

No Greater Love

The quarterly newsletter from St. Gianna Program of Catholic Social Services

Spring 2024



“
How do we persuade a woman not to have an abortion? As always, we must persuade her with love, and we remind ourselves that love means to be willing to give until it hurts. Jesus gave even his life to love us. So the mother who is thinking of abortion, should be helped to love.”

-St. Teresa of Calcutta

Protecting the most vulnerable

Veronica Pino

St. Gianna Program Manager

I want to take advantage of this opportunity to write to all of you to talk about something a little out of the ordinary, but still very much a part of our mission in the St. Gianna Program.

I'm sure many of you have heard, but this November we are going to be presented with two very important ballot initiatives that have the potential to amend the Nebraska constitution - either for the better or for the worse.

The first proposal is a radical, pro-abortion ballot initiative that would create a right to abortion for almost anyone, for any reason, during nearly the entire pregnancy. The language used in the proposal is rather deceptive, like the wolf pretending to be grandma in Little Red Riding Hood's story. On the surface it appears to be much more tempered, but when examined at its depths and through the lens of the legal ramifications that it entails, it is a dangerous proposal for the health and safety of mothers, the protections for minors, and for the unborn.

The second proposal, while not perfect, offers protections for the unborn and gives us an alternative to the extreme, pro-abortion proposal. It is a great next step in the fight towards protecting all life, at every stage.

Catholic Social Services, in collaboration with the Nebraska Catholic Conference, plans to host informational community events to present more comprehensive information and provide educational materials regarding these ballot initiatives and what we as voters need to know before November. This is a crucial moment in the fight for life in Nebraska. I implore all of you, during these next 6 months, to do what you can to spread awareness regarding these matters. Get involved at your parishes, in your

(Continued on back)

“She is doing great”

Sr. Bernadette Radek, M.S.
SGP Advocate

The sweetest words we can hear at St. Gianna are the words, “She is doing great.” That happened just recently when we met a woman who knew a former resident from years ago. We don’t often hear from the ladies who leave St. Gianna, and it is always our hope that the families we worked with and have moved on are living a fulfilled life. It sometimes amazes us as to how well they are doing after they move on. Some of our most broken in spirit when they come, blossom into such wonderful, successful women. On occasion we meet some of them when we are out shopping. They come rushing over, “Sister, do you remember me?” Then they pour out their story as to how their life has changed since their departure from St. Gianna. It is indeed a happy reunion. Several weeks ago, I came upon a poem two of our ladies wrote just before they moved on many years ago. I was happy to still have it.

St. Gianna’s

*Some stay for long, and some are just passing.
Most to escape, the pain they’ve been trapped in.
We will all walk away with warmth, beauty and grace.*

Because of the love of St. Gianna’s place God helps build us up, to keep our hearts dreaming and most importantly, to never stop believing.

-JM & KG

We sometimes receive Christmas cards and greetings from former residents. One comment was “I am so thankful and appreciative of being at St. Gianna and all the wonderful support given. I am forever grateful to you all.” And another greeting, “I think of you often, especially around the holidays. You all have been a blessing in my child’s and my life. Our time there will never be forgotten.” We have one former resident who has helped us out on several occasions when we needed help in a pinch. She is so grateful that she would do anything for us. We are proud of what she has accomplished. Her little family has grown so. Her oldest, who was just a little tike when they lived at St. Gianna has turned into a very handsome gentleman, who just got his driver’s permit. Of course, what the children say is the cutest. One little four-year-old, when leaving remarked that when he grew up, he was going to build his house right beside St. Gianna and live there. Another child on a return visit about a year after that family left wanted to go to her old room. When sister told her someone was living there, the little girl was indignant and said, “You mean you let someone move into our room?”

It’s little things like this that warm the heart and make you realize all the effort is worth it. St. Gianna is needed. Don’t ever doubt it. These ladies and children need your prayers and your continued support. Thank God for all the good people who make it possible.

This past quarter in our ST GIANNA PROGRAM:

\$6,767

IN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:
providing a variety
of critical
services

5,394

BED NIGHTS PROVIDED:
giving victims of domestic
violence and unexpected
pregnancies a safe place to
rest and recover

11

POSITIVE COMPLETIONS:
walking away with warmth,
beauty, and grace,
equipped for a brighter
tomorrow



Data range: January, February, March 2024

We cannot love without suffering

Alexis Brouillette

Crisis Response & Residential Care Coordinator

I recently discovered a quote by St. Gianna that I have been reflecting on a lot lately.

