

## Did you hear our big news? We're moving!



In case you missed the news in our Christmas letter—after 35 years of renting, God has blessed us with a building of our own! The dreams of a *someday* strategic plan pale in comparison to God's timing when He opens the door and leads us in. And to your credit, we were financially ready because of your past and present support. Thank you again and again.

Already, many of you have come forward with additional gifts to help with the expenses of renovation and the process of tying loose ends together. Moving in the winter may not be ideal, but many warm hearts are coming together to carry the load. We are so grateful!

We are preparing the space and packing what we can while planning for a February/March move. Our goal is for a smooth and seamless transition—with limited breaks in service to our community. Covid did not shut our doors for even 1 hour, and we believe we are ready to accept this challenge, as well. We've got relationships to build!

***Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.***

***1 Corinthians 10:31 NIV***

**Turn the page for more big news—lives saved and lives transformed!**



# The Road to JOY

By Leanna Ihry



If Chelsea Dowe has learned anything this year, it's that life sometimes doesn't go as planned, but the curve in the road can sometimes end up being the biggest blessing.

The first surprise for Chelsea began with a faint line on a pregnancy test. She wasn't planning to have another child as her son was already in elementary school and life was getting easier. Though she was in a committed relationship with her boyfriend Michael, being pregnant seemed overwhelming.

"I took the first pregnancy test, and then took another the next day. I think I ended up taking four total. They were all positive, so I knew I was pregnant," Chelsea said.

She had learned of the Grand Forks Women's Pregnancy Center [WPC] from family members who had utilized the services and called right away for an appointment.

"When I first came in, I was a mess. I was so anxious and sad. I was worried about my baby and having a miscarriage. I went to talk with Betsey, and she told me everything was going to be ok. She prayed for me and my baby, but I was still afraid," Chelsea recalled.

Chelsea enrolled in the Earn While You Learn program at the WPC and was matched with Mentor Tamara Wynn. "Chelsea was very fearful when she first started, but she was so committed to learning and growing as a parent. The baby's father, Michael, was also ready to learn," Tamara said.

Chelsea shared with Tamara and other staff at the WPC that anxiety was something she had dealt with her entire life.

She was touched by their compassion. "I know with Koko

[former WPC staff] particularly, we were doing a parenting lesson and I was having trouble breathing, and she was just talking me down. She kept saying, "Just breathe, your baby is ok."

Betsey Horken, nurse manager at the WPC also met Chelsea with open arms. "Betsey said to me, 'Anytime you have anxiety that something is wrong, just come and see me and we will do an ultrasound and we will see your baby.' I was so touched. Anxiety is something difficult to deal with. Sometimes people judge me because they don't understand. But I felt like she did understand," Chelsea stated.

As the weeks went by, Chelsea and Michael continued to come to the WPC for parenting classes and support. About a third of the way through their pregnancy, the couple decided to do a blood test to find out the gender of the baby and check for any chromosomal abnormalities.

"I mostly wanted to do it to find out if it was a boy or a girl. I never thought anything would be wrong with my baby. I was so anxious if it was a boy or a girl. Then I got a phone call from the nurse, and she said the doctor wanted to see me to talk more about the results. I knew something was not right. I was told there was an 85% chance my baby had Down syndrome. They also told me she was a girl, but I was so in shock I couldn't even be excited I was having a girl," Chelsea remembered.

She recalls telling Michael the news. His face just fell. He was really sad.



Feeling devastated, the couple stopped at the WPC to share their news. "I remember watching a parenting video with Tamara and I just started crying. She asked me what was wrong, and I told her. Everyone was so uplifting and assured us that everything was going to be ok. I remember Betsey saying, 'You don't know for sure [there was an 85% chance of the diagnosis], but even if she does, she is going to be loved by all of us. And you are going to love her. And no matter what, she is your baby. This baby is the same baby you loved yesterday.'"

It was then Chelsea and Michael began to accept their daughter, regardless of what the future would hold.

Tamara recalls, "When they first got the diagnosis it was very emotional, but the next week she came in and was ready to advocate for her daughter. She had joined Down syndrome support groups and was learning everything she could about it. It was just amazing."

