

## We Give Thanks



2014 has been a tremendous year at Greater Columbus Right to Life. And while I am thankful every day for this opportunity, there is something about this holiday season that invites us to draw close to loved ones and reflect upon the many blessings in our lives.

We've started a tradition at Greater Columbus Right to Life to share with you some of the things for which we are most thankful from this past year. Certainly, at the top of that list is that **we are thankful** for our Creator. **We are thankful** for our committed team of sidewalk counselors and prayer partners. Through their help, we have seen nearly 150 women turn away from the abortion clinic over the last two years. **We are thankful** that one of central Ohio's abortion clinics has stopped performing abortions! **We are thankful** for courageous leaders like Abby Johnson and Dr. Monica Miller who joined us this year in Columbus to share their stories and inspire us in our prolife efforts. **We are thankful** for our partnerships with other

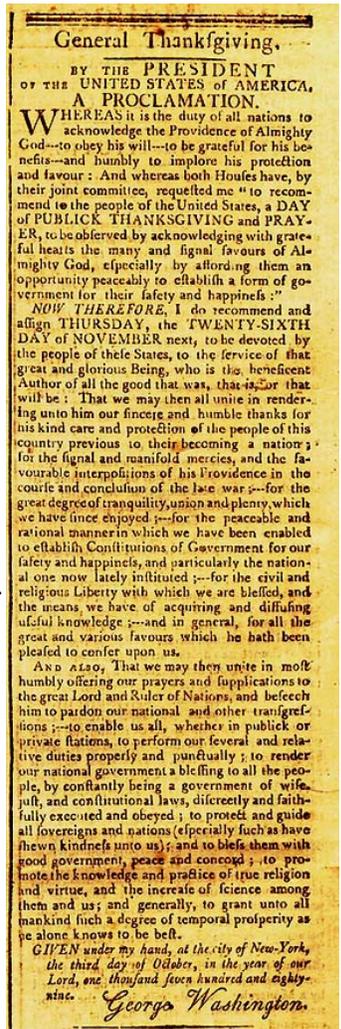
prolife organizations and the opportunity to serve unique needs in the community. **We are thankful** for the significant reduction in the number of abortions locally. **We are thankful** for each of the prolife faithful who has helped make these things happen. Through your prayers, your financial support, and your service, together we are making a difference in the lives of the unborn, the infirm, the elderly, and the unloved in our community.

While Thanksgiving is not a religious holiday per-se, its roots as an American holiday are grounded in a tradition of prayer and thanksgiving to God. In 1789, President George Washington signed the first national Thanksgiving proclamation "to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country..." Washington also asks that "we may unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of nations and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgressions."

This Thanksgiving will mark the bicentenninquennial (225<sup>th</sup> Anniversary) of President Washington's first Thanksgiving Proclamation. The same principles that shaped Washington's prayerful vision of Thanksgiving shape our efforts at Greater Columbus Right to Life.

Abortion is one of the dark spots on the conscience of our nation, a moral transgression entombed in our laws, and we pray that one day it will stand alongside slavery as an incomparable, unthinkable, and illegal action. This Thanksgiving, let us consider how we can be of service to the Lord of Life. Above all, let us give thanks for all that we have been given and all which we can give.

- Beth Vanderkooi  
 Executive Director



# 2013 Abortion Statistics: Fewer Abortions, Lots of Work to be Done

Every year, the Ohio Department of Health issues a report on the number of abortions performed in Ohio. The report identifies general trends, statistics, and other information (such as zip code of the mom's residence and location the abortion was performed). For the last seven years, abortion numbers in central Ohio have stayed fairly static with slight increases. This could be attributed to a variety of causes ranging from the population growth in central Ohio to the closure of clinics in nearby counties. Whatever the reason, we knew one thing—too many babies are dying in central Ohio. This trend has been why we've invested in programs like our sidewalk counselor and 40 Days programs. It is why we are focusing on youth education and programs with schools and churches.

