

A newsletter published by The Bridge to Life, a pregnancy resource center serving woman and children in need since 1992.

Our Mission: *To provide informative, honest and compassionate counseling to empower women dealing with pregnancy about their options, as well as extend hands of help through material assistance in order for them to raise their child.*

We are about Saving Lives

The Bridge to Life's number one goal though is to help pregnant women who are abortion-minded choose life.

During my sixteenth day on the job, September 1st, we got a call from a 24-year-old woman from South America who was quite sure she was pregnant. She had been living in Queens for about a year.

She lived just three blocks away from my new home. So I volunteered to be her chauffeur to wherever she needed to go for help that day. While in my car, I overheard one cell phone conversation in my car in which her boyfriend threatened to break up with her if she didn't have an abortion. But I think the counseling she received that day from our Executive Director, Ginny Gallo, and our President, Cathy Donohoe (both volunteers) made the difference. She hugged Ginny as she left our Flushing office. Ginny confirmed on two occasions in the following weeks that she decided to keep the child.



Ginny and Cathy

Angelica Harris, the author of several books including her memoir, Living with Rage: A Quest for Solace, has recently agreed to become a volunteer counselor with The Bridge to help abortion-minded women choose life. Her compelling story starts on this page.

The Bridge desperately needs more volunteers like Ginny, Cathy and Angela. I urge you to seriously consider using your talents and resources to help us in any way you can. Please feel free to discuss your ideas with me by calling our Flushing office.

Michael Schaefer, Director of Development and Communications

To Be of Good Counsel - Finding a Voice to Heal a Soul

Have you ever been molested by someone you knew? Has someone you loved ever tried to kill you? Have you ever been raped? For me, the answers are an enraged "Yes!".

I am the victim/survivor of domestic and sexual abuse in my youth. My uncle, a 30-year old man, molested me for 2 years, from the time I was 11 until I was 13. My mother was schizophrenic; she beat me until my back hurt and tried to kill herself and me on 3 different occasions. I never knew what love really was, and at 19, I ran into the arms of a man I trusted, who abused me, raped me, and left me pregnant. Fearing my mother's mental tirades, and knowing that if I told her that I was pregnant, she would beat me and try to kill me again, I sought and obtained an abortion in my 13th week of my pregnancy. One year later, I attempted suicide. If it weren't for a friend name Angela, I would not be writing this article now.

Today, with the grace of God, I am here. I am a medieval historian who has proudly written three novels about King Arthur, and in book one, The Quest of Excalibur, my time travelling character, Arianna, reveals her rape to King Arthur, with the help of Merlin. It took all I had to unleash this pain I had hidden for 25 years. After giving speaking engagements about my writing and being asked questions about my rape, it took the encouragement of my publisher to write my memoir, Living with Rage: A Quest for Solace. Writing my memoir helped me to heal, and now I also work with many community and domestic violence organizations to bring awareness to these horrific human issues.

In 2005, after raising a special needs son, I founded the Excalibur Reading Program, a literacy and arts program dedicated to aiding children with special needs and helping all children with homework support and educational enrichment. Today, we have over 50 students from all backgrounds coming for tutoring and we also support their parents with their children's educational needs. I love my students and their families and work long hours to assist them.

As though I do not have enough on my plate, I have been longing to get out of my office and work with young women who have been, and are, going through what I did when I was young. October is always a bad month for me; it was on October 20 that I had my abortion 38 years ago. I was born and raised Catholic, and aborting my child was a major blemish on my soul for years. Even though I repented, I never forgave myself, and I must have confessed my abortion in the confessional 100 times. Finally, one day last October, I just broke down and spoke to my friend and pastor, Fr. John Fullum, from Sacred Heart Church in Glendale. Fr. Fullum is a wise man and helped me to forgive myself. In a special ceremony, he helped me to spiritually baptize and name my child. I chose Michael for a boy or Michaela for a girl. It took 37 years to finally forgive myself, but now, I know that I have an angel in Heaven looking down on his mother. I look up to the heavens now and say, "I love you Michael."

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The Bridge Establishes Partnership with Jamaica's New Beginnings Centers of Hope

Oh how good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity." - Psalms 133:1

I know the blessing expressed in this scripture firsthand. I am a Registered Nurse. A few years ago, the Lord called me to create a center where women facing unintended pregnancies and abortion could go to receive help and healing. I communicated this call and explained the abysmal abortion statistics for NYC as a whole and African Americans in particular to my Bishop, Roderick R. Caesar, of Bethel Gospel Tabernacle. I also explained that according to the most current statistics (2009 NYC Vital statistics) in the zip code where our church resides, sixty percent of the pregnancies ended in abortion.

