

Little Way Pregnancy Resource Center

Good Works supported by SMM

Our parish has supported the Little Way Pregnancy Resource Center on Mother's and Father's Days with a Rose Sale and Baby Bottle Boomerang collection. This year SMM raised \$ _____ through our parishioners' generosity. Just what does Little Way do that is worthy of our ongoing support?

The following information summarizing 2016 accomplishments is taken from the center's January/February 2017 newsletter in an article written by Ellen Wichmann, Little Way Director. The Center is located at 515 West Oak Street.

2016 Statistics

2259 Total Client Visits – up 19%

791 Pregnancy Tests – up 10%

349 Ultrasounds – up 150%

1025 Tangible Help Visits – up 4%

27 Crib/Car Seats Given – up 90%

Milestones and Accomplishments—Our team has worked hard to improve our processes, client services, and our reach. Here are a few highlights:

Billboards—The strawberry billboard campaign was a huge success.

Ministry Ultrasound —We installed a new ultrasound machine allowing us to schedule ultrasounds as early as 5 ½ weeks LMP (last menstrual period).

BRIGHT—2016/17 school year had our program in 40 schools – up 4 schools over last year. Over 90% of students in anonymous surveys rate our program “great” or “good.” We redesigned/renamed our purity program BRIGHT Healthy Relationships Initiative. [Note: St. Margaret Mary 8th graders participate in BRIGHT. See article below for more information.]

New Website—PR Team designed a new device-friendly website (Littleway.org). It is fabulous—simple and smart, and sure to bring in clients.

Journey of Hope Post-Abortive Ministry—Our team redesigned the program to focus more on a fluid one-to-one accompaniment and monthly support group meetings. The ministry is gaining ground, and hearts are being healed.

Father of Baby Ministry—We began a new program to focus on fathers of the baby—the number one influencer of women who choose to have abortions. We began one-on-one counseling/education of fathers along with a focused effort to include them in the ultrasound visit.

Fundraising—Over 1300 unique donors. Rose Sale (at 44 parishes) and Baby Bottle Boomerang (at 32 parishes) hosted by many local parishes. Vision of Hope Benefit a great success . 660 in attendance with record funds raised.

2017 Plans and Goals—while numbers are important and worthy of analysis, they will never be our focus. We will keep our God-given mission and our clients always in the cross-hairs. Our focus is on the individual, especially those who are overwhelmed with an unplanned pregnancy and feel that they have only one choice. We are offering education, choices, support, love, and accompaniment.

[Presented by SMM Catholic Life Issues Committee]

Bringing *Purity* into our Culture

St. Margaret Mary 8th Graders have benefitted from the Little Way's BRIGHT Healthy Relationships Initiative. Here's how Director Ellen Wichmann describes the program:

Purity education actually spurred my first connection with Little Way in 2009 when my eldest was in the 8th grade. I had heard about this remarkable program from other parents at other schools, and I wanted my children to have that same opportunity.

At Little Way we have a vested interest in this program. Each day we see the chaos created when individuals do not practice purity:

- panic from unplanned pregnancies
- life-changing decisions that have to be made—"Do I abort, make an adoption plan, or parent?"
- sexually-transmitted diseases
- couples bonded together that should not be
- emotional effects of abortion
- children born out of wedlock
- financial burdens placed on single mothers

Probably more than any other organization, we see the need for purity in our community and understand the immense benefits it can bring. So, Little Way attempts to change the culture, hoping that the youth that we touch will never need our services.

Little Way is in 40 schools—middle schools and high schools, private and public—with programs tailored to each audience. We are there by invitation only, and our programs instruct a class for one period (50 minutes) per day for 5 consecutive days.

First and foremost, we value parents as the primary educators of their children. With that in mind, we offer a parent meeting before going into each school, so that parents have the opportunity to waive their children's participation. Most all find it very educational and are very appreciative of our help in this area.

This is not a “Don’t have sex!” program. Instead, we try to educate on many aspects of an intimate relationship—physical, mental, emotional, social, and ethical—giving the complete picture. Teens come to see the “Why” behind the reasons they should say “no” to sex before marriage. They begin to see that it actually turns into a bigger “yes” to purity, as they now understand the positives that come from waiting.

Today 1 in 3 Americans has a Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD). This is an epidemic. Both parents and teens need to be educated on the STDs in our community—statistics, how each spreads, treatment options, and risks. These risks are very real. Clients have shared with me the effects of STDs that they have experienced, including miscarriages, cancer, and infertility. STDs are impacting our community in a significant and devastating way.

Our two instructors, who are in their twenties, are passionate about purity. The feedback from our youth tells us that can definitely relate to these awesome individuals that we are blessed to have on our team. Their presentations include great skits that not only help to reinforce the message, but add an element of fun. Participation in skits and discussions are rewarded with lifesaver candy, because we are giving life-saving information.

We talk about the role the media plays in shaping the “casual sex” culture, and that it’s not the reality of the world. We also discuss the effects of the pornography epidemic in our culture today and the science behind its effect on the brain. In schools that have the program in both middle and high school, our Creating Positive Relationships curriculum allows us to address additional relationship topics.

Little Way is working to change the culture. We need the entire community behind this message, setting the expectation for purity in our youth. It is not uncool to be pure. It’s smart. It shows strength. It’s safe. It leads to better relationships. It gives you control over your life. And it is a great gift to your future spouse.

Please contact us if you’d like to discuss offering our program in your child’s school.

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