



Womankind

Prenatal & Maternal Care Center

womankind-cleveland.org



Fall 2024

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.

A Series of Miracles Brought This Mom Her Ultimate Happiness

It was the thick of Covid time, and nearly 40-year-old Larissa “Issa” Llave was single and living in the Philippines, patiently waiting to meet the partner God had chosen for her. As a Messianic Christian, also known as a Torah Observant Christian, Issa knew it was not going to be easy to find a match since members of that faith community are spread out across the globe. Through what she describes as a “series of miracles,”



Issa met her future husband Tyler on a fellowshipping Zoom call. She credits Yah (one of the Bible names of God) with bringing them together.

Another set of miracles—including Yah, her mother, and her fiancée, with whom she got engaged before they met in person—brought Issa to the United States. She worked in sales and, having a passion for all things natural, owned a local microbusiness selling essential oils and other health products. She and Tyler were married in a religious ceremony on 2/2/2022. After three months of trying, Issa was overjoyed to learn she was pregnant.

Needing help securing Medicaid and getting prenatal vitamins, Issa researched pregnancy resources online and found Womankind, something she considers another miracle in her life. It is a decision she never regretted. Describing herself as “a little crunchier than the regular maternity patient,” she notes that “they were understanding of our desire for a pregnancy/birth with minimal interventions.” She really appreciated the social services offered in addition to the comprehensive prenatal care.

With her due date approaching, Issa and Tyler’s marriage endured a lot of stress as they were still adjusting to being newly

married and were working feverishly to ready their fixer-upper house to make it livable for their new family. Issa again cites Yah and more miracles in providing skilled friends and family to help and teach Tyler how to fix the house just a few months before the baby was due.

On January 22, 2023, Issa and Tyler welcomed baby Murrini, named after a colorful Italian glass, into this world. Tyler chose the baby’s name because he likes to cut stones and make jewelry in his free time. The couple lovingly nicknamed their daughter Rini.

Although Issa labored for 30 hours and suffered what she describes as a “traumatic birth experience,” a cheerful Issa says that, because of what she endured, she is now setting up a doula practice (BlueSkiesHolistic.com) so she can help other mothers have a better birth experience than she did.

At 21 months old, Rini is a delightful and active toddler. Enjoying nature like her mom, Rini loves walking outside and foraging for acorns, wild strawberries, maple seeds, and autumn berries. Issa admits that while Tyler gets stressed when Rini cries, he is great at knowing how to care for her. In the end, this young family couldn’t be happier or more grateful for their faith and the miracles in their lives that brought them to this point.



Issa is also grateful to Womankind, saying, “They were so helpful with resources, but I especially love the warm staff members and volunteers.”

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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Community Outreach Coordinator

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.

Priorities...

From the desk of the Executive Director

Clevelanders were disappointed once again when the Guardians failed to advance to the World Series, after what was, by all accounts, a stellar season. Many confidently proclaimed "This is our year!" and "We're going to take it all!" After the game 5 loss, Cleveland baseball fans were heart-broken, dejected, and – literally and figuratively – defeated.

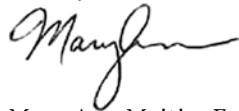
It got me thinking about priorities. What's really important in life?

While the answer to that question is subjective, to be sure, most people would agree that, despite the Guardians' inability to bring home a championship for Cleveland, there are much bigger issues our fellow Northeast Ohioans are facing that need and deserve our attention. People like the pregnant women and families we serve here at Womankind.

Every day, our amazing team of staff and volunteers joyfully provides care and support to the dozens of clients who come to our doors. Making every person feel loved and helping meet their needs, whether through free comprehensive prenatal care or any number of indispensable support services, is and has been our priority for nearly 50 years. And that will never change, even if the Browns someday miraculously make it to the Super Bowl!

We are grateful to each of you for your support and are blessed you choose to make Womankind one of your priorities. We pray you will keep Womankind on your priority list for the upcoming holiday giving season and beyond.

