



# Birthright of Peekskill, Inc.

**Donate**

Spring 2020

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## A Note from Our Directors:

Thursday, March 12 was the day we decided to close our Peekskill office due to the coronavirus. At that time, we were doing it as a precaution for our volunteers and our mothers. Little did we know that within days, all non-essential businesses would be required to close and that we would need to practice social distancing. We thought it would only be for a few weeks. Here we are, a couple of months later, in a world that has been turned upside down by the coronavirus.



In order to continue to serve our mothers and women in need of our help, some of our volunteers agreed to make appointments to meet with them to pick up material items. At first, we didn't really hear from many of our mothers. At all. When we went to the office to check messages and pick up mail, it was as if the normally lively city of Peekskill had turned into a ghost town. There were even plenty of parking spots right in front of the office! Where were our mothers? Certainly, their needs did not disappear? Turns out, like many of us, they were afraid. Among one of the first messages we received was from a young girl who thought she may be pregnant, but was afraid to leave her house to come for a pregnancy test. Another message was from a man who was calling because his wife was about 8 weeks pregnant according to several home pregnancy tests and they were rightfully nervous about her being pregnant during the pandemic. They had a lot of questions and concerns. Then the calls for diapers and formula started to come in as these items not only became scarce on store shelves, but some families also began feeling the strain of not having any income coming in. Thanks to you, our generous donors, we have been able to keep a supply of diapers, wipes and formula on our shelves to give to our mothers. During this time of fear and uncertainty, Birthright continues to be here to give hope to our community.

Sincerely,

Colleen DiRago, Director

Nichole Marra, Director

### Office Hours during the Coronavirus Pandemic:

Tuesdays: 11am-2pm  
Fridays 11am-2pm

### Timeline: Birthright of Peekskill and the Coronavirus 2020

By Tina McDermott

**March 12:** Our last day in the office. One of our volunteers, Maura and I wiped everything down, lowered the heat, and called our hotline to inform them we would be closing temporarily.

**STOP!** The phone rang! It was a social worker saying a family had been burned out of their home and literally had nothing! Even though this was not a pregnant woman in need of help, how could we turn her away when we had so much in the office? Thank God we were still there! Not only were we able to help this mother and baby with clothing, diapers and wipes - but the mother was so grateful for some maternity clothes even though she wasn't pregnant. She now had some clothes to wear! And not only were we able to help this family, but the social worker was so impressed with all we do, that I'm sure we now have a "friend" there!

**March 19:** A woman has gotten our name from our website and sends us an e-mail: "Unplanned pregnancy". We have tried contacting her, and so far have not been able to. At least we can remember her in our prayers. How many more women are confined to their homes wondering how they can carry on?

*(Continued below)*



# In the Spotlight

A special shoutout to our volunteers, Gina Cardoza-Cruz and Millie Alvarez for their help communicating from home with our Spanish speaking mothers during the pandemic. Their bilingual skills have been invaluable to us and we greatly appreciate it! Another shoutout to Bob Mazzarella and Tina McDermott for contacting our mothers about our diaper distribution. **Thank you!!**



Volunteer Gina Cardoza-Cruz



Volunteer Millie Alvarez

## We have received donations in Memory of:

- Phyllis Blessinger
- Patricia Higgins
- Hellmeth Gerbeth
- Catherine Fitzgerald
- John Fitzgerald, Sr.
- John Fitzgerald, Jr.



Volunteer helping in the office.

(Timeline... continuation)

**March 20:** 12:30 pm, Volunteer meeting cancelled.  
7 pm: Board of Director's virtual Zoom meeting. So good to "be" together and to know the spirit of Birthright is moving forward. Many possibilities were discussed, not the least of which was how we can still serve our moms and babies during this pandemic. We are so very grateful for the support you have given us so that we do have emergency funds for the time being. We will continue to seek ways we can help our mothers and babies, especially pregnant mothers in need. One main concern is the availability of formula and diapers.

