

# Pro-life pregnancy center to open next to Planned Parenthood

A man was praying outside a busy Planned Parenthood clinic on North Howard Street in downtown Baltimore more than a year ago when he noticed a for-sale sign on a long-abandoned, 100-year-old building right next door.

Instantly, he was inspired.

What if the three-story structure could be turned into a pro-life pregnancy resource center, he wondered? How many lives might be saved that would otherwise be lost to abortion at Planned Parenthood?

The man, who wishes to remain anonymous, contacted the Center for Pregnancy Concerns (CPC), a nondenominational, Christian nonprofit organization that operates four pro-life pregnancy resource centers in the Baltimore metropolitan area. He offered to put up money to purchase the building for CPC.

After another anonymous donor stepped forward to match the initial contribution, the CPC's board of directors approved going forward with acquisition of the dilapidated brick building. The CPC submitted the winning \$94,500 bid — paid with the unexpected contributions — to purchase the property at auction Jan. 19, 2017.

Plans are now underway to rehabilitate the former electronics and jewelry store and transform it into the CPC's fifth location. Once operational, the new outreach center will become only the second pro-life pregnancy resource center operating in the city.

"It's definitely providential," said Carol Clews, executive director of the CPC. "When we tell people in the pro-life community about this, their jaws drop. They are so excited."

The CPC, which helps approximately 1,000 women a year, includes two pregnancy resource centers based at Catholic institutions - one at St. Rita in Dundalk and another at St. Ann in East Baltimore. The other centers are located in Essex and Arbutus.

Among the free services offered at the existing centers include private counseling, sonograms, training programs and extensive material assistance, including donated baby clothes, toys, diapers, books, furniture and other supplies.

Gretchen Carney, the CPC's development director, said the Howard Street location gives her organization more direct contact with abortion-minded women.

"We have the opportunity to reach a whole group of people we haven't been able to access before," she said.

The purchased building, located at 328 North Howard Street, needs extensive renovations.

Wayne Dickie, a CPC board member and construction manager for the Howard Street property, said a final cost estimate for the restoration has not been completed. His goal is to get the first floor repaired first so the center can open to the public as soon as possible. Depending on available funds, the second and third floors could also be rehabilitated.

What services are offered at the new building are yet to be finalized and will depend on how much of the facility is able to be utilized.

"It was originally two structures that they actually joined together," said Dickie, noting that floors are misaligned in parts of the building. "We've got piping sitting in there that is leftover legacy stuff that isn't used. There's wires going places not even being used. It's got a basement in the front, but not the back. It's a mismatch."

Deacon Richard "Monti" Montalto, a CPC board member, is conducting an appeal to raise money to repair the building. He sent a letter to all parishes in Maryland, asking for support. Appeals were also made to other Catholic organizations and Christian groups.

"I reminded pastors that we have 2.5 million baptized Catholics in Maryland," he said. "I'm asking for a widow's mite - \$1 each to put toward the project."

Deacon Montalto noted that after he mentioned that a large percentage of baptized Catholics are not active in the church, someone gave \$200,000 to cover those

people.

"I have no doubt we will raise enough money to complete the project," Deacon Montalto said. "We are totally committed."

Archbishop William E. Lori, a strong supporter of opening another pregnancy resource center, will lead the annual Good Friday prayer walk to the Howard Street Planned Parenthood March 30 beginning at 8 a.m. Participants will walk from the National Shrine of St. Alphonsus Ligouri to Planned Parenthood, praying the Stations of the Cross along the way. At the abortion clinic, they will pray the rosary.

*Contributions may be mailed to the Center for Pregnancy Concerns, 442 Eastern Boulevard, Essex, MD 21221. Make checks payable to the Center for Pregnancy Concerns and note "328" in the memo line.*

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