

RELIGION: FAITHFUL OBSERVATIONS: OPEN ARMS AND YOUNG LIVES

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Hawk

As we approach Mother's Day on Sunday, don't be surprised if you see baby bottles at many of the area churches for the annual "Baby Bottle Boomerang" campaign to support the Open Arms Pregnancy Care Center and Real Choices Clinic in Coeur d'Alene.

Open Arms gives out the bottles before Mother's Day, and churches work internal distribution strategies to get bottles into the hands of their congregants, fill them with change, cash, and checks, and return them to the churches on Father's Day to support the ministry.

Open Arms welcomed a new executive director in February, Dr. Richard Hawk, a retired U.S. Air Force Officer. He assumed the role having more than 25 years of healthcare leadership and nonprofit leadership. He and his family relocated to the northwest from San Antonio, Texas.

We asked Dr. Rick some questions about the year ahead and the plans for the clinic.

Dr. Rick, this is probably a good time to remind readers what the mission of the clinic is and services offered.

We are unapologetically a Christ-centered ministry revealing God's design for human life, sexual integrity, and reproductive health. We help individuals in North Idaho make life-affirming choices through education, compassionate support, and pregnancy related services. We are a nonprofit, non-denominational and non-political organization. We are 100 percent donor-supported, so the prayers, volunteer hours and financial support continue to sustain our organization. We receive no government funding and the baby bottle campaign is one of many opportunities for our community to partner with us to sustain our mission.

What are some specific services offered and what are the recipients charged?

Our array of services is varied and offered at no cost to our clients. Our medical staff offers lab-quality pregnancy testing, limited obstetric ultrasounds and pregnancy option counseling. Our staff and volunteers offer pregnancy and parenting classes for men and women, post-abortive support groups, and a clothing boutique with new baby clothing and resources such as diapers and grooming items. We have recently started a program where we'll be going into high schools to teach a curriculum that helps students develop healthy relationships. In 2018 we served 760 clients in our clinic and we believe we could see 1,000 clients this year.

I know you have plans coming up to expand your services. What are they?

Our team is praying for big things to happen in and through Open Arms in 2019. Specifically, one of our prayers is for a donor with a \$1 million gift, which would go far in advancing our new facility. As some of your readers know, our Board was instrumental in purchasing a parcel of land in Hayden, near the Prairie Shopping Center. We continue to raise funds in our capital campaign and anticipate needing \$1.5-\$2.5 million to construct our new facility. Once completed, the increased space will allow us to minister to more people and serve more clients who call upon us for assistance, and the patient visit numbers bear proof to an increased need for services. The increased space will allow for more medical services, additional educational capability, as well as on-site room for local conferences and events. We welcome new businesses, churches and individuals to join us in prayer and financial support to make this dream a reality.

Thank you, Dr. Rick, for your leadership and for all you and your team does to positively impact the residents of Coeur d'Alene and the surrounding communities.

We also had a great conversation with Becky Orchard, who works with the local Young Life organization and they have started this year a "YoungLives Club" for teen parents between 13-21 years of age. We also had some questions for Becky:

Becky, explain what "YoungLives" represents?

First of all the Young Life ministry is to reach young people from junior high through college with the gospel of Christ. More than 20 years ago, Young Life answered God's call to run headfirst into the chaos of teenage motherhood with the hope of Jesus ... and YoungLives was born.

What is the vision and purpose as you interact with these young parents?

YoungLives has never wavered from the original vision to reach teen moms (and dads) by entering their world, modeling the unconditional love of Christ, and encouraging them to become the women and parents God created them to be. Through Young Life's time-tested methods and life-on-life mentoring, teen moms are empowered to make positive choices, set and achieve goals, and live a future rooted in Christ. As a whole, Young Life now refers to YoungLives as a ministry for Teen Parents!

What activities or events do you have available for these teens?

We meet regularly each month and also have teaching at skills events. We are also having our first ever YoungLives summer camp from Aug. 13-17 at Washington Family Camp in Oregon. We join other YoungLives groups from around the Northwest for this camp and we have committed to make camp affordable for these teen moms. We would love donations for this cause.

We thank both Dr. Richard Hawk and Becky Orchard for their time for this column and more than that their commitment to life on this Mother's Day weekend. If any would want more information about these organizations here is the best way to contact them, perhaps even a donation in honor of your own mother would be appropriate!

Dr. Richard Hawk

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