH

FATHERS DAY, JUNE 18TH

2017

BABY BOTTLE PROJECT!

Contact Jordynn at 417.623.0131 for more
information on how your church, family,
business, or organization can get involved!

