

Culture of Life Program Director's Report
New Jersey State Council Convention
Wildwood, NJ
May 15, 2021

Worthy State Deputy:

Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, we have had a good year here in New Jersey working to re-establish a Culture of Life in our society. We continued in our efforts to remove the barriers to the choice for life, support mother and child after the birth (despite what the media and pro-abortionists would have Americans believe we do not do), and educate the public on why abortion, euthanasia, and other anti-life stances are wrong.

Respect Life

Diapers for Babies

This program serves the very important purpose of providing material support to those women who choose life. This year, donations have been made to pregnancy care centers throughout the state to assist new mothers who chose life but cannot afford these costs of taking care of the child.

The program chairman reported collections totaling 62,933 (a 16% decrease over last year's 74,874 diapers) donated to various crisis pregnancy centers and social service agencies. This only gives us an estimate, as I am sure that many more councils that actually participated!

Homes for Mothers

Unfortunately, affording the cost of caring for the child once it is born is not the only problem facing young women who choose life. All too often they are homeless, many times due to the negative reactions of their families to news of the pregnancy.

This is why it is so important to support organizations like Good Council Homes and Several Sources Shelters that help these young women to choose life because they know that they will have a loving and supporting place to go should their parents turn them out. They need not abort their children out of this fear!

For this reason, our Homes for Mothers program continues to encourage councils to make donations to these places in an effort to help them with their important work. I am therefore extremely proud to announce that councils have donated a total of \$54,945.68 to that effort, a 40% increase over last year, which had recorded a 6% drop over the year before that!

Share in Life

This program, which has been running for many years, is critical to our support of pro-life organizations around the state. In this way, we not only help keep them going, but also show to the country that Planned Parenthood is not the only place where women can get good healthcare! In fact, our centers out-number theirs 3 to 1!

Unfortunately, we have seen a significant drop in donations this year at \$22,702, down from last year's \$55,530! Support of this program in the future is critical, as it is a big part of our overall initiative to help the mother **after** she chooses life and has the child. This downward trend must stop if we are going to continue to be effective!

Deborah Hospital Support

This is another program that has been devastated by the pandemic, ironically a disease that attacks the lungs! We have been a long-standing supporter of this institution, but participation has gone down over the years. Of a goal of \$30,000 donated, only \$7,455 was raised by 14 councils, 2 assemblies, 1 federation, and an individual! This is only 25% of our goal!

Disabilities Drive

We have also continued to support children with disabilities after they are born, although sadly the funds raised this Columbian Year were a small fraction of what we usually do. This year, only 23 councils participated, collecting a total of \$62,591.53. That represents a 90% reduction in both participation and collections! We do thank the councils who supported the drive and understand the many circumstances that prevented others from participating.

Special Olympics

A key part of our support for those with disabilities is our participation in the Seaside Heights Polar Bear Plunge through our team, the Polar Penguins. As I write this, 2 days before the event, the team has raised \$47,791 of its \$75,000 goal. We fully expect that amount to be higher when it's all said and done.

40 Days for Life

Although this highly effective pro-life program has been running for years, it became an official State Council program last year, helmed by PGK Mark Kiernan. By providing participants from our ranks to pray before the abortion mills, we help to continue the no-show rate for abortion appointments by up to 75% and having women consider alternatives to killing their baby. Our members prayed at vigils in two campaigns, one in the Fall and one in the Spring during Lent.

Catholic Citizenship

Our Catholic Voice in the Media

This is a program that started under Past State Deputy and Supreme Director Dan Rossi's term and has accomplished great things, but it has been languishing due to a lack of letter writers in our Councils. This cannot continue! If we say nothing, evil wins! Speak out! Make the effort! We need more letter writers and need to continue to promote this program through our local Councils. Appoint a letter writer in your council today!

Choose Life Banner Program

This program continued this Columbian Year to put banners in front of Catholic Churches throughout the state that present a simple message -- "Choose Life" -- and provides a toll-free telephone number through which help can be sought.

During this Columbian Year, eight banners were distributed through our Councils. An additional seven banners were sent directly to Catholic parishes in New Jersey, and two were sent to Protestant churches, one of which was in the State of Oregon.

While this seems encouraging, Brother Knights should remember that we have a goal of ensuring that every Council and every parish should display the Choose Life banner, thereby ensuring that the Catholic Life-ethic is clearly seen as protecting the born and the unborn.

Local pregnancy centers are getting responses from these banners, and as such, some abortions being prevented, and **the banner saves lives!** These banners, along with pro-life car magnets, broadcast to the public that we are pro-life and give encouragement to others who believe as we do that they are not alone.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven J. Richardson, FM
Life Programs Director