



## The Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation receives Founders' Award from Real Alternatives

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by Bonnie Finnerty, Education Director

A simple idea conceived by Pennsylvania Pro-lifers a quarter century ago to support women in unexpected pregnancies and to lower abortion rates has had a huge impact on over 323,000 women, their babies, their families, and the rest of America. Families are strengthened, relationships built, communities grown, and futures secured. The ripple effect seems infinite!

The Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation has advocated tirelessly for 25 years for the Pennsylvania Pregnancy and Parenting Support Services Program. Due in part to the Federation's efforts, Pennsylvania became the first state in the nation to fund such a program of hope with taxpayer dollars. That inspired 14 additional states, with Real Alternatives' help, to follow a similar model.

From its inception, the program, administered by Real Alternatives, has provided critical services for approximately 323,000 Pennsylvania women in need, and consequently many others alongside them.

The Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation was recently honored with the *Founders' Award*, which recognizes action crucial to the growth and success of the program's vision. President and CEO of Real Alternatives, Kevin Bagatta, said, "If it weren't for the Pro-Life Federation, we certainly would not be here."

Started during pro-life Governor Robert Casey's administration, the program funds pregnancy support centers, maternity homes, adoption agencies, and social service agencies throughout the state to provide much needed services and support to vulnerable women.

According to Federation Board President, Susan Rogacs, Real Alternatives has always been a priority because lives are saved. The Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation continues in its efforts to protect and promote the program, fighting against every attack to ensure that money in the state budget goes to help women and their babies. "We've lobbied legislators, issued press releases, and educated the public about the importance of this program. We stand firm in resisting those extremists who would take the safety net away from women," said Rogacs.

Several other champions for life were honored with the *Founders' Award* including former Governor Mark Schweiker, former U.S. Congressman Joe Pitts, the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference, and Morning Star Pregnancy Services, who began the program 25 years ago. In addition, Real Alternatives staff members Cliff McKeown and Tom Lang were honored with the Founders' Award for their dedicated service over many years.

In his closing remarks at the program's virtual 25th celebration, Bagatta thanked "all those people who had their fingerprints on history and didn't know it."

The Federation is honored to be part of a team that created a first-of-its-kind program that continues to generate ripples of life across the state and country.

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