

For the NEXT GENERATION – 2023 Fundraising Banquet

Executive Director Rose Condra – Ministry Update

Psalm 78:2-7 says, “I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old, things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us. We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell **the next generation** the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, His power, and the wonders He has done. He decreed statues for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which He commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so **the next generation** would know them, **even the children yet to be born**, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget His deeds but would keep His commands.”

At CHOICES - We are Pressing In, we are Pressing On, and we are Being Present for THE NEXT GENERATION – Like Layton.

He dribbled down the court, pulled up for a three-point shot, and hung in the air for mere seconds. Eighteen years earlier, his very life was hanging in the balance. Layton is the child of a brave teen mom. When Megan walked into our first tiny office on University Woods Drive, her internal struggle was evident on her face and in her body language.

Pressing in with the truth of God’s love is how we save lives, both in our time, and for eternity. God does not make mistakes and He has a plan for every child, no matter the circumstances surrounding conception or the age of the parents.

Though Layton has been a dedicated and talented high school basketball player, he probably will never get to play in the NBA. He may not even get college scholarships. What he will get, and what he has gotten for the past 18 years, are chances to make a difference, and a chance to grow up to know Jesus.

Layton is the first baby born through the ministry of CHOICES. I keep this picture on my desk to be reminded of why we do what we do. Layton will graduate from high school in just a few weeks. The most recent baby saved through the ministry of CHOICES will be born in a couple of months. In between these two are hundreds of middle schoolers, grade schoolers, preschoolers, and infants – now with the chance to hear about the Lord’s praiseworthy deeds, not the least of which was knitting them together in their mother’s womb. For clients like Megan, we are Pressing in For the Next Generation.

We are Pressing On for the Next Generation by equipping young new pro-life leaders, staff and volunteers. I’ve been a part of CHOICES for 19 years. I know this will surprise some of you, but I’m not really getting any younger. One of our young staff members, not sweet Emma, is still employed even though she repeatedly refers to me as Gram Gram and mocks the font and brightness on my cell phone. Now there are thirteen staff members (of various ages, none of whom are actually getting younger). Additionally, over 100 others give of their time and talent to serve as volunteers. Many volunteers are my elders but some, like Emma, are young and just entering their years in the Lord’s service. Those of us with a few more gray hairs have the privilege of raising up the Next Generation, equipping and encouraging them to Press On in the effort to make abortion unthinkable and to support parents in our community. You’ll hear Emma’s story about Pressing On in the video as well.

Added to the hundreds of babies saved from the horror of abortion through CHOICES, are thousands of families supported in their parenting journey. As I said before, the circumstances of a child’s conception and the age of the parents do not determine the child’s value. One of the most beautiful things I get to see as the Director of CHOICES is to witness our advocates Being Present for parents whose circumstances are less than ideal.

Though all the young families we see live in an information flood from media, many live in a desert when it comes to positive parenting. Our StepUp Parenting Resource Program, including our StepUp Fatherhood is

lifesaving and affirming to parents of all ages and walks of life, even those with great family support, like Maddie and Landon. The addition of our faithful advocates, Being Present with them on the journey is invaluable. You'll hear this in their own words.

In terms of ministry, 2022 was definitely a roller coaster. We started the year with a vision to open two satellite centers, and a need to relocate our Corydon office. All those projects started early in the year. Then came June 24 – the day the Supreme Court announced the Dobbs decision. Some of the staff were in a van on our way to a Pro-Life Women's Retreat at the very time the decision was announced.

The previously-mentioned sassy young staff member was keeping tabs on SCOTUS on her phone. At 10:10, she read the ruling, Roe is Gone! We all applauded, we shouted, we laughed, and we cried. Some, like me, repented, because we doubted we'd ever see the end of Roe in our lifetimes. It was a monumental moment. But we also knew it was the end of one fight and the beginning of 50 more, as each state would now be faced with protecting pre-born children, or protecting the abortion industry. We prayed for Indiana and Kentucky to stand for life. As laws in these states were flying around like mad in KY and IN, women with unplanned pregnancies were desperately looking for help. We were here to answer their calls – just like we have been for 19 years. The volume of fearful and determined clients was unlike anything we'd ever seen on our side of the river. All these circumstances led to a record 85 precious babies being saved through the ministry of CHOICES last year. And this year, our client numbers are up 30% and we have had over 50 babies born already! While we believe that pro-life laws are good and righteous, despite any laws, unplanned pregnancies will continue. So, we will continue to do what we've always done – offering love and support to families in need – Pressing In, Pressing On, and Being Present for the Next Generation.