"I knew this wasn't a death sentence. I talked to many parents of children with Down syndrome. I had accepted it and I loved my daughter," Chelsea said.

Chelsea continued to have a healthy pregnancy and in August her beautiful baby girl Akinley was born. "I was so in love with her from the moment I saw her. She is so cute and so beautiful and I just feel like our souls are connected. I love her so much," Chelsea smiled.

The new parents continue to meet with their mentor at the WPC with their sweet baby girl at their side. "I love absolutely everything about her. I don't even know how to describe how much I love my daughter. She is so wonderful. Sometimes I feel ashamed because before I knew anything about Down syndrome, I was so embarrassed and so angry, but I wouldn't change anything about her. I feel like we are connected souls. She is my everything."

Chelsea encourages anyone going through a challenging time in their pregnancy to seek support. "It's a lot less scary going through hard stuff when you have somebody loving you and supporting you each step of the way. I am so thankful for this place," Chelsea concluded.



Mentor Tamara thinks Akinley is extra-special and extra-adorable!



WPC Family Care Coordinator Jacquee agrees 100%!







# Celebrating Full Circles—

with Executive Director, Jill Chandler



It was a Tuesday morning. I was working in my office when I could hear the buzz and clamor of energized voices. I found the source of excitement just down the hallway where staff and volunteers huddled around our client Korto and her mentor, Monica. They were watching a video playing on Korto's cell phone. When I heard one of the taped voices say, "We thank Women's Pregnancy Center in America," my eyes welled-up because I knew what they were watching.

Korto is a client who has been mentored well. Since the start of her "circle" within our walls, her faith has grown and so has her heart for the women having babies in her home country of Liberia—many who don't have as much as a blanket when they give birth. Wanting to bless them like she'd been blessed here, Korto came up with a plan. She saves \$10 from each paycheck and applies it to the shipping cost for sending baby clothes to a government facility where women who need it the most, rejoice in her generosity.

Because of Korto's gratitude and ingenuity, our overflow of gently used baby items are shipped to Liberia. That morning, Korto beamed as she shared the reaction of the moms with grocery bags filled with items sorted by size for their children. Your gifts to the WPC are stewarded well—nothing is wasted.

A client we reached is now reaching another part of the world. Korto went from needing help to providing it—from seeking God to sharing Him. That's another beautiful full circle.

People who are built up, build up others. Thank you for enabling us to be in Korto's life.

## Gifts given in memory of:

Aaron by Joe & Deborah Shelton

Jerry Altendorf by Charles & Marie Hotvedt

Sandy Anderson by Kevin & Dawn Anderson

Angel by Lucian & Karen Boll

Roseline Badran by Richard & Aida Wakefield

Marie "Toots" Barrett by Kevin & Dawn Anderson

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Galen Cariveau by Charles & Marie Hotvedt

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Arlene Carlson by Pastor Dale & Cris Finstrom

Jack Carney by Bernadine Carney

Todd Case by Kevin & Carol Solem

Lawrence Cobert by Shirley Cobert

Jerry & Becky DeGraffenreid by Anonymous

Patrick Donahue by Dianne Donahue

Layla Enger by Tracy Enger

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My Parents by Francis & Carolyn Kryzsko

Our Parents by Dave & Jean Pelarski

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Annella Swartz by Steve & Annella Winger

Mardie Thompson by Paul & Peggy Zavoral

Bobbie Trontvet by Kevin & Debbie Krueger

Herman Tupa by Mary Anne Tupa

Natalie Wavra by Ron & Kathy Wavra

Bernice Winger by Steve & Annella Winger

Thaddeus Zaharia by Mark & Joanne Zaharia



# The first step to her fresh start was through our door!

By Leanna Ihry

Abigail, a 23-year-old commercial aviation student at UND, doesn't have many New Year's Resolutions for 2023. That's because the past 365 days have been a pivotal time of change, growth, and reflection.

Last January, Abigail was at one of the lowest points of her life. "I was in such a dark place the day I walked into the Women's Pregnancy Center [WPC]. I remember just praying that I wouldn't have anything," she said. Abigail courageously came to WPC to be tested for sexually transmitted infections [STIs]. She felt sad, broken and alone, and couldn't believe she had gotten herself to this point.

