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Living Alternatives: Pregnancy Resource Center

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The Pregnancy Resource Center is a non-profit organization in Champaign that helps women with crisis pregnancies. The mission statement says that we are “committed to saving the lives of unborn children by promoting life-affirming options and providing practical assistance, while sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed, and to minister restoration to those who have been wounded by the trauma of abortion.” (“Living Alternatives”) Although the Center is not a large building and there are only about four paid workers at the Champaign location, they are able to offer many different services to the women that enter the Center. They give education on abstinence and sexually transmitted diseases, give information about adoption and perform adoptions, offer parenting education for new and expecting mothers, give referrals to other community services, give post abortion help, assist with maternity clothes and baby items, give free on-site pregnancy tests and offer ultrasound services. Most importantly, they offer spiritual growth and friendship.

The two main services at the Center are the HOPE Program and Stephanie’s Room. I know about these programs the most because they are the ones that I am involved in as a volunteer. The HOPE Program is a personal counseling session. Normally it is the client and one or two of the volunteers. Together they do lessons out of the program guide about how to
handle and work through a pregnancy and new motherhood, while also growing a personal relationship with one another. Stephanie’s Room is where anyone can come once every two months to receive free gently used clothes for their children, diapers, wipes, books, and other furniture items.

Living Alternative is a Christian based organization. Before I started volunteering there, I would have thought their values would not mimic the American Core Values, but rather be based on biblical views. I have been volunteering at the Center for a while now and have had a chance to see how the clients are treated when at the Center. I have gotten to see what the Center sees as important for the girls to take away from their experiences while at the Center. After learning about the core American values I decided to analyze what goes on in the Center and if the activities support or reject some of the main core American values.

One of the main core American values is Individualism. Individualism states that “people are responsible for their own success or failure. Individual’s ability and hard work are the keys to success. Those who do not succeed have only themselves to blame because of their lack of ability, laziness, immorality, or other character defects.” (Kendall 54) I believe that Living Alternatives supports this idea of Individualism to a certain extent. They believe that with certain abilities and hard work the girls will be able to succeed, but they also believe that if you do not succeed it is not always because of character flaws, laziness, immorality, or lack of ability. They believe that sometime people get placed in situations where they cannot get out without a little help. They understand that even if one of the girls is at fault for what has happened to them that does not mean they have to walk through it alone. At the Center they supply many different opportunities and materials that will be able
to help the women and their families as best as possible. They encourage women in HOPE to work hard and do their best so they can succeed in the needs at home with support, materials, supplies, and even give them names of other services in Champaign that will also be able to help them out, or through, their situation.

Hard work and being active are also on the list of top ten core American values. According to “Sociology in Our Times”, “people who are industrious are praised for their achievement; those perceived as lazy are ridiculed. From the time of the early Puritans, work has been viewed as important.” (Kendall 54) The idea of working and being active is a huge part of the center. They seem to believe that it is extremely important for the girl to work on their parenting abilities and to work at making a better life for them and their families. In the HOPE program, homework is given out and when they return to the next counseling session if they have completed the homework or “extra credit” they are rewarded with Mommy Money. It is so nice to watch the ladies who have collected enough Mommy Money from their hard work, to go shopping in the clothing room where they are able to buy new clothes, diapers, furniture, toys, blanket, formula, and so much more. They always have such a great look as they see how all the hard work during their HOPE sessions pays off.

Freedom is highly valued in the United States. The idea of freedom includes the right to private ownership of property, the ability to engage in private enterprise, freedom of the press, and other freedoms that are considered to be “basic” rights. (Kendall 56) At the Center freedom is taken very seriously. They believe that all women should have a choice, they never will push an issue on some, but they do try their best to lay out all the options and help them understand the consequences of each. When in the ultrasound room they will always try
to educate the girls on all the options, including abortions, that she has rather than just telling her what she should do. She has a right to make decisions for her and her family. Since the center does not offer or believe in abortion they tend to try to gear girls away from this option. I have not had the pleasure to sit in on an ultrasound, but I believe that the ladies do not inform the women of the positives of having an abortion. This does seem to conflict with the clients freedoms for it is seen that women have a right to make their own decisions about their body. Since the Center is a Christian based organization these values of being a Conservative Christian and the rights to individual freedoms seem to conflict. In the HOPE programs they understand that these ladies have the right to own private property and the basic needs of clothes, food, and shelter. This is why they give the women Mommy Money so they can earn these things. With the Mommy Money they are able to buy new clothes, food, bed, and all sorts of other things so they can have these basic needs.

Equality in America “has been defined as equality of opportunity – an assumed equal chance to achieve success- not as “equality of outcome.” (Kendall 55) The workers and volunteers believe that the women who come into the Center should have the same opportunities as everyone else. From watching and hearing the stories from women that come into the Center, I now understand that even if the opportunities are out there for everyone that does not mean that everyone is able to receive the same opportunities. They do not have the same chances as others and have been set so far off track that it would be impossible for them to have an equal chance at achieving success. Coming into the center is a way that they will be able to make it just one step closer to achieving the American Dream. Although we understand that by just coming into the Center does not mean they will
suddenly reach success (as in the American Dream), but that they will have the tools to better their life and the lives they impact, such as their family.

Morality and humanitarianism are a huge part of Living Alternatives. “Aiding others especially following natural disasters is seen as a value. The notion of helping others was originally a part of religious teachings and tied to the idea of morality. Today, people engage in humanitarian acts without necessarily perceiving that to the “moral thing” to do.” (Kendall 56) At the center they aid many women from all different backgrounds and their natural disaster is defined in becoming pregnant or having difficulty supporting their family. I believe that the ladies at the Center do what they do because they feel they have a moral obligation to the clients that walk into the Center. They feel that since God was a man who served and loved that they are here to love and serve the girls that come into the Center. Some of the volunteers have been there for years because they love these girls and have a desire to do what they can to see that these women get the best out of life that they can.

After working at the Living Alternatives: Pregnancy Resource Center over seventeen hours I have learned that, for the most part, they seem to support the American Core Values. Although they do tweak some of them slightly, they use these values to teach and interact with the clients that come into the Center. This should not be too surprising considering that America was founded on Christian values. It has been a great experience volunteering at the Center. I have learned a lot both from the environment at the center and the people working and volunteering there. I am blessed to be working with so many ladies that have legitimate love and care for each girl that walks into the Center. Being in a place like that just makes you feel like you are doing something worthwhile.
Works Cited


