



UPDATE

Summer 2017



FREE TO BE FAITHFUL

In response to increasing intrusions by government in the realm of the church, the LCMS launched this "Free to be Faithful" campaign in September 2012 to educate and move people to take informed action to protect religious freedom and all the cultural issues that pertain to it: confessing the faith in the public square, marriage, defending the sanctity of human life and related issues affecting religious liberty.

In 2016, the Synod in convention adopted Resolution 14-01 to encourage education and leadership in matters of religious freedom.

For LCMS Free to be Faithful resources and news, visit lcms.org/socialissues/freetobefaitful.



Supreme Court delivers landmark ruling IN FAVOR of LCMS church preschool

by Roger Drinnon

The U.S. Supreme Court handed down its ruling June 26 in the case of a Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod church preschool, determining 7-2 that the state of Missouri's barring of the church from a government aid program was unconstitutional.

While the LCMS was not a party to the litigation, Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) attorneys represented Trinity Lutheran Church in Columbia, Mo., in *Trinity Lutheran Church (LCMS) v. Comer* (formerly Pauley).

The case came about after Trinity was invited to apply for the 2012 Playground Scrap Tire Surface Material Grant Program to resurface its playground with recycled tire products to be provided by the supposedly neutral state program. The grant program was offered to Missouri nonprofits as a

means to recycle scrap tires, in an attempt to reduce the amount of tires in landfills and to foster children's safety.

"The government should treat children's safety at religious schools the same as it does at nonreligious schools," said ADF Senior Counsel David Cortman in his statement after the ruling. "The Supreme Court's decision today affirms that common-sense principle and the larger truth that government isn't being neutral when it treats religious organizations worse than everyone else."

"The Supreme Court's decision today demonstrates the support of the principle that the government cannot treat religious organizations differently than other organizations just because of what we believe,"

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SELTZ TO DIRECT LUTHERAN CENTER FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

by Joe Isenhower Jr.

The first executive director has been named for the Synod's first office in Washington, D.C., in 17 years.

The board of directors of the new Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty (LCRL) has received a letter from the Rev. Dr. Gregory P. "Greg" Seltz — speaker for "The Lutheran Hour" since 2011 — informing the board that he officially accepts its call to fill the LCRL executive-director post.

The LCRL provides input, education, advice and resources in the areas of marriage, life issues and religious liberty and seeks to actively engage in discussions and establish partnerships, as appropriate, with individuals and groups in Washington, D.C.

'Joy' and 'privilege'

"What a joy to have served our Church being the Lutheran Hour speaker, sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ on the radio each week," Seltz said. "But, what a privilege now to accept the call to lead the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty, to serve all of our churches, schools and universities by ensuring that their voices continue to be heard, serving the cause of religious liberty for all of our people

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Landmark ruling continued from pg. 1

echoed LCMS President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison. “Despite this case being about a preschool playground, a seemingly mundane and simple matter, this is a very big win for the fair and equal treatment of religious organizations.”

After applying for the playground-resurfacing program, Trinity Preschool later was deemed ineligible for the state grant program solely because the preschool is operated by a church.

After soliciting nonprofit organizations across the state to apply for the program and listing Trinity near the top of all applicants, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources decided Trinity’s learning center was ineligible for the program based on an interpretation of a state-constitution provision prohibiting government aid to religion

ADF is a non-profit legal organization that

advocates for the right of people to freely live out their faith. Its attorneys contended the case was a question of whether states can exhibit “hostility to religion” by barring churches from state aid programs solely because they are religious organizations. In oral arguments April 19, ADF attorneys asserted such discrimination violates the Free Exercise and Equal Protection Clauses of the First Amendment.

“Equal treatment of a religious organization in a program that provides only secular benefits, like a partial reimbursement grant for playground surfacing, isn’t a government endorsement of religion,” said Cortman. “As the Supreme Court rightly found, unequal treatment that singles out a preschool for exclusion from such a program simply because a church runs the school is clearly unconstitutional.”

The LCMS announced June 20 that the Rev.

Dr. Gregory P. Seltz, speaker for “The Lutheran Hour,” officially accepted the Synod’s call to be the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty (LCRL) executive director in Washington, D.C. The LCRL provides input, education, advice and resources in the areas of marriage, life issues and religious liberty and seeks to actively engage in discussions and establish partnerships, as appropriate, with individuals and groups in Washington, D.C.

