

Womankind

MATERNAL AND PRENATAL CARE CENTER

www.womankindcleveland.org



Womankind Mission Statement: To provide hope, help, and possibility to any pregnant woman by offering comprehensive integrative care in a loving, nonjudgmental environment.

FALL 2020

Thank You for 45 Years at Womankind!

Over a year ago, I took the position as the Executive Director of Womankind. I think we can all agree that it has been quite the year! Through COVID-19, we did not stop. We are a needed resource in our community and realized that even more the past year. It is truly remarkable to see the staff, volunteers and clients come together and rise above the hurdles we have faced. We had to cancel our fundraisers, minimize numbers of people in our building, and take other difficult but necessary precautions to keep everyone safe. Our board members and staff had many conversations about how we would make it through this trying time. But through these struggles, we have continued to persevere and have kept our doors open. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Over the past month, I have been going through our history. I saw pictures, articles and personal stories that touched my heart. There were many moments as I was looking through the archives where I said to myself, "This is why we work tirelessly every single day." One story stuck in my head; it was about a woman from 30 years ago who had nowhere to go and found herself pregnant and homeless. Thankfully, she found Womankind. We helped her find housing and a job. Most importantly, we provided her with quality and compassionate



prenatal care for her and her baby. Stories like this continue to happen every day at Womankind. A woman may walk through our doors and feel hopeless, alone and sad but we work tirelessly to turn that around. From our prenatal clinic to our social services department, we will continue to provide quality and comprehensive care. The impact Womankind is having on our community is remarkable. I know there will always be work to do but I am proud of where Womankind is and will be in the future. Look at the numbers below and you

will understand how we are truly needed in our community:

- 390 Prenatal Medical Visits
- 700 Requests for essential material items
- 100 New clients (including prenatal/ medical, counseling and client support services)
- 400+ Volunteer hours provided by our Doctors, Nurses, and Distribution Volunteers

For over 45 years, Womankind has been a staple in our community and will continue to be. We will continue to provide prenatal care, counseling and support services, essential material items and childbirth education classes. We are grateful for your support of our mission. It means so much to us as we are serving our clients. As Mother Teresa said, "Spread love wherever you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier." Thank you for spreading love for 45 years. Here is to another 45 years of providing free, compassionate and quality care to our clients!

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OUR SERVICES

All of Womankind's services are confidential, nonjudgmental and provided at no cost to our clients.

These include:

- Pregnancy test
- Comprehensive and integrative prenatal care through 28 weeks of pregnancy
- Assistance with third trimester care and delivery
- Professional counseling
- Support services for those significant to the mother
- Childbirth classes
- Breastfeeding information
- Post-abortion counseling
- Assistance with Medicaid and WIC application
- Maternity clothing
- Baby items (as available)
- Referrals for
 - Parenting classes
 - Adoption
 - Legal assistance

If you need help, or know someone who does, please call us at 216-662-5700.

A New You – A Healthier You!

By Alene Kalista, Director of Community Engagement

As we approach the holiday season, it's important to take some time to plan out how we can take better care of ourselves, especially in light of this past year and our current health crisis. Oftentimes people tell me how difficult it is to take better care of themselves. They claim that they are too busy, too tired, too stressed, and they certainly aren't eating well, drinking adequate fluids, or getting enough exercise. I've found some simple ways to care for my body, mind, and spirit that anyone can implement into their daily routine. Start with something simple and progress as you feel comfortable:

1. The first is to make sure you are **drinking water** or other healthful beverages. When we consume the right amount of fluids, it supports our immune system and all of our bodily functions. Most medical experts recommend about 64 ounces per day for adults but that varies according to weight and physical activity so listen to your body. Drinking water is obviously the best way to meet this goal but broth and herbal teas are beneficial as well. Have fun with your water—add a slice of lemon, cucumber or mint leaves to experiment with taste.
2. The second key to properly care for ourselves is to get some form of **regular exercise** on most days of the week. Thirty minutes of moderate exercise is what we need to boost our immune system, develop a stronger body, and have a better mindset. Do some yoga, dance, take a walk outside, or join a gym. I once heard a fitness expert say, "If you don't use it, you'll lose it"—wise words, especially now when so many of us are stuck indoors!
3. Finding time for **prayer or meditation** is a key component of self-care. Our stress levels are at an all-time high and people are getting physically and



emotionally sick. We have been forced to detach ourselves from family and friends because of the pandemic. Now, more than ever, we need to find that sacred space to connect with our Higher Power. What better way to do this than to find time each day to spend in quiet solitude with prayer or meditation. I have developed a meditative strengthening/stretching routine that I do while I pray. My hope is to share this in the near future at Womankind for our clients and others in the community, so stay tuned!

