

Womankind

Prenatal & Maternal Care Center

womankind-cleveland.org



Our Mission: Since 1975, Womankind walks with women along the journey of pregnancy and beyond by providing free prenatal care, personal support, and social services in a caring and nonjudgmental environment.

Spring 2024

New Baby Was the Gift This Mom Never Knew She Needed

Erica Wright was happy with her life. She had a nine-year-old son, a career she loved, and a business she was passionate about. Having a baby was the furthest thing from her mind. But, here she was, 42 years old, and life threw her a curveball.

It all started when Erica was seven or eight weeks pregnant, and realized she couldn't keep ignoring her new reality. She admits she was uncertain about continuing the pregnancy when she looked across the street and saw the Image Clear Ultrasound mobile unit and decided to knock on the door. The staff on the unit warmly welcomed her, showed her the image of her baby on the monitor, and recommended she go to Womankind for free, comprehensive prenatal care. They assured her that Womankind was supportive and would take care of her, words she admits were exactly what she needed to hear. She left the van with photos and the confidence to face this new chapter in her life.



While Erica was not dealing with financial hardships, this Akron native, now working as a Linkage Coordinator at a Cleveland area high school, had no idea where to begin to find pregnancy resources in the Cleveland area. Because of that, and what she describes as her being in a "state of fragility" at the time, she is so grateful ICU Mobile encouraged her to contact Womankind.

From her first visit to the day she transferred, Erica felt loved and cared for by the staff and volunteers here. Believing that the way a person is greeted when they enter a facility says a lot, Erica was especially impressed by the two volunteer receptionists, Bernadette and Jeannie, who always greeted her with a friendly and familiar smile and even kept her older son Madden company while she was seeing the doctor. Incidentally, while Erica wasn't sure how Madden would react to no longer being an only child, her fears were soon allayed as the 4th grader couldn't wait to tell everyone he was going to be a big brother. He saw the baby on the ultrasound monitor and counted the days until he could finally meet his little brother.

Baby Easton Jace was born on February 20, 2024, just one day past his due date, weighing a healthy 7 pounds and 7 ounces. Erica shared that the baby's father, Emmitt, who is very supportive of the family, came up with the name Easton. Emmitt's mom subsequently did ancestry research and discovered that his grandfather five generations back was named Easton. That fact was further confirmation for Erica that everything happens as it is supposed to.

Now, this "geriatric mom," as Erica boldly and proudly refers to herself, is happy to share her story, especially to empower pregnant women over 40 to challenge the way people think and see what a blessing it is to birth a healthy baby later in life. "Baby Easton was the gift I never knew my son and I needed!" Erica exclaimed. Erica is grateful that Womankind was here to walk this unplanned journey with her. When asked what she would tell others in her situation, she said, "Every mom should understand that Womankind is a great place to go. They take great care of you!"

Support Our Mission

Womankind relies solely on the generosity of individuals, organizations, foundations and corporations for funding. Womankind spends an average of \$1,200 to cover the cost of medical care for one client.

Below are various giving options:

- **Gifts of Cash**
- **Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD)**

- **Gifts of Appreciated Assets**
- **Employer Matching Gift Program**
- **Named Beneficiary of Retirement Accounts, Trusts, Wills, and Life Insurance**
- **Corporate Support/Event Sponsorships**

Visit womankind-cleveland.org or call Mary Ann Meitin at 216-662-5700 for more information on how you can support the important work being done by Womankind.

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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 testing
- Comprehensive and integrative prenatal care through 28 weeks of pregnancy
- Assistance with transfer plans
- Professional counseling for prenatal clients
- Breastfeeding information
- Options consultation
- Assistance with Medicaid, SNAP and WIC applications
- Baby items (as available)
- Referrals for parenting classes, adoption, and housing

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

Memories...

