

QUIZ: how well do you know LIFE CHOICES CENTER?

1 This fall, Life Choices Center celebrates its ___ birthday.
a. 6th c. 17th
b. 13th d. 24th

2 ___ babies have been born to LCC clients so far this year.
a. 11 c. 27
b. 19 d. 33

3 What is the average age of clients coming to LCC?
a. 17 c. 22
b. 19 d. 26

4 LCC's mentoring program for new parents is called _____.

5 T or F: LCC offers programs for new dads and teen boys.

6 ___ pregnancy tests are done at LCC in an average week.
a. 2 c. 7
b. 5 d. 11

7 T or F: Giving away free baby items is one of LCC's goals.

8 1 out of ___ women will have an abortion by age 45.
a. 3 c. 8
b. 5 d. 10

score 100% and win this sticker!



answers on p. 4-5

9 Your heart first started beating:
a. when your mom was about 5 weeks pregnant with you.
b. around the end of your mom's first trimester (12 weeks).
c. when you fell in love for the first time.

10 The purpose for a client to have an ultrasound at LCC is:
a. to make sure the baby is okay.
b. to find out the baby's gender.
c. so the parents-to-be have a photo to show their friends.
d. to educate pregnant women and their partners about the life developing inside them.

11 The typical cost to clients for services at LCC is _____.

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Life Choices Center is a frontline outreach to the Greater Binghamton Region that provides competent and caring services to women and men in unplanned pregnancies and other related situations.

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Health Care Reform & Life Choices Center



Russ and Andrea Smith

Like many of you, I'm sure, I've been thinking lately about health care reform. How might the proposed national health care reform bill, if passed, affect Life Choices Center? Will it change what we do or how we do it? It seems that the bill will allow federal taxpayer money to be used for abortion. An ABC News report dated 8/13/09 states:

"While the original bills both in the House and Senate never explicitly addressed abortion, Section 1714 of the House bill, H.R. 3200, does talk about family planning for women on Medicaid, the existing federal-state health care program for the poor. Section 1714 would make states automatically eligible for matching federal funds if they wanted to offer family planning services to women who do not otherwise qualify for Medicaid because they make too much money. Currently, states wanting to pursue this approach need a special waiver from the federal government."

Take the report at face value. If publicly funded, the number of abortions would increase, especially among Medicaid-eligible women. This means that Life Choices

We will continue to do all we can to erase the need for abortion in this community.

Center will be called upon to do more. We will continue to do all that we can to erase the need for abortion in this community. We will look for new ways

to offer hope and help to anyone facing a pregnancy-related crisis, empowering them to make informed choices about their pregnancy and encouraging them to take advantage of the caring services that we offer. It takes an enthusiastic staff, hard-working volunteers and loyal donors to accomplish this. I am blessed with a capable staff. I am thankful for our current team of volunteers and the many donors that support us. I am inspired by the new volunteers and donors we have joining our team every month. I invite you to be one of them!

Walking for Life



About 100 walkers, runners, bikers, and cutestroller-riders braved

the heat on May 23 to join the Walk for Life. For half of these folks, it was their first time at the Walk for Life. A total of \$10,991 was pledged. Thank you to all who participated!

See more Walk for Life photos at www.lifechoicescenter.org/events

\$700 grant

Earlier this year, Life Choices Center received a grant to provide moms with emergency assistance. Thanks to the grant, we have been able to help several individuals with formula, diapers, a car seat, a breast pump and a crib. The grant came from The Women's Fund of the Community Foundation for South Central New York.

Calling all golfers!



Join us for a memorable end-of-the-season golfing

experience! Our inaugural golf tournament kicks off at 11:30 a.m. on Monday, September 21 at the premier Vestal Hills Country Club. We're playing a four-person Captain & Crew format. Visit our website or call Russ at 723.3540 for more information.

download a registration form at www.lifechoicescenter.org/events

A step of faith

Working at Life Choices Center began with a step of faith. I wanted to help people, but I felt inadequate and questioned if God would choose to use me here. I'll never forget the very



Mary Rose Byler

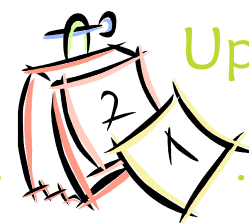
first client I met with for a pregnancy test. She cried when the test turned out positive. We lost touch, so I didn't know what she had decided to do—until last weekend, when I bumped into her and her little baby girl! I have just a couple weeks left at Life Choices Center, because I'm going to a missionary school in Ghana, West Africa. I think God let me see that girl and her baby as a reminder before I leave that he did choose to use me here. Now I have the courage to take another step of faith, and I look forward to seeing what God will teach me in Ghana.

prolifechecks.com

Thanks to everyone who ordered checks in May and June from prolifechecks.com. Because of your purchases, we earned enough credits to get a free box of 30 pregnancy tests!

