



Birthline Bulletin

Everything Life Affirming

Autumn 2022

Serving families in need from conception to kindergarten.

Little Blessings Abound



GRATITUDE FOR BLESSINGS, BIG AND SMALL

Humble Thanks



For many, Autumn is synonymous with Halloween and pumpkin spice; for me it is a time to reflect with gratitude on the many blessings life brings. I could fill this entire Bulletin with thank you's as I am continually inspired by the dedication, loyalty, and generosity of our Birthline community! This includes all the people that give of their time freely; our staff; our many Parish Partners who help spread the word about our mission; the talented crafters who make baby blankets, hats and toys; students who collect supplies for us; the Knights of Columbus; Ignatian Volunteer Corp.; the Newman Center at UCSD... the list goes on and on. Birthline couldn't exist without everyone coming together to help struggling families and mothers in need. I am incredibly grateful for all the love in this community. Thank you!

Michelle Twardowski
Board Chair &
Interim Executive Director

Free from Abuse and Thriving

When her then 13-year-old son said he couldn't take it anymore and was prepared to move out, Carmen knew she must go with him. Her husband's alcoholism and emotional abuse was taking an enormous toll. She fled Miami with her son and her unborn baby and arrived at a cousin's home in San Diego with nothing but the clothes they were wearing and whatever fit in their suitcase. Thankfully, she found Birthline soon after. That was December of 2020. Birthline connected her to needed resources including housing and divorce assistance. When her daughter was born in the spring of last year, Birthline provided everything to welcome her baby girl. Now, almost two years later, Carmen is living her best life. She found employment as an Outreach Specialist for CalFresh where she is able to help struggling families, including Birthline clients, to apply for food stamps. Her children are safe and happy. She is eternally grateful for the compassion and encouragement she received from Birthline. We are so proud of you Carmen!



October = Domestic Violence Awareness

Over 12% of our clients report having experienced a physically or emotionally abusive relationship.

San Diego DV Hotline 619-234-3164

Outgoing Legacy Board Member: Judy Ross

Judy Ross has devoted over 40 years to serving in a leadership and governance position at Birthline. She began volunteering at a makeshift office in a garage at St. Jude's Shrine in 1982 and has been engaged with Birthline ever since! She spent 15 years as a client advocate and office volunteer, followed by many years on the Board, first as an Education Consultant and eventually as Legacy Advisor.

Judy was blessed to come from a large family in Minnesota whose culture was always in support of women and children. Her mother and sister's volunteerism inspired Judy to do the same upon moving to San Diego.

Judy enjoys a passion for education and had a fulfilling career as a Math Professor at Mesa Community College for 40 years, retiring in 2014. Her interest in life affirming organizations arises from her personal belief that 'killing or harming anybody is never a solution.' Judy is retiring from the Birthline Board of Directors to enjoy more time with her family and to further explore her hobbies of genealogy and quilting. She will be sorely missed! Thank you, Judy, for so many years of service and dedication.

Judy Ross (center) received the Board Legacy Award for her 40 years of service.



CELEBRATING OUR BIRTHLINE COMMUNITY



Guests mingle during sunset at Our Mother of Confidence's intimate St. Paul Patio.



Birthline staff: Jeanne Hansen, Tula Pinella, Itan Jimenez, Riley Griffiths, Mayela Alvarado, and Board Chair Michelle Twardowski.



Volunteers, staff and guests enjoyed each other's company and the outdoor setting.



Engraved awards were presented to our top supporters.



Delicious catering was provided by The French Gourmet.



Deacon Dom Guzzardo began the evening with thoughtful prayer.



Maureen Sterk presented the Parish Partner awards.



Grateful Hearts

Friends of Birthline Appreciation Event

Birthline's top supporters were invited to our first-ever appreciation event on Saturday, October 1. This was a much overdue celebration of the many different community members whose contributions are critical to Birthline's mission and existence.

A Community Service Award was given to Seminarian Chris Nguyen of the UCSD Newman Center for providing us with everything from technical assistance to student volunteers. The parishes of All Hallows and St. Mary Magdalene were recognized for their ongoing and generous support. Two of our outstanding Parish Ambassadors were honored: Barbara Melkerson at Mission San Diego de Alcalá and Camille Dosé at All Hallows.

Two long-serving volunteers were also given special awards. Maureen Sterk received the Volunteer Excellence Award for 16+ years of work and her tireless efforts as Treasurer and Director of Parish Outreach. The Board Legacy Award was given to Judy Ross for 40 years of service to Birthline. Other volunteers were acknowledged for their dedication, with a special recognition for Molly Ann McCarren.

The celebration was held at Our Mother of Confidence on the beautiful St. Paul Patio, with amazing appetizers catered by The French Gourmet. Special thanks to the Knights of Columbus for underwriting event beverages. A lovely and memorable time was had by all in attendance!

Highschooler chooses Birthline for Backpack Giveback



Kalia partnered with Staples to collect backpacks & supplies.



Smiling preschoolers with new backpacks and lunchboxes.

While recovering from an injury that left her temporarily on crutches, Kalia Roper had time to ponder how less fortunate kids can manage to carry their school supplies if they don't have a backpack. With help from Staples in Solana Beach, she began collecting new and used backpacks. Two years later, the 9th grader has collected over 1000 items. Birthline was one of the lucky recipients of her "Backpack Giveback". Kalia shared what she has learned from this journey: "Do not take things for granted," she says, adding: "Seeing how happy kids get with a single backpack makes me feel good." Thank you, Kalia, for your maturity and generosity!

October is **Respect Life Month**.

It is considered a time to reflect more deeply on the dignity of every human life, and a reminder to cherish and defend those who are most vulnerable.

SAN DIEGO GIVES

Big thanks to all who contributed to our first San Diego Gives campaign. It was a success!

Did You Know...

Just **300** monthly donors contributing **\$100** per month covers all our regular expenses

Consider becoming a monthly donor today !

Spread the Word About Birthline: Become a Birthline Ambassador!



- **Who are our Ambassadors?** Parish or Organization Ambassadors focus on getting support for Birthline by coordinating donation drives or baby showers in their community.
- **Ambassadors-at-Large:** Help at organization or church events beyond their community. This may involve setting up and distributing Birthline materials, answering questions, or collecting goods from donation drives. These events usually take place on weekends once or twice per month, typically on Saturday evening and Sunday morning.

If you want to dedicate 3 to 5 hours per month serving as either a Parish Ambassador or as an Ambassador-at-Large, please contact Maureen Sterk, our Director of Parish Outreach at Maureen.Sterk@birthlineofsd.org.

Current Birthline Wish List

- ✓ New baby clothes up to 6 months
- ✓ Infant sleepsacks
- ✓ New infant car seats

NEEDED: Executive Director

We are seeking an experienced non-profit professional with strong leadership skills and a passion for Birthline's life-affirming mission.

For details, please contact Michelle Twardowski at Michelle.Twardo@birthlineofsd.org

At Birthline, we embrace diversity and strive to create conditions that provide everyone with an equal opportunity to thrive.