After hearing this, my Bishop allowed me to speak to our church on Sanctity of Human Life Sunday in 2013 and conduct a baby bottle campaign to raise money for the center. In three months, we raised \$15,000, received a \$5,000 grant from Care Net and a generous \$2,500 gift from Assembly of God of Center Moriches.

In December of 2014, we used these blessings to acquire and prepare a site for our center's services. God's faithfulness to His call is real! In 2015, we were further blessed to meet Cathy Donohoe from the Bridge to Life at a wonderful pro-life seminar hosted by Father Peter Pilsner and Chaplain Viviana from NY Life Team. Cathy and I conversed for about seven minutes, but it felt like we had known each other for a long time. When she heard of our endeavors and our need of an ultrasound machine, she became our prayer partner and advocate.

Continued on page 2

To Be of Good Counsel—continued from page 1

On October 3rd at St. Mary's of Winfield Church in Woodside, I had the privilege to meet another Michael from The Bridge to Life, who spoke about his work with the organization to help women and girls in crisis to choose life for their child, by helping them to provide for their child's needs. After mass, I shared my story with Michael. He asked if I would be a counselor for girls just like me. I admit that a strange feeling of dread hit the pit of my stomach, but later, I realized that God was giving me a chance to help those who are in dire straits as I was, and feel that there is no way out of their situation.

I now know that there is a way out. With the help of many people through the years, therapists, my priest, and the women who have read my memoir and told me that I helped them to heal from their pain, I have learned to believe in myself. I have come to know that there is a light and a God at the end of the tunnel, and even if the world is at war with you, God is there to help you - all the time.

It is with this conviction that I am able to say "Yes" to The Bridge to Life, and come on board to help girls just like I was, girls who are hurting and feel as though there is no one who cares. I care, and God cares!

The motto of my memoir is, "The only thing more powerful than rage ... is a voice." My soul was always enraged from my past, and it took years for me to find solace.

If I can be the voice of a girl in trouble and help her to make the right and just decision to save her baby and ultimately save herself at the same time, then I am here. I thank God first, and then Michael, for inviting me to share my story with these women, to let them know that there is a voice for them out there, and that, with me, they will never be alone.

Angelica Harris

You can learn more about Angelica's books, programs and initiatives by visiting www.excaliburreadingprogram.org or contact Angela Albergo at info@excaliburreadingprogram.org to schedule an interview or speaking engagement.

The Bridge's New Partnership—continued from page 1

In October, we received a site visit from Father Michael Gelfant and Christian Rada of the Brooklyn Diocese. These two gentlemen were just as warm and amiable as Cathy and just as willing to help. Their impromptu visit resulted in the acquisition of a \$67,000 ultrasound machine. God confirms His call again! I am so grateful to have met Cathy and Julia Chitos, The Bridge's Vice President.

I had no idea that this vital organization provides numerous services that are complementary to the ones we will be providing. I am excited by this new discovery and look forward to working with The Bridge to bring hope, healing and a culture of life back to our city.

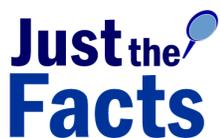
*Alecia Jones, RN, BSN
Executive Director
New Beginnings Centers of Hope*



Angelica



Alecia



In 2014, our Material Assistance program volunteers in Flushing and Astoria served 4,596 people while The Bridge's program expenses comprised 92% of all expenses. We could not achieve this without all of our wonderful volunteers in Flushing and Astoria.

Insights of a Volunteer Regarding Our Material Assistance Program

As a volunteer at The Bridge to Life, I am thankful for the many individuals who donate new or gently used clothing, carriages, cribs, car seats and other essential items. Their generosity enables The Bridge to assist nearly one hundred women and children in need on a weekly basis.

A new mother who was recently discharged from the hospital will call The Bridge asking for newborn essentials such as diapers, clothing or a crib. The Bridge is able to supply her with these necessities through the donations received.

The Bridge also provides warm winter jackets and clothing for children from birth up to size 14. When the client receives the items she is requesting, she is temporarily relieved of the constant stress of worrying about providing for her family. The client is told that she may return to The Bridge for more materials assistance as her needs require.

The recycling of clothes, baby carriages, high chairs, car seats, etc. not only bring peace and happiness to our clients, but is also protecting the environment.

I believe that only good is coming forward from this program at The Bridge to Life.

Eleanor Malone

The Bridge Welcomes Samantha, Our New Office Manager

Hi! My name is Samantha Rodriguez. I am Puerto Rican and French. I am 25 years old. My mom always taught me how to be a strong, independent woman. I had my son, Jesiah, at 20 years old so it was time to grow up and be an adult. Jesiah likes to dance, act, play music and is filled with so much joy, love and happiness. Having my son was the best day of my life. He changed my whole life around. Raising him has made me a better woman.