Want more?

This newsletter goes out 3-4 times a year. If you want more frequent news and stories, please sign up for "This Week at the Center," a bi-weekly email update. To sign up, email Karen at info@lifechoicescenter.org.



Upcoming events

September 9-12, 2009
selling IMAGE magazine at the National Care Net conference
Baltimore, Maryland

September 11, 2009
Day of Caring
Work day at LCC

September 20, 2009
Our Secret Sin
Abortion recovery seminar
First Baptist Church in Afton

September 21, 2009
Swing for Life
Inaugural golf tournament
Vestal Hills Country Club

September 23, 2009
Back2School Bash
for Binghamton H.S. students
on the LCC front lawn

October 16, 2009
Banquet for Life
The McKinley, Endicott
Speaker: Jason McGuire,
New Yorkers for
Constitutional Freedoms

January 2010
New volunteer training

February 2010
Beyond the Choice
abortion recovery group starts



baby Isaiah



baby Izabehla



baby Jamaree



baby Layne

1 answer: (c) 17th

October marks 17 years since LCC first opened its doors to serve individuals facing a crisis pregnancy situation.

thank you!

Many of you have played a part in these 17 successful years. Last year, Life Choices Center volunteers logged nearly **3,000 hours!**



93 Oak St.

2 answer: (d) 33 babies

We love when babies are born because it gives us a chance to celebrate the joy of life with our clients. (And because they're cute!)

At the top of this page you can see photos of some of our newest arrivals.

3 answer: (c) 22

With Binghamton High School and Binghamton University for our neighbors, we see a lot of teens and early 20-somethings. We have some exciting opportunities to reach out to young people! You can read about one recent opportunity on p. 6.

bonus fact:

67% of our clients are between the ages of 15-24. This same age range accounts for half of abortions in the United States.



missing something this month?

4 answer: Smart Choices

Parenting is the world's most challenging job! Through our Smart Choices program we offer new moms and dads one-on-one support and the opportunity to earn items for their babies.

did you know?

Hosting a baby shower is a simple, practical way you can keep our baby store stocked and help new parents. Our store is running low on diapers (sizes NB, 4, 6) and baby equipment. If you'd like to host a shower or donate to the baby store, please call us at 723.3540.



the baby store

5 answer: true

In fact, the number of male clients is beginning to overwhelm our male staff! If you'd like to mentor young men, please call Russ at 723.3540 or email him at director@lifechoicescenter.org.

6 answer: (c) 7

One line or two? Imagine the anxiety you'd feel as you wait to find out if your entire life is about to change. When clients come to LCC for a pregnancy test, often they are facing a moment of crisis in their life. Our goal is to provide a safe, comfortable place for them to express their fears, find answers and receive non-judgmental truth and love to help them tackle whatever challenges may come with their test results.

QUIZ answers



baby Sa-Afira



baby Makayla



baby Javon

7 answer: false

We intentionally choose not to give away very many items. Rather, our clients enjoy the satisfaction of knowing they are providing for their children by earning points through our Smart Choices program and shopping in the baby store.

however...

We try our best to help people facing emergency situations. Earlier this year we received a grant that has enabled us to assist some people with urgent needs. You can read about it on p. 3.

8 answer: (c) 1 out of 3

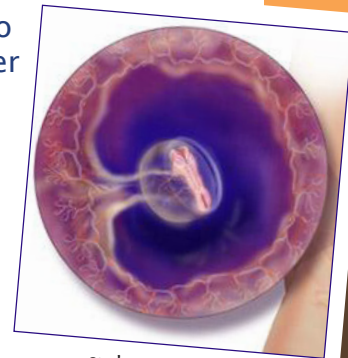
With one third of women experiencing abortion, it's hard to imagine why abortion remains a "secret sin." Through our Beyond the Choice program, we are letting post-abortive women know they are not alone—and more important, that forgiveness and healing are possible. You can read about what's happening with Beyond the Choice on p. 7.

bonus fact:

78% of women report a religious affiliation at the time of their abortion.