4. How much **sleep** do you get each night? Most people would agree that the average person doesn't get the suggested seven to eight hours of sleep a night. Sleep heals and restores our bodies. We go to bed late, get up early, and struggle to sleep peacefully. Look around your bedroom—what distractions do you have? Can you put your cell phone and other technology "to bed" in another room? Can you go to bed a few minutes

earlier each night? If you aren't getting adequate rest, perhaps you can take a short fifteen minute nap when you get home from work. Find simple ways to increase your sleep and you will find your stress levels are much lower.

5. Last but certainly not least, if we are going to take better care of ourselves, especially as the holiday eating binges approach, we need to look at our **diets**. Most of us do not eat enough fruits and vegetables each day. We rely on fast food, microwave meals, or processed foods to satisfy our hunger. I often hear people say how difficult it is to resist those nighttime snacks and I would definitely agree! It seems our hunger hormones go on overdrive after dinner. I have found intermittent fasting to be of great benefit to me. This is where you allow yourself to eat only during an eight hour time period each day. The most important thing is to try to make healthier food choices. There will be parties, holiday cookies, and just plain down days when you eat things you wish you hadn't. When this happens, do a bit more exercise or remind yourself that tomorrow is a new day!

So there you have it! Drink water, daily exercise, pray or meditate, get adequate rest, and change your eating habits to create a new and healthier you. If this seems too difficult to tackle all at once, try one at a time and incorporate more of these practices as you get comfortable with one. Learn to love yourself by taking care of you!

Let's Fill The Bottles!

Through COVID-19, Womankind has persevered and stayed true to its mission of providing hope, help and possibility to any pregnant woman by offering comprehensive and integrative care in a loving, nonjudgmental environment at no cost to our clients. We are grateful to the donors that came through in 2020. Without the support, we would not have remained open.

Our supplies are running low and we would love to replenish them because the need is even greater! Whatever the need, we do our best to provide parents with essential items for their babies or find the resources available to them.

Obviously, things are different this year. We are adjusting to the change every day and coming up with new ideas to raise funds. We decided to do a 50/50 raffle because not only do you have the chance to win, but you are also supporting an AMAZING cause! As a current Womankind prenatal client recently stated, *"Without Womankind during this time, I don't know where I would be. I was feeling anxious and depressed and was able to talk to a counselor and also receive care from a professional and caring medical team. I know I will be able to go back and my baby will be taken care of. This is a trying time but I know Womankind is always there for me."*

***If your church would like to have baby bottles to be distributed at weekend services, please contact our Director of Community Engagement, Alene Kalista, at 216-662-5700 or email akalista@womankindcleveland.org. Thank you for your continued support of one of our biggest annual fundraisers that helps us provide for the basic needs of our clients. Check out our website for all the exciting details!**



Looking Forward to 2021...

As we prepare to say goodbye to 2020 (and who isn't ready for that!), we here at Womankind are excited about what's to come in 2021! Our hope is to bring back our Baby Bottle Campaign and prepare for our Annual Golf Outing in July! We hope to celebrate 45+ years of offering Hope, Help, and Possibility to expectant moms with a Virtual Gala in February! Stay tuned for upcoming details by liking us on Facebook or going to www.womankindcleveland.org.

Sharing Our Success: Mona Maruna's Journey With Womankind

By Maria Tayek, volunteer

Life can take many twists and turns. Just ask Mona Maruna, a former Womankind client and now a member of its Board of Trustees. Thirty-six years ago, she had just recently graduated from high school and was ready to go off to college when she found out she was pregnant. Her high school sweetheart, John Maruna, was already in college. "We were 18 and 19 and there was this daunting feeling, 'I'm going to have a baby!'" Sharing those thoughts from long ago, she says, "I remember thinking, 'How am I going to pay for this? We have no insurance!'" Thinking back on those early years, Mona remembers, "It was just mind-boggling."