A Message from Our Director

I love to take trips “down memory lane,” metaphorically speaking. Piling in the car for family vacations, enjoying holiday traditions with my cousins, and even times when I made a complete fool of myself are all memories that contribute to the person I am today. As much as we all know you can't live in the past, it is true that we are who we are now because of our past experiences.

The same can be said for Womankind, now celebrating our 49th year. It is an incredible accomplishment for a non-profit organization to survive nearly five decades, and still hold to the dream and philosophy upon which our foundresses started Womankind in 1975. The staff and volunteers that run Womankind stand on the shoulders of the mighty visionaries who saw a need in the community for free prenatal care and took a leap of faith to fulfill that need. We also owe a debt of gratitude to the myriad of folks who carried forth the mission through the years, so thousands of women could enjoy healthy pregnancies, sometimes against seemingly insurmountable odds.

Since 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of Womankind, we are starting to plan festivities commemorating our amazing history. We hope to represent all the significant moments that have made Womankind the vibrant organization it still is today. We know that grateful clients, long-time volunteers, and dedicated staff members—past and present—have remarkable stories to tell of their experiences with Womankind, each one unique and special.

Do you have a memory of Womankind you would like to share? We want to hear from you! Womankind's story is your story. Please reach out to me via email at mameitin@womankind-cleveland.org and include photos if you have them. Pictures tell a thousand words!

We are grateful to all of you—our clients, volunteers, donors, and friends—who through the years have lived and supported the mission of Womankind. Because of all of you, Michele Rogers' dream and legacy lives on.



Mary Ann Meitin, Executive Director



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!



- Newborn Boys and Girls Clothing (especially onesies)
- 12-24 Month Boys and Girls Spring/Summer Clothing
- Size Newborn, Premie, 3, 4, 5, and 6 Diapers
- Baby Wipes
- Baby Socks, Towels and Receiving Blankets
- Formula

Call Womankind at 216-662-5700 to schedule a donation drop-off.

We are in need of volunteer OB/GYNs, certified nurse midwives, nurse practitioners, RNs and licensed phlebotomists who specialize in women's health to assist us at our Monday night clinics.

If you or someone you know meets the above qualifications and would like more information, please call us at 216-662-5700.

Volunteer Spotlight:

From Former Client to Board President

The mission of Womankind is near and dear to Mona Maruna's heart. Currently the President of our Board of Trustees, Mona has been connected with the organization for 40 years, starting when, in 1984, at 18 years old, she became pregnant with her first son, Tim. The father of her boyfriend—now husband—was affiliated with Womankind and suggested they go there for prenatal care since they did not have insurance at the time. They went to the original office located in South Euclid.

It turned out the couple's Womankind journey was far from over. Fast forwarding to around 2007, Mona and her husband John had a conversation with Eileen Murray, the Executive Director at the time, when they were donating their crib to Womankind. Eileen mentioned there was a need for board members and volunteers in the clinic. John became a board member and Mona started volunteering on Monday nights in the clinic as a support person to help the clients with non-medical questions, including about their Medicaid applications.

Mona said, "I absolutely loved all the staff and volunteers and especially enjoyed hearing all the clients' stories. It felt so good that I was able to help in some small way during the clients' pregnancy journeys."

One experience that stands out in Mona's memory was meeting a client from France who was not a US citizen. She did not have insurance but needed prenatal care. She came to Womankind early in her pregnancy and planned to make the trip back to France to have the baby and be with family. The client was so grateful for our services and all that we did for her and was amazed at the level of care she received at no cost to her.

Mona joined the Womankind Board of Trustees in 2017, feeling like it was "the perfect next step to make a difference in the organization," since she had been a volunteer for so many years. Expectations for Trustees include being committed to Womankind's mission and goals, providing professional expertise, and developing funding support by making personal contributions and cultivating relationships within the

community. As a Trustee working in the insurance industry, Mona has embodied all of the above, with her passion for the organization and desire to promote Womankind always evident.

