



ST. ELIZABETH | COLEMAN  
PREGNANCY & ADOPTION SERVICES

2500 Churchman Avenue • Indianapolis, IN 46203  
(317) 787-3412 • GivingBirthToHope.org

Services of Catholic Charities in Indianapolis



Community Partner



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Spring 2018 Newsletter



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## HANDS OF HOPE

### Dear Friends of St. Elizabeth|Coleman,

I am reminded each day how blessed we are to have such amazing partners, like you, who allow us to carry out this ministry of comforting those in need, the poor and vulnerable among us. In this newsletter, you will read about the positive impact you are having through St. Elizabeth|Coleman. Women, children and families enter our office doors, often under desperate circumstances, with stress visibly written on their faces. Some women are afraid, uncertain where to turn. Others are exhausted and are unaware of their options. Because of your generosity, we are able to provide them with the diapers, clothing, counseling, support and comfort they need to feel and experience hope.

As we offer Hands of Hope to these individuals, we are even able to restore their smiles. In these moments, we remember why our work is so important. Throughout this newsletter,

you will read stories about changed lives through the services received from St. Elizabeth|Coleman. All these successes were made possible because of your support. We want you to know the depth of gratitude felt by these children, women and families, and experience the joy associated with making a difference in their lives. Thank you for continuing to help St. Elizabeth|Coleman provide help and create hope throughout central Indiana.

Many Blessings,

David J. Bethuram, MA, M.Min., CFLE  
Executive Director  
Secretariat for Catholic Charities  
Archdiocese of Indianapolis

## STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE

Catholic Charities Indianapolis received reaccreditation by the Council on Accreditation (COA) in September 2017. St. Elizabeth|Coleman, an important program of Catholic Charities Indianapolis, is proud to be part of COA's Community of Excellence. COA accreditation attests that an organization meets the highest standards and is delivering the best quality services to the community it serves. The accreditation is effective for four years, and all organizations must certify annually between accreditation reviews that they continue to implement the standards.



**Catholic Charities**  
Providing Help. Creating Hope. Serving All.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### 8th Annual Birthmother Luncheon | Tentatively May 12, 2018.

On National Birthmother's Day, our agency hosts the annual Birthmother Luncheon, which honors and celebrates all the women who have placed children for adoption through our agency over the years.

### Transracial / Transcultural Adoption Training | May 19, 2018

Training for any adoptive parent (and their families) considering adopting a child of a race or ethnicity different than their own. Visit our website for more information and to register. Space is limited, so register early.

### Walking for Dreams | May 20, 2018

This family-friendly 5K walk around the beautiful downtown canal raises money for non-profit organizations. To join our team of walkers and raise funds for St. Elizabeth | Coleman, email Christine at [chigginbotham@secindy.org](mailto:chigginbotham@secindy.org)

## WISHLIST

- Women's shampoo & conditioner
- Liquid Dish Soap
- Women's deodorant
- All-purpose household cleaner
- Diaper Rash Cream

For a longer list of wish list items, please visit our website: [www.GivingBirthToHope.org](http://www.GivingBirthToHope.org)

## CHANGES IN INDIANA ADOPTION LAW

Positive changes are occurring in Indiana adoption law. A new law will come into effect on July 1, 2018 that will allow adoptees, whose adoptions were completed between 1941 and 1993 (roughly 350,000 Hoosiers), access to their original birth and adoption records. Adoptees born since January 1, 1994, and before July 1941, can already access identifying adoption information. A birth parent can complete a non-release form with the Indiana Department of Health to stop the release of his or her identifying information. The non-release form will protect those birthmothers who wish to remain anonymous.

St. Elizabeth|Coleman (as part of Indiana Adoption Agencies United), and alongside HEAR (Hoosiers for Equal Access to Records), has advocated and actively assisted in the passing of this new law. Katrina, adoptive mom and St. Elizabeth|Coleman's Search and Reunion Specialist, says: "This new legislation will allow our clients to receive information and give them

the opportunities to connect with biological relatives. In the past, adoptions were closed. There was little information shared, and post-placement contact was non-existent. This created difficulties for adoptees as they had no health history and no answers to their many questions. Many birth parents also struggled with the lack of information about their child's life or well-being. This legislation will be a life-changer for many of our clients. Through the years there has been a veil of secrecy over adoptions. It is time for that veil to be lifted."

Pam Kroskie, adult adoptee and President of HEAR, explains that: "Under the new law, searches will happen more easily. It's about closure and healing. Adoptees say that lack of completeness leads them to search for their birth parents even when the ties to their adoptive families are strong."

### Search and Reunion Thank You Note

Hi Katrina,

Tomorrow marks one year since I received a phone call from you letting me know that Andrew was looking for me. There was always a missing piece of my heart. In May, Andrew came to Indiana where he was welcomed into our family. I have also been in touch with Andrew's mom and look forward to a day when I can hug her and tell her thank you. In short, I want you to know how grateful I am to you for your part in the healing of my heart and soul. This was a burden that I carried for 33 years. Now, I feel fully happy and healed.

Bless You!

