

Asheville fire prompts regional response

Local donors and supporters help to ensure minimal disruption to patients

The electrical fire began in a utility closet on a cold Sunday morning in February. As firefighters battled the blaze, staff members in Asheville, Raleigh, Winston-Salem and Roanoke (Virginia) were already mobilizing to ensure our patients would be served.



The February fire threatened to prevent Dr. Donna Burkett, PPHS Medical Director, from providing medical care in Asheville.

“We didn’t miss a beat,” says Medical Director Donna Burkett, MD. “Staff from our whole region responded almost as fast as police, fire and rescue. Patients, donors and supporters were offering to do



March 2008: PPHS President & CEO Walt Klausmeier holds Asheville press conference.

anything to help.”

Within hours, the Asheville phone lines were being answered by Planned Parenthood staff in West Virginia. Two days after the fire, patients were once again receiving exams. Education clients were again being served.

“From the moment the fire started, ‘Priority One’ was making sure patient

needs were met. I didn’t want one extra unintended pregnancy as a result of the fire,” said Walt Klausmeier, President & CEO. “Staff response was outstanding.”

For five months after the fire, Planned Parenthood staff and volunteers served patients from a temporary location.



July 2008: Regional Manager Lori Thornton gives tour of the refurbished health center to the media. (Photo courtesy of Asheville Citizen-Times, photographer Erin Brethauer)

By July, the charred building had been refurbished. “We have grown a lot in the past few years and we just added a new Community Educator,” says Regional Manager Lori Thornton, who oversees the Asheville Health Center. “We are able to meet community needs better than ever.”

New Lynchburg Location

The summer has brought many changes to Planned Parenthood in Lynchburg, Virginia. We have relocated to a more spacious and attractive health center location. We have hired additional staff and expanded our clinical hours. This fall, we will initiate new education programs in ‘the Hill City.’ Pictured from left to right: Health Center Assistant **Linda Scott** (Scotty), Health Center Manager **Nancy Milton** and Clinician **Remonia Davis**, members of our growing team of health center staff. Says Nancy, “This is our tenth anniversary offering medical services in Lynchburg. It’s our time to take Lynchburg to the next level.”



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Planned Parenthood Health Systems is a private, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization operating in four states and headquartered in Raleigh, NC. Our organization is an accredited affiliate of Planned Parenthood Federation of America, the world's largest and most trusted voluntary reproductive health care organization.

Message from the CEO

During my 33 years in reproductive health care, I have had the opportunity to work with legislators on both sides of the aisle to further the public health of our communities. I've worked with Democrats who are committed to ensuring that women and men can obtain affordable reproductive health services. I've worked with Republicans who strongly support Title X, the nation's family planning program.

Over time, however, reproductive health care and sex education have become more politicized – often to the detriment of our patients and the public's health. Birth control prices have skyrocketed in the wake of partisan bickering. Congress spends billions on abstinence-only education that even its own auditors say is ineffective. Reproductive policy is determined by political agendas rather than what is best for individuals and families. We must do more to alter the equation.

After nearly a year of planning, our Board of Directors has unanimously voted to establish an advocacy and electoral organization to address these growing concerns. The **Planned Parenthood Health Systems Action Fund, Inc.** will help elect candidates and support public officials who uphold our values *regardless* of political affiliation. The Action Fund will also inform our supporters of the candidates' positions and will encourage them to vote.

It won't be easy to convince opposing candidates that each should agree to support the values and programs of Planned Parenthood. With the Action Fund, our affiliate has created an organization that will positively affect progressive public health policy.

[A link to the Action Fund is available from our website: www.pphsinc.org.]



Walter Klausmeier
PRESIDENT/CEO

Charleston Health Center Opening Soon

Janet Stevens to Lead New Team

With the renovations to our new health center in Charleston, SC all but complete, Planned Parenthood Health Systems is hiring and training an experienced team to deliver quality

services. Leading that team is Janet Stevens, who served as Manager of five school-based clinics for the Medical University of South Carolina's College of Nursing and has chaired the Charleston County Teen Pregnancy Prevention Council. "It's a critical time here in Charleston," says Janet. "There were more than 700 teen pregnancies in Charleston County last year. We have high hopes our new Health Center will address the many unmet family planning needs in the area." The Planned Parenthood center is scheduled to open this fall.



