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Real Alternatives to Abortion: A Pennsylvania Success Story



A woman attending a Pennsylvania college discovers she's unexpectedly pregnant. Her emotions run the gamut—fear, anger, frustration, confusion, loneliness. Wishing to somehow make the whole situation go away, she decides to turn up her stereo full blast. A tidal wave of music rushes over her and she tries to become lost in the sound.

Then, the music stops and a commercial starts. The commercial speaks to her like nothing else could. She picks up the phone and calls the hotline number



gram. It's the first government-funded alternatives to abortion program in the nation, and it's run by a team of 12 dedicated pro-life professionals at Real Alternatives led by its President & CEO, Kevin I. Bagatta. Real

program that promotes childbirth rather than abortion with tax dollars! Real Alternatives funds 121 centers throughout the Commonwealth consisting of 70 social service agencies, 33 pregnancy support centers,

2006 Going national!

Kevin I. Bagatta, Esquire with Vincent Friedewald III, Esquire after Real Alternatives successfully trained the staff of Texas Pregnancy Care Network on how to operate the alternatives to abortion program in Texas.

empower another woman in an unplanned pregnancy to overcome her obstacles so she can choose life!

This is how we are lowering abortion in Pennsylvania."

Real Alternatives also holds the distinction of being the first and only statewide faith-based program in Pennsylvania and thanks to President Bush's Faith-based Initiative, more faith-based pregnancy centers have been able to constitutionally become service providers.

Bagatta credits modern business principles for keeping the program's administrative costs down to an impressively low 8.4 percent. The program also enjoys bipartisan support, earning rave reviews from both Democrats and Republicans who are struck by Real Alternatives' success in provid-

with outstanding accountability. This administrative and performance prowess was recognized by the Pennsylvania Association of Non Profit Organizations (PANO) when it awarded Real Alternatives its Seal of Excellence for its internal operations.

The Pennsylvania program has also celebrated a number of milestones in its decade of operation. Most importantly, women are increasingly choosing childbirth rather than abortion as a result of the Real Alternatives program. The fruits of the program also include increased physical and emotional support to women facing unexpected pregnancies...enhanced knowledge of adoption...improved parenting skills...and improved reproductive health thanks to STD education and modification of risky lifestyle behavior through abstinence education.

And thanks to Real Alternatives' national educational efforts, the movement to provide government-funded alternatives to abortion throughout the country is gaining steam. For instance, in 2005, state legislatures in Nebraska, North Dakota, Florida,

Texas, and Minnesota opted to fund alternative to abortion services programs in their states. And in 2006, Texas Health and Human Services signed a \$2.5 million-a-year agreement with Texas Pregnancy Care Network to offer statewide government-funded alternatives to abortion using Real Alternatives as its model. Bagatta enthusiastically adds, "for those who want to lower abortion or make abortion rare - this is how it is done in Pennsylvania - this is the model for America!"



2004 Selling Texas! Real Alternatives toll-free counselor explaining the hotline patch system to Texas Right to Life Director Elizabeth Graham and Legislative Director Stacey Emick during visit at Real Alternatives in 2004.

advertised: 1-888-LIFE-AID. She's put in touch with a counselor at a pregnancy support center who seems willing to listen to her pain. Nine months later, she celebrates the birth of her baby. And she is filled with indescribable joy.

Since 1997, more than 12,500 individuals have called that same hotline number—the official hotline of Pennsylvania's Alternative to Abortion Services Pro-

Alternatives' management approach has led to the growth of a program that went national in 2006, thanks to the state of Texas' decision to use Real Alternatives as a consultant to replicate Pennsylvania's program.

The Pennsylvania program is, in essence, a privatized social services program. The Commonwealth has hired a nonprofit prime contractor (Real Alternatives) to administer a statewide

four adoption agencies, and 14 maternity homes that provide free services to women who are pregnant, who think they are, or who have a child under the age of one. All told, more than 115,000 women have been served by the program, receiving the comprehensive support they need for themselves and their families.

According to Bagatta, the Real Alternatives program works because of the services provided by over 500 counselors statewide at those 121 centers who are there to reach out to women in crisis pregnancies with love and compassion. "This program represents the best in America - strangers helping strangers who are in need. An alternative to abortion is not a pamphlet; it is women taking the time to



ing compassionate care to women and children and running a sterling program