

## **A Brief History of Planned Parenthood in Waco**

### **The Early Days**

The inspiration for a birth control clinic in the Waco area came in 1936 when Mrs. Ernest (Helen) Day invited a group of women to meet with Mrs. Agnes Nelms of Houston, President of the Texas League of Planned Parenthood. Months of education and enthusiastic preparation followed.

The first organized meeting of Waco community leaders interested in making birth control available in this area was held on February 1, 1939 at the Waco Public Library. The group agreed to open a clinic in the Child Welfare quarters at City Hall with each member donating \$1 per month and volunteering time at the clinic. About 30 women participated in this endeavor during the next few months.

The clinic later moved to the City Hospital building at 605 Columbus. As community support increased, the Maternal Health Center (as it was called) secured contributions for the purchase of property and moved to 315 North 4th Street. Still, the clinic operated solely on private funds. Then in 1940, the clinic was accepted as a Community Chest Agency (what is now the United Way). The first Community Chest allotment was \$30 per month.

In 1940 a charter was registered with the State of Texas.

### **A New Location and Growth**

Eventually, urban renewal forced the clinic to seek another site and in 1965, the present property at 1121 Ross Avenue was purchased and a new clinic was built. In 1975, a grant from the Waco Perpetual Growth Foundation, along with private donations, funded an addition that nearly doubled the size of the Ross clinic. This addition was dedicated on the occasion of the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Planned Parenthood in Waco. In 1978, another 2,800 square feet was added. A modular structure that was adjacent to the clinic was purchased in 1980 to house the administrative staff and library. Another modular structure purchased in 1985 provided storage.

In November 1995, the clinic on Columbus Avenue was named the Audré Rapoport Women's Health Center and Library with a dedication service honoring Audré Rapoport, who for many years has been both a vocal and financial supporter of reproductive rights and education. In 2001, the Audré Rapoport Women's Health Center was remodeled to provide more space and comfort for our patients, and a state-of-the-art security system was installed to afford more safety for our staff and patients.

In June 2000, a new administrative building was constructed adjoining the Ross Avenue Clinic at 1121 Ross Avenue, and in November of that year, the clinic was named the Mary Ruth Duncan Women's Health Center to honor a long time benefactor, board member and supporter of Planned Parenthood in Waco. The Audré Rapoport Library was moved from the Columbus clinic to the Ross location. The addition of the administrative offices and library allowed for much needed space in both clinics for patient services.

In 2001, the Ross Avenue Clinic was remodeled to allow for better patient flow and efficiency. State of the art security cameras and a monitor were installed to afford a view of the parking lot and grounds.

In 2005, the agency separated into two corporations to satisfy compliance with a law passed by the Texas Legislature in 2003 withholding public funding from agencies who perform abortion. The two corporations are Planned Parenthood of Central Texas, Inc. (PPCT) and Planned Parenthood of Waco Family Planning and Surgical Services (PPWFSS).

## Medical Services

Services now extend far beyond contraception and medical assistance. In 1988, the agency added an HIV counseling and testing program and in January 1994, first trimester abortion services became a standard reproductive health service. Colposcopy and cryotherapy became available for diagnosis and treatment for cervical dysplasia and lower urinary tract infection treatment began.

With a grant from the Central Texas Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Foundation, PPCT began a mammogram program for low income women by contracting with local medical facilities to provide the actual screening in 2001. In 2003, additional money was made available through the Foundation for diagnostic follow-up for patients with abnormal mammograms. As of 2008, PPCT had provided 2,196 mammograms for low income women in the community. In 2007, Planned Parenthood of Central Texas was able to expand cancer screening services when the Department of State Health Services approved and funded the affiliate as a provider of Breast and Cervical Cancer Services (BCCS).

In 2005, Planned Parenthood in Waco partnered with Adoption Affiliates to provide adoption services for women choosing that option.

In 2007, PPCT opened two satellite health centers in Marlin (Falls County) and Mexia (Limestone County) to serve low income women in these respective communities. At start-up, the clinics were open one day per week.

## Education

Planned Parenthood offers education to the community. Local schools, churches, civic groups, youth organizations, and other agencies depend on Planned Parenthood for programs and educational resources.

The André Rapoport Library offers books, videos, and curricula for all ages. In 2002, the library was designated as a branch of the Waco/McLennan County Library System. However, a lawsuit was filed against PPCT and the public library by the opposition alleging that if we were a part of the public library, we could not deny entry into our facility by the public. Instead of endangering staff and patients, the relationship with the Waco/McLennan County Public Library was dissolved in 2003.

“Nobody’s Fool: Dating, Love, Sex, and AIDS”, a nationally recognized adolescent seminar is held annually. Nobody’s Fool aims to encourage abstinence, promote parent-child communication, and give medically accurate and age-appropriate facts about sexuality issues. Since 1989, Planned Parenthood in Waco has partnered with local churches and other non-profit agencies who work with young people to deliver facts, fun, and food to 300-500 children. The students are involved in educational activities for 3 hours that focus on important subjects relevant to young teens and pre-teens: puberty, dating, relationships, avoiding peer pressure, postponing sexual activity, preventing sex abuse, teen pregnancy, and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Trained health educators teach classes that are divided by age and gender: 5th grade boys, 5th grade girls, 6th grade girls, 6th grade boys, etc. There are a total of ten classrooms, each having age appropriate objectives and activities.

## Financial History

In 1989, Planned Parenthood of Central Texas celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a staff of 27, providing services to over 7,200 patients, and an annual budget of \$837,000. A short six years later in 1995, more than 8,500 men and women took advantage of family planning services with 31 staff, and the budget had grown to \$1.4 million.

Staff provided 8,500 patients with health care in 1999. Due to budget restraints in 2000, staff was reduced by 25% to 21 employees. By streamlining tasks and raising efficiency, 8,600 patients were provided services in 2000.

In 2008, staff provided 26,311 medical services to 12,762 patients. The combined budgets of PPCT and PPWFPSS had grown to \$2.2 million with a staff of 35.

Planned Parenthood of Central Texas is funded by federal and state sources, patient fees and donations, private grants, and donations.

Planned Parenthood of Waco Family Planning and Surgical Services is funded by patient fees and donations, private grants, and donations.

In 2009, Planned Parenthood in Waco celebrated its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary and it continues to meet the challenges of the community by providing countless women and men with healthier, happier lives, while celebrating a proud legacy. We anticipate a bright future in serving the community with the same confidence and leadership exemplified by its founders.

~ Planned Parenthood in Waco... Generations of Service to Generations ~