Public Policy Team Achieves Success



Vice President of Public Policy Melissa Reed (left) meets with the newest member of her staff, South Carolina Field Manager Erica Brooks.

There is a short lull in early spring. The Virginia and West Virginia legislative sessions have adjourned for the year. The North Carolina session has not yet been gavelled to order. Only the South Carolina legislature is active.

It was in this small window of time that Melissa Reed began serving as our new Vice President for Public Policy.

Melissa had served as the Executive Director of NARAL Pro-Choice North Carolina for the past four years. Her political acumen and tenacity helped

to transform that organization into a formidable force in North Carolina.

Melissa now oversees four states and a team of six public policy staff for Planned Parenthood Health Systems. That team helped to defeat all of the anti-choice measures introduced in North Carolina this year. In addition, they were instrumental in several legislative achievements to

increase access to preventive care:

- Our “**Prevention First!**” agenda gained new legislative allies to address the root causes of unintended pregnancy.
- New funding was secured for the **New Hanover County Adolescent Parenting Program**. (Cuts in Medicaid funding have threatened to eliminate this program.)

The Public Policy staff has already begun preparing for the 2009 legislative sessions in North and South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Prevention thru Media Coverage

West Virginia Lobbyist **Nicole Elswick** was among a dozen staff from North and South Carolina, West Virginia and Virginia who participated in a two-day Media and Communications Training in Raleigh. The August training is part of our latest efforts to increase media coverage of preventive health care and education throughout the Southern Mid-Atlantic.



Education and More

Back Up Your Birth Control Campaign

Emergency Contraception (EC) has been available without a prescription to women (and men) 18 years and older since 2006. Yet our Community Health Educators regularly encounter people who don't know this safe, affordable prevention method is available to them.



Monique Ingram, Community Health Educator, provides information on Emergency Contraception.

In order to better educate the public about EC, we initiated 'Back Up Your Birth Control Day' on March 25. We sold EC at a special \$10.00 rate (as compared to \$50.00 or more at most pharmacies). We also waived the consultation fee for minors, allowing young people to receive an EC prescription from a clinician at no charge. That day, we provided over 200 clients with a back-up birth control method!

Additionally, our Education, Public Policy and Medical Departments worked in collaboration to reach over 7,500 people in our service region. On that day, we enlisted clients and supporters to urge Congress to restore affordable birth control pricing. We also generated television, radio, and print coverage to emphasize Planned Parenthood's commitment to preventing unintended pregnancies.

Planned Parenthood educates our patients and the public of the need to prevent unintended pregnancy every single day. Condoms can break, pills are skipped, forced sex happens all too often. Just in case, please back up your primary birth control method with Emergency Contraception.

Generation to Generation: Art Imitates Life



The Little Goddess, a sculpture by Betty Branch, greets all who enter our Roanoke Health Center.

Upon entering the Planned Parenthood center in Roanoke, patients are greeted by *The Little Goddess*, one of more than a dozen sculptures donated to our affiliate by celebrated artist Betty Branch. Betty's sculptures capture the ideals Planned Parenthood aspires to achieve for women – courage and beauty, strength and dignity. You can see these same qualities in Betty's eight children – some of whom are accomplished artists in their own right.

Each year, Betty designs a special bronze sculpture for the honoree of our annual Sally Fishburn Crockett Award. This year Betty was the honoree, which posed a problem... We could not have Betty design her own award!

The solution was quintessentially Planned Parenthood – we turned to the next generation. This year's Sally Award



Artist Betty Branch greets daughter Polly after receiving the Seventh Annual Sally Fishburn Crockett Award during a June luncheon attended by 150 Planned Parenthood supporters.

was designed by Betty's daughter, Polly Branch. Polly's award portrays the love and intimacy of mother and daughter – a painting that is deeply personal but also reminiscent of the important role Planned Parenthood plays from generation to generation.



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