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CHOICE

Walk a Peaceful Mile

by Kira Johnson

On October 24, supporters of Rape Crisis of the Southern Tier (RCST) gathered at Centerway Square in Corning to Walk a Peaceful Mile. This annual event, now in its fourth year, aims to increase awareness and improve response to the problem of sexual violence in our community, and to raise much needed funds to cover program costs in excess of available funding.



RCST supporters walk to raise awareness

This year's walk was a tremendous success. The crowd enjoyed a compelling address by guest speaker Taylor York, attorney and professor of criminal justice at Keuka College. Thus far, the walk has raised over \$6,000 in support of RCST, with donations still coming in.

Of special note are the students of Corning East High School, who rallied in support of the walk to raise \$2,740 in donations. Many area businesses also contributed to the walk's success: Chemung Canal Trust Company, Larson Design Group, Pepsi Bottling Group, Gentle Family Dentistry, The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Big Flats, Orthodontic Associates of the Southern Tier, Elmira College, Wendbing Corporation, Zonta Club of Elmira, Wegmans of Corning, Target, American Legion Post 442, The Corning Area Independent Insurance Agents Association, Phillips Funeral Home, Keuka Construction Corporation, Schuyler Hospital, First Heritage Federal Credit Union, and X-Gen Pharmaceuticals.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who donated to this important cause, and to all of the participants who gathered pledges in support of the 2009 Walk a Peaceful Mile. Please consider joining us in October 2010, when we will celebrate the walk's 5th year!

LETTER FROM JOE SAMMONS, CEO

Greetings, and Happy New Year!

As we turn the corner into 2010, we are reflecting on what has been a challenging year in 2009. The economic crisis resulted in significant budget cuts that hurt our staff and our programs. We were stunned by the horrible murder of Dr. George Tiller, and by the betrayal of a woman's right to choose by the House of Representatives and the Senate when the Stupak / Nelson amendments to health care reform were passed.

A tough year, indeed, but there is one thing that we can always count on: Planned Parenthood fights back!

In Washington, D.C., Planned Parenthood is the leading organization fighting for a woman's right to choose during the final days of the health care reform debate, relaying one simple, powerful message: yes to health care reform, no to Stupak bans on abortion.

In Albany, NY, Planned Parenthood is fighting budget cuts and changes to Medicaid funding that could be devastating to our clinics and education programs. Although we are currently projecting a cut of 12% or more in 2010, we are going to keep fighting, because we know that women's health matters, and every dollar of state funds that goes to family planning saves \$4 in expensive and unnecessary health care.

They say that in the darkest moments you see the spirit shine brighter, and that is certainly true at PPSFL. As you can see in this newsletter, our commitment to advancing our mission – in every program, every clinic, and every office in this agency – is as strong as ever.

So, in 2010, we will continue the fight to protect women's health and reproductive freedom in the national health care reform battles. We will continue to expand our vital educational and rape crisis programming, and provide the exceptional care and service that has been our trademark for more than 40 years. And we will drive forward with our capital campaign to build new facilities that our patients and staff deserve.

Most importantly, we will not back down from the fight. We will always be here, ensuring that the hard work of earlier generations is preserved for generations to come.



On behalf of the PPSFL staff, board, and volunteers – let me say how grateful we are for your spirit and your support of this important work. We couldn't do it without you!

Warmly,

Joe Sammons
President / CEO

Caring & Committed

Alicia Kenaley interviews Dr. Michelle Orengo-Mcfarlane



What is your background?

I was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area. My family has always had deep connections to progressive politics and social justice issues.

Nobody else in my family is in medicine though, and I first came to an interest in medicine through feminism and feminist issues around women's health, as well as through herbal and alternative medicine - not very traditional!

What is your experience of how abortion procedures are covered in medical school and residency programs?

In medical school (I attended a large one in Philadelphia), I think we may have had one lecture on contraception that mentioned abortion. We did have a vibrant Medical Students for Choice (MS4C) chapter, chaired by friends of mine, which sponsored many excellent extracurricular educational activities. I was disappointed that abortion was so poorly covered in the curriculum though.