We are very thankful that Columbus, as one of the Midwest's fastest growing regions, is also leading the way in reducing the number of abortions. We are not, however, content. The truth is that there are still far too many abortions. The number of abortion clinics in central Ohio has dropped from four to two since 2012. These closures were due to regulations or laws or court decisions (although we need laws and regulations that uphold LIFE). If we are seeing any reduction (and when we see an end to abortion altogether), it will be because we have taken back a culture of life. One person at a time, one decision at a time, one heart at a time, and one prayer at a time. Will you join us in standing for life, for praying for life? Can we count on you to help us fight the good fight?

## Online Extra—What is Truth?

In late August, we learned that Drs. Milroy and Mervyn Samuels, the father-son team at Complete Healthcare for Women were quitting the abortion industry. After decades of performing abortions at 5888 Cleveland Avenue (and seven years of 40 Days for Life campaigns), the news was astonishing. There was little notice from the doctors, but quietly their website was changed to remove all references to surgical and medical abortions. Contacts to the office and local news reports confirmed this news. Still, in the week since, there have been a lot of questions—Can this be trusted? Are they distributing the abortion pill instead? Are they just moving the abortion location? The issue is a bit too complicated to cover in this newsletter, but visit us at [www.gcrtl.org/blog](http://www.gcrtl.org/blog) as our ED explores the issue further.

## Abortions by County of Occurrence

- 4,966 abortions performed in Columbus in 2013
- 5,698 abortions in Columbus in 2012 (732 fewer)
- 95 (average) each week
- 19 (average) daily (abortions performed Tues-Sat)
- Reduction of 15 per week from 2012

## Abortions by Mother's Residence

- Delaware County - 145 abortions, down from 155!
- Fairfield County - 144 abortions, down from 163!
- Pickaway County - 39 abortions, down from 54!
- Madison County - 21 abortions, down from 40!
- Morrow County - 21 abortions, down from 24!
- Licking County - 177 abortions, down from 188!
- Union County - 47 abortions, up from 45
- Franklin County - 3448, down from 3771!

## Select Statistics

- 83% of abortions statewide performed on single women
- 251 women statewide report 5 or more prior abortions
- 23,271 abortions statewide performed in an ASF
- 89 abortions statewide performed in a hospital
- 42% of abortions statewide to African-American moms
- 46% of Franklin Co abortions to African-American moms
- 21% of Franklin Co population is African American
- Cervical Laceration—most common complication

## Online Extra—Abortionist Indicted

A Toledo-area abortionist and a known sex offender who regularly aborted children at Founder's was indicted in November on charges of child pornography. Tom Michaelis lost his license to practice medicine in the 90's after pleading guilty to 4 courts of sexual imposition of minor girls. Michaelis worked for Capital Care Network, which earlier this year had an Akron office shut down for horrific violations of state law, including theft of patient blood. CCN also runs the Toledo office appealing an ODH order to close. Clinics are not bad because they are dirty; they are dirty because they are bad. Visit our blog to learn more.

## Dan Bruening Honored



GCRTL President Mike Melliere (left) presented Dan Bruening (right) with the 2014 Defender of Life award. The Defender of Life Award is presented annually to a central Ohio prolife volunteer who has shown exemplary service to a local prolife organization. Dan was nominated by a fellow Knight of Columbus, who pointed not only to his servant leadership within the prolife movement, but also his mentorship of younger leaders in the church and prolife community. Dan, together with his wife Lisa and their children, are members of St. Andrew Parish. Dan is active with the St. Andrew Respect Life Committee and the Knights of Columbus. Dan is also a Greater Columbus Right to Life Sidewalk Counselor, and 40 Days for Life co-captain. He is well known throughout the pregnancy help and prolife community. Congratulations, Dan. Thank you for your service.