In all of the chaos and uncertainty, the Lord has grown our borders to now include five counties. As we started 2022 with plans for adding Clark and Crawford Counties, those goals were accomplished with the partnership of two churches. The Lord also opened a door for a great location with nearly double the square footage in Corydon. He provided great landlords, financial resources, a phenomenal Visionary Board, and a great contractor and our new space opened in August.

Across all locations we were able to serve 783 individuals in 2022. So far in 2023, we have served over 450 and had 43 women change their view on abortion. We are also seeing more dads and our fatherhood mentors are empowering the next generation of dads across Southern Indiana.

I'm wondering, are you ever afraid to say something good out loud because you're afraid of a "jinx." No, I don't actually believe in a jinx or knocking on wood. But I have been hesitant to say this out loud. As of the beginning of March, all open staff positions are filled at CHOICES. Wayne, our Board Chair, always uses this analogy. He says we need to get the right folks on the bus and get them each in their right seats. I'm here to report tonight that the CHOICES bus is going places. We have the right people and they are each rocking their respective seats. However, there are still lots of empty seats for new volunteers. Where is the CHOICES bus going, you ask?

We are going wherever the Lord leads. Right now He has given us a vision for preparing clients for the next steps in their parenting journey with a new Step Forward program for clients with children aging out of our program, helping them gain even more self-sufficiency. We are growing the Step Up Fatherhood Program with new curriculum and resources to help dads be successful outside the walls of CHOICES. We are also discerning what our presence in Clark and Crawford Counties will look like long term.

Also, we are looking to freshen up our New Albany office, which is the is the flagship of the ministry. This 9,000 square foot space has been our very busy home since 2012. Thousands of families have been served on Charlestown Road and we just signed another lease extension to continue to serve there. In the time we've occupied this office, we've completed three other buildings (two in Corydon and one in Salem) and added two Satellite centers. Over the next few months, we are preparing to make some updates. We believe everything we do in our centers is a reflection of the excellence of God's character and having

lovely, fresh, inviting spaces helps clients feel welcomed from the first impression. The New Albany office is showing its age and your gifts tonight can help renew and refresh for the hundreds of moms and dads and babies who will come through the doors this year and in the years to come.

In closing tonight I want to read some words to an older song by the group 4 Him. It is called For Future Generations.

The signs are obvious, they are everywhere
 All that we hear about is the gloom and despair
 Too many would be prophets saying
 It's the end of it all
 'Cause mother earth can't take much more
 The hammer's gonna fall
 So nature has its needs, that's a lesson learned
 But it appears to me there are greater concerns
 'Cause we can save the planet
 Thinkin' we will somehow survive
 But father time is calling us

To save somebody's life

So I won't bend and I won't break
 I won't water down my faith
 I won't compromise in a world of desperation
 What has been I cannot change
 But for tomorrow and today

I must be a light for future generations

If we could find a way to preserve our faith
 So those who follow us
 See the price that was paid
 Then maybe when they question
 What it's gonna take to survive
 They'll find the strength to carry on
 In what we leave behind

Lookin' in the eyes of the children
 Knowing that tomorrow is at stake
 When the choice is up to them
 Will they have the strength to say

We won't bend and we won't break
 We won't water down our faith
 We won't compromise in a world of desperation
 What has been we cannot change
 For tomorrow and today

We must be a light for future generations

The testimony video you are about to see depicts the ministry of CHOICES as we Press In, Press On, and are Present For the Next Generation. Now, on behalf of the 450 individuals who received help so far this year, the thousands in previous years, and the thousands yet to come, I'd like to say Thank You for your faithfulness to the next generation.