



Birthline Bulletin

Everything Life Affirming

Winter 2022

Serving families in need from conception to kindergarten.

Some might say she is too young and too poor. She is not yet living with her husband. She has no secure home or homeland.

They could tell her that caring for a child would be a burden she could scarcely handle.

That is the message they might give her, and yet...

She listened to the voice of another messenger, one who told her that her son would be great, would be called the Son of the Most High, one who would usher in an everlasting kingdom.

She had a choice, the choice to say yes or no to life, and her YES has made all the difference for humanity.

-- Birthline Board Member

A Season of Hope



It's hard to believe almost a year has passed since I took on the role of interim Executive Director. Though we are still looking for the perfect candidate, I have faith that we are moving in the right direction. So much has

been accomplished this year: our website redesign, relationships with supporting organizations, increased communication with our donors, and the expansion of our parish outreach, to name just a few. Yet there is still more to do and challenges to overcome. With your support, I know we can achieve stability and ensure our ongoing presence in the community. My heart is filled with gratitude for countless blessings that have come our way, including our dedicated volunteers, generous donors, and committed staff. Happy holidays and Merry Christmas from our Birthline family to yours! May peace and love surround you this season.

Michelle Twardowski
Board Chair &
Interim Executive Director

Prevailing Against All Odds

This is not your typical love story... When Mayra first met Gino, he was recovering from a serious car accident that had left him with major head trauma.



After three weeks in a coma, he had to learn to talk and walk all over again, which he did with great effort. Despite all that, or maybe because of it, Mayra fell in love with him. A few years later, the couple had two children together. Gino was unable to work, and Mayra was busy with the babies. They fell upon financial hardship and had to move into a shelter. Mayra searched online for any services that could help her struggling family. Thankfully, she found Birthline and reached out. "They were so kind and gave me hope," she says. The supplies were critical, as was the caring case management. Recently the family found an apartment and Gino's mom moved in to help. Gino continued to improve and, two months ago, they welcomed their third child, a baby boy. Mayra's strength in caring for Gino and their babies is unwavering. There are still challenges ahead but with love and faith this family will achieve greater independence, and with Birthline's assistance, they will thrive!

New Board Member: Mary Ann Fentress 'Two Times is a Charm!'

Mary Ann Fentress, is joining Birthline's Board of Directors for a second time as she truly felt called to serve once again! More than twelve years ago, Mary Ann was dropping off a donation of baby furniture and was invited by Birthline founder, Catherine Ewers, to volunteer. Mary Ann dove into action! Before long, she became a Board member and held the duty of secretary. Eventually, she stepped into the role of Executive Director for 7+ years, despite her other obligations as a busy mother, grandmother, and wife. "I truly enjoyed donating my time to an organization that I trust and that does such good work in our world." Now, years later, Mary Ann is joining the Board once more, this time as Legacy Director. "I felt the Holy Spirit calling me to serve again at this important time helping mothers and fathers who are choosing life and find themselves in need, to feel supported and loved by their community. My entire family, even my grandson Jared, has been engaged with Birthline in some way over the years. We always receive more than we give in service to others. Serving Birthline is truly a blessing." Thank you Mary Ann for your servant leadership at this time and welcome to the Board!



2022 Jan. - Nov. Impact

2,515 = Client visits

974 = Families served

1,473 = Children under age 6 impacted

250 = Newborn gift bags dispensed

264 = Homeless clients referred to shelter

Please consider becoming a Birthline Builder to help us make an even bigger impact.

Birthline Builders

Platinum Builder	\$5,000 +
Gold Builder	\$2,500 - \$4,999
Silver Builder	\$1,000 - \$2,499
Bronze Builder	\$500 - \$999
Monthly Builder	Any Amount

A Sparkle of Joy, Just in Time for the Holidays!

Birthline's much anticipated annual Holiday Event is coming up on December 15 & 16. Around 120 client families will be showered with goodies to help make their holidays festive and happy. Birthline staff and over 30 volunteers have signed up to help transform our office and courtyard into a Winter Wonderland. Upon arrival, clients are greeted by volunteers dressed as "elves" and led around to multiple stations where they will receive toys, books, festive winter clothing, and other fun items.

Thank you to Toys for Tots and the San Diego Food Bank for stocking our reserves. Special thanks, to Colleen Cook and Katie LaRosa for leading students from Saint James Academy in Solana Beach to prepare holiday gift bags for our mothers which include cozy blankets, warm socks, lotion, and other personal items. We can't wait to see the happy faces of everyone in attendance -- clients and volunteers alike!