# 40 Days Fall Campaign Fruitful, Faithful, & Fun!



GCRTL has been sponsoring 40 Days for Life in central Ohio since 2008. Once again, our phenomenal team was out at the clinic for the fall campaign, which was held the 40 days leading up to the midterm elections. Although individual participation was a little down, we were able to fill almost every abortion day and hour with 40 Days volunteers and GCRTL Sidewalk Counselors. We know of at least 9 women who turned away through the campaign!

We also know that we are having an impact on both the employees and the financials at Founders'. Of the approximately 150 turn-aways that we have been part of since January 2013, the overwhelming majority of them have been from 1243 E Broad Street. The clinic has responded first by having staff escort patients

into the clinic and now by starting a volunteer escort program, with escorts coming from as far as Toledo to train local abortion advocates. They have also started a "pledge-a-protestor" campaign, which solicits clinic patients and their friends/family to donate money to a fund to provide subsidized abortions. According to Founders', they've raised a few hundred dollars to date.

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## 365 Days ProLife

Each week, an average of 95 unborn children will be aborted right here in our community. At least one of Columbus' two abortion clinics are open Tuesday through Saturday. In recent years, they haven't even taken Christmas Eve, Good Friday, or the 4th of July off. Since 2008, we've been participating in 40 Days for Life, and for the past two years we've conducted campaigns in both the spring and the fall. Our goal, however, has been to establish a prayer presence at the clinics every day they are doing abortions, every hour they are open, and even at times when they are not seeing patients. It is a pretty aggressive goal. With the help of our Sidewalk Counseling team, this past fall campaign we were able to see nearly every abortion day covered with prayer and counseling. It has made a tremendous difference. With the national 40 Days for Life campaign over, we are redoubling our efforts to keep up the prayer and counseling presence at the clinics through a program we are calling 365 Days ProLife. Our goal is exactly what it sounds like—make sure that there is a prolife presence in central Ohio 365 days a year. We are going to do this through a coordinated program of prayer partners, spiritual adoption, and sidewalk counseling.

**Prayer Partners:** We are identify individuals, churches, bible studies, rosary groups and respect life committees to invite them to adopt a regular time to pray at a clinic. Many groups are already doing this with a weekly, a monthly, or a quarterly commitment.. We will be identifying those groups who are already out and coordinating new groups to fill other needed times. We are also in search of prayer partners, especially those who are available throughout the week on a regular or fairly regular basis to partner with our Sidewalk Counselors.

**Sidewalk Counselors:** Our SWC program continues to grow by training individuals to go to the clinics and lovingly and peacefully approach women who are headed into the clinics, their support people, and also clinic staff. This program is saving lives in central Ohio. Our SWC also help direct women who have had an abortion to one of central Ohio's abortion recovery and healing programs.

**Spiritual Adoption:** Our spiritual adoption program will give you an opportunity to pray for an unborn child or a sidewalk counselor every day. Spiritual adoption participants will agree to pray for an unborn child (and his or her mother) in central Ohio every day for 9 months or a specific sidewalk counselor or GCRTL volunteer every day for one month (renewable!). Both the unborn and our front-line volunteers are deeply in need of your prayers, and through our spiritual adoption program, even if you cannot get to the clinic, you can be part of our efforts.

**To join our 365 Days ProLife program, visit us online at [www.gcrtl.org/pray](http://www.gcrtl.org/pray) or give us a call today!**



# 'Tis the Season

We all have our traditions this time of year. For some it is cooking the perfect bird on Thanksgiving. Others look forward to the “Black Friday” or “Cyber Monday” shopping deals. Many start the countdown to Christmas with an Advent wreath or calendar. Perhaps you light a candle or spin a dreidel for Hanukkah. Most of us will trim a tree, shop for gifts, and purchase butter and cream cheese in quantities hard to justify the rest of the year. For most GCRTL supporters and friends, the most wonderful time of the year will be found in a Midnight Mass or Sunrise Service as Christians around the world celebrate the birth of Christ.

