

# SUMMER NEWSLETTER



# RIGHT ON

# Track

Karolyn Schrage, Executive Director

In her book *Right on Track*, five-time Olympic medalist Sanya Richards-Ross encourages readers to face wins and losses with grace and faith, to set goals that keep focused on the finish line, and to be true to yourself under pressure.

The repercussions of the recent global pandemic could have easily deterred LifeChoices over the last 18 months. At times we have had to pivot quickly in order to run through the ongoing chaos and confusion, continuing to **courageously head for the finish line** ahead of us. At LifeChoices we know that the ultimate race has already been won, and when we run our own race with this in mind, we can delight even in the midst of the hardest laps. **The services at LifeChoices have continued full steam ahead. Our mission is as strong as ever to empower individuals to make healthy life choices through education and medical services.**

We have equipped our team for whatever hurdles come our way and we work hard to securely pass the baton between our departments and provide holistic care for our community. Our Prevention Services department works with students in 14 area school districts to address the potentially harmful outcomes of unhealthy choices. We share candidly about healthy relationship skills, internet safety, and predatory grooming. We also offer a powerful hand-off to our medical clinics for those who may need it. Our Choices Medical Services teams bind up those needing help with sexual health concerns, such as



unplanned pregnancies or sexually transmitted infections. We ready ourselves for referrals from our medical team and local law enforcement agencies to provide Victim Services when an individual discloses she is being trafficked or is found in a potentially dangerous situation. Because of you, Amani Landing will soon be available to provide a warm shower, hot meal, medical care, and the comfort of temporary safety as we help women establish long-term plans for recovery. For clients needing ongoing assistance, we hand the baton to our Extension Services department which offers material resources as well as online education about parenting, budgeting, fatherhood, and so much more.

**As our race moves forward, we are excited to invite you to join us at this year's annual banquet as we cheer together for all that God is doing through the incredible work of LifeChoices!**

Barring further pandemic risks, we are planning a joyous celebration at

**Victory Ministry and Sports Complex on  
Tuesday, October 5th**

with none other than **special guest Sanya Richards-Ross**, who will be sharing her inspiring testimony with us all. You will not be disappointed!

**REGISTER TODAY TO JOIN US AT THIS SPECIAL  
EVENT BY VISITING  
[WWW.LIFEVOICES.ORG/BANQUET](http://WWW.LIFEVOICES.ORG/BANQUET)**



**KEEPING KIDS**

**SAFE IN A**

**DIGITAL WORLD.**

Chelsea Delgado, Prevention Services Director

Standing at the front of a classroom, the shift in attitude is not only obvious but tangible as I watch students' eyes open wide, their phones forgotten on the table, and their hands raising with questions. "Human trafficking" is a term we have heard often in the last few years, but there are still many misconceptions surrounding what it is and who it affects.

LifeChoices has been teaching students about human trafficking and abuse for over five years, but we now have more data than ever to share with students and their parents in our efforts to keep them safe.

One of the first questions we often get from students is "why are we learning about this?" For many, they believe that human trafficking only happens in other countries, big cities, or to someone else. However, recent data from the regional Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force tells us that this continues to be a growing issue in our area. Last year, nearly **1,000 new investigations** were opened, largely due to the increase in time that students were spending online during the COVID-19 pandemic. National statistics also tell us that **many survivors of trafficking were recruited between ages 9-14**, often through the internet via phone apps and social media. These local and national trends have confirmed our team's convictions that it is increasingly important to come alongside students and their families to offer education about internet safety and how to identify risky situations.

During the last year and a half, students have been online more than ever. Some students in our Compass and Project ID classes have reported spending an average of **14 hours per day utilizing the internet!** In addition to continuing to educate students about healthy relationship skills, we have also increased our education about internet safety, human trafficking, and predatory grooming. We have also recently had more opportunities than ever to partner with local school districts through assemblies, worksheets, and take-home lessons designed to complement our longstanding programs and provide more in-depth education on these increasingly important topics.

Our goal at LifeChoices has always been, and continues to be, to connect students with their parents and other safe adults, while also providing them with resources to help empower them to make healthy life choices regarding healthy relationships. Thank you for helping us provide this very necessary education for more than 20 years, and for your continued support in the years to come!

# FROM THE CLASSROOMS TO THE CLINICS...



The young man on the clinic helpline seemed nervous as he specifically requested an appointment with Jared\*...

Jared works as a presenter for the Compass program that LifeChoices provides in area schools, as well as volunteers as a Client Advocate at one of our medical clinics.

Ricky is a student at a local high school and he shared that the information presented to him during his 10-day Compass class was highly influential in his decision to schedule an appointment for STD testing. Ricky recalled that Jared had encouraged the class to seek out our Choices Medical Services clinics if they were ever in need of a safe space to discuss concerns about their sexual health.

When Ricky arrived for his appointment, he seemed relieved to connect with Jared again. They visited about his current relationship and past choices. They also had a long conversation about spiritual beliefs and Ricky continued to contact Jared for several weeks after his appointment.