“I look forward to my role with the LCRL and engaging on issues like this that impact religious organizations,” said Seltz. “One of the three areas of work will be to defend religious freedoms, liberties and rights of conscience for people of faith as provided to us by our founding fathers in the Constitution.”

In 2015, the LCMS participated in an *amicus* brief for the case. *Amicus* briefs provide pertinent information to the court regarding a case, alert the court to the ways in which the case may affect people outside of the two parties involved, and help draw public and media attention to an important issue. That *amicus* brief is available for download at lcms.org/board/amicusbriefs.

Harrison said the Synod now will be looking more closely at the specifics of the high court’s decision and its implications for religious liberty.

Read the ruling at https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/16pdf/15-577_khlp.pdf.

Roger Drinnon (roger.drinnon@lcms.org) is director of Editorial Services and Media Relations for LCMS Communications.



CONFLICT OF FAITH

Synod, other advocates speak for religious liberty in secularized military

by Roger Drinnon

U.S. Air Force Col. Michael Madrid stands next to a vintage aircraft display outside Randolph Air Force Base, Texas. First Liberty Institute represents Madrid on the basis he was unlawfully punished because of his religious beliefs about marriage and sexuality.

The LCMS and certain other groups are speaking up for the rights of U.S. service members to live faithfully amid continued U.S. Defense Department infringements on religious freedom in the military.

Despite the Department of Defense’s (DoD’s) claims of accommodating religious expression in the military, a heavily secularized military culture, stemming from ongoing atheist activism and LGBT advocacy, seems to permeate each branch of military service. This has led to an environment where restrictions and even punitive actions reportedly are being imposed on chaplains, commanders and lower ranks who seek to serve without compromising their religious faith.

Court-martialed for Bible verse?

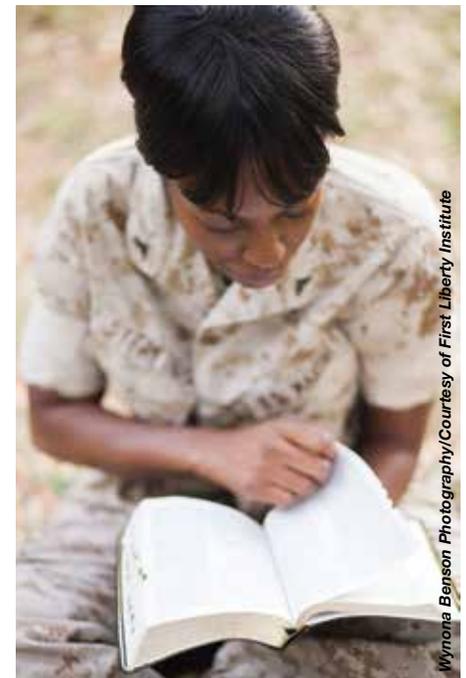
For example, at least a dozen parties have

joined an *amicus* brief for the U.S. Supreme Court, including the Synod and the Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty, as the high court now considers taking the case of *Sterling v. United States*.

According to a First Liberty Institute press release, the Sterling case began when U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. Monifa Sterling was court-martialed for refusing to remove a Bible-themed passage from her workspace based on Is. 54:17, which read, “No weapons formed against me shall prosper.” Sterling was given a bad-conduct discharge and reduced to the military’s lowest rank prior to the discharge.

First Liberty Institute, along with former U.S. Solicitor General Paul Clement of Kirkland and Ellis LLP, represented Sterling in

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so that God’s Word will indeed not be bound, but go forth and bear much fruit.”

After a transition period at Lutheran Hour Ministries (LHM — sponsor of “The Lutheran Hour”) and orientation for his new position with the Synod, Seltz will relocate from St. Louis to head the LCRL office in Washington.

“Greg Seltz is an extraordinary, very gifted individual,” said Synod President Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, who is president of the four-member LCRL board.

In his June 6 message to the church body announcing the call to Seltz, Harrison noted that the board “sought an individual with theological depth, a spirit of entrepreneurialism, strong communication and relationship skills, and the ability to carefully navigate the political environment in our nation’s capital. ... We believe that Dr. Seltz can fulfill this role with the integrity, professionalism and commitment required to make the LCRL a permanent voice for confessional Lutheranism in Washington, D.C.”