Jeanne Hansen: The Life Force Behind Birthline

Visit Birthline any day and you'll see a petite, soft-spoken woman flitting about the office with what seems like Energizer battery power. It's hard to imagine Birthline without Jeanne Hansen! For the past 15 years she has been a constant presence and overseen numerous improvements to our organization and client services.

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Jeanne always knew she would become a nurse. Her career began at Queen of Angels Hospital in Hollywood where she helped establish their first intensive care unit and ER. Eventually she married and moved to San Diego. For 24 years, she worked as the director of a pediatric practice overseeing multiple locations... all while raising her family! When her daughters left the nest, Jeanne transitioned to working in the public health sector, specifically in perinatal care. It was then that she encountered Birthline and began referring patients, many of whom were pregnant teens.

In 2007, after almost 15 years in public health, she decided to retire. However, not being one to slow down much, one week after retiring she gave Birthline a call! Starting at two days per week, she gradually became increasingly involved, until last year she was officially hired as Program Director. Jeanne brought her public health perspective to Birthline's services. Seeing an opportunity to do more than just give out free supplies, she created a resource book and initiated Birthline's case management system. Among other changes, she also reached out to the San Diego Food Bank and enrolled Birthline as a Diaper Bank location. "I was always trying to find resources for free," she smiles.

Over time, her entire family has supported Birthline in one way or another. Most rewarding to Jeanne are "the relationships you develop with the people you work with and with the clients. Clients call me when they graduate or get married. I've seen their children grow up, and some become clients themselves if they are in need." Her compassion has made a difference in hundreds of lives. Jeanne, you are one-of-a-kind!



Local Churches Support Birthline with Christmas Giving Trees



Birthline has been blessed with the support of local parishes during the Christmas season through their Giving Trees. Our Mother of Confidence in University City and Our Lady of Refuge in Pacific Beach have donated everything from baby clothes and toys to Pack-N-Plays for our Birthline families. At the beginning of Advent, parishioners take a tag from the tree with the needed items and bring those items back over the next few weeks. These gifts keep on giving throughout the year, as many of them become part of the newborn gift bags we give to new moms.

This year another parish, St Therese of Carmel, is dedicating one of their Angel Trees to Birthline. We are so grateful to add them to our sponsoring parishes. Every gift given will be a blessing to our young families!

If your parish or organization would like to support Birthline at Christmas, or any time throughout the year, please let us know by contacting Maureen Sterk at maureen.sterk@birthlineofsd.org.

Take Advantage of Giving & Tax Benefits**

End of Year Philanthropy that Makes Sense:

- Don't forget that annual IRA Required Minimum Distributions (RMD's), can go tax free directly to Birthline and can save you taxes by reducing your taxable income.
- Donating appreciated securities, including stocks and bonds, is a simple and tax efficient way to donate.
- Create a charitable gift annuity by transferring cash or property to Birthline and we make fixed payments to you for life at a rate based on your age. This is a win-win charitable tool.
- Also, including Birthline as beneficiary of an investment account, insurance policy, or of a gift in your will can save your estate unnecessary taxes and again, goes tax free to Birthline.



** Please consult your tax advisor.

Remembering Birthline in his Will: Chris's Testimonial

As you and your family discuss philanthropy or update wills or insurance policies, please consider Birthline. Any gift you leave that names Birthline as a beneficiary will ultimately go tax free to our impactful nonprofit so we can continue stabilizing families and transforming lives!

Birthline was alerted in September that they are a beneficiary in the will of an active-duty military serviceman who once lived in Bay Park and is now stationed in Florida. In the wonderful, heartfelt letter, Chris G. shared "being a very pro-life individual, I researched Birthline to discover what you are about, and I was totally inspired. I'm now stationed in Florida, but I will never forget being inspired and grateful for the work you do." Thank you, Chris G., for remembering and acknowledging the amazing impact our mission has on vulnerable women and children. Your action to remember Birthline financially in the future is a gift that keeps on giving. You are an inspiration to others!

Birthline needs YOU!

If you have a few spare hours, please consider helping us in the office.

- ✓ **In-Kind Donations Manager**
- ✓ **Interpreters: Arabic, Farsi, French, Haitian Creole**
- ✓ **Active Members for our Board of Directors:** Areas of expertise desired include Business, Finance, Human Resources, Social Work, Real Estate, and Digital Marketing.

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