

"There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest." — Élie Wiesel

# Voice for Choice

Newsletter of the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

Winter 2017

## Stay Engaged!

by Ann T. Allen, Board Member, KRCRC

History shows us that many generations have lived through dark times, and such a time may be in store for us. In recent years, a host of new regulations have restricted access to reproductive services, and particularly abortion. Although such laws are ostensibly intended to protect patients, their main result is to make abortion expensive and hard to get.

As a result of last November's state and national elections, this bad situation may get worse. New state laws may add to counselling and ultrasound requirements and defund organizations such as Planned Parenthood. A restructured Supreme Court could eventually overturn of *Roe v.*

*Wade*, the decision that defined access to abortion as a constitutional right in 1973. Individual states would then make their own laws, and many might outlaw abortion altogether. As in the days before *Roe*, many women who needed to terminate a pregnancy would have to travel to other states—a trip that the poorest and most vulnerable women could not afford.

A long-term view, however, is more hopeful. An increasing number of women are choosing to prevent rather than terminate unwanted pregnancies. During the past few years,

No matter what they do, I will never stop fighting for reproductive rights.



NARAL Pro-Choice America

abortion rates have dropped to an all-time low. Just between 2008 and 2011 the number of legal terminations in the United States declined 13% to reach the lowest rate recorded since abortion became legal in 1973, and the same pattern can be observed throughout the developed world. Teenage pregnancy, birth, and abortion rates are also at the lowest level in the past four decades.


Although such trends have multiple causes, the increasingly

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Join KRCRC for

*A Prayer Vigil  
of Hope and  
Determination*

Details inside!



## KRCRC Plans "Choice Stuff" Online Auction in April

We need your "Choice Stuff"!

Everyone loves an auction. Mark your calendar NOW for April 1 through 15 (ending at 10pm) for KRCRC's "Choice Stuff" online silent auction; you can snag some great items while supporting reproductive freedom in Kentucky!



Find our auction site at [www.charityauction.bid/krcrc](http://www.charityauction.bid/krcrc). You can browse without logging in 'til you're ready to bid. Then... Bid early, bid often, and tell all your friends!



**Right NOW** we're gathering our items, and we could use your help. What do we need? Here are some ideas...

- Quality art pieces, crafts, jewelry, and collectors' items
- Event tickets
- Restaurant gift cards
- Your unique skill (as either a gift certificate or as an offer to teach that skill)
- Your vacation retreat or timeshare for a night, a weekend or a week
- or... What ideas do you have?

Contact Jean or Carol at [info@krcrc.org](mailto:info@krcrc.org), and we'll talk details.



## A Vigil of Hope and Determination

By Ann T.Allen

"We are going forward together," declares the Rev. Millie Horning Peters, "our advocacy is more important than ever." Peters, a minister of the United Methodist Church and co-chair of KRCRC, will lead the prayer vigil that is scheduled

January 22, the anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision. The ceremony will begin with four meditations, given by people of different faiths. Members of the congregation will then come forward to light candles and to commit

themselves to work in the coming year. The vigil aims to bring people of all faiths together to support a principle that all have in common: the right of individuals of both genders to live in dignity and to decide for themselves about deeply personal concerns such as reproduction. In the coming year, which may bring many challenges, the vigil will strengthen our determination to affirm and realize this positive agenda.



Join KRCRC for

### *A Prayer Vigil of Hope and Determination*

Commemorating the 43<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* decision

**January 22, 2017 at 3:00 pm, at Central Presbyterian Church**  
318 W. Kentucky at S. 4th Street, Louisville

*We are passing through a wilderness of fear and outrage.*

*During these challenging times, let us come together, draw strength from each other and seek guidance from our varied faith experiences.*

*We stand strong on our pathway toward justice with great Hope and a fierce Determination!*

# Olivia Given, Our First Social Media Intern

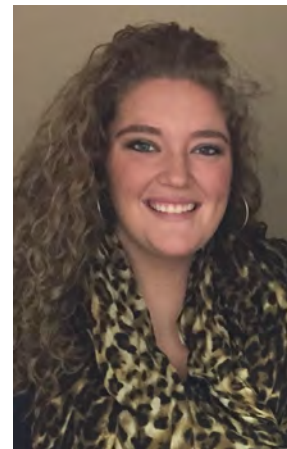
by Olivia Given and Ann T.Allen, KRCRC Board Member