In 2023, Mona assumed the role of Board President, with her primary responsibility being to ensure the welfare and financial stability of Womankind. Under Mona's leadership, the main focus of the Board has been to draft a strategic plan with an eye toward growth and sustainability and prepare for Womankind's 50th anniversary in 2025.

In her personal life, Mona is a proud wife, mother, and grandmother. She and husband John—who will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary this November—have four sons, Tim, Terry, Michael, and Christopher. They finally added a girl to the family when their son Terry married Jodi in October 2021. The couple gave them the greatest gift of all, their first grandchild, Landon, who just turned one year old. Mona says she is blessed to have a large family and many wonderful friends whom they spend a lot of time with. Anyone who knows her knows that she loves to get together for a "splash," aka, a glass of wine. Her motto is:

"Life is short so we enjoy every minute that we can."

When asked about her vision for the future of Womankind, Mona simply stated, "to be one of the leading non-profit organizations in the Cleveland area that people think to donate to and want to be involved with." She added, "I believe the founder, Michelle Rogers, would be so thrilled to see the organization still thriving today." Thanks to dedicated and spirited volunteers like Mona, the future of Womankind is indeed bright.



Baby Bottle Drives Raise Much-Needed Funds

For many years, Womankind has been known for our Baby Bottle Fundraisers. Hosting a drive is easy and a lot of fun, and the money raised helps to ensure that Womankind can continue to provide free prenatal care and support services to the many Northeast Ohio area women and families in need.

Churches by far make up the largest percentage of Baby Bottle Fundraiser participants, because Womankind's life-affirming mission aligns naturally with their values and outreach support initiatives, but organizations, companies or clubs are encouraged to sponsor drives as well. Drives can be held any time of the year, but the time between Mother's Day and Father's Day is the most popular when upwards of 25 churches are hosting drives.



Michele Ehrbar coordinated a Lenten drive for her church, Our Lady of Angels, in Cleveland. As a Womankind supporter, Michele finds it personally fulfilling to organize this effort for her fellow parishioners. She especially enjoys setting up several creative displays of baby bottles in bassinets to draw attention to this important fundraiser and is always pleasantly surprised by the positive response and generosity of the parish.

Hosting a drive is simple. Womankind supplies the empty baby bottles, and your participants/parishioners fill them up with spare change, dollar bills, or checks and return them to you. We support you by providing sample announcements, sign templates, and speakers, as needed. After your drive is completed, we will contact you regarding pickup or drop-off of filled bottles. The best part is you do not need to count the change! Womankind will have the change counted and notify you of the total collected as soon as it is available. And, a new option is the QR code that is on each bottle label for those who would like to donate securely online.

If your church, club, company, or organization is interested in hosting a Baby Bottle Fundraiser for Womankind, please call us at (216) 662-5700 or email volunteer@womankind-cleveland.org.

Womankind

Prenatal & Maternal Care Center

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womankind-cleveland.org

Address Service Requested



JOIN US! 

Womankind provides free prenatal care and a full range of support services to women and families in need.

Womankind Oktoberfest
is October 25, 2024
SAVE THE DATE!

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It's That Time of Year Again! *Womankind's 26th Annual Charity Golf Event is June 24th*

We hope you can join us for what promises to be another great event at a superior country club in support of Womankind's important mission of providing free prenatal care and client support for pregnant women and families in need. This charity event is being held at Mayfield Country Club on Monday, June 24th.

Consider these many ways to participate:

- Event Sponsorships start at \$500
- Golf Foursomes are \$1300. Golfers will receive lunch, beverages (water, beer, and pop) on the course, two bar tickets, and dinner prepared by Executive Chef Robert Harris
- Dinner Only tickets are \$125. Includes dinner and two bar tickets
- Unable to join us? Donations are welcome!

Please visit WomankindGolf24.givesmart.com for information, to register, or to make a donation. You can also contact Colleen at 216-346-8382 or colleen.cereijo@gmail.com. We sold out last year, so do not miss your chance to participate in this special event!

