

GRACE

This past summer, I had the joy and privilege of witnessing a child being brought into the world. My dear friend and HOPE client, Grace, allowed me to journey with her through the miracle of childbirth. The story of how Grace found HOPE is incredibly powerful, so I'll let her share in her own words:

When I conceived Gabriel, I was really confused...really confused about what to do and whether to continue the pregnancy. While searching online for answers to some questions, I found a hotline and they gave me HOPE's information. So I contacted your organization, and that was the very first time I found out about HOPE. I hesitated about whether or not to continue the pregnancy because I was already a mother of two, and I worried a lot about the baby's father—particularly, his personal problems. I was confused because it's not an easy decision to make, but I strongly believe that the baby has nothing to do with the circumstances.

Other people told me, "You're gonna have a hard time if you choose to continue this pregnancy. You're gonna deal with [his father] for the rest of your life." And I got scared. It came to a point where I almost believed that I couldn't go through with keeping this pregnancy; but deep in my heart, I just knew that I couldn't go through [with an abortion] because [the fetus is] a baby.

I told myself: "You have to do what you have to do [to take care of your kids]." I couldn't allow myself to be stressed and depressed because my kids are dependent upon me. If something happened to me, what would my kids do? Who would care for them and love them the way I do? In that sense, the thought of my kids losing me is what kept me going. I asked God for a sign regarding whether or not I should keep my pregnancy. There was a time when I spent a day lying in bed, crying. I asked the Lord to please just take this pain away. I thought about giving up... giving up hope and just ending my life. But then, I thought about my kids...and it was hard.

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This Newsletter Is Dedicated to the Memory of Susan Branigan

We are sad to announce that Susan Branigan, a former Associate Director of HOPE, passed on September 6, 2016. Sue Branigan had a wonderful sense of humor, was fun to be with, and was very generous and spirited. She was extremely proud of her family. She bore her limitations with great dignity. Sue was very dedicated to HOPE and we at HOPE are proud and grateful to have known her.



Grace's children.

HOPE HIGHLIGHTS

Grace, continued



Students doing yard work at HOPE, during the 2016 O'Connell Service Retreat.



Nancy Fishenden and Fr. Posey of St. James Catholic Church present Ama Richardson, Executive Director of HOPE, with the Church's 2016 Bottle Drive donation.



HOPE volunteers celebrate Ms. Toni's birthday.



Check out our brand new donor website at hopehousenova.org. Contributions directly support service to our clients, including free counseling, adoption support, material needs (i.e. cribs and diapers), housing references, and parenting classes.

After crying for several hours, I went online and watched some inspirational videos about God on YouTube. One particular video mentioned that God brings us through certain trials because He believes in us and He knows we can do it. He also wants to test us to see how faithful and strong we are, because He believes in us and He never gives us more than we can handle.

When I look at my baby boy, I know God has His reasons for why He gave me Gabriel; perhaps it's to change his dad's life. I knew I would be miserable for the rest of my life if I terminated the pregnancy. I would forever be asking myself "Why?" I had a dream in which a light from heaven was shining down in a clearing, and I saw my two older kids and I playing and running after each other. My daughter saw the light from above and followed it. I asked her, "Where are you going?" And she said, "There's a light over there." So she followed the light and found a baby boy; it was Gabriel. She told him, "Come play with me!" So Gabriel started running around with her, and their big brother joined in. When I woke up, I knew God had given me a sign. I prayed to God and told Him that I can't handle this alone, and that "I can't do this without Him." The journey of going through my entire pregnancy without Gabriel's father—even though he had promised to be there—was very difficult and painful. He had made a lot of promises, but in the end, I had to do everything alone.

If a woman were to find herself in a situation similar to mine, I would have a heart-to-heart with her and encourage her to keep the pregnancy. She should give her baby life, because her baby is an angel. The baby has nothing to do with her current circumstances, and there is a reason why her child was brought to conception. At the end of the day, a woman's child isn't really hers, it's God's; because a child doesn't choose its mother, God does. No matter what concerns may lie ahead if she keeps her baby, there are solutions to them all, in time. There is always a way in the end.

HOPE is a very big blessing. There aren't enough words to express how grateful I am to have HOPE, Ms. Kim, Ms. Alison, and Ms. Ama. Ms. Kim listened to me and addressed my concerns. HOPE helped me make my decision firmly and gradually. I received not only material support from HOPE, but also compassion and emotional support. I can't thank HOPE enough! God uses HOPE to help us women, and I'm grateful to have HOPE in my life. HOPE cares about me, my well-being, and that of my family. HOPE will always be a part of our lives.

Merry, Merry Christmas!
Ama Richardson
Executive Director of HOPE in Northern Virginia

DEAR FRIENDS OF HOPE,

Merry Christmas! Regardless of your religious beliefs, may you and your family experience the warmth of human kindness during the holiday season. In many ways I believe HOPE brings the spirit of Christmas to mothers and their families throughout the year. And like every vibrant organization, HOPE needs to improve. This past summer the HOPE Board of Directors focused on rededicating ourselves to defining our purpose. Mainly, we examined how we interface with the community especially via the ever expanding online mediums. This led to creating our Vision Statement. Our Vision Statement defines what we want the organization to foster in the future. After several months of prayerful consideration we adopted the vision statement of "Every mother chooses life." This is the environment we want to create.

Additionally, we are on the cusp of releasing an extensive update to our donor website. We are modernizing our image, providing greater details on donations, and listing upcoming events all while celebrating HOPE's history. In the near future when you log onto the HOPE website this is the face that will greet you:



Finally, last year I attended my first HOPE Christmas party. It was a revelation. Standing by the doorway of Heller Hall at St. James Catholic School, I watched several families leave with their presents still perfectly intact. As a child, I would have torn through the wrapping paper immediately. But there they were, thanking us as they left the event, with the gifts still wrapped in bows untouched. As one family exited I overheard a child ask his mother, "Why can't we open our presents now?" She replied, "I told you. These ARE our Christmas presents. We have to wait 'til Christmas."

Your donations were their only Christmas presents.

On behalf of our families and volunteers, thank you. You are making a difference.

Merry Christmas,
Michael Bergeron
President of HOPE in NOVA

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Peggy Bauer, President of the Saint Joseph Respect Life Ministry, and HOPE Board President, Michael Bergeron, at the 2016 St. Joseph Bottle Drive.

Help us share
HOPE with others



HOPE Nova



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