**March 23:** Our volunteers begin our new "normal" of making appointments to meet with our mothers in need. This has continued up to the present time.

**April 20:** Birthright donates approximately 500 assorted diapers and wipes to the food pantry at Holy Spirit Church.

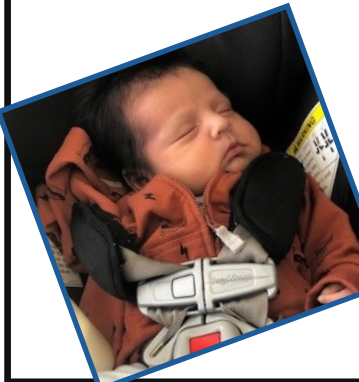
**April 24:** Our rented U-Haul van arrives at the office with 53 cases of diapers from the EMC Campaign.

**May 5:** Our mothers pick up diapers, wipes and some baby clothes from our diaper distribution using "Sidewalk Pickup" for safe social distancing.

**May 12:** Volunteers organize records, baby clothes and the office while meeting with some appointments.

**May 19:** Our official re-opening day with limited hours.

**June 4:** Our first Volunteer Meeting via Zoom!



## Welcome Little Ones!

- |              |              |              |            |                |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|----------------|
| 1/1 Samantha | 1/16 Lucas   | 2/15 Genna   | 3/29 Anaya | 5/16 Christina |
| 1/6 Marjary  | Zenaida      | 3/3 Josua    | Racha      | 5/19 Emily     |
| 1/8 Layla    | 2/10 Mikhael | 3/15 Endrick | 4/7 Sayuri |                |
| 1/10 Stella  | 2/11 Anthony | 3/27 Matthew | 5/6 Mia    |                |
|              | 2/12 Lucas   |              |            |                |

## Volunteering is an integral part of happiness

By Millie Alvarez

*“Spread love everywhere you go . Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier.” -Mother Teresa.*



Birthright Volunteers in the office helping during COVID

Since I began volunteering at Birthright, the love generated and shared by numerous staff members assured me I had made the right choice. Our office provides bilingual services to our predominantly Hispanic community and my skills as a bilingual professional come in handy during many of my volunteer hours. I met many volunteers at our office, monthly meetings and fundraiser events who are totally dedicated. One event I enjoyed and hope to be part of again was providing information to our local religious education classes. I translated information presented by two of our volunteers to young adults who were Spanish dominant students. We shared valuable information to both young men and women who will know that our mission is to help pregnant women or those who think they may be pregnant.

Birthright has so much to offer. During this pandemic, we continue to avail ourselves by calling our clients, handing out diapers and clothing and providing guidance through our vast knowledge of resources. We are using technology to help us gather much needed items, communicate with our families and so much more. Our volunteers continue to spread love from a distance, our clients are happier and more hopeful once they hear from Birthright of Peekskill or leave our office. I can honestly say I am, as well.



Tyler, Jack and Nick Kelly helped unload 53 cases of diapers at the office.

### Diapers for Mothers in Need

Our chapter was one of the lucky recipients of the 'Operation EMC Frontline Diaper Deployment Campaign' which was a partnership between EMC (Expectant Mother Care) pregnancy care center and Wrap for a Cause. EMC's Executive Director, Chris Slattery saw the diaper campaign as a remedy for some of the emotional and financial stress some pregnant women and disadvantaged mothers are feeling as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We rented a U-Haul van to pick up 53 cases of assorted sized diapers from a warehouse in Yonkers. On Tuesday, May 5, we opened our office doors for a limited time to hand out diapers and wipes to our mothers in need while following safe social distancing practices. We were able to give out approximately 50 packages of diapers and wipes. Our mothers were very appreciative. We received the following text message from one of them the next day, "Just wanted to say thank you for everything you sent for my little girl. Helps a lot! You guys are truly angels. Thanks again!" We are hopeful that we will be able to open for at least a limited number of hours again soon to serve our community. For more information on the "Diaper Deployment Campaign, click on the link: <https://www.yonkertribune.com/2020/04/wrap-for-a-cause-and-emc-frontline-two-ny-based-non-profits-team-up-to-deliver-diapers-to-mothers-in-need>

Good morning. This is ~~my~~ I don't want to be bothering you on your personal cell but just wanted to say thank you so much for everything you sent for my little girl. Helps a lot!! You guys are truly angels! Thanks again !