Being a single mom at the age of 25 is not easy but I always try to stay positive. I always push myself to stay focused because it's not easy living in New York.



Jesiah and Samantha



"Human society must protect its children—yes, but prenatal care is most essential! The child-to-be, as yet not called into being, has rights no less imperative." - Margaret Sanger, founder of Planned Parenthood (1925)

In 2013, Planned Parenthood performed 327,653 abortions.



The Bridge to Life

www.thebridgetolife.org

Staff

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Our Board of Directors

Catherine Donohoe, MS, RN, *President*
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Center Locations

147-32 Sanford Ave., 2nd Floor, Flushing, NY 11355
718-463-1810
23-40 Astoria Boulevard, Astoria, NY 11102
718-274-3577

Requested Donations

Layette items: hooded towels & infant gowns
Infant clothing, 0-6 months especially boys (not 0-3 months)
Toddler clothing: sizes 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Diapers: sizes 1—6
Strollers and cribs (no drop down sides)
Infant car seats which are no greater than five years old
Stretchies (boys and girls)

Items can be new or gently used condition

Please call our Flushing/Astoria office before dropping off donations to ensure someone is there to receive them.

Upcoming Events

November 22 - Brendan Flynn runs the Philly Marathon to benefit TBTL (gofundme.com/runforbridgetolife)

December 1 - Msgr. Dillon Knights of Columbus pasta dinner to benefit The Bridge to Life

April 17 - The Bridge's annual Gala Dinner Dance (see back page for details)

Your employer might double your donation!

Many employers sponsor matching gift programs to match charitable contributions made by their employees. Gifts from employees' spouses and retirees may also qualify for a match. Please inquire at your employer's human resources department or contact The Bridge for assistance.

Baby Bottle Boomerang

Pregnancy resource centers like The Bridge raise lots of money through a simple fundraiser called a Baby Bottle Boomerang. Volunteers decorate baby bottles which serve as collection cans. These bottles are handed out at your church, school, civic organization or employer. For more information on how you can help The Bridge raise money in this manner, please contact our Flushing office.

Volunteers Wanted

Pregnancy Counselors (training provided)

Junior Board Members

Public Speakers

Dinner Dance Committee Members

Development Assistants

Office Technology Manager

Only 3% of people who are pro-life know where their local pregnancy resource center is located. To learn more about how you can help, please contact Michael at our Flushing office.

Our Summer Sunshine (Donors from 7/1/15—9/30/15)

Maria Altamuro	Albert & Catherine Donohoe	KPMG (matching gift)
Thomas Van Arsdale	Kathleen R. Easton	Ruth Larosa
Brooklyn Dioc. Union/Holy Name	Anne E. Foell	Joseph & Gloria Scarola
David Buckmaster	Kevin & Linda Goodspeed	Anthony & Lucy Scipione
Rita Cassaro	Maureen Kalnberg	Jennie & Floretta Stuart
Jian Chang	Janet Keogan	Mario & Fanny Tucciarone
Stephen & Dorothy Damato	Knights of Columbus #5872	Councilman Eric Ulrich
Sharon Doerrbecker	Knights of Columbus #12675	Thomas G. Young
Christine Donofrio	Councilman Peter Koo	Marcianne Ziegler

Churches/Baby Bottle Campaigns

Holy Family
Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament
Resurrection Ascension
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran
St. John The Baptist
St. Josaphat
St. Kevin
St. Teresa
St. Theresa Guild St. Francis of Paola

A Special Student's Letter to her Teacher

One person I admire is my Nona. I admire all the hard work she does for The Bridge to Life, an organization that helps women keep their babies. They help by giving them counseling before the baby comes. They also help by giving them clothing, diapers and things like cribs, car seats and high chairs. They also help all other children in the family receive clothing until they are ten years old.

My Nona is their Vice President. She goes to different communities and speaks about The Bridge to Life. She asks people to donate their clothing and things once they no longer need them. She also helps run fundraisers which help make money for The Bridge to Life.

I admire my Nona for everything she does to help save babies in our community.

Dara (Julia Chitos' granddaughter)

5th Grade Student

Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament School

The Bridge to Life wishes to thank Lana K. Karim of Michigan for her assistance with this newsletter.

FALL 2015

The BRIDGE
to
LIFE Inc.

147-32 Sanford Avenue 2nd Floor
Flushing, NY 11355

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Like us on Facebook, love us on Twitter and LinkedIn



Save the Date

The Bridge To Life's 24th Annual Dinner Dance

Celebrating 24 years of serving women & children



Sunday, April 17, 2016

2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Leonard's Palazzo

555 Northern Boulevard, Great Neck

To volunteer on our Planning Committee, please contact us!