**From the classroom to the clinic, LifeChoices is making an incredible impact in the lives of our youth.**

The connections made through the Prevention Services department at LifeChoices give direction and hope to young people – empowering students to make healthy choices for life! For many, all they need is for someone to

believe in them and share with them about the power of healthy choices for their future.

Proverbs 11:14 states, **“Without good direction, people lose their way, the more wise counsel you follow, the better your chances.”**

This verse is an inspiring confirmation that our acts of pouring wise counsel into our youth will reap better lifelong outcomes for all. But stories like this are only possible because of you. Your investment is crucial in our ability to continue building relationships with young people, from the classrooms to the clinics.

**Would you consider joining LifeChoices with a mid-year gift in order to see that even more students receive empowering education and compassionate medical care?** Enclosed you will find a pledge card and return envelope addressed to LifeChoices. You may also partner with LifeChoices through an online gift at [www.lifevoices.org/donate](http://www.lifevoices.org/donate).

We appreciate your consideration of this request. Your generosity is impacting lives for generations to come!

\*Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

# A MOTHER'S LOVE

Hillary Patrick, Client Services Director

Lauren\* came to the clinic scared and overwhelmed, seeking information about abortion. She appeared physically emotional and nervous as she shared about her boyfriend with her volunteer Client Advocate.

Lauren had visible bruises on her face and as her appointment continued, her Client Advocate became concerned about her safety. In a quiet moment alone, the volunteer advocate asked Lauren if she was in a safe relationship. Lauren quickly deflected the question, stating that her bruises were caused by a recent car accident. When Lauren left our clinic that day, the team was unsure of the decision she would make about her pregnancy. A few weeks later, Lauren shared that she had chosen to parent her baby and she was excited to welcome a little girl in the months to come!

Several weeks went by when Lauren unexpectedly called our clinic helpline early one morning. She shared that she had been severely assaulted by her boyfriend and was soon to have an emergency c-section. She was all alone and incredibly scared. But she knew who to call...

Lauren's Client Advocate was delighted to walk through this journey with her and quickly rushed to meet Lauren at the hospital. As they sat together through the pre-operation processes, her c-section, and then her recovery, Lauren began to open up about her past. She freely shared about her abusive relationship and substance addiction, and she voiced that she needed to make healthier choices for her future and her children.

**That day, Lauren decided to make an adoption plan for her new baby girl.** Our team referred her to an adoption agency who was then able to assist Lauren with choosing the perfect family for her little girl.

This long-time partner agency recently shared, "Choices Medical lives up to its name. When clients visit Choices, they are provided with information regarding their pregnancy options, not just the option of parenting their child, but also the option of adoption. I appreciate and respect the way they show compassion, respect, and serve as an advocate for all."

We were honored to play a small role in Lauren's incredible parenting and adoption story. Thank you so much for your partnership and support for young girls like her.

\*Names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of our clients.



# '21 LINKS FOR LIFE WAS A HUGE HIT!

**Thank you for making Links for Life 2021 our best golf tournament ever!**

We had a full field of 26 teams, with over **100 men and women** coming out to show support for LifeChoices! **Over \$14,000** was raised for continued services in Carthage, Joplin, and the surrounding areas. We are thankful for everyone who braved the weather and joined us on the links for this special event.

We also want to share a special thank you to everyone who helped make Links for Life such a success, and a special thank you to the following underwriters. Because of their partnership, **every registration fee went directly to client and student services!**

We cannot do what we do without your support and partnership. Thank you!

**Save the date to join us on the links again next year for our special**

**10TH ANNIVERSARY TOURNAMENT**  
**Friday, April 15th, 2022!**

**Thank You to All Our Sponsors**

**Title Sponsor:** Troy & Jenny Richards

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## **ANNUAL LIFECHOICES BANQUET**

For more information, please contact Jordynn at 417-623-0131 or visit [www.lifevoices.org/banquet!](http://www.lifevoices.org/banquet)



## **TREE OF LIFE**

Tree of Life is a fun and easy way to celebrate the Christmas season by blessing a family and their new baby with material gifts. For more information or to register your church or organization, contact Kim at 417-623-0131.



## **'22 LINKS FOR LIFE GOLF TOURNAMENT**

Save the date to join us on the links for our special 10th-anniversary golf tournament!

## **- VOLUNTEER TRAINING -**

Want to make an impact? LifeChoices now offers ongoing training opportunities for anyone interested in getting involved with our school, medical, or client programs. For more information, please contact Hillary at 417-623-0131.

# LIFECHOICES HEALTH NETWORK

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## YOUR CHANGE CHANGES LIVES!

Thank you for your incredible support of this important initiative! You have already raised over **\$65,000** so far!

Visit [www.lifevoices.org/changeforallife](http://www.lifevoices.org/changeforallife) to view ongoing updates from this event.