I did get the opportunity to first-assist at an operating room 2nd trimester dilation and evacuation during my 3rd year OB/GYN rotation, because all of the OB/GYN residents refused! I was a little shocked at that.

In residency, abortion training was one of my priorities; I was applying for family medicine, and quickly realized that there was a huge range, from Catholic hospital affiliated programs that didn't even allow residents to take electives in abortion training, to programs that offered opt-out abortion training as part of the standard curriculum. I ended up at my top-ranked program, UCSF, which has an opt-out curriculum.

A RESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

The longer I work for Planned Parenthood, the more respect I have for the men and women who serve on the "front lines," providing quality, compassionate care to patients. Despite emotional rigors, vocal opposition from anti-choice groups, and as Dr. Tiller's murder demonstrated, potential for bodily harm, these individuals are steadfast in their determination to ensure access to affordable, high-quality, and comprehensive reproductive health care. Curious about the process of becoming a provider of reproductive health care that includes abortion, I recently interviewed Dr. Michelle Orengo-Mcfarlane, a medical resident who spent a month observing the procedures at our affiliate. Here is what she had to say:

What is your experience finding a residency program that covers surgical abortion procedures?

I used the MS4C list of programs providing that training as a starting point; I think I considered all of the programs listed there. I ended up being attracted to the UCSF program for a variety of reasons, but their opt-out early abortion curriculum was certainly a major point in their favor.

How would you rate the interest among your peers in learning more about and performing surgical abortions?

I would say that the majority of my colleagues in my program look forward to the training we get, and very few opt out. A number of them have pursued further training during residency and afterward to develop their skills and get more experience.

Why are you committed to learning about this?

Ethically and morally, I've always believed that women have a right to control their own bodies, and to choose when and if they want to have a child. My religious faith – I'm a Unitarian Universalist (UU) – also upholds this value. My minister in Philadelphia spoke eloquently on an MS4C-sponsored panel, turning the opposition's language around on them by explaining that from a UU perspective, to be "pro-life" means to consider the big picture of a woman's whole life and what pregnancy means to her.

From a more personal perspective, I know what it's like to imagine you might be pregnant and to be thankful that you have the option of ending that pregnancy if it's not

the right time. Even in my limited experience so far, I've heard from so many women after their abortion, how relieved and grateful they are to get their lives back.

I'm committed to being an abortion provider because I know there aren't enough of us, and I believe it's the right thing to do.

In the wake of Dr. Tiller's murder, how concerned are you about your own well-being as you embark on learning more about abortions?

I do have concerns about my own safety – even before Dr. Tiller's murder, Dr. Bernard Slepian's assassination at home by James Kopp in 1998 reminded me forcefully that abortion providers are always at risk of being targeted by violent extremists. But I won't let that keep me from doing what's right. That's really how I look at it.



Please join us to pitch in on special projects while strengthening the connections within our community of supporters. Mixed Company is a new volunteer program at PPSFL where volunteers, board members, staff, and students will mix and mingle while providing support on fun and easy projects. The group will meet in Ithaca every 4-8 weeks for just a couple of evening or weekend hours. If you have even one free hour per month that you would like to put to good use, please e-mail Jenn Foy for an application or for more information at jennifer.foy@ppsfl.org.

PPSFL Then & Now

A GLANCE BACK (AND A FRESH LOOK FORWARD)

by Melissa Friedman and Jennifer Foy

At first friendly neighbors in the world of advocating for sexual and reproductive health, Planned Parenthood of Tompkins County (PPTC) and Planned Parenthood of the Southern Tier (PPST), both founded in 1968, joined forces to become Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes (PPSFL) in 2004. Although the merger has made our affiliate a strong force in the Finger Lakes community, the foundation of our strength lies in the great accomplishments of the once separate branches.

