

## Dear Supporter and Friend,

I have had a wonderful experience getting to know our programs and people as I continue my first year as the new President & CEO of Planned Parenthood Mid-Hudson Valley. I want to give you an update on some discoveries I've made in my explorations.

### Planned Parenthood: We're More Than You Think

I have learned that one of the staff's favorite marketing campaigns was one we used a few years ago: "Planned Parenthood: We're More Than You Think."

I'm not surprised it's popular. At our local events, I make a point of talking about a program I've seen in action, or a story about a patient that struck me, to help connect our supporters with the people whose lives they are changing with their donations.

Every time I describe a program, a local supporter will tell me, *"I've supported Planned Parenthood for years – and I never knew that!"* So let me take the opportunity to share with you some of our "hidden gems":

### Support and Resources for People Struggling with Infertility

I'm especially pleased to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Insights, one of our many outstanding programs initially created by a group of volunteers and staff. Insights is Planned Parenthood's fertility information and support group, which for 20 years has provided free, on-going support to men and women struggling with infertility problems. Did you know that one in six couples in America have a difficult time getting pregnant? As couples start trying to have

children at later ages, more and more are affected by infertility.

Insights, led by a licensed social worker and long-time advocate, offers information, support and resources for all who seek help. Each month, the group gets together for a discussion that covers a wide range

of concerns, including assisted reproductive technologies, adoption, and medical evaluation and counseling. It's also a chance to confidentially share feelings and experiences that are so sensitive that sometimes those coping with infertility can grow alienated from their own loved ones and friends.



Clare Coleman, President & CEO

Thank you.

When local supporters express surprise that Planned Parenthood is more than they thought, I think, "It's because of you!"

Insights provides a safe place to share loss, frustration, and isolation — all feelings commonly felt by women and men who are dealing with infertility — as well as the hopes and joy associated with parenting. I had the privilege to observe an Insights meeting at which all of those emotions were shown and discussed.

While no counselor or group can ensure participants the happy ending they long for, Insights sends a message to all those who struggle with infertility problems: you are not alone.

### Comfort and Advocacy for People Who Have Been Sexually Assaulted

For residents of Sullivan County, there's a special resource for survivors of sexual assault, including rape. Planned Parenthood's RISE (Rape Information,

Services and Education) offers a comprehensive array of services for survivors of sexual assault and their families, including a crisis helpline open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Trained staff and volunteers offer understanding and confidentiality to our callers.

RISE offers counseling and weekly support groups under the direction of a trained professional in an atmosphere which encourages survivors to talk through their traumatic experiences and help one another in their recovery. In addition, specially-trained volunteers are available to provide information and support through medical and legal processes. The award-winning program also presents workshops for students, educators, law enforcement personnel and human services professionals.

Next year, RISE will reach its 20th anniversary at Planned Parenthood. Its dedicated and experienced staff continues to work toward a day when no one has to experience sexual assault, and we're proud to be the home of this outstanding community resource for Sullivan County.

**The commitment and generosity of donors has, again and again, allowed Planned Parenthood to do more to reach out and help the most vulnerable among our neighbors.**

### **Assistance and Goal-Setting For Teenage Parents**

In Orange County, Planned Parenthood offers a program for pregnant, parenting or at-risk teens called TASA (named for the New York State TeenAge Services Act). TASA is an intensive, one-on-one case management effort focused on helping teen parents cope with school, work, and caring for a child. From parenting skills and medical services to financial assistance and household needs, TASA staff help teens navigate the system to get appropriate resources and support.

TASA's aim is to help these new parents turn their hopes into reality — by setting their own goals for education, employment, independence, and to delay their next pregnancy. Participants have a TASA staff member to turn to when they hit a roadblock, and to cheer them on when they move ahead on the road toward their goals.

I've had a chance to witness the warmth and closeness that is created between the young women and the TASA staff, and to participate in this year's TASA recognition ceremony. I watched as, one after another, these young women were recognized and praised for achievements that you might think are small but make such a big difference in their futures — a learning permit or driver's license, a GED, or steady employment for six months or more.

Many of you know how challenging it is to raise children, and it's even more difficult as a teen parent. These young women frequently feel overwhelmed, with nowhere to go with their questions. Planned Parenthood's TASA program is there to listen and to help, with all services free and confidential.

### **Your Gift Makes It Possible**

How can Planned Parenthood develop and maintain these excellent programs for those in need throughout the mid-Hudson Valley?

*Your gift makes it possible.*

When local supporters express surprise that Planned Parenthood is more than they thought, I think, "*It's because of you!*" The commitment and generosity of donors has, again and again, allowed Planned Parenthood to do more to reach out and help the most vulnerable among our neighbors.

I'm very mindful of the public spirit and commitment to care and excellence that built this organization, and helped to make it a trusted source of health care, information, and more-than-you-think for so many of our neighbors. That's why Planned Parenthood Mid-Hudson Valley will be there for you, and your family, throughout your life — your gift is what makes it possible.

Thank you for your generous support of our mission and all of our programs.



Clare Coleman, President & CEO

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