So happy we could help!  
Stay well ❤️

Delivered

Thank you for being my support. I appreciate you



Please keep in touch! ❤️

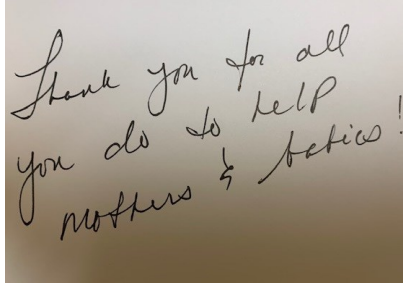
I will

Text messages from our grateful moms.

## Exciting News!

by Nichole Marra

About 10 days after our office closed, Gina, one of our volunteers, checked in on one of our expectant mothers. We had previously gotten a call from a guidance counselor at one of the local high schools about a 16 year old who was pregnant. We were so surprised to get the call since it has been a challenge getting into some of the local high schools to talk about Birthright. We asked her to have the girl come to our office. When "Marcia" came with her Mom, she was crying her eyes out. Once we went into the intake room, we asked her why she wasn't excited about having her baby. She said she was only having the baby because her Mom wanted her to. After we spent a lot of time talking with her and telling her how Birthright would be there to help, she started to come around. Marcia and her Mom were very relieved. Marcia came in to visit us before she had her baby and get her layette. Some of us even bought her gifts for the baby. When Gina called to check on Marcia, she was so excited to hear that she had her son on 3/17. He was 8 lbs. and 20 inches long. Marcia's mother told her she would care for the baby so she would be able to continue with school. All are doing well! Stories like Marcia's are why I love Birthright!



## Thank you for your Generosity!

Thank you to **St. Joseph's Church** in Croton Falls who held a Valentine's Day baby shower for our office the weekend of Feb. 15 & 16. We received several beautiful baby items for our layette room including outfits, onesies, sweaters and other necessities as well several packages of diapers. In addition, the parish contributed \$1163 in cash and checks. Thank you so much for your generosity! We are truly blessed to have the support of such a giving parish! Thank you also to members of **St. Columbanus Church** who recently donated diapers and baby wipes. We are so appreciative!

**COVID-19 has caused great economic uncertainty for many of our mothers and their families. Our office in Peekskill was also affected since our Spring Bowling Fundraiser had to be postponed. It is unclear when we may be able to reschedule. We continue to meet the needs of our mothers and their babies as well as cover our office expenses. We need your help!**

\$25 covers the cost of a can of formula or a supermarket gift card

\$50 covers the cost of a month supply of diapers

\$75 can supply baby clothing for a full season

\$100 can cover the cost of several layette items and mother's gift

\$250 can be used towards office utilities

## **Supporting Birthright is Easy!!!!**

**Click on the link below:**

<https://www.aplos.com/aws/give/BirthrightPeekskill/general>

**OR go to our website:**

<https://birthright.org/peekskill> and click on our **DONATE** button

**Smile Amazon:** You can select **Birthright of Peekskill** as your charity of choice. When you shop at <https://smile.amazon.com/gp/charity/homepage.html>, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com with the added bonus that Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase to Birthright of Peekskill.

## Office Hours during Coronavirus Pandemic

Mondays: By Appointment

Tuesdays: 11am-2pm

Wednesdays: By Appointment

Thursdays: By Appointment

Fridays: 11am-12pm

Saturdays: By Appointment

Sundays CLOSED



**Warmline  
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1-800-550-4900  
www.birthright.org**