In 1973, only five years after being founded, PPST encompassed four operating clinics, and the patient numbers had climbed from 103 to over 2,000. Evelyn Laskaris, PPST veteran of 34 years and current Center Manager for Corning and Hornell, says “tremendous changes have occurred” since her first day of working with the agency in 1975, such as the addition of colposcopies, male services, and medication abortions to name a few.

Next door in Tompkins County, PPTC was providing services to students at Cornell University in Sage House until 1979, when a capital campaign was met with many generous contributions. The remarkable donor support helped to move the agency into its own building at 314 West State Street in Ithaca.

As the staff settled into their new surroundings, “they thought they had too much space and would have to rent out a portion of the second floor,” Rosaire Karij, Vice President of Patient Services, remembers. This recollection causes sweet bursts of laughter from staff today, as we look at a health center that offered around 7,000 visits per year in the early 1980s and now provides over 11,000 visits per year within the same 4,100 square feet of space. In fact, during the first decade in their current

location, PPTC was named as the affiliate serving the highest percentage of women in need being served in the federation.

In 1984 PPTC began offering abortion services, though there were many hurdles to clear before the agency could provide abortion, including “a modest capital campaign, a zoning fight, and a long search for a physician who shared our values and commitment to patient care,” says Kate Potteiger, former PPTC CEO and current member of PPSFL’s Board of Directors. In the end, PPTC was able to push forward in the reproductive rights movement, a significant accomplishment in the context of the times. As the number of abortion providers dwindled, PPTC was able to provide this much-needed service to women from at least 8 surrounding counties.

Some of the services the two affiliates tried to cultivate could not sustain themselves at the time. In 1992, PPST began offering prenatal care and the PPTC health center became the very first Planned Parenthood to offer childbirth services, delivering the first Planned Parenthood baby – very exciting accomplishments. Unfortunately, these services could not be maintained due to financial difficulty. Nevertheless, PPSFL staff continue to persevere with innovation

and fearless dreaming to make a difference in our community. Laskaris relates “whenever we’ve expanded services, the end result means reaching more people that might not otherwise get the care or service they need and probably not at a cost that they can afford.” PPTC was also home to one of the first nurse practitioners in the federation to provide LEEP (Loop Electrosurgical Excision Procedure), an in-office procedure to help diagnose and treat abnormal cervical cells. LEEPs are one of many added exceptional health care services that PPSFL continues to provide to the southern Finger Lakes community.

A great example of fearless dreaming and innovation in action is the PPSFL Education Department. In earlier years, PPST’s department was once comprised of four educators who contributed much more than just educational programming. The team was tremendously dedicated to raising awareness about AIDS and HIV testing, and launched Rape Crisis of the Southern Tier (RCST), staffing the program until full-time RCST staff could be hired and trained.

The first semblance of an education department at PPTC was a group of volunteer outreach workers who went door to door and met with community groups. Later, in the 1980s, a fully staffed and structured PPTC



Education Department was the first agency in the county to offer workshops on male sexuality, homophobia, and HIV/AIDS. Around 1985, the department began publishing the 3Rs newsletter, which has morphed into Education’s current quarterly newsletter titled Sex: Talk About It! In 2000, the team launched their award winning teen website, sextalk.org, which preceded PPFA’s teenwire.org as a youth focused prevention and education site.

In 2003, through generous donor funding and a special grant from PPFA, PPTC’s advocacy and education work crossed borders to Namibia in southwest Africa as partners with the Namibian Planned Parenthood Association. Delegations visited Ithaca and Windhoek to exchange ideas, successes, challenges, and further Planned Parenthood’s commitment to global sexual and reproductive rights.

Since the 2004 merger, the PPSFL Education Department has evolved into a multi-county team of seasoned educators that brings hundreds of programs to students and informative workshops to professionals, parents, and youth in our region each year. The Education staff participate with many local and regional human services organizations and committees to connect community members to services, resources, and sexuality education. Recently relocated to 111 East Seneca Street, the department is in the process of launching a lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender (LGBT) health and wellness program called Out for Health, funded by the New York State Department of Health. The expansive new space has provided the team the room they need to bring many of their big dreams to fruition, and the Out for Health program is a marvelous

opportunity to better serve members of our community.

