

I had an abortion when I was nineteen years old. When I was twenty-one, I gave birth to my rainbow baby – others may call him my atonement baby. When I was twenty-seven, I had my second child, and at thirty-three, my third.

After my abortion, I became increasingly withdrawn and depressed. I felt overwhelming shame, guilt, anger, and hatred of myself. I abused drugs to numb the intense sadness and grief I was experiencing. Worst of all, I had trouble bonding with my firstborn. As many women do, though, I still managed to live life, care for my son, graduate college, get a degree and decent job, and eventually got married. It was during my second pregnancy I had become increasingly aware of this space in my chest brimming with the swirling of unacknowledged distress. I was hurting – hurting bad, and it needed addressed.

About a year after I had my second child, I was eating at a local restaurant and reading a local newspaper. An ad caught my eye. “Hurting After Abortion? It’s Your Choice to Heal.” It was an ad for a program available at my local pregnancy center for women struggling after their abortion experiences. The program offered a walkthrough of a book that dealt with the painful emotions that may come up after an abortion. I bought the book but was fearful of reaching out to anyone – especially a pro-life organization.

It took me three months to open that book, but when I did, I was surprised to learn that all the things I was feeling and experiencing related to my abortion were due to trauma. There are women that have trauma after their abortions! No one had ever told me that side of the procedure, only that it was safe with some possible physical side-effects.

So, what does any of this have to do with my local pregnancy resource center?

That ad brought me to a book. That book opened my eyes and took me on a journey to forgiveness, wholeness, healing, recovery, and peace. That journey brought me to God. God led me to volunteer at my local pregnancy center. That pregnancy resource center has allowed me to give away what God has given me to others.

Forgiveness, wholeness, healing, recovery, and peace.

I was fearful to reach out, like I said, especially to a pro-life organization, but I am so grateful my pregnancy center received me without judgement and with compassion and understanding at the heart of their service.

It takes money to have a strong organization. As a development professional, I know donors are more likely to give when an incentive is involved. Giving tax breaks to wealthy donors who itemize works as an incentive to give, and I have no doubt that offering the same tax incentive to everyone dollar-for-dollar will inspire others to give. They will be more likely to give, and give more, if they can add it as a deduction on their taxes.

In 2022, there were 18,488 surgical and nonsurgical abortions performed in Ohio. That is so many possible hurting women. Ohio pregnancy centers must have funding to reach women impacted by abortion. Let’s give them a fighting chance to bring forgiveness, wholeness, healing, recovery, and peace by increasing donor capacity to give!

I was one. Let’s reach the many!