If you have questions regarding this new law, please contact Katrina Carlisle at [kcarlisle@secindy.org](mailto:kcarlisle@secindy.org) or visit our website <http://www.givingbirthtohope.org/search--reunion-stories->

### WHY YOU SHOULD CALL SEC BEFORE YOU START YOUR INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION PROCESS

International adoption can seem like a daunting process. Questions may arise such as, "How expensive is it?" "Don't you have to wait forever to bring your child home?" "How much paperwork is involved?" "How would I even get started?"

Here is the good news. All these questions have very straightforward answers. When life looks tricky, simplify and lean in. The International Adoption Program here at SEC has designed this process with a calm, compassionate approach that simplifies and supports you through this amazing journey. We encourage you, as you grow your family from its inception in your heart, to the day you travel home. We continue to support you long after you become a family to ensure that you have the guidance you need.

As the International Adoption Team, we align ourselves, as a mentor, advocate and educator for you along your adoption journey. It helps to call us early in your process so that we can educate you during important decisions such as: what country you might be most appropriate for and which agencies have the best reputation for success in the country you choose. When you have a knowledgeable resource in your corner with you, leaning in and guiding you forward, the task seems less daunting. Hope is a beautiful thing, especially for a child that is waiting for their forever family.

If you would like to learn more about international adoption, please contact Jennifer Bigelow at [jbigeLOW@secindy.org](mailto:jbigeLOW@secindy.org).

#### Testimonial

Pete and I were both very happy with the process to start and complete our home study! While it was overwhelming in the beginning, every person at St. Elizabeth|Coleman was so helpful with all our questions. We appreciated all the support along the way. The process was put in place in an organized way, and we were given help whenever we needed it. We really appreciate the work that you do and the kind and compassionate nature of everyone we were in contact with throughout the process.



The St. Elizabeth|Coleman International Adoptions Team (Jennifer Bigelow (left) and Stephanie Ralich (right)).

### FALL FESTIVAL 2017 CELEBRATING ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH



On the afternoon of November 4th, 2017, St. Elizabeth|Coleman hosted its inaugural Fall Festival in our agency's sprawling 10-acre backyard. This family-friendly event was hugely successful, bringing together our adoption community. Adoptive families, adoptees and birth parents were invited to join us in celebrating "Adoption Awareness Month." Festival attendees enjoyed the free activities, which included hay rides, face painting, games and more. Thank you to our volunteers and staff members for making this festival a reality. A big thank you goes to 'Launch Pad Music' for bringing multiple bands that provided musical entertainment. Pictures were taken and edited by 'Every Little Moment Photography - by Stephanie'. We hope old and new families will join us at this year's Fall Festival.



### CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

The 2017 Christmas Program at St. Elizabeth | Coleman brought joy & smiles to a large number of our clients. 36 adults and 76 children were able to receive Christmas gifts because of the overwhelming generosity of our wonderful donors. Gift recipients of this annual program are clients that made an adoption plan with our agency and Parent Support Group members. In addition to the Christmas gifts, donors brought a vast amount of basic needs items (such as baby bottles, diapers, wipes, baby wash, etc) that will allow us to serve countless community members in need throughout this year.

Thank you for your continued support in brightening the spirits of families during the Christmas season and beyond.

#### Testimonial

"Thank you so much for everything you did for me and my kids this Christmas. You are truly a blessing from God above. You are so appreciated." (current Parent Support Group Member)

Pictured on Right: Members of the Parent Support Group and group leader, Cheryl Garlinger, on the day of the Christmas Party and receiving Christmas Gifts from our Christmas Program.



### SERVING THE COMMUNITY IN NEED: IN THE PAST YEAR (2016-2017)

Our services benefited more than 5,784 people both directly or indirectly.

- Pregnancy and Adoption Counseling: 177 birthparents served and 72 clients receiving grief and loss counseling
- Pregnancy and Adoption Outreach: 497 individuals served
- Adoption Awareness and Education: 3,314 individuals
- Adoption Placement Preparation: 70 individuals
- Adoption Searches: 690 search requests
- Support Groups: 60 women and children served

### GIVING A LEGACY

If you would like to make a donation to help support the mission of St. Elizabeth|Coleman, please visit our website, [GivingBirthToHope.org](http://GivingBirthToHope.org). Together, we can provide help, create hope and serve all for years to come!

### VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS

Marge, Marilyn, and Deb have been volunteering at St. Elizabeth|Coleman for over 3 years. For the three women, volunteering isn't just something to keep them busy during their retirement. They have been able to witness the positive impact their volunteer work has on the vital support mothers receive from St. Elizabeth|Coleman. The three come once a week and help sort donations the agency has received, as well as prepare donation requests from mothers needing help. They have formed a special bond as they volunteer together.

Marge loves knowing that she's directly helping women and children in need. Marilyn feels that she's able to make a difference to the mothers and children who find solace here. Deb says she feels that the agency is truly appreciative of the work that she accomplishes each week.

Marge, Marilyn, and Deb have enjoyed their time volunteering at St. Elizabeth|Coleman. They love their ability to help mothers and children every week and feel cherished by the staff of St. Elizabeth's. In addition, they value the friendships they have developed through their volunteer work.



Marilynn • Deb



Marilynn • Marge