The merger of these outstanding and accomplished neighboring affiliates was bound to succeed. PPSFL has come a long way from offering basic family planning, now providing a wide range of services for men and women that include STD testing and treatment, same-day HIV testing, treatment of minor gynecological problems, colposcopy, and midlife services, and four of our clinics offer medication abortion. Today, PPSFL serves four counties with health centers in Elmira, Corning, Hornell, Watkins Glen, and Ithaca. The affiliate is proud to serve these diverse communities with exceptional service, honest education, and fearless advocacy.

Looking forward, PPSFL’s agency goals include building new facilities in Ithaca and Hornell that our patients and staff have long deserved, creating increased opportunities to integrate our clinical education and community programming, and implementing new systems such as electronic medical records. These large-scale goals for the coming years are primed for success and the first steps toward the upcoming capital campaign for Ithaca’s new health center are well underway with completed space planning, progressing architectural designs, and meetings to reach out to potential donors. CEO Joe Sammons asserts “Our goals are ambitious, but the entire agency remains committed to advancing the mission, even in difficult times, and we are on track to achieve our goals.” Ask our dedicated staff members and they will share the same sentiments. Ithaca Medical & Surgical Service Coordinator Wendy Heine said it best: “The mission is in our souls.”



TRIBUTE GIFTS

Oct. 7 - Dec. 10, 2009

IN HONOR OF

Mimi Biatch

Margot A. Bliven and Richard A. Rosenberg

Poney, Julie and Noni Carpenter

Anonymous

Emma Coty

John Simon and Lynne Jackier

Her Great Grandchild

Elizabeth DeProsse

Jen Mainville

Lisa Maurer, Joanie Groome

Elizabeth Reed

Janice and Jan Nigro

Louise Richardson

Kristine S. Gehl

Annie Wall

Margaret Wakeley

IN MEMORY OF

Catherine Bloom Vawter

Tom Vawter and Thea Martin

Natalie Fancher

Elizabeth B. Gordon, Martha Ferger

Annette Fuhr

Marilyn Vogel

Irene Grandt

Dr. Edward J. Grandt

Dr. William Hertl

Pamela Hertl

Kathleen Kelly

Jean and Carl Gortzig, Allan Warshawsky

Ingrid Kovary

Charles Brodhead, Nancy L. Istock, Laura Linke, D. Leah Meltzer, Kate D. Potteiger and Stephen E. Goggin, Ann and Charles Rosenthal, Rachel J. Siegel

Robert C. McDonald

Mary J. McDonald

Francis McNally

Anonymous

Jane P. Sleeper

Katherine D. Durant

Candace Widmer

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NEED TO CONTACT US?

Health Centers

Corning
962-4686

Elmira
734-3313

Hornell
324-1124

Ithaca
273-1513

Watkins Glen
535-0030

Admin. & Development Offices

Ithaca
273-1526

Horseheads
796-0220

Sexuality Education & Outreach

Tompkins County
216-0021

Southern Tier
271-9685

Rape Crisis of the Southern Tier

888-810-0093

WHY I SUPPORT PLANNED PARENTHOOD

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women's health, but society's health. Planned Parenthood believes in preventative care and proactively addresses health issues through education. This organization understands it must focus on society at large because no society can reach its full potential if its women are uneducated and/or unhealthy. It knows men need to be similarly educated of women's reproductive rights, and it promotes a better understanding of the interdependency of men and women.

I believe society should do all it can to minimize abortions and this is another reason why I support Planned Parenthood. This organization

believes in meaningful sex education because it has been demonstrated that better education leads to wiser choices, which lead to more planned children, which eliminates unwanted pregnancies.

The links are clear. Because I am committed to helping create a healthier and wiser society, one in which women's rights are honored and every child is a planned child, I am a proud supporter of Planned Parenthood.