*Last fall, the Boards of KRCRC and A Fund decided to create a position for an intern whose main job would be to update and expand our presence on social media. Board members saw this as an opportunity to enlist the younger generation in the cause of reproductive justice. The Boards made a joint application to the University of Louisville's Women's and Gender Studies Department, which sponsors internship programs for both undergraduate and graduate students. The intern will work during the Spring semester of 2017, dividing her time between the two organizations, and will receive a stipend. We were fortunate to find Olivia Given, who introduces herself here.*

Olivia Given is a recent graduate from West Virginia University with a degree in Women's and Gender Studies and a minor in Psychology. She is now a first-year Master's student at the University of Louisville in the Women's and Gender Studies Department. Aside from being a full-time student and working as our newest social media intern, Olivia also works for Planned Parenthood of Kentucky as their sex education organizer.

Olivia's main goals for this internship with KRCRC and A Fund is to hold film screenings with educational programs at the Universities of Louisville and Kentucky, to work on updating and streamlining our web pages as well as our various social media platforms, and to start building

a community of volunteers and supporters on college campuses. Olivia aims also to create the basis for future internships by drawing up a set of guidelines and expectations that provide a clear and concise explanation of the work of both organizations.



Olivia Given

During her early years in the rural South, Olivia developed a passion for reproductive justice, which she defines as the right to options and services in all areas of reproductive health. She believes that social media can be used to reach people who may have never been introduced to this concept. Social media can give such individuals a platform from which they can speak their truth and ask for help—an opportunity that until recently has not been available to marginalized communities. Social media help people feel included and invested in a cause or movement by enabling them to do simple things like retweeting a tweet, sharing a video link, or signing an online petition. For a non-profit agency, social media provide an easy, cost-effective, and successful instrument for organizing and mobilizing supporters as we move into the twenty-first century.

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## KRCRC Raises Over \$4000 During Give Local Louisville

by Deb Finkel, KRCRC Board Member

### KRCRC Raises over \$4000 during Give Local Louisville

Give Local Louisville is a 24-hour online giving day created by the Community Foundation of Louisville to inspire people to give generously to the nonprofits that make our community a better, more vital place to live. The CFL works with corporate partners to maximize the community's generosity with the community's generosity with Golden Tickets, prizes, and bonus dollars. The Foundation's leaders hope that these and other incentives will inspire thousands of people to give to the local causes they care about and to turn their collective generosity into impact for our community.

This year's Give Local Louisville took place on Thursday, September 15 and KRCRC was in on the fun and the fund-



raising. Our goals were to raise awareness of KRCRC in the community and to tap into a pool of new donors and supporters that will help KRCRC stay healthy and strong. In total, Give Local Louisville raised over \$4 million from over 21,000 donors. Using email invitations, tweets, and Facebook posts to engage with donors, KRCRC raised \$4404, more than half of our typical annual operating budget. Because 47 donors contributed to KRCRC, we qualified for some of

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## Tabling

by Ann T. Allen, KRCRC Board Member

“What percentage of United States abortion patients are already mothers? True or false: In the United States, the risk of health problems among newborn babies, for example low birth weight, is higher when a pregnancy is unintended.” These are some of the questions that visitors to the KRCRC table have answered during the past few months. At the Board Retreat last April, we decided to increase our outreach to the community by setting up our table at community events. Volunteers staff our table for eleven full days at the Kentucky State Fair in August, and for shorter periods at the Flea-Off Market and the NuLu Festival this past Fall.

Our main attraction is the brightly-colored wooden wheel, which invites visitors to take a spin and win a prize! When a visitor spins the wheel, it lands on a number, and that number corresponds to a question about reproductive health. The prize for a correct answer is a fan that proclaims that the owner is a “fan of reproductive choice.” Questions for children include “What is the capital of Kentucky?” or “What color was Mary’s lamb?” and they always get a piece of candy.

