

Decatur pregnancy center helps women make wise choices

October 2, 2020

DECATUR—When Connie Wyatt arrives at work each morning, she knows the day will present many opportunities to promote life and share the love of Jesus.

“No day is the same, said Wyatt, chief executive officer of the [Wise Choice Pregnancy Resource Center](#) in Decatur. “Every day is different.”

Wyatt has served the center in varied capacities since 2009, beginning as a volunteer. She joined the center’s board of directors in 2013, and two years later, she became CEO.

Last year, 77 young women who came to the center were “abortion minded/vulnerable,” she reported.

“But when they have an ultrasound and hear the baby’s heartbeat, everything changes,” Wyatt said. Seventy-one of the 77 young women—92 percent—changed their minds and carried to term.

In 2019, the center reported 936 client visits, 782 monthly clients served, 410 new clients, 317 pregnancy tests and 247 ultrasounds.

Workers at the center presented the gospel at least 271 times, and 47 women made professions of faith in Christ.

Multiple services available

To encourage participation in educational programs, the center allows women to earn coupons they can exchange for baby-care items by

participating in and completing classes or viewing DVDs on topics such as parenting, budgeting, nutrition and the Bible.

“Clients are encouraged to call and talk with a staff person for a complete listing of all the ways we stand ready to help care for their babies now, while also preparing for their future,” Wyatt said.

The center continues to offer services to new mothers and their babies until the children are 3 years old.

Numbers of women and children served have increased dramatically since mid-March, as the center has provided essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic, with some financial assistance from the [Texas Baptist Hunger Offering](#) to purchase baby food.

“We have given out 600 dozen diapers, boxes of wet wipes, baby food and formula,” Wyatt said.

In addition to pregnancy tests, ultrasound and adoption information, the center offers peer counseling services, certified life coaches, parenting classes, youth education and referrals to social service agencies.

The Wise Choice Recovery Program helps women who are dealing with guilt or shame after an abortion. Held twice a year in a retreat-style setting, the recovery program helps women come to terms with that choice and allow God to heal and restore them. Trained staff provide one-on-one counseling to help women find wholeness and peace.

By partnering with area schools and youth pastors, the center helps equip youth to make empowering decisions for their future. Presentations include healthy relationships, avoiding sexual risks and “being the best you can be.”



Elementary school students attend a presentation on making wise choices and preventing bullying. (Courtesy Photo)

A companion presentation geared toward elementary school-age boys and girls focuses on making wise choices and prevention of bullying.

The center receives financial support from 35 churches in the area, including First Baptist in Decatur. Individual donors provide 78 percent of the center's total budget, and only 10 percent of the budget is devoted to overhead and administration. The remaining 90 percent is dedicated to services and programs.

Thanks to the support it has received, the center was able to purchase a 37-ft. mobile medical unit with a limited medical clinic and a resource education center. Its mission is to serve women in Wise County and surrounding areas who otherwise would be unable to get to a clinic.

Volunteer assistance essential

Volunteers—male and female—always are needed at the center, Wyatt stressed.

“If you have a gift or a talent, it can be put to use,” she said. “This is not rocket science. We stand for life.”

Bilingual volunteers are needed to communicate with Spanish-speaking women. Quilters can use their skills to provide items for young women and their babies.

“And we need prayer partners—people committed to praying for the center and our clients,” she said.

The center also seeks to equip volunteers in area churches to respond to women in need.

“Some of the congregations started LifeGuards, a type of first responder in the church that we train to be a confidential person for the women in the church,” Wyatt said.

The program is making a difference in the lives of the women involved in the ministry as well as the clients, she added.

“I’ve seen a change in the women who volunteer,” Wyatt said. “This ministry has changed their lives.”

Carolyn Tomlin writes for the Christian magazine and newspaper market and teaches the Boot Camp for Christian Writers.