"I had been in a relationship, and we moved in together and then he got a new girlfriend, and I didn't know it. I was heart-broken. I started filling that hole by sleeping with many people," Abigail said.

Abigail grew up in a loving, Christian home. As a high-school student, she wore a purity ring and planned to save herself for marriage. But the peer pressures of college life and wanting to be accepted began to take over. "When I got to college, I thought if I didn't sleep with a guy, he was going to leave me," she said.

Abigail recalls her respect for herself was at an all-time low the day she met Nurse Betsey at the WPC. "She helped me recognize my self-worth and prayed with me. She encouraged me to start going to church again," Abigail said.

Listening to Betsey's advice, Abigail began to attend Hope Church in Grand Forks. This was another step toward healing. "God pulled me out of the darkness. I look back at who I was ... so broken," she said. Abigail's family tells her she "has her sparkle back", and she is truly loving life.



"The WPC, Hope Church, my church back home, and first and foremost, God, changed my life. He allows His strongest people to go through the hardest things. After going through what I did, I know I can get through anything with God," she said.

Abigail encourages any young adult who is struggling with sexual promiscuity to take the step and schedule an appointment at the WPC. "There is no judgement. You are just met with loving arms. Betsey felt like a mom to me," she recalls.

In the last year, Abigail has learned many things, but the most important thing she wants to share with readers is this: "Self worth is way more than doing what people want you to. God is always there for you. No matter what you have done and how low you feel. In your darkest place, He is there waiting for you with loving arms."

## Gifts given in Honor of:

All the lives saved by Kent & Valerie Krogstad

Kathy Ashe birthday by Kathy Ashe

Baby Bauske by Dan & Brenda Crane

Children & grandchildren by Charles & Marie Hotvedt

Angel Gaberial by Brigette Gaberial

Grandchildren by Loren & Pam Kuster

Grandchildren by Sheryl Magelssen

Grandchildren by Roger & Ruth Quanbeck

Grandson's safe, healthy delivery by Rose Funseth

Grandsons Carter & August by Gail Schmisek

Hunter, Rebekah & Jager by Jim & Judy Hettwer

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C.J. Kulesza by Mike & Kathy Klemisch

John & Sophie Laxen by Mary Ann Laxen

Mann & Whitfield families by Michael & Terrie Mann

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Sacred Heart Bishop Victor Balke by Mike & Julie Marek

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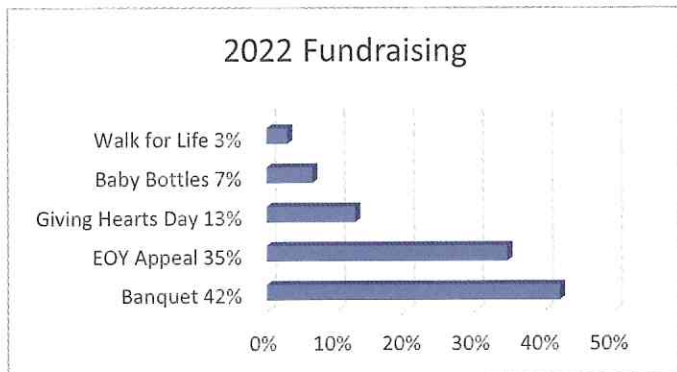
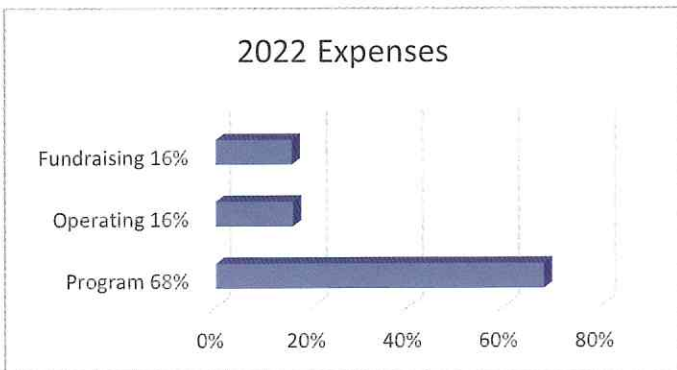
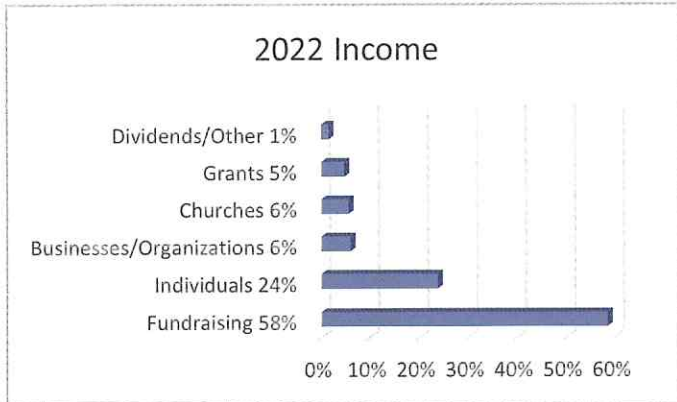
Jeremy Sierra by Sheila Wurden

