

2009-2010 FISCAL YEAR ANNUAL REPORT



Caris

PREGNANCY COUNSELING
AND RESOURCES®

Engaging Our Culture in a New
Conversation



Our Mission

Caris is a faith-based pregnancy counseling agency providing the emotional support and practical resources women need when facing unplanned pregnancies. Through free services, including professional counseling, medically accurate information and connection to community resources, Caris creates a safe environment where a woman can have hope and confidence about her pregnancy and future decisions.

Did You Know?

The Caris Approach® of Commitment, Counseling and Connection focuses on supporting all women in Cook County facing unplanned pregnancies. This approach meets the needs of women, builds common ground in a divisive issue and reduces the number of abortions.



we're listening.

THIS HAS BEEN THE YEAR OF CONVERSATIONS AT CARIS. WE HAVE ENGAGED WITH AND LISTENED TO WOMEN, THE COMMUNITY, CHURCHES AND GOD.



DEAR MINISTRY PARTNERS,

What is so special about conversations? They are the vehicle to connecting, building trust and deepening any relationship. For me, this has been the *Year of Conversations* at Caris – engaging with and listening to women, to churches, to our community and to God. These conversations have been transformational, affirming the direction of Caris and giving us insight for the future.

One of my favorite conversations happened while sitting around a table with four women who had come to Caris initially for help and were now giving back by peer leading a support group. I asked them what they had received from Caris that was most helpful. I'll never forget the response of one young woman:

“Everyone at Caris was so positive. It was the first time I got that response from people.” I clarified, ***“Oh, you mean people were negative about your pregnancy?”*** ***“No,”*** she said, ***“I mean no one in my entire life had ever been positive about anything I tried to do.”***

I knew some of her story, that she had a previous abortion, and that she had been terrified to tell anyone about this pregnancy for fear of rejection and isolation. But as I looked at her holding her 4-month old son in her lap, I could see hope for the future in her eyes. And I knew that she and her son were on a different path because of Caris.

Through these conversations, we are seeing that when pregnant women receive support, they can move forward into a positive future.

I also had many encouraging conversations with people from local churches. I remember sitting across from two women who are leading the expansion of their church's outreach center.

“We are committed to having counseling for women facing unplanned pregnancies as part of our community outreach. We would love to explore the idea of partnering with you to do that.”

I was so excited that this church wants to focus on meeting the needs of pregnant women and change the conversation about how Christians address the divisive issue of abortion.

Through these conversations, we are seeing churches getting involved in providing solutions, not just taking a stand against abortion.

Many times, the conversations I had this year inspired me because they confirmed and reinforced what God is doing through Caris. Other times, I was motivated because the conversations I was having revealed something I want to see God change. My eyes were opened when we received feedback from people in our community who are involved in several fields, including non-profit and public health organizations. Comments like this one were particularly enlightening:

“When I read Caris’ Mission and Vision, the word CHRISTIAN pops up right at the beginning, and my mind automatically goes to extremists who try to scare girls into not getting abortions.”

I was actually relieved to hear this level of honesty, because many times in face-to-face conversations, I could sense that people in the community were skeptical about our services, but I often couldn't put my finger on exactly what it was. It grieves me that this is the reputation followers of Christ have in certain parts of our community. This motivates me to get out even more to start a new conversation about how God views unplanned pregnancy and abortion, and share how followers of Christ are working for the dignity and welfare of both the woman and the child.

Through these conversations, we are seeing the need to dialogue with people in our community and work toward trust and understanding.

In fact, as we have listened to God this year, He is confirming the dream to be reaching 10,000 women every year by the year 2015. As we have spoken and listened to God this year, God is opening doors and God is committed to the women and children of Cook County. Thank you for your partnership this past year and the role you have played in expanding these conversations. I hope you are inspired as we look back at what God has done and trust Him for even greater things for the future.



Angie Weszely, Caris President



"...I felt terrified."

"I just felt like I was completely alone..."

A CONVERSATION WITH WOMEN

To others, it may not seem like much to come and talk to young moms, but it has been a lot for me. I am grateful for you, the time you put in to helping us when everyone else turns away.

Who asks a pregnant teen what her dreams are? Who does that?

I was thinking there was no way I could be a good mom. I felt terrified to tell my boyfriend because I didn't think he would stay around. I felt like I was going to be alone. I didn't want to even know if I was pregnant because I didn't want to deal with all that stuff.

I felt sad because I was giving up so much of my life. I felt sad because I wasn't ready. I felt sad because I had mentioned to the baby's father that I might be pregnant and he wanted for me to have an abortion. I felt scared to tell my mom and disappointed. To me it kind of felt like my life was over.

I had never known anybody who was pregnant or that there was anything out there like that for me. There were little quotes and stuff on the website...that with Caris you didn't have to be alone and that really hit me like something I wanted to be a part of.