“Love and sacrifice are as intimately connected as sun and light. We cannot love without suffering or suffer without loving. Look how many sacrifices are made by mothers who truly love their children. They are ready for everything, even to give their own blood. Did not Jesus die on the Cross for us, out of love for us? Love is affirmed and confirmed with the blood of sacrifice.” -St. Gianna Beretta Molla

I have been reflecting on the sacrifices made by mothers which include St. Gianna, the women at Gianna’s Home, my own mom, and Our Mother, Mary. Each of these women has put her child or children first and lived a life of love amidst suffering.

St Gianna forgo cancer treatment to give life to her baby. She is a beautiful example of a mother who suffered much pain and sacrifices out of love. She pleaded with the doctor to give her daughter life instead of having to go through the cancer treatment that could harm and potentially kill the unborn baby. She suffered with great joy and love to give life to her daughter. She passed away shortly after her daughter, Gianna Emanuela was born. She sacrificed her very life for the life of her daughter out of love, just as Jesus gave His life for us His sons and daughters.

The women at Gianna’s have also given so much of their life for their child and children. They have suffered mentally, physically and emotionally and yet have continued to provide for their children. To care for them and give them hope. They sacrifice and work hard to provide a safe and loving home for their children where they can be loved and received in the midst of the suffering and trauma they have experienced.

I recently had an interview with a soon to be resident who is pregnant. She is trying to get out of an emo-

tionally and mentally abusive relationship so she can provide for her unborn son who is due in July. She spoke about how she has considered abortion and even scheduled two abortions but never went to either appointment because she desires to give this child life. She desires to give her child a safe home and upbringing. In the midst of the suffering she is experiencing at home, she hasn’t had the opportunity to really feel and rejoice in her pregnancy. She wants to change her situation and bring light and life into this world. She wants to love her son by giving of herself and making these difficult choices in order to make sure her son can have an abundant life.



Our Mother, Mary- I have been reflecting a lot on what her suffering and sacrifice looked like especially in regard to the Passion and Death of her son, Jesus. She cared for Jesus as a child and loved Him so well. Then she walked with Him through His Passion and Death. She could not physically take away the pain He was suffering, the physical cross He carried, and the agony of His death but she was present to Him. She had compassion- to suffer with another- for what her son was going through. I imagine how sad and

sorrowful this must have been for Mary but am reminded of the immense love she had for her son. I think of how she must have wanted to take His suffering, to fully bear it in His place. But she couldn’t and that must have been hard to see Him suffer but how much it meant to Jesus that she was with Him through it all. She stood at the foot of His cross and gave her son to us so that we might have life. That is what love is, that is what sacrifice is. Just as St. Gianna said , “Love and sacrifice are as intimately connected as sun and light. We cannot love without suffering or suffer without loving. Look how many sacrifices are made by mothers who truly love their children. They are ready for everything, even to give their own blood. Did not Jesus die on the Cross for us, out of love for us? Love is affirmed and confirmed with the blood of sacrifice.”



PO Box 30425
Lincoln NE 68503-0425

NON PROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
LINCOLN, NE
PERMIT No 976



No Greater Love

Spring 2024

Protecting the most vulnerable (Continued from page 1)

families, or if you're so called, to join the Pro-Life Team the NCC is creating. It's our responsibility as Nebraskans and as children of God to make sure we use our time and talents to bring the truth to those around us, and to protect the most vulnerable.

Please be attentive as we begin planning these informational events. We will be promoting them ahead of time on our website and social media. In the meantime, if you'd like more information, please visit the Nebraska Catholic Conference website, where they have information published in their resources, as well as in news and events regarding these two ballot initiatives.

I will leave you with a statement provided by our three Bishops of Nebraska: "Nebraska voters are likely to decide on two ballot measures regarding abortion this November. We have reviewed the proposed initiative to create a constitutional protection for preborn children in the second and third trimester that was announced on Tuesday morning. Although imperfect in its protection of all preborn children, the proposal is a step toward safeguarding human life. Thus, it is morally permissible for

Nebraskans to support this newly proposed initiative.

More importantly, we urge Nebraskans to unite in opposition to the other initiative proposal that wants to enshrine the evil of late-pregnancy abortion into the state constitution.

Women in Nebraska deserve support throughout pregnancy, not abandonment to the lifelong, physical, and emotional trauma of abortion. The late-pregnancy abortion ballot measure fails pregnant women and is more extreme than meets the eye. Nebraskans should pray and work for its defeat and commit to even more support for pregnant women in need."

Thank you for being a part of our mission.

For more information, please see the Nebraska Catholic Conference online resources found here:
<https://necatholic.org/resources/defeat-the-pro-abortion-ballot-proposal.html>