Harrison later told *Reporter* that Seltz “understands the great gift of the Lutheran Two-Kingdoms doctrine — the teachings of the secular and spiritual realms — how they interact, how they’re a blessing to each other and how they ought to be carefully distinguished.” He noted that this doctrine is the subject of Seltz’s current doctoral studies at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

‘A great communicator’

He also spoke of Seltz as “a great communicator. The future of the LCRL is very bright as we take our place on Capitol Hill to advocate for religious freedom.”

Harrison noted that the Synod’s interests “on [Capitol] Hill” continue to be advocated by others such as the Becket Fund, Alliance

“... what a privilege now to accept the call to lead the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty, to serve all of our churches, schools and universities by ensuring that their voices continue to be heard, serving the cause of religious liberty for all of our people so that God’s Word will indeed not be bound, but go forth and bear much fruit.”

— Rev. Dr. Gregory P. “Greg” Seltz

Defending Freedom, The Heritage Foundation and LCMS congressional representatives,” and that “we look forward to networking with many more who share our concerns.”

He added that although erosion of religious liberty has lessened somewhat with the Republican administration in Washington, “issues further

threatening those freedoms continue apace. ... It simply is not right for us not to have direct representation there.”

“Now, with the naming of Greg Seltz as the [LCRL] executive director, we believe that we have great impetus to move forward,” Harrison said. “People are very excited about the LCRL and want to help out.”

Two other members of the LCRL board — Timothy Goeglein, vice-president of External Relations at Focus on the Family in Washington, D.C., and Concordia University System President Rev. Dr. Dean O. Wenthe — also commented on Seltz accepting the call.

“The LCRL board and many in the LCMS have worked for many years to come to this important and pivotal moment,” said Goeglein. “We are excited to work with Greg and have every confidence in his ability to speak boldly into this cultural moment in the public arena of our beloved country. Marriage, human life, and religious liberty and conscience comprise a dynamic, central and fundamental core of issues that are hotly contested. We shall welcome his clarity, courage, and clear-eyed nurture and defense of all we believe as Christians in 21st century America.

We know the grace, mercy and goodness of Jesus Christ will lead Greg as he navigates the shoals of our culture and our era.”

Reaching many audiences

“It is a delight to learn that the Rev. Dr. Greg Seltz has accepted the leadership role in Synod’s Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty,” Wenthe said. “Dr. Seltz brings a remarkable skill set to this calling at a time when the Church’s role in the public square is increasingly challenged. His experience as a pastor, ... a professor ... and as Lutheran Hour speaker has given him extensive exposure to the cultural and social realities that shape American culture. ... His voice will prove to be both informed and nuanced to reach the multiple audiences and constituencies of Washington, D.C. May the Lord bless his labors so that the Church’s confession and practice might be spoken with such charity and clarity that many will be influenced to act on behalf of religious liberty.”

In addition to serving as speaker for LHM’s “The Lutheran Hour,” Seltz is the organization’s spiritual leader, evangelist and ministry emissary.

Before joining Lutheran Hour Ministries in 2011, Seltz served as director of the Cross-Cultural Ministry Center and held other positions at Concordia University Irvine, Irvine, Calif., and executive director of Life’s Journey Ministries and founding pastor of Church for All Nations in New York City. Prior to that, he started a mission congregation in Dallas and was pastor of a congregation in Tampa, Fla.

A 1986 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Seltz was awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree from Concordia, Irvine, and is nearing completion of the St. Louis seminary’s Ph.D. program.

He and his wife, Marie Yvette, are the parents of a daughter, Devin.

For more information about the LCRL, including ways to support it, visit lcms.org/lutheran-center-for-religious-liberty or contact Martha Mitkos at martha.mitkos@lcms.org or 800-248-1930.



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Conflict of Faith continued from pg. 2

her appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, which the High Court declined to hear June 5.

“Because the Supreme Court did not decide to review the case, the [previous ruling against Sterling] by the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces will now stand,” said Kelly Shackelford, president, CEO and chief counsel for First Liberty Institute, in a press release. “We had hoped the court would review this case, but we will now work even harder to ensure our nation’s brave service members do not lose their religious freedom.”

