

# No Greater Love

The quarterly newsletter of St. Gianna Women's Homes

Spring 2022



“  
You kinda get  
broken down  
by your abuser,  
but when you  
come here the  
Sisters are  
building your  
strength and  
everything back  
up for you.”

*-SGWH client*

## We're not a shelter, but a home

Veronica Hotovy

St. Gianna Women's Homes Program Manager

One thing that Covid has clearly taught us is our need for community. God designed us in His image and likeness, to be in communion with others, to be surrounded by those who offer us love and companionship. This need is overwhelmingly evident at St. Gianna Women's Homes (SGWH). Our women and children often come to us alone, broken from those who were supposed to love and protect them, longing to have someone they can count on when they most need it.

Recently one of our residents, Catalina, told me that her car had broken down, and that one of the women down the hall - Naomi - had taken her to her doctor's appointment for her newborn daughter. The following week, as I was talking to Catalina and her 6 year old son, Mark, in the playroom, Naomi came in asking if Mark would like to play outside with her two boys - since Catalina couldn't be outside too long with her daughter. Mark ran to grab his coat, and I heard Naomi sharing her exciting news of getting a new job with Catalina. As I listened to the congratulations that followed, I was aware of the importance of that moment for each of them. A neighbor had become someone to support the other in a time of need, to celebrate the good news and the steps forward, to offer company and healthy conversation, to be a friend. A couple of days later, I passed Catalina in the hall, taking cupcakes to Naomi in celebration of her new job.

St. Gianna's isn't a shelter. It's a home. A home where each woman and each child can find the support and love of a family, from the Sisters, from our donors and volunteers, but most importantly, among each other.



# History has a way of repeating

Sr. Bernadette Radek, M.S.

**Ecclesiastes 1:9 states...“Nothing is new under the sun”. Oh, how true. The following article was written in 2012. Read on.....**

“Please do not be misled. We are not asking for lemons or any fruit for the CSS food pantry. I am talking about those lemons sitting out in the St. Gianna parking lot. Several days ago I mentioned to Sr. Clare that I was hard up for a topic for the upcoming St. Gianna newsletter. She said, “Why not write about the car problems we have at St. Gianna?” Oh, that would take more than an article...how about a book!! Cars! They are supposed to run. Beyond that I know nothing. However, many of our residents are pretty knowledgeable about making cars run. They need to for survival. Cars are not a luxury as we know, but a necessity, especially at St. Gianna. Some of our ladies do not have cars and are dependent on public transportation, which is not always reliable, time wise. Other ladies have one problem after the other because of the condition their cars are in. Last week one of the ladies lost her job because of her continuous car problems. Let me explain. At this moment one car in the parking lot will no longer run. It also has the distinguishing feature of a duct taped back window. Another one sits with a passenger side window boasting of a white garbage bag for a window. It just gave out yesterday after many efforts to figure out what was wrong with it. Another car that does run has a back window out. Someone put it out during a Nebraska football game. Still another has a dubious future. It caught fire as one of our residents was driving it. The fire department had to be called.

I am not finished. There is a car parked out in the parking lot that makes you wonder just why it doesn't fall into a heap of bolts and metal. It is five years older than its

owner. She is in her 30's. She is a remarkable woman and doesn't let anything stop her. I have seen her take a gas can from her trunk, go under the hood, pour some gas on something, jump in the car and get it started. When I asked her if that wasn't dangerous, her response was, “Oh I have been doing that for years, my cousin taught me how to do it”. The bumper is held on by wire and just to be safe, she puts a block of wood behind the back wheel, just in case it decides to roll away. One of our residents knows quite a bit about cars and has put in her own car headlights, tail lights, and has changed hoses under the hood. She is a genius in my book. Some months back she was stopped by a patrolman who told her that her headlight was out. She picked up the package from the front seat containing the headlight that she had purchased the night before. She told him she hadn't had time to put it in yet. I think the patrolman was impressed when she said “Yes” to his question as to her knowing how to put it in.

How are the conditions of the other cars? Well, this may give you some idea. We do not have a parking lot, we have an oil slick. It appears that the cars are in competition as to how much oil they can add to the slick. Believe me, when Fr. Kubat says that CSS is in need of your used cars, he is not kidding.”

**No, nothing has changed. History repeats itself. By the way I think I hear a plane trying to land in our parking lot.**

**Fact check---It is one of our cars...** If you have an unused, not needed, secondhand car in your driveway I know what you can do about that. Just scan this QR code or visit [csshope.org/vehicledonations](http://csshope.org/vehicledonations) and go from there! God bless each of you.



# Hope and healing

Ann Peters Miller, MS  
Family Counselor

Project Rachel is a post abortion healing program offered through the Immaculate Heart of Mary Counseling Center. The Church wants to welcome those hurting psychologically and spiritually after being involved with abortion. God wants those affected to seek his love and forgiveness.

