

May 2018

Dear Sustaining Partner,

“Give me some men who are stout-hearted men,  
Who will fight, for the right they adore,  
Start me with ten who are stout-hearted men,  
And I'll soon give you ten thousand more.  
Shoulder to shoulder and bolder and bolder,  
They grow as they go to the fore.  
Then there's nothing in the world can halt or mar a plan,  
When stout-hearted men can stick together man to man.”

(Nelson Eddy)

Finding some good men has been on my mind and heart a lot lately. I've long believed men as necessary in our culture has been negated to a harmful degree. Watch a TV series and the majority of what you'll see is mom-only families. If the dad/husband is present he's generally relegated to a position more resembling the entertaining family pet whom no one takes very seriously. Honestly, it makes me very, very angry to see what damage this shift to a matriarchal society has done in our culture.

I've been involved in several conversations lately with the woeful lack of fathers the topic of discussion. Many of us see very clearly the negative impact on our families and children; especially those we see on a regular basis. If the young man comes in at all he's clearly uncomfortable. Some try to be a part of the baby event: Young men may be very excited at the beginning of a pregnancy when the couple chooses to carry their child to term. A young man may be feeling good about being a dad right after the birth. While it's fun to share the excitement, I always have cautious enthusiasm because I've seen the same pattern over and over. At first, he's at every appointment and all smiles ready to be helpful with his child. It doesn't seem to take long before he's missing appointments, then we don't see him anymore. He is then minimally involved with his family, if he doesn't just move on. This troubles me!

While I been having these discussions with several people and trying to think ways we could begin to turn this trend around in our community, we've experienced more mass shooting events. I am not profiling when I state the shooters are all young men. What did catch my attention was research conducted by Jeanine Martin in February 2018. Every young man involved in a shooting was raised in a fatherless home. The only exception is Cho at Virginia Tech who lived in a two-parent family where neither parent was involved with their son. These examples are a microcosm of the huge problem.: This is not only evident to us here at Pregnancy & Family Resource Center. Recent national statistics show there are 24 million children in the US being raised in a fatherless home—this translates to one out of every three children are at great risk for early sexual behavior, drug use, violence, being

homeless or a runaway. WOW! Is it really this bad? Yes! Probably worse if you get up close enough to realize the perpetuation of fragmented families is going to continue in this downward, death spiral. Can we save them all? Nope!

We are very clear no matter what the need, we can help only those who are willing to learn and grow and receive. It's a hard thing to see someone continue on toward self-destruction, but rather than focus on the losses, we fight for the wins. What can we do and how best to do it? That's what I've been asking myself for quite some while regarding our lack of young men involved with their families. I know I cannot do much to make a difference for these guys---even though some hunger for help. For all the 12 plus years I've served as Executive Director, I've spoken a lot about our need for the involvement of a few mature, committed men willing to give of their time and resources to help strengthen our families. We've had a few here and there. Most stay for a while and then leave for one reason or another. Each time a man leaves I grieve. But, what's the answer? People have their own lives, and I'm not the person to head a men's ministry.

I attended the Heartbeat International conference in April and came away knowing I want my most significant legacy through this ministry to be a viable and effective outreach to men. This is critical for two reasons: Men need to know their value; our families need strengthened. The ideas God put in my head and my heart are outrageous and were I not a woman of faith who knows God works in way we cannot explain, I'd give up the idea and simply wish for something better than what we have now.

What I see in my imagination and heart is a full-time leader of a men's ministry through this organization. When will that happen? What will it look like? I have no clue, but I know we are not going to be effective in our outreach to men without being intentional. This requires we put some money in to it, but where does that come from when funding's been down 25% for the past two years? How do find God's man for the job and how do we pay him what he's worth? Again, as honest as I can be---I don't know. But, I trust God who put the desire in my heart and then gave me these crazy ideas. The thoughts are preposterous, but God loves to show up when the odds are impossible.

Currently, I'm asking you pray and think with me. Maybe you have thoughts or resources or a desire to be a part of something amazing. Will it reach everyone and fix everything broken in our community? Not even close. But, what a legacy we'll leave in those whose lives are transformed.

There's a lot going on as usual and more to come. Visit our Facebook page at [Facebook.com/pregnancyfamily](https://www.facebook.com/pregnancyfamily) or check our website: [www.pregnancyfamily.org](http://www.pregnancyfamily.org).

It's time for vacation. Please don't forget us. Go to our website and set up automatic giving or get me your information (Checking, savings or credit card) and I'll be happy to help. Congrats to all our moms, dads, graduates, brides and grooms. And to the families who enjoy each success together. God bless you all!

For Life!

Lisa J Stiefken  
Executive Director