As you might expect, responses vary. Some people simply avert their eyes and walk by; a few make negative remarks. Most of those who stop, however, are genuinely interested and enjoy answering the questions. Many leave their



Volunteer Joan K. staffs our KRCRC table at Flea Off Market.

names to add to our email list; some leave donations. The table educates the public and gains supporters for KRCRC.

KRCRC plans to continue “tabling” in the Spring, and of course we are always looking for volunteers! As one who has done it, I can say that I enjoy meeting our supporters, engaging in discussions, and making new friends for the organization. Those interested in volunteering should get in touch with Carol or Debbie at [info@krcrc.org](mailto:info@krcrc.org).



### **Give Local Louisville** *Cont. from page 3.*

the bonus dollars. Donations ranged from \$10 to \$1000, with an average of \$94, and including several donors supporting KRCRC for the first time.

KRCRC plans to use the funds to support our increased outreach efforts. In addition to having a booth at the Kentucky State Fair, we are working to staff tables at monthly local events, including the Flea Off Market and the NULU Festival. Give Local Louisville funds allow us to cover the entry fees, purchase a tent, and provide informational materials for the people we meet at these events. In addition, we hope to be able to use the funds raised during Give Local Louisville to invite a prominent speaker for our upcoming Roe v. Wade anniversary event (stay tuned).

### **Our very special thanks go to these Matching Gifts donors:**

- Nelson and Susie Helms
- Kathleen Bean and Bob Kotheimer
- Cindy and Genny Scheldorf
- Kim Greene
- Louis Moseson
- KRCRC Board Members Jean Abshire, Ann T. Allen, Deb Finkel, Ann Hardman, Terrie Hill, Laurie Kaplin, Millie Peters and Carol Savkovich.

# On the Sidewalk with the Escorts

by Fausta Luchini

In 2009, when I started escorting, I would tell people, “Oh, I escort on Saturday mornings,” and they’d look shocked. Then I’d have to add, “Nooooo, not that kind of escorting,” and explain about abortion clinic escorting.

“At the clinic,” I’d say, “there are protesters. They try to stop the women coming to the clinic. Try to talk them out of it, or trick them into going to the ‘fake clinic’ (the Crisis Pregnancy Center) next door so they miss their appointment. We – the escorts – just walk with them; we’re just there to let them know they’re not alone, to help them get to their appointment.” I started writing for the Louisville Clinic Escort blog “Every Saturday Morning” because I wanted people to know what was happening on Market Street between 1st and 2nd Street.

Some things have changed since then: clinic escorting has received more publicity; Benita Ulisano of the Clinic Vest Project supplies many escort groups with free vests; and there’s a Facebook page where escorts across the nation share stories and offer each other support.

But things have stayed the same on the sidewalk. We still escort for a couple of hours in the early morning – about 7:00 until about 8:30 a.m. The little red-haired protester, Donna, still stands by the door, saying, “Come out. Come out of there.” Gesturing with her hand in a come-here motion, she says things like, “You’re already a mother. You’ll always be a mother. You’ll just be the mother of a dead baby. Come out of there.”

Angela still preaches at the window without taking a breath. When she sees a woman that she knows is going to the clinic, she chases her down and calls the client’s family or other church members, demanding that they come to the clinic and stop the client on her way to her doctor’s appointment.

It’s a circus out there. And that’s the way it’s always been. But now there are new anti-choice protesters, and they’ve really upped the ante. Our new group call themselves P-82, Psalm 82 Ministries. They describe themselves as, “A dynamic ministry dedicated to the plight of pre-born orphans abandoned to the slaughterhouse.”

The men of P-82 carry huge signs – “fetal porn” we call it – with bloody fetuses magnified a thousand times. They use the signs to take up space, blocking the sidewalk. Preaching through bullhorns, they blast away at decibel levels that defy the noise ordinance. They wear go-pro cameras to document their harassment, and are proud of trying to prevent clients from getting into the clinic.

It is a circus. In the face of all that, what do escorts do? The best answer to that is from the *Escorts’ Points of Unity*, our guiding principles. These three points capture the heart of what escorts do:

- Escorts are present to support people and create space for them to be empowered while accessing reproductive healthcare.
- Our goal is always to de-escalate.
- Our goal is to normalize and de-stigmatize abortion services.