On behalf of the nearly 1,000 clients who used Womankind's services in the past year, and the thousands more to come, please accept our heartfelt thanks. May God bless you and those you love!



Mary Ann Meitin, Executive Director



In Memoriam...Evelt Moynihan

In late September, Womankind lost a dedicated volunteer and friend when Evelt Moynihan passed away after a brave battle with cancer. Serving as our Baby Bottle Coordinator, and frequently as backup receptionist, Evelt touched many lives with her friendly voice and warm smile.

A retired teacher, Evelt came to Womankind in 2022 seeking a volunteer position where she could use her skills to make a difference with an organization she believed in. Executive Director Mary Ann Meitin remembers fondly the day receptionist Julie Keller introduced Evelt to her as someone interested in volunteering. It was memorable for two reasons—one, that Evelt was actually a friend from St. Basil the Great Church and two, that Mary Ann had recently been commiserating on how Womankind needed someone to run the church baby bottle campaigns. Mary Ann believes Evelt was Heaven-sent.

Immediately, Evelt started consolidating years' worth of notes and spreadsheets from past baby bottle campaigns, while simultaneously contacting churches to encourage them to host drives. She created processes that simplified the complexities of baby bottle campaigns, from initial contact to drop-off to pick-up to acknowledgments. And, while in the office, Evelt was always willing to pitch in to help cover the front desk for lunches, meetings, and staff vacations.

Her cancer became aggressive in the spring, preventing Evelt from continuing her volunteer work. Always an optimist, instead of bemoaning her prognosis, Evelt celebrated the fact that she had been able to celebrate her daughter's wedding in Louisiana last November. In her inimitable and ever-joyful way, Evelt kept in touch with the Womankind staff and offered to pray for our intentions, even while bedridden.

Rest in peace, dear friend. You will be missed. Our loss is Heaven's gain.



Volunteer Spotlight: Energetic Volunteer Does It All!

When **Anita Juby** walked through the doors of Womankind two years ago, we had no idea how fortunate we were that she inquired about volunteering here. Her main role is as our volunteer Friday receptionist, a position she has wholeheartedly embraced. Recently serving as co-chair of our recent Oktoberfest fundraiser, Anita has proven she is so much more than a friendly face!

Anita came to Womankind in December of 2022, having seen a notice in a church bulletin that Womankind was looking for volunteers. She was familiar with us through baby bottle drives and believed in our mission of helping moms and babies. She thought volunteering here would be a perfect fit to connect with the community while supporting a cause she was passionate about.

As a receptionist for Womankind, Anita is primarily responsible for answering the phones and welcoming clients and visitors at the door. She said, "I especially enjoy greeting the families when they come to pick up the baby items. The best benefit is seeing the little ones smile!!"

Since Anita joined the Womankind team, she has left her mark in many other areas besides the front desk, using creativity and resourcefulness stemming from her career as a chemical engineer. One major accomplishment was enhancing our signage, inside and out. Using the Cuyahoga County Public Library's Innovation Center, Anita produced a vinyl Womankind logo she affixed to the wall in our lobby. And, to address the perpetual issue of people not being able to find our location, she recently designed and mounted a banner outside on the light pole facing the driveway. She has also engraved name tags for staff and volunteers and built pretzel stands as centerpieces for Oktoberfest.

Having lost Joe, her husband of 52 years, in 2022, Anita makes the most of her time with her three children and eight grandchildren. In her spare time, her hobbies include crafting, reading, watching her grandkids play sports, and cheering for The Ohio State Buckeyes.

When asked why she loves volunteering at Womankind, Anita shared, "I cherish the giving, family environment of the volunteers and staff." We're blessed to have Anita on our team!



Three New Staffers in 2024 Complete the Team



Womankind is thrilled to introduce you to our three newest staff members, **Hayley Mucci, Tammy Pryatel, and Bettina Herrmann**. With these hires, our team is positioned to carry Womankind into our 50th anniversary and beyond with outstanding medical and support services as well as community outreach.

