



Brief History of Organization

In 1984, Gail Tierney, felt a strong desire to start a pregnancy center in Rockville, MD. For two years, she was obsessed with the idea and couldn't run away from it. When a friend asked if she thought it was from God, Gail's response was *"Why would God want to involve lowly me?"* However, based on her friend's encouragement, Gail decided to share her vision with the pastor and elders of Halpine Church.

The group listened and said they would pray about it and get back to her. Two weeks later, Gail received a call from the church informing her that they felt this was a move by the Lord to start a pregnancy center in Rockville.

Gail immediately formed a steering committee which included Mary Hager, Tom Welch, Chris Mulsteff, and Emily Campen, among others. The committee used the instructions from the Care Net manual on starting a center and found it to be easy. They met monthly and by the end of 1986, everyone involved agreed that the Lord was in it as all the pieces came together and the Rockville Pregnancy Center (RPC) was incorporated.

RPC's purpose was to develop and administer programs designed to assist women in confronting and dealing with the physical, spiritual, economic and social problems associated with pregnancy; as well as to develop and administer programs designed to assist pregnant women who desired to carry their unborn child to term.

The doors of RPC opened on July 6, 1987, with Gail Tierney as the Executive Director (and only staff member). After two years, Mary Hager was hired as the secretary and after several years she was promoted to Assistant Director. Many individuals invested significant time in the early years of the center and still continue their support today. These individuals include Ed Anderson, Barbara Harders and her beloved husband Walt, Chris Mullsteff, Ben and Patricia Patton, and Rob and Patty Peterson.

With a team of trained volunteers, RPC provided many services including a computer training program for moms. The program's goal was to empower low-income women with skills to help them financially support themselves and their children. The program also provided access to donated business clothing as women went out to seek employment.

In 1991 RPC had its first attack by NARAL and Planned Parenthood via People for the American Way, a liberal activists group that sent a bogus client to the center for an appointment. After that

appointment, a letter was received from the Attorney General of Maryland, Consumer Affairs Department alleging that RPC had provided false information and caused emotional distress. This letter required that RPC complete a form and return it to Consumer Affairs Department. RPC contacted a lawyer from the Rutherford Institute and eventually the case was dismissed.

In 1999 RPC converted to a medical clinic to offer limited ultrasound service to abortion vulnerable women. The name was changed to Rockville Pregnancy Clinic, and RPC was one of two pregnancy clinics in the state offering ultrasound. It was the same year that RPC began its abstinence program in schools. In 2001, STD testing was added under the guidance of a medical doctor who was now on staff; the name was modified to Rockville Center Pregnancy Clinic (RCPC), although RPC was its legal name. In 2001, RPC applied and was accepted for membership in the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA).

In 2002, pregnancy centers successfully fended off legislation at the State House in Annapolis. RPC and other centers provided testimony at public hearings before the House of Representatives and the Senate.

In 2009, NARAL made another attempt to get the Montgomery County Council to pass legislation against pregnancy centers. Gail presented testimony on behalf of pregnancy centers and the Council ruled that medical pregnancy centers were exempt from the legislation.

Gail Tierney retired at the end of 2012 and was succeeded by Mary Hager, who served as the Executive Director until 2015. It was the same year that the center expanded one-on-one mentor service to families through a 2-year family support program.

The Center went through a transitional stage in 2016 when Betsy Evans was hired as the Executive Director. Following a series of strategic meetings, the name was modified to Rockville Women's Center (RWC) with the implementation of a linear service model to objectively serve the abortion-vulnerable woman. Betsy resigned in May 2019 and Steffi Benjamin was hired as the fifth Executive Director in RWC's history.

RWC remains true to its core values of evangelization and serving abortion-vulnerable women. RWC seeks continuous improvement to stay on the cutting edge of service in an ever-changing culture without compromising its life-saving mission.

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