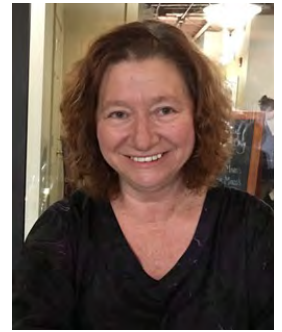
We ask the clients if they want company on their walk to the clinic. If they do, then we walk with them, and their companions if they have them. We talk to them, if they want us to, in a low voice that they can focus on, rather than the hateful words of the protesters. We let them know they’re not alone.

It’s really all we can do.

One other change from 2009 - when I started, we only escorted on Saturday. Now, due to an increased presence of protesters, we have escorts on the sidewalk Tuesday through Saturday, every day the clinic is open.

If you want to know more about what we do, and how we do it, I invite you to visit us at <http://everysaturdaymorning.net>. If you’re interested in being an escort, email us at [everysaturdaymorning@gmail.com](mailto:everysaturdaymorning@gmail.com). People who can escort during the week are particularly needed.

I love escorting. I think it may be the single most immediately rewarding thing I do most weeks. I leave the clinic knowing that I made a real difference. We get email thanking us, we hear it from clients as they get to the door, we see it on their faces.



Fausta Luchini



Escorts at the EMW Clinic

# American Abortion Rates: Declining, But Still High

by Ann T. Allen, KRCRC Board Member

## How many abortions?

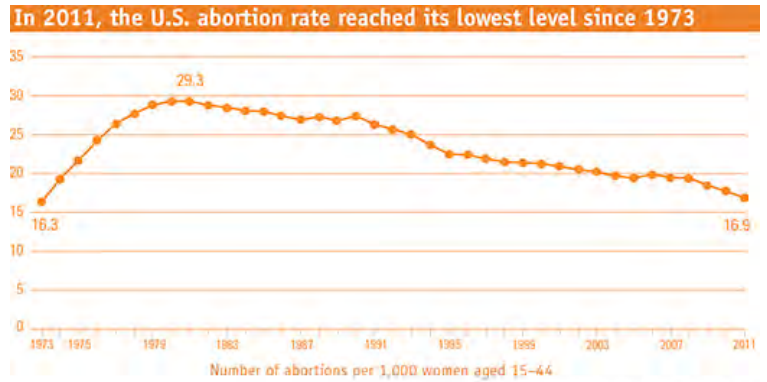
- According to data gathered by the Guttmacher Institute for the year 2011, nearly half of pregnancies in the United States were unplanned and about four in ten of these were terminated by abortion. In all, 21% of all pregnancies (excluding spontaneous miscarriages) ended in abortion. The approximately 1.06 procedures performed in 2011 represented a drop of 13% from 1.21 million in 2001.
- Between 2008 and 2011, the abortion rate dropped from 19.4 to 16.9 per 1,000 women aged 15-44.

## Who has abortions?

- Abortion patients represent a cross-section of the population. In 2014, 12% of U.S. abortion patients were teenagers, and more than half were in their twenties. White women had about 39%; African Americans about 28%; Hispanics about 24%; and women of other races and ethnic groups about 9% of all abortions.
- Although some American religious groups condemn abortion, patients came from all religious backgrounds. 17% identified themselves as mainline and 13% as evangelical Protestants; 34% identified themselves as Catholics. Others—about 38%—gave no religious affiliation.
- The majority of abortion patients (59%) already have one or more children.
- In 2014, almost half (49%) of all abortion patients reported incomes below the federal poverty level, and many others (26%) reported incomes within 100-199% of the poverty level. The reasons that these women give for their decisions express a sense of responsibility for themselves and their families. Many say they cannot afford, or are not in a position to care for, another child because of family responsibilities, work, or educational aspirations.

## How many medication abortions?

- In 2011, medication abortions (using mifepristone) were about a third of all nonhospital abortions, and about 36% of those done in the first nine weeks of pregnancy.
- Medication abortions increased from 6% of all abortions in 2001 to 23% in 2011, even as the total number of terminations declined. According to the Centers for



www.guttmacher.org

Guttmacher Institute, www.guttmacher.org

Disease Control and Prevention, the average abortion is now performed earlier in the first trimester, probably because medication abortion is available.

