

# your gift

at work in our community

Spring 2007

## Dear Supporter and Friend,

For many of us, the real joy of being part of Planned Parenthood is in helping others. Over the years, Planned Parenthood Mid-Hudson Valley has been very fortunate to have attracted hundreds of staff and volunteers who sincerely want to create a healthier and better community, and are willing to take the extra step to engage with someone in need.



*Kyra Carr, VP for Patient Services and Clare Coleman, President & CEO, discuss patient care.*

I want to tell you a story of just such an encounter, which a staff member who has been with Planned Parenthood 18 years recently shared with me.

“One afternoon while I was checking in patients, ‘Martha’ stood up and walked through the crowded waiting room. I smiled, but she made no eye contact. Her face looked drawn and tired.

‘Hi Martha, I’m Jan. I’ll be going over your paperwork with you and getting you ready to see the clinician.’

She took a seat, folded her arms across her chest and looked angrily at the floor.

‘Martha, you seem upset. Is there anything I can help you with?’

‘I spoke to you yesterday on the phone. I haven’t been to the doctor since my son was born. He’s 13. I have pain down there. You told me to come in.’

‘Oh, I remember.....it’s great that you decided to come in.’

‘Whatever.’

I thought perhaps I could win her over with some lightness. Our birthdays were 2 days apart, so I smiled and said, ‘Look at that.

*(over)*

**Your generosity touches many lives.**

**Last year, more than 1800 donors like you invested in Planned Parenthood’s work and helped extend our reach into the communities we serve:**

**28,500 clients received high-quality reproductive health care.**

**14,400 teens, parents and professionals participated in our education programs.**

**10,800 people were reached by our peer educators and counselors with important information about contraception, HIV/AIDS and healthy sexuality.**

**Your gift helps us create a healthier and better community. Thank you.**

'We're almost twins.' No response. So I took out her patient history and got down to business.

We reviewed her health history, and she answered me in as few words as possible. When we got to a question about unwanted sexual experiences, I gently asked, 'I see you checked yes to this question about an unwanted sexual experience. Is this something you'd feel comfortable talking with me about?'

Finally she looked at me. Her eyes filled with tears.

'I don't know why I'm telling you this. I never told anyone. My brother . . .'

Martha cried for a while. I handed her a box of tissues.

'My brother had sex with me . . . more than once. I used to try to get him off me . . . I told my father. He said it didn't happen . . . that he didn't raise sons to be like that.'

She leaned into me with her arms opened and I hugged her while she cried, tears rolling down my cheeks as well. I told her how brave she was to share that with me and asked if she wanted me to go into the exam room with her.

'You can do that? I'm so scared something is wrong with me.'

'Of course. Let me go get the room ready for you.'

I left the room to get the exam room ready and shared Martha's story with her clinician. I waited outside the door as Martha undressed and joined the clinician in the exam room. I held Martha's hand during her exam, and the clinician told her

every move she was making, every touch she'd feel. Martha did manage to give me a weak smile and a 'thank you' when the exam was done. I told her that I'd call her as soon as her lab results were in.

In a week, I called her to let her know that everything was normal and that she had an infection that was diagnosed and treated at her exam. She sounded happy and said she'd be back in a week for her HIV results. I suggested that she might want to think about counseling so she could talk about her experiences. She said she'd think about it. She also told me that she had a job interview about which she was very excited.

Two weeks later I passed the front desk and saw a woman talking with one of the nurses. She wore a red sweater and bright floral skirt. It was Martha. She had gotten the job and had already been working a week. She was smiling and her face looked completely different. She hugged me and said that as soon as her insurance was active she had heard of a counselor she wanted to see.

I think about Martha often, on days when I'm not sure I'm getting through to anyone or days when I am very tired. I wonder what would have happened if I hadn't made that extra effort to help her. I'm always glad I took time with Martha."

This is the story of Planned Parenthood Mid-Hudson Valley.

Your gift makes it possible.



Clare Coleman, President & CEO

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