I really don't believe in abortion but I just don't think I can do this. I know that God can help me like he did before, but then I'm not ready to be a parent and I don't want to be a single parent.

They weren't just telling me what to do or talking condescendingly to me because I was an irresponsible person. She just really cared about what I said, cared about how I felt - treated me like those things mattered. She seemed so concerned...whether it was about me or the baby, she was concerned. I thought that was a beautiful thing.

— All quotes from Caris clients

Women



2 out of 3 women
chose to parent or place
for adoption
(criteria: see page 16)



total connections: 2,993
connecting women with practical
resources or emotional support
(types of referrals: see page 16)

"...really Compelling."

— Adolescent Health Advocate

"...you Support Women regardless"

— Public Policy Coordinator

A CONVERSATION WITH OUR COMMUNITY

It's unique that you are focusing on the emotional issues of unplanned pregnancy as a Christian organization. This is the strength that will set Caris apart - digging deeper to find out what the issues are that led to the unplanned pregnancy in the first place and addressing those core issues. — Women's Health Advocate

If you don't refer women for abortion, how do you talk about it when a client brings it up? — CEO of nonprofit organization to help teens

As a Christian organization, how would you approach counseling with a woman from a different faith background? — Medical Clinic Director

Why bring Christian into your mission statement? I have a bias against the word "Christian" and I block out anything constructive you may be offering after I see it. Christians have not always been providing accurate information in this issue. Old perceptions die hard. — Consultant for non-profit organizations

Why haven't I heard of your organization? There is no other Chicago agency I know of that provides professional counseling for women facing unplanned pregnancy. I could have referred someone to you yesterday! — Department Director, University of Illinois at Chicago



Community

Number of clients served by Caris location



Total Number of Clients in a Caris Support Group 60

"How can we help?"

"We want to advocate for both the woman and the child..."

A CONVERSATION WITH CHURCHES

I steer clear of this topic in my sermons, because I'm afraid I'll inadvertently hurt women in my congregation who have had abortions.

— Pastor of local church

We like Caris because they are on the edge... they are willing to take risks.

— Staff member at local church

Our church is really divided on abortion and we need a way to approach this issue that will bring us back together.

— Church member

Biblically, I didn't know where to stand on this issue. Pro-Life and Pro-Choice didn't reflect how I felt about unplanned pregnancies and abortion. But Caris does.

— Church member

We have a young woman in our church who is considering abortion, and I don't really know how to help her. So I'm referring her to Caris, and I really hope she'll go.

— Church counselor

Caris is both professional and compassionate, and they are creative and thoughtful in their approach to a culturally divisive issue.

— Pastor of local church

How can we make our church a safe place for women facing unplanned pregnancies?

— Seminary student

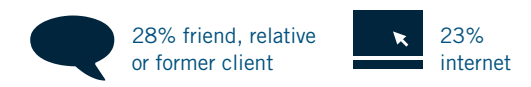


churches

Number of Caris Volunteers



Top 2 Ways That Women Found Caris



"mercy triumphs over judgement..."

— James 2:13

"...be full of grace, seasoned with salt."

— Colossians 4:5-6

A CONVERSATION WITH GOD

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

— Colossians 4:5-6

A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling.

— Psalm 68:5

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion - to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.

— Isaiah 61:1-3

Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

— James 2:12-13

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

— James 1:27



God



National Research Shows
Most women choose abortion because they lack emotional support and practical resources



Cook County Stats
Total of Abortions: 25,529
2008 ILLINOIS ABORTION STATISTIC

The Caris Approach®

3 C'S

CARIS VISION

Caris envisions a world where followers of Christ work for the dignity and welfare of both the woman and the child involved in an unplanned pregnancy; where women are empowered with the support and resources they need to continue their pregnancies, and where the number of abortions is significantly reduced as a result.

OUR COMMITMENT is to work for the dignity and welfare of both the woman and the child because God is equally committed to both.

As a Christian pregnancy counseling agency, we are committed to providing real help and solutions to women experiencing unplanned pregnancies.

We commit to providing a safe and welcoming place where each woman will be accepted and respected regardless of her circumstances.

We commit to building relationships with individuals, churches and organizations in the community so that women and children have strong infrastructures for ongoing support.

OUR COUNSELING helps a woman navigate the complex emotions surrounding an unplanned pregnancy.

Our research shows that when a woman is faced with an unplanned pregnancy she often experiences overwhelming emotional distress.*

She needs a safe place to process feelings so that she can have hope and confidence about her pregnancy and future decisions.

Our master level counselors specialize in the unique issues surrounding unplanned pregnancies. We are here to help each woman process her situation and offer support and resources based on her individual needs.

Through this, we demonstrate the love of God, and we offer the hope that there are people who will be there for her.

