

The Birth Writer

"It is the Right of every pregnant Woman to give Birth and the Right of every Child to be Born"

From the Director's Desk—Sandra Baker

In June, 2016 I attended the Birthright International Convention in Newark, NJ. The theme was a very fitting one for Birthright: "Journey of Hope". Every time a pregnant woman calls Birthright or comes into our office for the first time, a journey of hope begins: Hope that she will find help and understanding in her time of need, hope that she can find solutions to her problem, hope that the decisions she makes will be the best ones both for herself and for her child. The Birthright volunteer is there to assist the woman in whatever way she can to fulfil these hopes, but the volunteer is also experiencing a journey of hope: Hope that she can provide the love and compassion that the pregnant woman is so in need of, hope that she can find a way to truly communicate this love and compassion to the woman, and hope that she can find a way to help the woman find solutions which will result in choosing life for the child that she is carrying. Sometimes the volunteer's hopes are not fulfilled, but whatever the outcome, the Birthright volunteer will be there for the woman, providing friendship and support in a non-judgmental way. This is the greatest hope of all, that we, as Birthright volunteers, will always be there when we are needed, and that the community will continue to support the work of Birthright.

Why Volunteer?

I first came across Birthright when I began the search for volunteer work related to my schooling for Psychology. Being a young adult, I have been exposed to many peers with unplanned pregnancies and felt this to be an organization that is near and dear to my heart. I wanted to be involved with Lethbridge's mothers and their children, and to take action in lending a helping hand where it is needed. So far I have had a very positive, uplifting experience from my time at Birthright. I enjoy learning from each of the other volunteers and like to watch them interact with clients. Birthright is a wonderful organization that helps out many community members and lends a listening ear to anyone that shows the need. I feel very blessed to be part of the Birthright team and encourage everyone to take the time to learn more about what they are doing in our community!

- Chanice, current office volunteer

Fall/Winter 2016



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We love them both...

Birthright International

There are 320 and counting Birthright centres worldwide. It is impressive what a difference one woman's vision has been able to make in the lives of so many!

One such centre is located in Ghana. It has been operating officially since 1997 and unofficially since the 1980s. In that time, they have changed the world for so many families. Here is an excerpt from their most recent newsletter:

“Our office volunteers touch so many lives each week, often it is just the kindness and encouragement that the young women need to understand the value of the baby they are carrying but sometimes more is needed. Medical costs are not as high in Ghana but often our clients have very little money due to high unemployment and unskilled labor. We try our best to help with accommodation by speaking to families, pastors and church members. So many of our young women need training for a skill so we help them to pay tuition to acquire the necessary skill.”

It is so incredible that people from all over the world can be united under the same vision! Thank you, Louise Summerhill, for creating something so extraordinary!



Annual General Meeting Guest

This year's AGM featured a guest speaker from McMan Youth Services, Keri-Lee Reykdahl. She is an outreach worker for Youth Hub, a part of McMan, and gave an informative talk on the various services that McMan provides for youth in our community. McMan functions “to support and encourage individuals and families to achieve their full potential as members of their community” as stated in their mission statement. Some programs they offer are as follows: FASD Outreach Program, FASD Crime Reduction Project, Youth at Risk Program, Parkside Group Home and many others. If you are interested in learning more about McMan, visit them on the web at www.mcman.ca.

A Legacy for Life

Have you ever considered being a Birthright benefactor?

This can be done by a variety of methods such as:

- * monthly post dated checks or automatic debit
- * annual contribution
- * naming Birthright as a beneficiary in your will
- * naming Birthright as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy

There are significant income tax benefits associated with all of these contributions which can be realized both now and for your estate.

Wouldn't you consider establishing such a **legacy for new life**?



Birthright Lethbridge Board of Directors

Agree with Birthright's cause but not sure how to help? Do you have some time to share with Birthright? Don't feel like you are the type to speak directly to clients? Why not explore becoming a Board member?

