

June 2020



Lifelines



Supporting Moms During Pandemic with 'Blessing Bags Filled with Love'

Featured in National Publication of PREGNANCY HELP NEWS



Ashland Pregnancy Care Center blessed moms with essential supplies just before Mother's Day.

Written By: Gayle Irwin

Last month as Mother's Day weekend approached, staff and volunteers from an Ohio pregnancy center took time to honor and help moms in the community, providing needed materials and much-needed hope to those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We were prompted by all the COVID stuff ... people feeling hopeless, overwhelmed and anxious," said Melanie Miller, executive director of Ashland Pregnancy Care Center. "When all of this happened, we had many moms stop in at

our center, panicked and afraid they weren't going to have enough baby food or diapers and wipes."

"We just had such a burden on our hearts for babies and moms in our community," Miller said, "so we decided to provide a 'blessing bag' filled with love."

Blessing the community with essential items

The idea took root in April, and the event was held the Friday before Mother's Day, Miller said. She and her staff and volunteers created 100 'blessing bags,'

Mission Statement:

The Ashland Pregnancy Care Center is a Christ-centered ministry offering compassion, hope, and help to women and men facing critical pregnancy decisions by *establishing* trusted relationships, *equipping* with education and resources, and *empowering* families to live life according to God's plan.

Staff

Executive Director
Melanie Miller

Administrative Assistant
Traci Counts

Client Care Coordinator
Jackie Beaty

Client Outreach & Volunteer Coordinator
Amanda Bowman

Boutique Coordinator
Pat Rogers

Medical Staff

Medical Director
Dr. Debbie Cowden

Prenatal Specialist
Dr. J.A. Klobutcher

Sonographers
Mandi Ross, RDMS
Katie Kline, RT

Board of Directors

Adrea Tennant, President
Travis McKenzie, Vice-President
Joan Scott, Secretary
Lorin Weaver, Treasurer
Eric Abel
Renee Maggelet
Melanie Miller (ex-officio)

COVID RESPONSE

We are open for in-person client visits and donation drop-offs.

Please visit our website at **AshlandCareCenter.org** and click on the pink alert bar at the top of the page, where you will see important COVID-19 updates. We are currently requiring each person to call ahead to be given a health screening. Each person will be encouraged to wear a mask, and a temperature check will be taken.



A large donation was delivered earlier this year — a box truck filled with new (with tags) maternity clothes! We were so blessed to receive these special items for our moms valued at \$20,000! We thank The Lord's Pantry and the Motherhood Maternity Store for this special gift. During the pandemic, we have been able to re-imagine The Boutique and add a Mommy Corner. These new cute, trendy clothes are an opportunity to help our moms see that they are beautiful and that they are valuable and worthy.

Can You Help Us Meet These Needs?

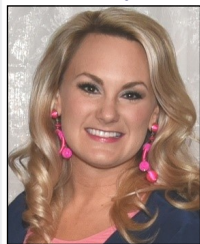
- ♥ 2 Ironing Boards & 2 Irons to press The Boutique donations
- ♥ Backpack Diaper Bags
- ♥ Crib Beddings Sets (3 to 4 piece)
- ♥ Mommy & Daddy items

Please visit:

AshlandCareCenter.org/Boutique

to view an extended list of client specific & general Center needs. You can also shop our Wish Lists on Amazon Smile.

Message from the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

This has been a challenging, yet blessed season during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through it all, we have been

experiencing the wonder of God's love. Psalm 17:6-9 says,

**"I call on you, O God, for You will answer me;
give ear to me and hear my prayer.
Show me the wonder of Your great love,**

**You who save by Your right hand
those who take refuge in You from
their foes.**

**Keep me as the apple of Your eye;
hide me in the shadow of Your
wings
from the wicked who assail me,
from my mortal enemies who surround me."**

As we all walked through uncharted waters, covering all things in prayer, God continued to provide. We have been in awe of how God used many of you to meet and fulfill needs as they arose. We felt led to document a weekly video update, which was posted on Facebook and sent through our Eblast to communicate important information and praises.

We were so honored that a national publication, "Pregnancy Help News" got a tip on the Blessing Bag Outreach and featured our center. The article included in its entirety in this special newsletter edition, beginning on page 1 and continuing on page 3.