John's father, a supporter of Womankind, suggested Mona visit their offices at that time located at Mayfield and Green Roads in South Euclid. Mona says she remembers that first visit in September 1984 to Womankind. "I remember going for the first time up the stairs to the clinic. It was an older building." When she opened the door, she was comforted by her surroundings. "I remember everyone was so kind and reassuring; they took all my apprehensions away."

John and Mona married in November 1984 and both had jobs but no health insurance to cover Mona's prenatal care and delivery. "John started working as an orderly at the Cleveland Clinic, but his insurance did not begin until February, 1985 right before the birth of our baby," explains Maruna. Mona's pregnancy was considered a preexisting condition, so only the baby and the baby's hospital stay would be covered by John's Cleveland Clinic insurance. Mona completed 28 weeks of Womankind prenatal care and then transferred to the former St. Alexis Hospital, where she completed the remainder of care and delivered Tim, the first of four sons for the couple.

Fast forward in life and Mona and John's sons, Tim, Terry, Michael and Christopher are grown and the family no longer needed the crib that served them well. John Maruna suggested they donate the crib and other baby items to Womankind, reacquainting themselves with the non-profit organization. John became more involved and accepted a seat on the Board of Trustees. Mona started volunteering in the clinic and doing fundraising. Since that time, John has left the board and Mona replaced him in 2017. Their sons also support the work of Womankind by attending fundraising events.

As a volunteer and a board member, Mona talks to Womankind supporters and clients all the time. She has a unique advantage in having been a client herself, bringing an experienced perspective to those conversations. While the Womankind facilities have



changed over 45 years the mission of care has not. "The quality of care is just as good as 36 years ago," says Mona. "Now though, Womankind has beautiful, well equipped offices which rival any doctor's office in town," she says proudly of the Transportation Boulevard facility in Garfield Heights.

When Mona talks to people about Womankind, she says they are amazed that all the care is free. "I impress upon them how wonderful the staff and volunteers are, what a great job they do for our clients and how we address the medical and social needs of each woman." In addition to receiving 28 weeks of free prenatal care, Womankind clients may utilize our layette program after their baby is born for up to two years." This consists of donated items such as diapers, wipes, formula, clothing and other essentials. These too are free of charge to clients.

Mona and John Maruna's life took many twists and turns, but somehow the road always came back to Womankind. In fact, the companies Mona and John work for are both Womankind contributors. Mona works in commercial insurance for Alpha Insurance Group and John works in sales for HDS Marketing. Their journey is just one of thousands in the 45-year history of Womankind, a prenatal and maternal care non-profit. You can learn more about Womankind and its comprehensive prenatal care program by searching womankindcleveland.org.

THE DASH

I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend. He referred to the dates on the tombstone from the *beginning*... to the *end*.

He noted that first came the date of birth and spoke of the following date with tears, but he said what mattered most of all was the *dash* between those years.

For that dash represents all the time they spent alive on earth and now only those who loved them know what that little line is *worth*.

For it matters not, how much we own, the cars... the house... the cash. What *matters* is *how* we live and love and how we *spend our dash*.

So think about this long and hard; are there things you'd like to *change*? For you never know how much time is left that still can be rearranged.

To be less quick to anger and show *appreciation* more and *love* the people in our lives like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with *respect* and more often wear a *smile*... remembering that this special dash might only last a little while.

So when your eulogy is being read, with your life's *actions* to rehash, would you be proud of the things they say about how you *lived your dash*?

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My Reflection on The Dash by Alene Kalista

I recently came across this poem and thought it was a beautiful gift to share with our readers before we get busy with the holiday rush of shopping, parties, and gift-giving. Think of this as our gift to you as we reflect on the past 45 years. This poem can help us think about the importance of taking a step back and reflecting on how we use the time we are given. Here at Womankind, we have employees and volunteers who spend part of their "dash" living out our mission to offer Hope, Help, and Possibility in a loving, non-judgmental environment. From our Tuesday volunteers who sort, fold, and put together our baby items to the couriers who do our lab runs or those who answer the phones, these kind souls are living their "dash" as they assist all of us to help the women and children entrusted to our care.

"For it matters not, how much we own, the cars...the house...the cash. What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash." This is my favorite line in the poem because it truly represents how we live out our mission. Every day those of us involved with Womankind spend part of our "dash" showing love and kindness to each person who walks through our doors. Oftentimes we talk about how working for Womankind isn't a nine-to-five job; rather, it's how we live every single day. When we think about time and how fast it goes, we realize how important it is to do something that matters—spend time with people we love, do for others, share our time, talent, and treasure. As the Director of Community Engagement, I have seen firsthand how so many people are "spending their dash." So let's take this opportunity to look back through the years!



