



SPRING 2020

NEWSLETTER

We have been dedicated to serving with compassion and dignity the immediate and long-term needs of those facing unplanned pregnancies for 21 years!



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Hello Dear Friend of Next Step!

“Faith does not make things easy, it makes them possible.” - Luke 1:37

My name is Heather M Vasquez and I find myself addressing you as the new Executive Director of Next Step. How did this happen? I had been working in the administrative offices of a busy community hospital lab as a supervisor going on fifteen and a half years when I realized I was sleepwalking through my days.

I was very good at my job and reliable and detail-oriented. I was patient and empathetic. I was friendly yet uninterested in joining in on the chatter of my co-workers and associates. I kept my thoughts to myself. I was passionate about honest work, ethics and putting our patients first. I took very personally the work of department. But it was not enough. Year after year it was never enough. But I faithfully come in day after day and gave of myself.

I had to believe at some point somehow this would all be worthwhile. That I would someday feel inspired, exhilarated, and ablaze! But it never happened.

In November of 2019 I decided to stop waiting. I had accepted my place in that soon-to-be state hospital but decided I would look outward for the fulfillment I sought. I was ardently pro-life and believed strongly in the cause so I decided one day to do more than like and share various pro-life posts and articles. More than comment on misconceptions about the movement and roll my eyes at the opposition's delusional remarks.

I contacted two crisis pregnancy clinics in the area offering to volunteer my time. One place didn't quite fit but Kathy at Next Step responded warmly asking me if I'd be interested in serving on the Board. I jumped at the chance. Again – baby steps! During a tour of the clinic I was struck by the warmth I received. The atmosphere was clean but not cold. Bright but not harsh. There was room filled with little baby clothes. Onesies and pants, sleepers and tiny shoes and another room where layettes were put together with little receiving blankets and tiny socks and mittens, sleepers and swaddlers all wrapped in beautifully hand-made



Heather M Vasquez
Executive Director



(Continued inside)

MARCH FOR LIFE OLYMPIA

January 21st 2020

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“For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.” Psalm 139:13-16



Pictured above are two pro-life supporters, Maria Vasquez and Teresa Fesalbon.



On Tuesday January 21st 2020 I had the privilege of attending the Annual March for Life in Olympia. The day was overcast and wet yet permeated with hope and exhilaration! The march to our capital has been an annual event since 1974 – a year after the Roe v Wade decision that effectively made the slaughter of the unborn a reality.

We bussed out of St. Mark Parish in Shoreline and headed to Mass being celebrated at Sacred Heart in Lacey by our new Archbishop Paul Etienne. During the Homily Archbishop Etienne said, “Today is one of those days where we have an interesting convergence of our political action that is overlapped, infused, conjoined with our role as members of the body of Christ”. He went on to say, “We are here to celebrate the truth and reality that once a life is conceived, it shares the dignity of humanity,” Archbishop Etienne said. “It shares the gift of the plan of God, the breath of God, the life of God already in seminal form, and we hold this belief dearly. Thus we are willing to make a very strong public statement” about the unborn.

After Mass we bussed a short distance to the capital building where we were joined by thousands of men, women, teens, and children all armed with umbrellas, rain-coats, strong words, prayers, and determination. There was a record number of young people in attendance to fight for the unborn. Pictured above are two pro-life supporters, Maria Vasquez and Teresa Fesalbon.

The rally was kicked off by speakers from the surrounding districts. Noreen McEntee Hobson, president of Washington State March for Life was in attendance as well as 10 other pro-life state legislators including freshman Representative Kelly Chambers of the 25th District. She shared her own personal story of an unplanned pregnancy at age 16. Despite the odds she had her baby girl, graduated from high school and went on to college.

McEntee Hobson added, “That’s the message — the baby isn’t the enemy of your dreams, the baby is your dreams,” she said. “Babies are never the enemy, they are not the burden. They are the blessing, they are the gift, and they are the resource.”