Hayley Mucci joined Womankind as Head Nurse/Clinical Nurse Manager in June 2024. Having worked for years as a Labor and Delivery Nurse, Hayley says she was drawn to Womankind because she has always had a passion for OB and women's health. She admitted, "I thought it was a place where I could potentially make a difference: ensuring mothers received optimal support, maintained their dignity, and understood their value no matter their life circumstances."

As Head Nurse, Hayley's responsibilities include directing all medical-related tasks for our Monday prenatal clinic, managing volunteers and staff nurses, and working collaboratively with Womankind's volunteer Medical Director. She is grateful to staff nurses Marilyn Louis and Marybeth McEntee for their guidance and assistance as she was onboarding.

When she takes her proverbial nurse's hat off, Hayley spends time with her husband of 13 years, Kevin, her two children, and two stepchildren. Her hobbies include traveling, reading, baking, and watching all Cleveland sports.

Womankind's Community Engagement Coordinator, **Tammy Pryatel**, joined the team on her birthday, one week before our annual Charity Golf Event in June. She says it was "baptism by fire" for her, although she admits that she loves the excitement of special events and truly enjoyed getting to meet the members of the Board of Trustees and many of our generous donors.

Having served as a board member and past president of Medina County Right to Life for years, Tammy says it was her passion for the sanctity of life and the chance to be involved with an

organization that offers hope, help, and possibility to women that attracted her to Womankind.

In her role as Community Engagement Coordinator, Tammy is responsible for marketing, social media, database management and event coordination. She quips that she is Executive Director Mary Ann Meitin's right—and sometimes right and left—hand. The two work closely with a focus on accomplishing Womankind's goals.

When asked what she likes best about working at Womankind, Tammy said, "I love that it feels like I work with family or good friends! We all really get along wonderfully. We joke, laugh, and share a lot of our personal lives with each other. Also seeing the precious little ones that come into Womankind—that is simply heartwarming!"

Bettina Herrmann is the newest member of the Womankind team, serving as Director of Social Services since October 2024. Working at Womankind is truly a homecoming for Bettina since she walked through the doors of Womankind 23 years ago, 17 and pregnant. She credits Womankind with motivating her to graduate high school and continue on to college as an 18-year-old single mother. She exclaimed, "When the Director of Social Services opportunity was presented to me, I knew it was an answered prayer, and a chance to give back to an organization that gave me so much many years ago!"

In this position, Bettina's responsibilities include managing Womankind's client support program, providing clients advocacy and referral services, and working closely with the nurses to offer our prenatal patients the social and emotional support they need to ensure a healthy pregnancy outcome. She says her favorite part about working at Womankind is knowing that the staff and volunteers love our clients just as much as she does. "It's a breath of fresh air!"

Bettina shares her life outside of work with her husband of three years, Joe, whom she describes as wonderful, supportive, loving, and humorous. After a past abusive marriage, Bettina is grateful to God for His healing and for bringing Joe into her life. She has two beautiful children, a son and a daughter, aged 23 and 13, respectively, and two sons in Heaven. Bettina and Joe are also proud parents of a one-year-old dachshund and are helping to raise her daughter's three-month-old mini dachshund. Her hobbies include reading, crafting, and hiking or fishing out in nature.

Womankind

Prenatal & Maternal Care Center

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womankind-cleveland.org

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JOIN US! 

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

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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!

- Newborn Boys and Girls Clothing (especially onesies)
- 12-24 Month Boys and Girls Fall/Winter Clothing
- Size Newborn, Preemie, 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.

Thank You to Our Sponsors!

This year, Womankind hosted two fundraising events in support of our mission to walk the journey of pregnancy and beyond with moms and families in need. The 26th Annual Charity Golf Event returned to Mayfield Country Club on June 24th, and our Annual Oktoberfest was held at the Society of the Donauschwaben/German-American Cultural Center in Olmsted Township on October 25th.

We are grateful to our sponsors, whose generosity helped to ensure the success of both events.



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