

your gift

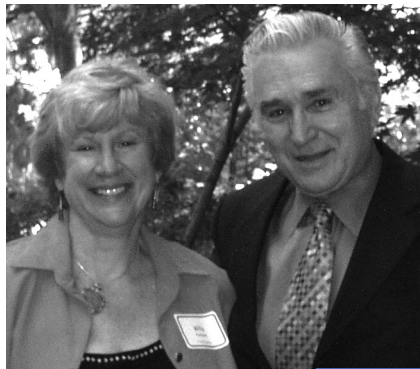
at work in our community

Summer 2007

Dear Supporter and Friend,

Many of our supporters are drawn to Planned Parenthood because it has been a fighter for women's rights, for quality health care regardless of income, and for opportunity for all Americans.

That's especially true at Planned Parenthood Mid-Hudson Valley, where the tradition of social activism, telling truth to power and standing up for what we believe to be right is an essential part of our mission. In many ways, we could not be the caring, confidential, trusted health care provider we are if it were not for our advocacy on behalf of the most vulnerable in our society.



Congressman Maurice Hinchey with former Vice President of Public Affairs, Willa Freiband

It was Planned Parenthood Mid-Hudson Valley that organized Poughkeepsie's largest rally – “Pro Choice, Your Choice” – which attracted over 3,000 people to march to defend the right to choose.

It was Planned Parenthood Mid-Hudson Valley that created a program to educate and activate patients in our health center waiting rooms, an innovation that won a national Planned Parenthood “Fund for

the Future” grant and encouraged patient activist campaigns around the country.

We organized a volunteer “escort” program to help patients deal with anti-choice protestors who gather to taunt and intimidate outside our health centers; this program exists – and unfortunately is more necessary than ever – today.

It was Planned Parenthood Mid-Hudson Valley that recognized the need for young people to have a voice in our state capital, and sponsored the first scholarships for high school youth. That effort is now 17 years old, and has grown a mighty force of articulate, savvy and persuasive young activists. Our website for young people, www.TeenGov.com, won a national Planned Parenthood “Affiliate Excellence Award in Public Affairs.”

The site, along with the national Planned Parenthood www.teenwire.com, brings information and a message of empowerment to teens.

We helped spearhead the community portion of a successful lawsuit against Dutchess County

when, in 1994, the county denied funds for free gynecological exams for low-income women.

We stood with the community to oppose two attempts to merge Kingston and Benedictine hospitals, and to facilitate an appropriate

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collaboration between Vassar Brothers and St. Francis hospitals, in the 1990s, and continue to work actively to ensure women’s health is fairly treated in any hospital merger or collaboration.

Planned Parenthood Mid-Hudson Valley was first among the New York State Planned Parenthoods to create an “Action Fund,” which today works to educate local residents about policy issues and what’s at stake in local, state and national elections.

As I write to you today, I’m reflecting on that legacy, and particularly on some of the people here in the Hudson Valley who put Planned Parenthood at the heart of their activism and energy.

Planned Parenthood Mid-Hudson Valley is, of course, its people – the staff and supporters who work every day at tasks great and small to further our mission of health care, education and advocacy. In our advocacy work, two of our brightest lights have been longtime Vice President of Public Affairs, Willa Freiband, who is leaving PPMHV to pursue a new phase of her career in July, and Public Affairs volunteer Camilla Wygan, who passed away on June 27.

In her twenty-three years with Planned Parenthood, Willa Freiband developed a reputation for creativity, moxie and strategic sense that’s gotten her recognized around the state and among Planned Parenthoods nationwide. She was given the Reverend Beatrice

We remain absolutely committed to advocacy and activism as a core part of our mission, and we take seriously our obligation to build on the successes of the past.

Blair Courageous Service Award by New York State Family Planning Advocates at its 1998 annual conference, and has twice been honored by local YWCAs for excellence in advocacy. Willa now intends to pursue political activism at a new level, and we

know she’ll remain a part of our family and a tremendous campaigner for our mission.

Camilla Wygan was such a dynamic presence in public affairs work that we named our Annual Distinguished Volunteer Award after her! Complementing her professional work in education, child development and fundraising, Camilla’s volunteer work was extensive and significant. She was an active participant in public affairs

work until a few months before her death, and her partnership with Planned Parenthood Mid-Hudson Valley, and with Willa especially, was very meaningful.

Planned Parenthood Mid-Hudson Valley remains absolutely committed to advocacy and activism as a core part of our mission, and we take seriously our obligation to build on the successes of the past. The future holds enormous opportunity, and your gift makes it possible.



Clare Coleman, President & CEO

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