



## BECAUSE WE ARE CATHOLIC

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CALIFORNIA SERVES AND ADVOCATES FOR THE POOR, VULNERABLE AND THOSE IN NEED NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE CATHOLIC, BUT *because we are Catholic.*



“All life has inestimable value even the weakest and most vulnerable, the sick, the old, the unborn and the poor... deserv[e] the utmost reverence and respect.”

– Pope Francis

## Pregnancy Resource Centers Offer Hope to Those with Nowhere to Turn

Anna, mom to three young children, had just ended the relationship with their father when she learned she was pregnant again. Feeling helpless and alone and thinking she wouldn't be able to raise another child on her own, she found hope at the Sacramento Life Center.

With their help, Anna is the proud new mom of baby Khloe.

For countless women, the news of motherhood is the greatest joy of their lives, but for others like Anna, the moment is filled with fear and uncertainty, due to an unplanned or unsupported pregnancy. Many feel their only option is to have an abortion. But, with the help of pregnancy resource clinics such as the Sacramento Life Center and RealOptions Pregnancy Medical Clinics, these women have a place to turn for non-judgmental support and abortion alternatives.

Strongly supported by the Catholic Church, these clinics serve as advocates for women and teen girls—especially those who are pregnant with nowhere to turn.

Since 1972, the Sacramento Life Center has been reaching out to women and couples in Sacramento and the surrounding community who are facing an unplanned pregnancy. By providing services such as a



*Anna and baby Khloe*

pregnancy hotline, free ultrasounds, OB/GYN referrals and adoption information, as well as post-abortion counseling, if necessary, the center is committed to helping women in the community, providing them both medical and emotional support.

According to Marie Leatherby, the clinic's director, 95 percent of the Sacramento Life Center's clients are low income and often uninsured, with most being under 30 years old. With one main clinic and two mobile clinics

*Continued on next page*

## Pregnancy Resource Centers Offer Hope to Those with Nowhere to Turn (continued)



### *One of Sacramento Life Center's Mobile Clinic*

serving eight locations, the Sacramento Life Center is focused on reaching as many women and couples in need as possible, regardless of financial standing, ethnic background or religion.

“We focus our mobile clinics on poor and needy neighborhoods where there is lack of transportation,” Leatherby said.

The center also stresses the importance of fatherhood by encouraging men to learn about pregnancy options and fetal development through peer counseling and pregnancy education for fathers-to-be.

The Catholic Church’s commitment to protect human life is one of its highest priorities and the center receives about 90 percent of its donations from individual Catholics and Protestants, as well as local Catholic parishes and schools. “We really rely on community support,” Leatherby added.

Serving the San Francisco Bay Area since 1981, RealOptions Pregnancy Medical Clinic has three locations in Santa Clara County.

Valerie Hill, who started as a volunteer advocate at RealOptions in 1989, has been the clinic’s CEO since 2007.

“Each clinic has been strategically located near a Planned Parenthood. We are helping to advance a culture of life, instead of death,” Hill said.

RealOptions, an ecumenical ministry of Catholics and Protestants working together, provides free pregnancy testing, ultrasound imaging, pre-natal care and options counseling, including adoption services and referrals, as well as post-abortion help through The Hope Summit, a seven-week bible-based healing program. The clinic also reaches out to the local college community through student-led campus ministries at Stanford, Santa Clara, and

San Jose State Universities.

“We want an opportunity to help women make an educated decision,” Hill said.

RealOptions, like the Sacramento Life Center, receives no government funding and relies on the community for support. Local churches and their parishioners participate in baby bottle fundraisers, knit baby blankets and provide layettes for newborns. Hill said that there is no typical client at RealOptions.

“Women come to us in all circumstances and from all religious backgrounds,” she said, adding, “We are not here to coerce or judge women. We want them to know God loves them no matter their decision.”

*For more information, go to:*

**catholic.org**

Sacramento Life Center **<http://sacvalley.org/>**

RealOptions

**<http://www.realoptions.net/>**

Options United

pregnancy support center locator

**<http://www.la-archdiocese.org/org/oljp/life/Pages/optionsunited.aspx>**