Ian Harrop is a former member of the board of directors of Planned Parenthood of the Southern Fingerlakes.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

Four Years & Four Months

by Katie Johnson

This fall, the Education Department was lucky to have an amazing intern, Katie Johnson, with us for four months. Our staff was immediately impressed with how kind, hard-working, fun, and eager to learn Katie was. We invited Katie tell you her story about the journey that led her to PPSFL and what she had to say about the internship.



I was 17 when I found out I was pregnant, and my life changed in an instant. I knew life would no longer be carefree, and I literally matured overnight with this realization. I left school but earned my GED. I'd never had plans to go to college. But as time passed, my boyfriend and I realized we wanted more for ourselves – for our family – and he encouraged me to go back to school.

My desire to help people led to an interest in nursing, and I decided to work on some pre-requisites for the nursing program at TC3 in 2005. A week after classes started, I learned I was pregnant with my second son. I had to take some time off and was worried about how this would impact my goals.

I made it back to school the next year and completed the pre-requisites, but I was not accepted into the program. I was frustrated, unsure of what to do next, and by this time I was pregnant with my third son. I needed to stay in school to keep my insurance for OB/GYN care. I hurriedly filled my schedule with any classes I thought might be interesting, including a Human Sexuality course.

I really enjoyed the Human Sexuality class – it was amazing. But I was shocked at how little my classmates knew about basic reproductive health and sexuality. Halfway through the semester, Maureen Kelly from PPSFL's Education Department visited the class to give a presentation that included Sexuality Jeopardy and an activity called

the Condom Line-Up. The program was so engaging, informative, and fun that I immediately started researching what careers are available in sexuality education and human services.

I took my first Human Services course the following semester. My grades improved dramatically because I was so interested in the coursework, and this new path that would allow me to help others and contribute to the community was very fulfilling. When the time came to select an internship, I was completely set on working in sexuality education and I applied at PPSFL. I was pleasantly surprised to be interviewed by Maureen for the internship position, and I was absolutely thrilled when I was accepted. I knew it was going to be amazing to work with someone who has such great energy and experience.

The internship had me on cloud nine, but I was facing many challenges. I was struggling financially to provide for my three children while working at a low-paying and unfulfilling job. I was trying to manage a hectic schedule of school, work, caring for my sons, and now an internship. Fortunately, my long-term goals kept me focused and positive. I want to be an example to my children and show them that they can do anything.

So, here I am in my last day of interning in the PPSFL Education Department with my graduation just two days away. I did it! I am thrilled that this four year journey and all of the very hard work that went into it is finally over. But, I am sad to be leaving the friends I've made here and the supportive learning environment they created for me. I've learned so much about sexuality education, the preparation involved in delivering a successful program, the administrative work that goes into keeping the department running smoothly, and so much more. I loved interning at PPSFL because I've felt like I was part of something significant. I enjoyed the passion and energy my co-workers put into their jobs. Our youth and community are lucky to have Planned Parenthood and the caring staff that supports its mission, and I am thankful for the opportunity to have been a part of it.

WHY I SUPPORT PLANNED PARENTHOOD

by Ian Harrop

I believe in a woman's right to choose. Yet, my support isn't based solely on this organization's support of repro-

ductive freedom. I support Planned Parenthood because it is dedicated to helping women and men make educated and informed choices.

As a young man, I did all that I could to please my mom and grandmother. This included attending our Catholic church frequently – sometimes several times a week – and becoming an altar boy. I also dreamt of becoming a priest, but the open-mindedness my parents were instilling in me soon conflicted

with the apparent close-mindedness of religious doctrine. I use the word “apparent” for it was the same church that taught me St. Francis's Prayer for Peace, which says “O Divine Master, grant me that I may seek not so much to be understood as to understand...”

I support Planned Parenthood because it is committed to promoting a better understanding of one of today's most polarizing issues – reproductive freedom. Too many think of Planned Parenthood as an organization that promotes abortions – nothing could be further from the truth. This organization promotes health, and not only

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From left to right: Cecile Richards, Pat Johnson, Ian Harrop and Jean Gortzig

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