We would like to give a Shout Out to the Northern Ohio Italian American Foundation for choosing Womankind as the benefactor for their annual golf outing! Although we weren't able to hold our annual golf outing this year, NOIA raised \$11,000.00 to support our organization! Thank you, NOIA!

"Over these 45 years, I am not sure we know just how much Womankind has impacted our greater community except for the knowledge that there are thousands of healthy mothers and children who are experiencing better lives as the result of our volunteer health professionals, social workers, and many dedicated individuals who have been willing to help those in need, in this case, pregnant women and their babies. One only needs to hear the stories of success and gratefulness dating back all of these decades to know that Womankind quietly makes a difference and has served as a great benefit to our community."

***– Bob Tayek,
Board of Trustees President***

From the beginning...



To present day...

We are able to offer state-of-the-art medical offices and counseling rooms thanks to the generosity of our donors!



Here are just samples of the many beautiful afghans and quilts we've received from the dedicated women at various churches to keep our babies warm throughout the winter months ahead!



Our Baby Room and Front Closet provide moms with much needed products to see their children through their first two years.



It Has Been Said...

By Maggie Lallo, Executive Director

...that the reason volunteers do not get paid is not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless. Joe and Cheri Slattery have volunteered at Womankind for 45 years. Their service has stretched from simply serving coffee to the more complex job of board membership and president. Most recently Cheri has been appointed to our Member Board, which has the rich task to oversee and protect Womankind's long-standing mission and philosophy: To Provide Hope, Help, and Possibility to every person who walks through our doors. As a young college student at Cleveland State University, Joe became involved with Womankind through his friendship with our founder, Michele Rogers. Early on he would meet with young fathers and couples on clinic nights, trying to help and guide them in any way he could. As soon as they began dating, he introduced Cheri to the work we do by coaxing her to "just come and serve coffee." Four children, six grandchildren and forty-five years later, they still make time for Womankind.

Early in their marriage, the Slattery's became a host family for countless women, providing them a safe place to live during their pregnancies. Sometimes a mom and baby would even return after the birth until they got on their feet. The stories they tell are remarkable. One such story is about a young woman who lived with them and was due to give birth around the same time as Cheri. As luck would have it, while Cheri was in the hospital recovering, the client went into labor. Without anyone by her side, and without any hesitation, Joe brought her to the hospital and coached her through



the labor and delivery. The two women remained close friends until her untimely death just a few years ago.

Due to COVID-19, Womankind has lost some volunteers. Without thinking twice, Cheri said she would help and now works our front desk every Thursday, continuing to serve our clients. When asked why they have supported Womankind for all these years, Cheri stated, "It is because no matter what a woman's situation is, Womankind provides unconditional love, support and professional prenatal care. Our mission is to be available every step of the way, offering women the chance to have a healthy pregnancy and baby. What's not to love?" Anyone who meets the Slatterys can see their love, compassion and kindness. Bob Tayek, Womankind's Board president, says it best: "If we could name Womankind

all-time volunteers, the Slatterys would be my choice." From Joe's days as a college student, to welcoming some of our earliest clients into their home, to assuring that the Womankind mission is always appropriately addressed, the Slatterys have spent countless hours over decades fulfilling different roles with the purpose that young mothers will be giving birth to healthy babies. They are the ultimate volunteers in all aspects of time, dedication and service assuring continued success of our mission. Cheri is an avid gardener, loves to refinish woodwork, and enjoys exercising. Joe, recently retired, will try to fix anything, loves to golf and travel. But, above all of that, they will drop anything to spend time with their children and grandchildren. Along with all our priceless volunteers, I do not know where we would be without these two very special people.

THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR GENEROUS 2020 DONORS

We are grateful for all those who have continued to support the mission of Womankind. If a gift was made after October 2020, it will be acknowledged in the next newsletter.

ORGANIZATIONS

Aetna Foundation
Baird Foundation
Blessed Trinity Parish
Catholic Charities
Catholic Community Foundation
Church of the Gesu
Church of the Holy Angels
Church of the Resurrection
Cleveland Clinic/Marymount Hospital
Communion of Saints
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
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Immaculate Conception Church Cleveland
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“You were there for me over 17 years ago. Your resources helped me receive counseling and to empower myself and take care of my baby... Thank you for everything you do and for whom you do it.”