Our team has used this time to train, learn innovative ways to communicate with clients and our volunteer team virtually, and take a deeper look at the center through the lens of our clients. We have freshened up spaces with intention, simplified procedures, and gave The Boutique a makeover (more coming soon)!

On behalf of the entire Ashland Pregnancy Care Center family, we want to thank each of you who took the time to call and pray for us, deliver gifts and treats to encourage our staff, and meet essential client needs like baby food, formula, diapers and wipes, and other special requests.

We also want to pay special tribute to the individuals who gave a commemorative gift to honor or remember a special mom and dad in their life. Their names are listed in the special insert.

Melanie Miller, Executive Director

Samaritan Hospital Foundation Gives Generously



Samaritan Hospital
Foundation

This year, Ashland Pregnancy Care Center received a generous \$5,000 grant from the Samaritan Hospital Foundation to help provide new car seats and new convertible cribs to clients who

participate in our Learn & Earn Program. When clients *learn* by watching pregnancy and parenting educational videos or meeting with mom/dad mentors, families *earn* "Boutique Bucks," which can be used at The Boutique (the Center's material resource store) to acquire the necessary material items for baby. These essential equipment items provide safe travel and safe sleep environments for babies.

In addition, our generous friends also provided two touchless digital forehead thermometers so that we can screen staff, volunteers, and clients who enter.

Thank you, Samaritan Hospital Foundation for helping keep our team, client families, and babies safe in the Ashland Community!

BLESSING BAGS continued

filling them with items for moms and babies. That included diapers, wipes, toys, and crocheted and knitted blankets made by women from a local church. These were called 'prayer blankets' because each one was prayed over before being disbursed. The center also received donations of toothbrushes and toothpaste from local dentists and bottles of shampoo, soap, and lotion provided by local hotels. Limited amounts of formula and baby food was also available, and a Gospel tract and a brochure about the center's services were also placed in each bag.



APCC blessing bags and prayer tent

"We wanted it to be an outreach for the Gospel as well so we could meet a tangible need for these moms with babies," Miller said, "but the most important need we all have is the spiritual need, to know Christ, and if we can encourage people with prayer, we wanted to do that."

Gideons International's Ashland Camp, which provides Bibles for the pregnancy center, also assisted.



APCC blessing bag drive-thru

They set up a prayer tent at which women, after obtaining their material items, could go and receive prayer plus a Bible or a "personal witness testament," Miller said. Forty-two testaments were given

en out along with 19 full-sized Bibles.

"Overall, I think the event went really well," she said. "We put our faith to action, and it was a great bright spot amid all the COVID happenings."

This drive-through community event was held in the parking lot of a local church. Miller and her helpers wore masks and gloves in keeping with pandemic restrictions, and those needing supplies stayed in their cars.

Center to celebrate 40 years

Located mid-way between Cleveland and Columbus, Ashland Pregnancy Care Center has been part of the community for 39 years; the center celebrates its 40th anniversary next year. Many changes have occurred over the four decades, including the name of the center. However, the mission remains the same.

"Our desire is to reach women and men facing a critical pregnancy decision and help them with that pregnancy decision," Miller said.

In addition to the medical services of pregnancy testing and ultrasound, options education, and parenting and abortion recovery programs, the center provides support for families dealing with infant and pregnancy loss, and just this year, the center partnered with a local church to start an Embrace Grace program.

"It began in the spring and then COVID happened," Miller said. "We did a drive-in baby shower, people honking their horns and celebrating. That was a unique and sweet experience. Embrace Grace has been a beautiful ministry in our community."

Another session is planned for the fall.

Returning the love

Amid the COVID-19 outbreak, Miller and her team have experienced the love and support of their 21,000-person community.

"It's been like Christmas almost every day ... we get packages from Amazon where people are fulfilling our Wish List for diapers and wipes," Miller said. "The

outpouring of love and care from our community, that God continued to put our ministry and our moms with babies on their hearts and minds through all of this – it's been an emotional experience for our staff. We've been in awe what God has done ... we wanted to pay (the blessings) forward."

Several recent clients have received discouraging diagnoses about their pregnancies, Miller added; two of them came to the blessing bags event. They ended up encouraging each other.

"It was neat to see how the two clients ministered to one another, walking in those shoes together," Miller said. "It was just so amazing ... I call them 'miracles from Heaven.'"

