

your gift at work in our community

JULY 2006

thank you

One hundred percent of Planned Parenthood's issue education and public policy work is supported by your dollars.

Volunteer work magnifies the impact of your support, helping make Planned Parenthood a trusted source of health care and information for so many of our neighbors.

In the very earliest days, everyone from the executive director to our nurses, intake workers, counselors, educators and receptionists, volunteered their time to serve hundreds of clients each year.

Today, our paid staff of 150 professionals reach more than 50,000 women and men in our health centers and education programs – yet more than 200 volunteers still play a critical role in our advocacy, education and fundraising efforts each year.

Dear Supporter and Friend,

As we enjoy the summer, and I enter my fourth month as President & CEO of Planned Parenthood Mid-Hudson Valley, I want to give you an update on how your support is helping us make a difference in our communities.

After traveling to all twelve of our health centers in my first two weeks here, I have continued to visit one center each week to listen to our patients and learn more about the challenges they face. I am often struck by the connection between the services our patients are seeking and the work we do, with your generous help, to keep those services safe and accessible.

ADVOCATING FOR COMMON-SENSE POLICIES

I want to share with you one example of how we put your gift to work for those who need our services most. The overwhelming majority of our patients have no health insurance, but there's a special New York State program that

covers their reproductive health needs for two years. The federal government, however, is trying to reduce that eligibility to one year, and that means many of those in need will simply fall out of the program – going without the information, counseling and access to services they really need.



CEO Clare Coleman (right) with volunteer Eva Beals at the New Windsor health center. Eva will be honored in September as our 2006 Distinguished Volunteer.

Your support for our agency allows us to make our case in both

Albany and Washington that the unintended pregnancy rate can soar when reproductive health care is delayed or interrupted – that our policies should make common sense – and that women should continue to have two years of participation in a family planning program, as the federal government has traditionally allowed.

ACTIVISM FROM THE HEART

One of the many lessons I've learned in the last few months is just how important volunteers have been, and continue to be, to the success of the

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agency. I'm especially pleased to share with you the story of an outstanding volunteer, Eva Beals of Tuxedo, who has been involved with Planned Parenthood Mid-Hudson Valley since 1999.

Eva knows firsthand the connections between public policy and the availability of family planning services. She was a girl of 10 when her family fled Hungary with only two suitcases, leaving behind their bombed-out home. They lived for five years, during Eva's early teens, in a displaced persons camp in Austria following World War II.

"It was not a time to bring children into that world," Eva remembered recently. "Many women chose to have abortions, since birth control was not available. The availability of birth control to everybody . . . I find that a real privilege."

As a volunteer for Planned Parenthood Mid-Hudson Valley, Eva helps others understand that they can take part in preserving their access to health care. In our Goshen and New Windsor health centers, Eva engages patients in friendly conversations. She carries voter registration forms and postcards to send to local legislators requesting support for reproductive health access. More importantly, she carries a passion for personal choice and access to reproductive health services.

"It amazes me," Eva says, "that so many people don't understand the connection between who we vote for — that we vote — and our ability to just come to Planned Parenthood for what we need. I talk to them about what Planned Parenthood offers . . . and what would happen if they didn't have that."

Many of the women Eva talks with in our health centers are young mothers, without insurance, without money, often without jobs.

"I wish I could help them," Eva says. "Education is so important. I make the connection to politics — did they vote in the last election, do they know who is running, do they know their vote can impact their own lives?"

SENSE & SENSIBILITY: YOUR GIFT IN ACTION

Your gifts directly support the work of Eva and all our volunteers, so that we can reach more of our neighbors and make our community a better place. Your gifts help us advocate for public policies that protect reproductive health and address the very tangible needs of our patients. Thank you for supporting Planned Parenthood Mid-Hudson Valley and enabling us to share your generosity with so many others.



Clare Coleman
President & CEO

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