Colonel under fire for sexuality, marriage beliefs

According to another First Liberty Institute press release, its attorneys now represent U.S. Air Force Col. Michael Madrid on the basis he was unlawfully punished because of his religious beliefs about marriage and sexuality.

In 2014, an openly gay airman was court-martialed and found guilty of serious misconduct, purportedly involving drugs and a firearm. During the court-martial process, the airman, who worked with Madrid, accused Madrid of making derogatory comments about homosexuality. As a Christian, Madrid holds the traditional belief that marriage is the sacred union of one man and one woman.

According to First Liberty’s case summary, Madrid was cleared of the airman’s allegations but later was placed under a new commander who purportedly decided Madrid was guilty of making the derogatory comments. The new commander placed a Letter of Admonishment (LOA) in Madrid’s permanent record. In the Air Force, an LOA placed in an officer’s record negatively impacts that officer’s promotions. Madrid likely will not be promoted to the general officer ranks unless he is exonerated.

“I feel like the full power of the Air Force is coming down on me because of my faith,” said Madrid. “Now, after more than a quarter century of service to this nation, I feel like I constantly have to look over my shoulder. It’s incredibly intimidating.”

“We are aware of Col. Michael Madrid’s situation and his retention of legal representation,” said an Air Force spokesman from Air Education and Training Command Public Affairs. “Maj. Gen. Mark Brown, vice-commander of Air Education and Training Command, received a letter on March 29, 2017, from Col. Madrid’s legal representation. We are now working through the process of verifying the facts around Colonel Madrid’s protestations.”

In November 2014, the Air Force touted its revised Air Force Instruction (AFI) 1-1, Air Force Standards, to “clarify guidance on Airmen’s religious rights and commanders’ authority and responsibility to protect those rights” amid reported infringements on those rights that year and some years earlier.

When asked by Reporter about the impact of the punitive actions against Madrid, the Air Force spokesman cited outdated guidance from an earlier version of AFI 1-1.

“At First Liberty Institute, we’ve seen multiple cases in which military officials have refused to tolerate service members’ traditional religious beliefs,” said Mike Berry, First Liberty director of Military Affairs. “Col. Madrid doesn’t hide the fact that he is a devout Christian. We are concerned that [Madrid’s commander] judged and punished Madrid — a decorated Air Force officer — because he became aware of Col. Madrid’s traditional religious views. If so, that not only harms the military, but it is illegal.”

Madrid doesn’t hide the fact that he is a devout Christian. We are concerned that [Madrid’s commander] judged and punished Madrid — a decorated Air Force officer — because he became aware of Col. Madrid’s traditional religious views. If so, that not only harms the military, but it is illegal.”

LGBT advocacy a factor

Last year, the Synod sent a request to then-Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter to ensure specific protections for chaplains, service members, medical personnel, DoD civilians and other DoD-affiliated employees. The request came in response to the DoD’s mandated LGBT Pride Month and its revised policies for transgender service members, which, among other things, advocates

in-service gender transitions while serving in the military.

The Synod’s request called for specific protections for expressing personal religious beliefs to be codified in DoD and service-specific guidance, as service members continued experiencing restrictions on living out their faith in their military vocations.

DoD officials responded with assurances that religious freedom is protected in the military despite recent policy changes. However, the Defense Department’s response went on to say:

“We continue to make every effort to ensure that the DoD is a model of equal opportunity for all and to remove all barriers to service to allow qualified personnel to compete for the opportunity to serve. Military chaplains in particular, upon commissioning, agree to serve in a pluralistic environment and are expected to treat everyone with dignity and respect, irrespective of differences in religious belief.”

Faith on the front lines

The Synod’s Ministry to the Armed Forces (MAF), part of the LCMS Office of International Mission, continues to advocate for the rights of military members to live out their faith in their vocation, especially as the nation approaches three decades of constant armed conflict around the globe.

“We need to address how recent DoD policy changes continue to impact the rights of military personnel to live consistently with their faith while in uniform — that faith doesn’t suddenly disappear when they put the uniform on,” said Chaplain (U.S. Navy Capt. Ret.) Craig Muehler, MAF director.