Additionally, a woman from the community, who recently learned her one-year-old daughter has cancer, showed up specifically for prayer support.

"When we got to her window, she said, 'I'm really here for the prayer,'" recalled Miller. "I just found out my one-year-old daughter in the back seat has been diagnosed with cancer, and I'm just so overwhelmed; I just want somebody to pray with me. I don't know what to do with this news."

"She was so encouraged by the time she left," Miller said. "She felt so much hope for her situation."



APCC distributed items to moms

Despite the cold that day, 82 of the 100 bags were given out. In addition to the material items, something else was given.

"It was our chance to be the hands and feet of Christ in the middle of this pandemic when people were in need of hope," Miller said.

THANK YOU for making the Blessing Bag Outreach a success: APCC Staff, Lorin & Judy Weaver, Sharon Carr, Maryanne Wise, The Gideons International Ashland Camp-Women's Auxiliary President Melody Barnes, Amy Keller-and First United Methodist Church for serving as host site.



Ashland Pregnancy Care Center

119 Sloan Ave.
Ashland, OH 44805
419.281.1111

Open Mon, Tues, Thurs.
10:00 a.m.—6:00 p.m.

Ashland Pregnancy Care Center Special Hours:
Center Closed: Monday, September 7, 2020 (Labor Day)

The Boutique

Emmanuel United Methodist
322 Cleveland Ave.
Ashland, OH 44805

Open Thursday
12:00 p.m.—6:00 p.m.

Upcoming Events

GET READY TO JOIN US

Walk for Life & 5K Fun Run Fundraiser

Saturday, October 3, 2020
Downtown Ashland Corner Park
Registration Opens July 31, 2020
For details visit: AshlandCareCenter.org/Walk

New Volunteer Interest Meeting

Thursday, October 8, 2020 from 5:00—6:00 p.m.
Contact Amanda for information at 419.281.1111

Fundraising Banquet Shifts from In-Person to Virtual Online Event

Don't miss it!



Our 14th Annual Fundraising Banquet
has been **RESCHEDULED!**
With guest speaker Abby Johnson

NEW EVENT DATE:

Thursday, August 6, 2020



Due to COVID-19 concerns and restrictions, Ashland Pregnancy Care Center is shifting from an **in-person** fundraising event into a **virtual online** fundraising event. The annual fundraising banquet is mission-critical to our life-saving work. Had this event been canceled, it would have been **devastating** to our ability to service mothers and save babies. To help in this crucial time, please register and attend the virtual online event (if you have a computer or mobile device and an internet connection, you can easily join us)—and spread the word to everyone you know!

First things first: in order to watch the LIVE event, you have to register to attend. Take the first step at AshlandCareCenter.org/Banquet. Each guest will receive a confirmation email with a link to join the Live Stream (to be received closer to the event date). If you were already registered to attend, you DO NOT need to re-register. There is no registration deadline. Individuals can sign-up an hour before the live event! One of the most exciting aspects about going virtual is there are no limit to the number of people who can attend! So invite friends near and far!

What to Expect?

One-hour Live Stream at 7:00 p.m.

- ♥ The banquet program will include a

ministry update, client testimonials, special message from speaker Abby Johnson, A BIG ANNOUNCEMENT, and an opportunity to make a financial investment in God's work.

- ♥ You will need a good internet connection and device to be able to watch the Live Stream.

Gather Together or Watch at Home

- ♥ There is something powerful about fellowship and breaking bread. If you're willing to invite friends to your house, this is a great opportunity to gather together for dinner or appetizers and desserts and collectively watch our Live Stream. Or consider talking with your pastor and hosting a watch party at church.

- ♥ If you're not comfortable gathering, we encourage you to *still* host a watch party! You can do this using Zoom—gathering together with friends virtually before our Live Stream, then connecting back up after to discuss.

- ♥ Be creative! If there's anything we can do to help, please reach out!

Opportunity To Give

- ♥ Guests will have the opportunity to give online right where the Live Stream will be taking place.
- ♥ If you are gathering with a table host or at the invite of a host, each host will have giving cards with envelopes. At the end of the event, your host will collect the envelopes and return them to the Center.

For more information and to REGISTER, please visit: ASHLANDCARECENTER.ORG/BANQUET