NEW BEGINNINGS!

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**Thank you to our
amazing Executive
Director
Kathy Dizard!**

As you may know friends our dear Executive Director Kathy Dizard has entered blissfully into her much deserved retirement. Though we are loath to part we wish and pray only for her happiness, peace, and contentment and thank her from the moon and back for her many, many years of service, compassion, kindness, leadership, and grit – for our clients, families, donors, and especially the unborn!



Hello Dear Friend...

(Continued from cover)

crib blankets. There was a counseling room where I admired the beautiful painting on the wall. Calm and serene. A soft couch as well. Kathy told me about the pregnancy tests and counsel they gave to women who came in seeking them. About the Ultrasounds where mothers-to-be could glimpse the life brimming within. About the clothes, wipes, diapers, and formula the volunteers handed out. About the daily drops of donations from mothers who'd once been clients, from neighbors and friends. About the devoted volunteers who came day in and day out to sort clothes, check in clients, and basically keep the clinic moving. And about the prayers. The prayers said right there in the waiting room by staff and volunteers – out loud! The whole operation was a wonder!

As I set about sending in my board application I got an email from the Kathy attaching the job description for the open Executive Director position, “just in case” was how she'd put it. In our meeting I'd expressed my plans to look for another place to work as I was afraid working for this new “entity” that had taken over my hospital would bind me with practices, policies and beliefs I did not want to be a part of. She asked for my resume and cover letter – again, “just in case” --- and shaking my head --- I sent them and went back to applying for random jobs and interviewing and testing. It had never crossed my mind that my visit to Next Step would lead to anything more than meeting some new folks and maybe collecting some diapers. In reading the job description, as daunting as it was, I shook my head. No way could I be an Executive Director. What if I messed up? It wasn't like making a pizza and forgetting the olives.

I was asked to interview with the Board and I went ahead with it. I had two other interviews that day and it was my last one. Then one cool day in November as I was eating lunch with my parents and my older brother in our monthly “original Buyce family no spouses or children” meetup I got a call from Bill, the Board president. I was in a loud restaurant so I let it go to voicemail though that was an excuse. My heart had gone into my throat – truly! I excused myself and went outside in the parking lot to listen to the message.

I'd gotten the job!!! I had not realized how much I wanted it until that very moment. I laughed out loud and smiled to the heavens. I stood out in the parking lot for a few minutes just absorbing this idea that my life was about to change. That the thing I had been seeking, not as a daughter, or as a sister, or as a wife or as a mother – I was and am all those things – but I in my uniqueness had been seeking something deeper and life-affirming – I believe I'd found what God truly, not made for me, but made ME for.

**Do not be afraid, I am with you
I have called you each by name
Come and follow Me
I will bring you home
I love you and you are mine**

- David Haas



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**SATURDAY
JUNE 20, 2020
6 PM**

Holy Family Church, Kirkland

GALA SPEAKER:



***Patricia
Sandoval***

Online Registration: nssupport.org

Board Member Highlight!

My name is Ben Altenhofen and I have been a part of the Next Step board for over four years, most of that time as board secretary. I applied to the board in order to help build up the “culture of life” that John Paul II talked about. Every mother should be surrounded by love and support as



she brings her baby into the world, but we know that this is not always the case. The amazing staff at Next Step reaches out to provide this support to mothers facing difficult circumstances. My main job as secretary is to take the minutes of our meetings. Looking back at my notes these past few years, I am astonished at the growth that has taken place thanks to the providence of God and the prayers and generosity of all our donors. We have been in our new building for over a year now, open from 10 am to 6 pm, Monday-Friday. We have a great location along 196th in Lynnwood and women continue to seek us out for help. There are countless stories of women who come back to Next Step after their baby is several months old to thank us for helping them through a difficult time. I want to thank Kathy Dizard for all her hard work and service over the years and I want to say “thank you” to everyone who makes this ministry possible!