When women come into one of our four Chicago-area sites, they receive free services – professional counseling, pregnancy tests and ultrasound.

OUR CONNECTION helps a woman build a longer-term support system. National research shows most women choose abortion because they lack emotional support and practical resources.**

Our on-site support groups provide women with emotional support from professional counselors, encouragement from peers and an opportunity to build relationships with caring Christian volunteers.

Caris also connects women with a wide variety of church and community resources that can help them build the long-term emotional, spiritual and practical support systems they need during pregnancy and beyond.

Our Connection programs for women include: support groups, Adopt-a-Group, early childcare items, referrals and resources.

* Brandtrust, Inc. research, 2008

** Guttmacher Institute

Caris Values

1 RESPECT

As service providers, we value the welfare of both the woman and child in an unplanned pregnancy, show compassionate consideration of both and serve every woman with individualized care...no matter what her needs are...wherever she happens to be in her journey...no matter what decision she makes about her pregnancy.

2 TRUTHFULNESS

We provide medically accurate information to women, commit to honest marketing of our free services and uphold transparency in communication with clients and community partners.

3 INTEGRITY

One way we live out our Christian faith is by being reliable, ethical in all practices and holding ourselves accountable for our actions.

4 EXCELLENCE

To best meet the diverse needs of women facing unplanned pregnancies, we dedicate ourselves to being experts in the field – having distinction within Cook County – based on the quality of our professional counseling, on-site services and depth of referral networks.

5 INNOVATION

In collaboration with faith groups and community agencies, we build common ground to provide creative, relevant solutions, ongoing support and practical resources for pregnant women and their children.

FINANCIALS

Sources of Funding

We are so thankful for your generous support. God has continued to provide for Caris in this challenging economy. Even though our cash receipts decreased 5%, our cash assets increased 15%. Total support and revenue decreased 3.6% and total assets decreased 17% due to the runoff of multi-year pledges previously recognized as income in the year of the initial pledge. Caris is not asking for multi-year pledges any longer; all new pledges are one year or less.

RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS

Churches	\$	85,295
Corporations	\$	16,514
Donors	\$	849,562
Foundations	\$	40,700
Other	\$	34,171
Grant	\$	619,469
TOTAL INCOME:	\$	1,645,711

Donors
52%

Grant
38%

Churches
3%

Corporations
1%

Foundations
2%

Other
2%

Uses of Funding

The program allocations increased 3.5% from last year to this year with administrative costs decreasing 3.2% and fundraising costs decreasing slightly. More resources are being focused on counseling and support groups.

FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS

Program Services	\$	1,308,434
General and Administrative	\$	234,276
Fundraising	\$	286,176
TOTAL EXPENSE:	\$	1,828,886*

Services
71.5%

General
13%

Fundraising
16%

**Although total assets decreased due to pledges recognized as income in prior years, actual cash contributions (including cash to pay off pledges) exceeded actual expenses. Cash position remains strong as no operating reserves were drawn.*

financials

Caris Fiscal Year 09/10

The financial audit of Caris was conducted by Capin Crouse, LLP in September 2010 on all records as of June 30, 2010. We were found to have all processes and controls in place to meet the financial accountability standards.

THANK YOU
FOR BEING AN
INTEGRAL PART
OF HELPING
TO CHANGE THE
CONVERSATION.

— Caris Staff and Board

Caris Board of Directors

Michael Sharp
Chairman of the Board
Vice President, Controller & CAO
AAR Corporation

Prosper Wang M.D.
Vice-Chair of the Board
Family Practice Physician
Lawndale Christian Health Center

John Andrew
Secretary/Treasurer of the Board
Human Resource Consulting
HR Performance Group, Inc

Jane May
Board Member
Attorney
McDermott, Will & Emery

Bervin Peterson
Board Member
Owner
Peterson & Associates Real Estate

Mindy Caliguire
Board Member
Transformation Ministry Director
Willow Creek Association

Criteria for outcomes: Outcomes calculated from clients with known decisions who were pregnant and considering abortion

Types of referral services Caris provides: Adoption agency, baby boutique, church, food, housing, job or educational resources, medical clinic or doctor, mentor, Caris support group, parenting support, post-abortion resources, professional counseling, public assistance/WIC, and STD testing.

Northside

1135 West Sheridan Road
Chicago Illinois 60660
t 773.338.8311

Lawndale

3860 West Ogden Avenue
Chicago Illinois 60623
t 773.843.3001

Near West

715 West Lake Street #104
Oak Park Illinois 60301
t 708.383.4999

Woodfield

717 East Golf Road
Schaumburg Illinois 60173
t 847.885.1778

Administrative

4811 Emerson Avenue Suite 110
Palatine Illinois 60067
t 847.397.0133

we're listening.