– A former Womankind client

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“My mother was the type of person who loved with her whole heart and was always in tune with the emotions of others. Raising her children was the most fulfilling joy of her life. Caring for others came very natural to her. She was reliable and cherished by her family and friends. She had a large heart and you could feel her love.”



– April Knotek Lagman, daughter of Lana Knotek

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CARES Act Charitable Giving Incentives for 2020

The federal government's coronavirus response legislation includes multiple provisions that offer individuals incentives for giving in 2020.

- Donors can deduct donations to public charities up to 100% of adjusted gross income (AGI) for 2020 only – up from 60% in 2019. This applies only to cash gifts. Stock gifts remain deductible for up to 30% of AGI.
- Although Required Minimum Distributions from IRAs and Pension Plans are suspended for 2020, donors may still make a tax-free Charitable IRA Rollover gift to public charities. Donors must be age 70½ to make this type of gift.
- In 2020, taxpayers who take the standard deduction can claim a \$300 “above-the-line” deduction for cash gifts to public charities. Stock gifts are not included.

Gifts of appreciated stock can help reduce capital gain tax and remain a great way to make a gift. Please consult with your tax advisor to determine the best strategy for your philanthropic gifts.

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 Mr. and Mrs. Ken Shrefler
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IN MEMORY OF:

Aborted Babies
 Mr. Daniel Telzrow

Jack Banko
 Mr. and Mrs. Gregory Hanna

Agnes Bednar
 Ms. Mary Bednar
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard Boguski

Stephen Albert Bednar
 Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Bednar

Fr. Dan Begin
 Ms. Patricia Korcheck

Dr. Daniel F. Braun
 Dr. and Mrs. William Braun

Dennis Denzer
 Ms. Clare Becker

Scott Felker
 Dolores Shannon

Nicholas & Maryann Grande
 Mr. and Mrs. Peter Lutjen

Alba Graziano & Barbara Groscop
 Ms. Deanna Hiros

William Hallisy, Ruth & Tom Keenan, Donna Modic
 Ms. Ethel Hallisy

Elsie Harvan
 Mr. Paul Harvan

David Hils
 Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Hils
 Mr. David Smith

Paul Kenyon & April Ann McHale
 Mr. and Mrs. Paul McHale

M. Killeen
 Anonymous

Marilyn Knowles
 Mr. and Mrs. I. Bernard Trombetta

Bernadette Kuhl
 Mr. and Mrs. Ken Bruening

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 Mr. Joseph Zwilling

Florence Mausser & Veronica Wroblewski
 Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Derbin

Eleanor Murray
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 Mr. Ivan Otto

Marie Ouellette
 Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Pitten

Nettie Petranek
 Ms. Rita Traska

Monica Popp
 Mr. and Mrs. Michael Sakai

Pauline Racco & Teresa Innocenzi
 Mr. and Mrs. Darryl Innocenzi

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“While we were living in Wisconsin, we received help from an organization like this, so we wanted to find a way to give back and we found Womankind!”

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Joan Vivolo
 Mr. and Mrs. Gerard Bradley

Deceased Members of Winters, Slattery, Krebs, O'Malley Families
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Fr. Walt Jenne
 Anonymous
 Ms. Kathleen Szweda

Albert Kirchner
 Ms. Mary Lou Currihan

Jo McGinnis' 90th Birthday
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To make a gift to support women and their families, please return the enclosed envelope with your gift, or you may donate online at womankindcleveland.org. Please call Alene Kalista, Director of Community Engagement at 216-662-5700 to make a gift by phone or to discuss other ways to support Womankind. Thank you for your continued generosity.

We regret if we inadvertently excluded or misspelled any names. Please call Alene Kalista at 216-662-5700 so that we may correct any errors.



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WISH LIST

Please look at the list below and see how you might be able to help us provide for the basic needs of our moms and their babies!

- Gift Cards in any amount: Giant Eagle, Amazon, Walmart/Target, Office Max, Visa/Mastercard
- Diapers: our greatest needs are sizes 3, 4, 5, and 6
- Car Seats
- Pack n' Plays
 - Postage Stamps
 - Paper Products (toilet paper and paper towels)
 - Trash Bags (13 gallon size)

*Please contact Alene or Maggie at 216-662-5700 to arrange a time to drop off these items.