## Who pays for abortion?

- In 2014, most abortion patients had health insurance. However, not all such plans cover abortion, and some patients do not use their insurance because they need confidentiality or their providers do not accept their coverage.
- In all, 53% of patients paid out of pocket for their abortions. About 24% used Medicaid funds; most of these patients lived in the few states where such coverage was available.
- Most patients would have liked to have their abortions earlier in pregnancy but were delayed by the time it took to acquire money and make arrangements.

## How many states are hostile to abortion rights?

- As of 2016, at least half of all states have imposed burdensome and unnecessary restrictions on abortion access. In 2000, 13 states imposed major restrictions and were considered hostile to abortion rights. By 2016, there were 27 states in this group.
- The proportion of women living in such hostile states rose from 31% in 2000 to 56% in 2016.

Source: Guttmacher Institute, "Fact Sheet: Induced Abortion in the United States," September 2016, <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/induced-abortion-united-states>



## Stay Engaged! *Cont. from page 1.*

widespread and effective use of contraception is probably the most important. American women and their partners are more determined than ever to control their reproductive lives, and they will not be turned back.

The fact that about half of all American women who seek to terminate a pregnancy have incomes that are below or near the federal poverty level must remind us of the broader economic context of reproductive decision-making. Poor women, and especially poor women of color, are less likely than their better-situated fellow citizens to have access to contraceptive services, and cutbacks in health insurance may make such services unaffordable for some.

Moreover, many women who choose to have children lack the economic resources to raise them under safe and decent conditions. We must broaden our definition of choice to include a full range of options, including both preventing pregnancy and becoming a parent with the support of society.

In the present hostile political climate, how can we defend reproductive rights? Even those who cannot change the big picture can make a difference on the local level. They can help providers of abortion and contraceptive services by donating money, by volunteering, or by escorting clinic patients past bullying protesters. They can advocate comprehensive sex education in public schools. They can support politicians who share their values and groups such as KRCRC that organize political actions and educate the public. They can dispel the atmosphere of shame and secrecy that still surrounds reproductive issues by discussing them frankly with family, friends, and neighbors.

Hillary Clinton recently urged her supporters not to “lose heart” or to “give up on the values we share.” She urged them to “stay engaged, stay engaged on every level. That’s how we’ll get through this.” We must stay engaged.

## Is your Kroger Card Working for KRCRC?



With 2 simple steps, you can be helping KRCRC fight for reproductive rights each time you shop – at no cost to you!

1. Go to [www.kroger.com/communityrewards](http://www.kroger.com/communityrewards). Create an account or sign in.
2. Follow the instructions to select an organization. KRCRC is #11048.

If you’ve signed up for us before, thank you! But Kroger “zeroes out the books” each August 1st. Please take a couple of minutes to make sure your Kroger purchases are working for us all year!

### KRCRC MISSION STATEMENT

**The mission of the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice is to direct the moral power of people of faith and religious organizations to safeguard and advance reproductive justice in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. We do this through education, advocacy, counseling and support of organizations with related goals.**

## Response to the November 2016 Election Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice

The outcomes of this election are at odds with our deepest-held values and faith traditions: loving our neighbors, serving our communities and protecting our families. The election results will have a direct and devastating impact on all communities on the margins, including women and girls, immigrants, people of color and the poor.

In the words of Rev. William Barber, our task in this election was to “shock this nation with the power of love. We must shock this nation with the power of mercy. We must shock this nation and fight for justice for all. We can’t

give up on the heart of our democracy, not now, not ever!”

No matter how strong our opposition, RCRC will never give up on our faithful commitment to reproductive health, rights, choice and justice. Starting today, there is even more work to be done to stop the religious and political right in their quest to seize the moral ground on our issues. Our prophetic voice will be needed now more than ever. While we take this moment to grieve, pray and express our outrage, we must quickly channel our energies back into building a faithful movement for reproductive health, rights, choice and justice.



**Kentucky Religious Coalition  
for Reproductive Choice  
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Louisville, KY 40204**

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

*The Religious Community in Support of an Individual's Right to Choose!*



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Kyle E. checks out a "white elephant" shawl at KRCRC's Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, September 27, 2016.