Baby Strandberg by Dan & Brenda Crane

Fr. Sullivan's 40th Ordin. Aniv. by Mark & Nancy Knox

The children by Bernadine Carney

## 2022 was another great year in partnership with YOU!



## Client Profile

### Appointments:

Pregnancy Testing—339 (20%)  
 Sonogram—307 Client, 99 Community (18%)  
 STI/STD Testing—184 (10%)  
 STI Treatment—38 (2%)  
 Post Abortive/Counseling—31 (2%)  
 Parent Education/Boutique—833 (48%)

Female—95%

Male—5%

Single—90%

Married—10%

Age: 13-19 yrs.—18%

20-24 yrs.—40%

25-29 yrs.—19%

30-34 yrs.—14%

35+ yrs.—9%

Religion: Christian/Catholic—58%

None/Atheist—20%

Native American—6%

Unknown/Other—16%

- We received 3,982 donations from 1,376 investors
- 300 were first-time donors in 2022
- 46% of donations were one-time gifts ... 54% were recurring monthly donations

**1,732**

**Client Visits!**

**71**

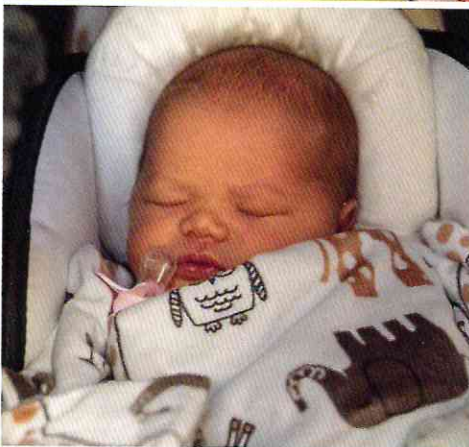
**Lives Saved!**

**1,336**

**Volunteer Hours!**



# It's a wonderful LIFE!



**Our Christ-centered mission is to impact the lives of women and men through education—equipping them to make life-affirming choices that will positively affect their futures, their families, and the communities in which they live.**

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# Women's Pregnancy Center

1726 S Washington St, Suite 70  
Grand Forks, ND 58201

Phone: 701-746-8866  
Email: Info@gfwpc.org  
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www.friendsofgfwpc.org  
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# Giving Hearts Day

**24 Hours of Online Giving!**

Find Women's Pregnancy Center at:

[www.givingheartsday.org](http://www.givingheartsday.org)



Wait until Feb. 9th or schedule your gift today through 2/7.  
Matching funds will add extra IMPACT to your donation.  
Rather send or bring in a check? Just write **GHD** in the  
memo. We'll add it to our online total on the 9th!

To help us say thank you,  
"O for Heaven's Cakes"  
will reward you with one  
Red Velvet Cupcake  
for every \$10 gift ... limit 1 dozen. Pick up your  
cupcakes on the 9th. We'll be there to greet you!



Ezra's tiny  
heart was  
beating just  
21 days after  
fertilization—  
all Giving  
Hearts start  
small!