Last year, the Synod in convention also adopted Resolution 2-04, which reaffirms LCMS military chaplains’ rights of free exercise of religion in the face of LGBT inclusion in the armed forces, and Resolution 14-01 to encourage intentional leadership in matters of religious freedom.

“No American, especially those who wear the uniform, should be denied their religious freedom or be forced to go against their conscience,” said Muehler. “The men and women in uniform serving on the front lines to defend our nation should not be penalized for exercising the same freedoms they are fighting to protect.”

“The men and women in uniform serving on the front lines to defend our nation should not be penalized for exercising the same freedoms they are fighting to protect.”
— Chaplain Craig Muehler

LISTEN TO KFUD DISCUSSIONS ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY



Listen to *KFUD.org* interviews with key attorneys and other experts involved in major issues affecting religious liberty as part of the Synod’s Free to be Faithful initiative.

Worldwide KFUD host Kip Allen moderates “Free to be Faithful” discussions on *KFUD.org* 2:30 p.m. Central time on the third Wednesday of each month.

Previously broadcast interviews also are available at kfuam.org/category/free-to-be-faithful.

KFUO EXAMINES SECULARIZED MILITARY AND ITS EFFECT ON TROOPS

The military is charged with defending American liberty as defined in the freedoms outlined in the U.S. Constitution. The free exercise of religion is one of the most important of those basic rights.

The military is charged with defending American liberty as defined in the freedoms outlined in the U.S. Constitution. The free exercise of religion is one of the most important of those basic rights.

How is this freedom treated within the military? Are U.S. service members, who risk their lives each day defending the Constitution, allowed the same freedom they are defending for the rest of America?

Listen to Worldwide KFUO's "Free to be Faithful" program from May 17, as moderator Kip Allen and LCMS Director of Editorial



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Services and Media Relations Roger Drinnon discuss this topic and its implications for LCMS chaplains and other Lutherans serving in our nation's military.

Drinnon is a 21-year U.S. Air Force veteran and former military public-affairs specialist who holds a master's degree in Military Operational Art and Science from the Air Force's Air Command and Staff College. After retiring from active-duty and prior to working for the Synod, he also worked for several years as media-relations chief for Air Mobility

Command, headquartered at Scott Air Force Base in Illinois.

Listen as Allen and Drinnon talk about recent legal cases, military training changes, new Defense Department directives and their implications for religious liberty and living one's vocation under the cross while serving in today's military.

The broadcast is available at: kfuo.org/2017/05/17/ftbf-051717-religious-freedom-military/

CHAPLAIN ALLIANCE, FIRST LIBERTY BLOCK ATTEMPT TO BAN CHAPLAIN PRAYERS AT AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE

The New Hampshire Air National Guard has announced they will continue their tradition of including prayer during military ceremonies, despite demands from a special interest group that they stop, according to a recent press release from First Liberty Institute.

At the request of the Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty, First Liberty Institute sent an advisory letter to the military base explaining how the law allows chaplains to offer invocations at military events.

"We commend Pease Air National Guard Base for standing strong and continuing their tradition," said Chaplain Ron Crews, executive director for the Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty who also is a retired U.S. Army Col. "Chaplains and service members have the right to freely exercise their religious beliefs without fear of reprisal."

First Liberty Institute is a legal

organization dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans. The Chaplain Alliance for

Religious Liberty is an organization that works to protect religious freedom for military chaplains.



Samuel King

Court affirms freedom to live, work faithfully: Kentucky appeals court upholds victory for printer being coerced by HRC

Alliance Defending Freedom Press Release

A Kentucky appeals court issued a ruling May 12 that affirms a Lexington printer's freedom to decline orders that would require him to promote a message in conflict with his religious beliefs.

In 2014, the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission ruled that Blaine Adamson of Hands On Originals must print messages that conflict with his faith when customers ask him to do so. ADF attorneys appealed the order to the Fayette Circuit Court, which reversed the commission's ruling and affirmed Adamson's freedom to live according to his faith. The commission then appealed that decision to the Court of Appeals in *Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission v. Hands On Originals*.

"Americans should always have the freedom to believe, the freedom to express those beliefs, and the freedom to not express ideas that would violate their conscience," said ADF Senior Counsel Jim Campbell, who argued before the appeals court in December of last year. "Today's decision is a victory for printers and other creative professionals who serve all people but cannot promote all messages. It is also a victory for all Americans because it reassures us all that, no matter what you believe, the law can't force you to express a message in conflict with your deepest convictions."