9 answer: (a) around 5 weeks

Facts about fetal development are just one piece of information we offer our clients. We can't make anyone's decision for them. And we don't pressure or preach. But we do know that knowledge is power and more information means a more informed choice.



embryo at 5 weeks (about when the heart starts beating)

10 answer: (d) to educate clients

An ultrasound is like a window to the womb. In addition to a sneak peek at their developing baby, meeting with Dr. Crosby gives our clients the opportunity to have some of their questions answered and fears put to rest.



fetus at 5 months

11 answer: free

We've estimated that it costs about \$526 per day to operate Life Choices Center. Thanks to countless generous people (like many of you), we can offer our services for free to people in need.

so ... how'd you do?

If you scored 100% congratulations! You win this **good choices for a good life** sticker (while supplies last). To claim your prize, email admin@lifechoicescenter.org



What I learned from teenagers this summer

by Michelle Pratt
Youth Education Consultant



A goal at Life Choices Center has been to develop a male counterpart to IMAGE magazine. So when the opportunity came for me to teach a group of teens how to lay out a magazine, we jumped on it.

On July 13, I started working with six teen leaders—four guys, two girls—from the Community Improvement Through Youth project of Cornell Cooperative Extension. First task: define our goal. We wanted to create a magazine, written by teens to teens, that tells guys many of the messages they get from the culture and media are flat-out lies. Second task: choose a name. The group thought for a few minutes and came to a unanimous decision: DaTruf. (Translation: The Truth)

This was going to be fun.

Throughout our six weeks together, we had great conversations. One girl interviewed the guys in the group (none of them have their father living in the house) for an article about the effects of growing up without a dad around. No one was more surprised than me to see boys who one moment earlier were laughing and pushing each other around settle down and get serious as they considered the question.



Sneak Peek: DaTruf

“Nothing,” said one. “Yeah, nothing,” echoed his friend. Silence. “Well, I think maybe I wouldn’t have had to grow up so fast,” ventured a third, the oldest of the group. We asked him to explain. “My mom needs my help. I think I’m doing some of the stuff my father should be doing.”

The ice was broken, and the boys started talking.

“I would have played ball in the park with my dad.”

“I wouldn’t have to help with the bills.”

“I would have learned how to tie a tie.”

As they let down their defenses, I realized each one had deep wounds from growing up without their father around. Then it occurred to me that we adults believe our own set of lies. Here’s one: kids are resilient, so my selfish choices won’t affect my children. I felt powerless when I caught a glimpse of their struggles, and I prayed for the opportunity to tell them their Dad really loves them.

I want to thank you for supporting Life Choices Center. Many non-profits survive from federal and state funding, sources that are limited to us because of the work we do. Your donations allowed me to work with these teens this summer. They didn’t know it, but me being there was really hundreds of people saying, “You’re important to God, so you’re important to me.” Thank you, co-laborers.

boys, bffs, and your body

If you're a girl age 13-17, you'll love IMAGE magazine and IMAGE groups. You'll develop skills to help you succeed at dating, set healthy boundaries, and communicate effectively.

After-school IMAGE groups starting soon!

To sign up, e-mail Michelle at positivechoices@lifechoicescenter.org. Cost is \$3, which pays for your copy of IMAGE.



 <http://www.notminebutgodstory.blogspot.com>



adventures in the blogging world

posted: August 2009
0 comments

A couple of years ago I started blogging. Why, I'm not sure. Writing was never a desire of mine (I much prefer to talk!), and computers and I have never gotten along. But God kept nudging me to write about my abortion. So, with a little help from my computer-savvy husband, I dove into the blogging world with no idea what to expect.

I started with what I know best—my own story. Soon I began receiving messages from other women revealing their “secret sin.” Women from all over the country wrote to me! It seemed God was using my blog to spread my story—his story—further than I'd ever dreamed was possible.

One day Lisa from Florida posted this comment: “I was moved by your testimony that in many ways parallels mine. (Single mother, 3-yr-old daughter, married one yr, became pregnant and ALLOWED FEAR to over ride my FAITH).”

Lisa wrote on her own blog about how God used my story to give her the courage to speak openly about her own abortion: “I needed to know that I wasn't alone, that I wasn't the only woman who had been a married Christian who had an abortion. I have no more reason to remain quiet.”

