

Ending 'crisis' in a crisis pregnancy

Rob Cullivan/Catholic Courier

Tori Cooney, 18 months old, presented her visitor with a sock and a teddy bear.

Her mother, Marie A. Cooney, is a divorced mother of two other children. She noted that Tori's addition to her family was "unplanned." When she found herself pregnant, the Irondequoit resident rejected the idea of abortion, however.

"I knew it was an option, but it didn't seem a morally correct option," she said.

But she also realized she needed support. So she turned to Birthright, a crisis-pregnancy agency that operates throughout the Diocese of Rochester. Cooney also said she was aided by Women's Care Center (formerly Problem Pregnancy Help Center) in Rochester, as well as Elizabeth Ministry of St. Louis Parish in Pittsford.

As Cooney learned, there are many services throughout the diocese for women in crisis-pregnancy situations. Services are available, for example, through diocesan Catholic Charities. And such ministries as diocesan Hispanic Migrant Ministry have assisted pregnant women as well.

Meanwhile, a number of parishes noted that they have supported mothers and mothers to be with material and spiritual aid. Dozens of parishes, clusters, organizations, campus ministries and pastoral-planning groups have signed the diocesan "Pledge For Life," which commits them to serve people struggling with crisis-pregnancy situa-



Mike Crupi/Catholic Courier

Marie Cooney of Irondequoit gets a kiss from her 18-month-old daughter, Tori. Cooney says she turned to Birthright for emotional support during her unplanned pregnancy.

tions. For information on the Pledge For Life, visit www.dor.org/charities/CLE/pledgeforlifeparishes.htm.

Services include the following.

- Birthright can be reached at 800/550-4900.
- The Stephen Ministry of Church of the Resurrection in Fairport ministers to women in crisis pregnancies and those experiencing other situations, including miscarriages, abortions and adoptions. Call 585/223-5500, ext. 6.
- Catholic Charities of the Finger Lakes has programs serving mothers and fathers. Call 315/789-2686, ext. 335.
- Guardian Angels Parish in Henrietta has partnered with Compass-

Care, a crisis-pregnancy agency in Rochester, to provide material and spiritual support to mothers. Call 585/334-1412. CompassCare can be reached at 585/232-2350.

- The Newman Center at the State

University of New York at Brockport hosts a chapter of Birthright, which can be contacted at 585/637-9010. Margot Van Etten, campus minister, is a trained counselor for Project Rachel, the diocese's post-abortion ministry. Project Rachel can be contacted at 888/9RACHEL.

• The Community of Caring Program of Catholic Charities of Livingston County provides services to mothers and pregnant women. Call Michelle Morris at 585/658-4466.

• The Pregnancy Counseling Program of Catholic Family Center in Rochester offers services to women experiencing unplanned pregnancies. Call Virginia M. Riedman at 585/262-7136.

• Parishioners at Holy Trinity in Webster have donated such items as diapers and sleepers to Women's Care Center. For information on this and other pro-life efforts, call Julie Ellender at 585/265-1085.

• St. Leo's Parish in Hilton sponsors a 24-hour-a-day Pregnancy Help Line at 585/392-1572. Those who call will be assisted in finding such services as pregnancy testing, transportation and housing.



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