In 2012, Adamson declined to print shirts with a message promoting the Lexington Pride Festival, an event that the Gay and Lesbian Services Organization hosted. Although



The LCMS has participated in amicus briefs for important cases like these that pertain to religious liberty. To read these briefs, visit lcms.org/board/amicusbriefs.

“It is also a victory for all Americans because it reassures us all that, no matter what you believe, the law can't force you to express a message in conflict with your deepest convictions.”

— Jim Campbell, ADF Senior Counsel

he declined to print the shirts because of the message that would have been on them, he nevertheless offered to refer the GLSO to another printer who would have made the shirts. Unsatisfied, the GLSO filed a complaint with the commission—despite eventually receiving the shirts for free from another printer.

The appeals court opinion written by Chief Judge Joy A. Kramer found that Adamson did not engage in unlawful discrimination. She explained that no evidence demonstrates that Hands On Originals “refused any individual the full and equal enjoyment

of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages and accommodations it offered to everyone else because the individual in question had a specific sexual orientation or gender identity.” In fact, Adamson regularly does business with and employs people who identify as LGBT.

The concurring opinion by Judge Debra Hembree Lambert says that Hands On Originals is protected by Kentucky's Religious Freedom Restoration Statute, and that Ad-

Eternal Lord, ruler of all, graciously regard those who have been set in positions of authority among us that, guided by Your Spirit, they may be high in purpose, wise in counsel, firm in good resolution, and unwavering in duty, that under them we may be governed quietly and peaceably; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

amson has the right under that law to operate his business consistently with his “sincerely held religious beliefs.”

“We commend the court's ruling, which upholds the First Amendment's promise that everyone, including businesses and their owners, can decide for themselves the ideas and beliefs that they choose to express,” added Bryan Beauman of Sturgill, Turner, Barker & Moloney, PLLC, of Lexington. Beauman, one of nearly 3,200 attorneys allied with ADF, is co-counsel for Adamson and Hands on Originals.

See the case details at <http://www.adflegal.org/detailspages/case-details/hands-on-originals-v.-lexington-fayette-urban-county-human-rights-commission>



LUTHERAN CENTER FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Keep up to date on what's happening with the Lutheran Center for Religious Liberty (LCRL).

The LCRL's mission is to ignite and fuel a uniquely Lutheran response to increasing intrusions, limitations and challenges by the government in the life of the Church, while educating, encouraging and equipping LCMS members and organizations to take informed action in support of marriage, life and religious freedom.

For more information, visit lcms.org/lutheran-center-for-religious-liberty.

Contacting the President and other elected officials:

usa.gov/elected-officials | senate.gov/senators/contact/ | house.gov/representatives/find/



Free to Be Faithful Update | lcms.org/socialissues/freetobeforthful

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VOLUNTEER AT A PREGNANCY RESOURCE CENTER



WEBSITE

Help develop or update a pregnancy center's website



OFFICE HELP

Provide administrative assistance (copies, filing, etc.)



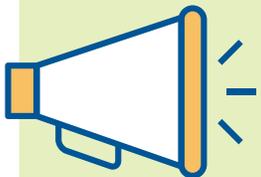
TRANSLATE

Offer to serve as a translator for written materials if you are fluent in other languages



CLEAN/PAINT

Offer to clean or paint a center's facilities



PROMOTE

Distribute promotional items to local churches, schools and businesses

FUNDRAISING

Assist with organizing fundraising events like banquets, walks and baby bottle campaigns



BABYSITTING

Assist with babysitting during parenting classes



ORGANIZE DONATIONS

Sort material donations and organize the center's baby closet



DIAPER DRIVE

Coordinate clothing and diaper drives

BABY SHOWER

Host a baby shower at a church or with friends, donating the gifts to a center's baby closet



HELP OUT AT A RETIREMENT HOME



Contact a local retirement home to see what opportunities exist for helping the elderly who deserve our love, respect, care and company.

LIFE SUNDAY

Invite local PRC to your church to share about their work



PRAYER

- MOST IMPORTANT -
PRAY FOR THE WORK OF
PREGNANCY CENTER'S

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