My friendship with Lisa started to build through emails. Then a telephone conversation. Then a face-to-face meeting when my family took a vacation in Florida this summer.

Meeting Lisa was an amazing experience. It was like we had been girlfriends for a lifetime. We knew the ugly parts of each other's past and the pain our choices had brought into our lives and the lives of the people closest to us. Our time together reminded both of us how God has taken what was meant for evil and is using it for good.

It's funny—a few years ago I didn't even know what “blogging” meant. Now I'm hooked on it. For me, it's just one more tool God is using to help me spread the word about the healing and freedom he offers for those suffering from the “secret sin” of abortion.

news & notes

A group is meeting on Tuesday evenings for an abortion recovery Bible study. Please pray for these women to experience deep healing .

If you haven't seen our new video yet, please check it out! You can access it by clicking on the After Abortion tab at www.lifechoicescenter.org. To request a DVD copy, email beyondthechoice@lifechoicescenter.org.

At the end of May, we held a memorial service for five women who completed our abortion recovery study. Here's how one of the women described her experience:

“ This was a week of finally believing in God's forgiveness. It's been easy for me to accept his forgiveness for my other sins. But with my abortion, I didn't know how. When God gave me my son's name, I was able to hold him in my heart for the first time and to feel God's forgiveness.

The hardest (and best) decision I ever made

I was a senior in high school when I found out I was pregnant.

I'd been living with my boyfriend and his parents for six months when I decided I couldn't take his abuse anymore and moved back in with my mom. When I called to tell my ex I was pregnant, he said, "Good thing you don't live here anymore, because I would've thrown you down the stairs to make sure you didn't have that baby." Throughout the pregnancy, he continually asked me to have an abortion, but I never wanted that. I was scared, but I knew my decision would impact the life of my unborn child forever.

By the time I showed up at Life Choices Center, I had decided on adoption.

I had found a couple who was ready and eager to become parents for my child. I went to Life Choices Center every week to meet with my mentor, Della. It was so helpful to know she was there when I needed to talk, and she understood without being judgmental. She reassured me that while this may not be an easy road, I was making a good choice. We did lessons on pregnancy, and I learned about what was happening inside of me. I earned points for doing things like getting good grades, going to work and to church, and I was able to use those points to get things I needed for the baby and for me. It was great to be able to check in with Della and let her know the details of how the adoption plans were going. She helped me realize that my walk with the Lord is what would help me the most. To this day, I know she was right.

It was difficult walking the halls of my school that year,

with my growing belly surpassing my feet. I was the only one with a backpack on wheels, because I couldn't lift too much. I was afraid I might go into labor on graduation day. To my surprise, though, people at school didn't reject me. My friends wanted to know all about the pregnancy. They helped me with my books and walked me to my car. I don't think it was because they thought it was cool for me to be pregnant, but they knew my situation and how scared I was. I really think they were sincere in helping me.

I felt accepted.

I think a big reason I felt that way was because I had already been accepted at Life Choices Center. The love and acceptance I got there gave me confidence to face my peers at school.

At first, I just wanted the pregnancy to be over

and forget about the whole thing. Life Choices Center helped me cherish the fact that I did something great—I gave life to my biological son, and I gave a couple the child they had longed for. And now when questions arise, I can explain in a good way why I did what I did.



Ashley Vincent has an open adoption arrangement and sees her biological son on a regular basis.

To my son

My darling son you've no idea
How much you're on my mind.
Perfectly formed, completely unique
You are a child who's one of a kind.

When I had you I cried for joy
To see your perfect little frame.
I hope you know how much I love you
And perhaps one day you'll feel the same.

Although I chose to give you life
I could not give you a home.
And so I picked a loving family
Who'd provide for you wherever you roam.

I held you close to my breast
And caressed your tender brow.
But I must let you go and try to understand
That your life isn't mine to control now.

I pray you'll grow up strong and bold
With a heart for those weaker than you.
Whatever you become in the future
Will be wonderful, I'm sure that much is true.

Just don't forget my darling son,
Your mother who loves you day by day,
And you can conquer all obstacles in life
No matter what other people say.

I love you, my son, with all my heart.

Your Mother

This poem was written by a former client of Life Choices Center who did not want her name published. Last spring she made arrangements for a closed adoption.