Abortion is a disenfranchised grief, in that it is not recognized as something to grieve. There is no funeral, no sympathy cards, no comfort from friends and relatives, and no grave to visit. As such, the woman may feel uncomfortable sharing her grief with others. If she does share with others, they may tell her there is no reason to grieve. If she is feeling grief, it is helpful for her to have a ceremony that validates this grief. The Catholic Church has a ceremony available called "The order for the naming and commendation of an infant who died before birth." This liturgical resource aims to assist those suffering from the grief of a child who has died without being baptized.

Most women view their abortion as their first serious perceived sin. They don't feel welcome at church. If they go to church, they often sit in the back. A woman who has had an abortion may feel she is marked, that everyone can see and know what she has done.

There are many psychological effects of abortion including the following: guilt, shame, grief, depression, sexual problems, eating disorders, alcohol or drug addictions, problems bonding with subsequent children, and sleep problems.

Many women feel punished by God. There are physical long-term effects from having an abortion. These are mostly related to childbearing issues, such as miscarriage, stillbirth or infertility. The abortion experience predisposes her to the very things she fears the most. When she experiences one of these things, she attributes them to God punishing her.

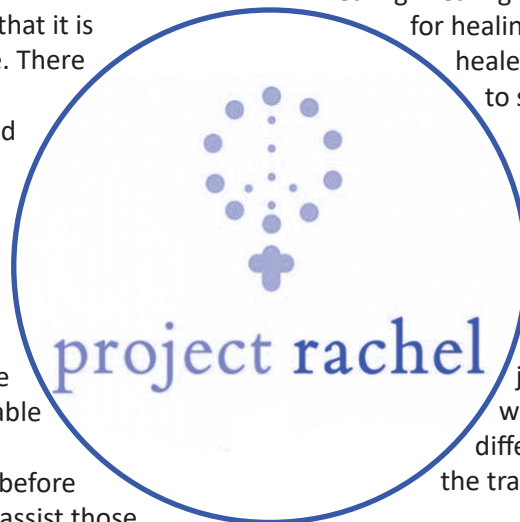
If a woman is suffering from symptoms that were caused by her abortion, it would certainly be helpful if she were to find healing from her abortion. We now know that asking women to tell the story of their trauma only re-traumatizes them, so we use gentler treatment approaches to facilitate healing. Healing is possible. There are several options for healing to take place. God is the divine healer and wants those affected by abortion to seek His limitless love and forgiveness.

When we see a woman who has had an abortion, we commend them for coming in as it takes great courage to seek help for this issue. We are merciful and compassionate and meet the woman where she is at in her journey. Project Rachel has a protocol we take them through, but we also use different gentle techniques to help heal the trauma of abortion.

Women who find healing from their abortion are able to be life giving. They were the "walking wounded." They are now able to live their life in a way that they are no longer carrying around the burden of this trauma. If they are able to find healing from their abortion, there is a huge enlightenment and awakening. It might be likened to the story of St. Paul, in which he describes how "scales fell from his eyes and he saw the truth."

God is merciful and compassionate. He knows that the situation these women were in was a difficult one. He offers love and peace. In the Gospel of Life, Pope John Paul II stated "The Father of Mercy is ready to give you His forgiveness and His peace in the Sacrament of Reconciliation."

*(Continued on back)*



Project Rachel is open to anyone in need, regardless of their faith background. There is no initial charge for those who contact us for Project Rachel support. If extended professional counseling is needed, financial arrangements can be made through our business office. To learn more about Project Rachel's post-abortion healing, call us at 402-489-1834 or visit our website at [immaculateheartcounseling.org](http://immaculateheartcounseling.org).

# healing.







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### *Hope and healing (Continued from page 3)*

Women who have had abortions have not sinned against themselves but rather against God. When God has offered His forgiveness and the person has been reconciled with the Church, the person's acceptance of God's forgiveness will free them.

Through the mercy of God, our hope is that their child is in heaven. If the child is in heaven, this child desires to have their parents to be with them. The child becomes the catalyst for the healing of the parents.

*Ann Peters Miller, MS, received her Master's Degree from The University of Nebraska in 1989 and is a Licensed*

*Mental Health Practitioner. She has been in practice and providing services at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Counseling Center with Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska for over 30 years. Ann's clinical practice includes the assessment and treatment of adults with various presenting concerns including loss and grief. Ann was trained as a Project Rachel counselor in 1992 and continues to bring healing and hope to those affected by abortion.*

*The Immaculate Heart of Mary Counseling Center with Catholic Social Services of Southern Nebraska serves as a call center for the Project Rachel Ministry.*



## You can now listen to the sound of hope

We are excited to announce the launch of our "Hope in the Good Life Podcast." Hosted by CSS Development Officer John Soukup, this monthly podcast features stories of hope from CSS clients, volunteers, supporters and staff. These podcasts are now available on our website at [csshope.org/podcast](http://csshope.org/podcast), or scan the QR code at the right to listen at anytime. We hope you enjoy our "Hope in the Good Life Podcast"!