As the clock ticks down to 2015, many people use this time of year to especially give thanks for all that they have and share their blessings with those who need a little help. In fact, the month between Thanksgiving and New Year’s is the single biggest giving time of the year. Not only does being thankful for what we have give us renewed opportunity to be generous, but many donors will use this time to maximize their charitable contributions for tax purposes. Charitable giving statistics suggest that about a quarter of all annual donations are given in December,

The work that we are doing is having a tremendous effect, but it comes at a price. Since our founding in 1975, the structure and activities of GCRTL have waxed and waned. In 2008, the leadership of GCRTL made a goal and a commitment. Our goal was to end abortions in Columbus by 2020. Our commitment was to bring on a professional staff who could coordinate activities and volunteers, provide valuable community resources, and work to build a cohesive and unified prayer and education program locally. To realize these goals, we worked with donors and friends to build a base of funding that would support our programs until they became self-sustaining.

It is nearing the end of 2014. We have seen two of four abortion clinics close and a third is in hot water. We are committed to ending abortion in Columbus by 2020—and sooner if we can. We have a great team of volunteers managed by our executive director and staff. We are working together with other prolife ministries to develop a full continuum of prolife education, advocacy, and help in our community built on a solid foundation of prayer and faith. We are within a few thousand dollars of finishing 2014 as our strongest year in recent history.

Somewhere between the shopping and the eating and the rejoicing of Christmas, I’d like to ask you to consider making a generous year-end gift to Greater Columbus Right to Life. You can donate securely on our website or by returning the enclosed envelope today.

When you donate to GCRTL, you have several options that can help your dollar to go a little further. While most of our donations come from individuals who give via cash, check, or credit card, we also work with the professionals at the Stewardship Foundation who can help you to contribute to our donor advised fund (or establish one of your own), look at the potential of a charitable trust, or even the direct transfer of an appreciated asset like a stock or bond. Certainly, whether you have \$10 or \$10,000 to give this year, you are giving as a sign that you share our passion and conviction for the protection of innocent human life and because you give thanks with us for all that God has provided. That said, with a little advanced planning, you may be able to reduce your income tax or business tax liability. Who among us wouldn’t rather that more of our money go to our families and organizations who share our beliefs and less to the state and federal government?

If you’d like to learn more about some of these strategies, please visit us on the web at [www.gcrtl.org/yea](http://www.gcrtl.org/yea). Unfortunately, many people do not have much knowledge of the variety of charitable giving strategies, especially those that are available to those of modest and moderate wealth. We’ve put together a great list of explanations and resources that will make you more knowledgeable on a topic that is intimidating for many.

If you cannot make a donation at this time, please join us in praying for a successful end to our fiscal year. We do not do this work for the money, but without funds we will not be able to continue to do this work! God Bless you all.

## Upcoming Events

**Carols at the Clinic  
Founders (1243 E Broad Street)  
Saturday December 20th  
10:00 am**

*All are welcome to join us as we sing carols of Hope overcoming darkness.*

**Roe Remembrance  
Ohio Statehouse Atrium  
Thursday, January 22, 2015  
12:00 PM**

*Note: Because of extreme cold the last three years, we are moving our annual Roe Remembrance event inside the Ohio Statehouse. Due to Statehouse security policies, there are no banners/signs permitted inside the Statehouse.*

**Sidewalk Counselor Training  
GCRTL Training Room  
Saturday, January 24, 2015  
9:30 am**

Register online at  
[www.gcrtl.org/sidewalk-counseling](http://www.gcrtl.org/sidewalk-counseling)

**Sidewalk Counseling and Prayer  
Partner Drop-in  
1243 E Broad Street  
Columbus Ohio  
9:30-12:00 Saturdays**

*Never been to the sidewalk? Would you like to join our team to pray for a few minutes? Maybe you will be in the area and would like to give them a supportive honk or bring a warm drink! Other days' schedules vary.*