The Birthright Board meets 7 to 9 times per year to discuss activities of Birthright and how to be most effective at helping clients. Discussion examples would be support of ongoing office operations, client statistics, financing, brainstorming new ideas, fundraising and awareness opportunities. A great Board should have members passionate about each of these functions – so if one of them applies to you, it may be a great fit to come and share your knowledge! One of the most important Board tasks is to support the Executive Director; we are very fortunate to have a passionate leader for the office and all related activities. Any work Board members can do to free up Sandra's time leaves more time for her to concentrate on helping clients. Reflect on your talents – would you be able to contribute?

The current Board is a small group of individuals committed to helping Birthright continue to deliver a service to those in need – and welcome others who would like the opportunity to become a part of this great cause. Please feel free to email the office for details of the next meeting, come and talk to other Board members. See if you would like to join!

L to R: Joan Zimmer (Secretary), Sandra Baker (Director), Cassandra Van EE (Treasurer), Barbara Spiess (past Director), Kathy Tratch (President), Joanne Krywolt, Shaun Ward (Bingo Chair).
Missing from photo: Gerald Wright, Larry Spiess, Marg Humphrey, Sr. Bernadette Gaetz



BINGO Report

Birthright is one of 28 clubs, societies and service groups who operate two BINGO events per day at Winners BINGO, the only BINGO hall in Lethbridge. It requires a minimum of 12 volunteers to properly run an event. We are grateful to Volunteer Lethbridge for providing us with three new volunteers and their service is greatly appreciated! However, we could always use more! New volunteers are always welcome! If you can help us out, please contact Shaun Ward at sward55@gmail.com. The revenue from each event can fluctuate between \$1200 and \$1500. Ten events per year provide Birthright with a valuable source of revenue. Thank you to everyone involved!

The next four events scheduled are:

Monday Dec. 5th; Wednesday Feb. 15th; Monday March 6th and Monday April 3rd

- Shaun Ward (Bingo Coordinator)



Barbara and Larry Spiess Retirement

It is with sadness that Birthright Lethbridge receives and accepts the 'notice of retirement' of Barbara and Larry Spiess. Barbara and Larry have been at the helm of our organization for 32 years of devoted guidance, advocacy and commitment in maintaining the valued presence and contribution to our community.



Barbara served as the Birthright Lethbridge director from 1999 to 2014, guarding the intent and the mission statement established by Birthright founder Louise Summerhill. Providing nonjudgmental support and friendship to the many girls and women who chose to be Birthright clients was truly Barbara's calling. She was a master at recruiting volunteers, giving presentations to Grade Ten CALM classes and always fostering and promoting the Birthright mission and values.

Birthright Lethbridge appreciates and thanks Larry for his patient and constant support in fund raising, serving on the bingo board and the numerous other commitments and service he so generously provided for the support of our organization.

THANK YOU Barbara and Larry for your many years of service and care.

May God bless you and keep you happy and well.

**BIRTHRIGHT
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Birthright Lethbridge Directors

Exec. Director: Sandra Baker

Board of Directors:

- * Kathy Tratch
- * Joan Zimmer
- * Barbara Spiess
- * Larry Spiess
- * Cassandra Van Ee
- * Gerald Wright
- * Margaret Humphrey
- * Joanne Krywolt
- * Sr. Bernie Gaetz
- * Shaun Ward
- * Cassandra Jackson
- * Rose Shaver

Newsletter Editor:

- * Cassandra Jackson

Free Services Offered:

- * Caring and listening
- * Personalized support
- * Referrals to community services
- * Maternity clothes
- * Baby clothes
- * Newborn layettes
- * Pregnancy tests

Birthright is:

- * Confidential
- * Non-political
- * Non-judgemental
- * Interdenominational
- * Volunteer run
- * A registered charity

Referrals for Assistance Include:

- * Medical
- * Financial
- * Education and employment
- * Nutrition
- * Housing

We make the commitment to help women in crisis: single or married, regardless of age, race, or religion.

.....Please tear off and mail, email, or fax to above address.....

Yes! I want to help Birthright save babies and help women!

Here is my gift of: \$50 \$100 \$200 Other \$_____ Name: _____

I want to be part of Friends of Birthright: Yes I need to know more Email: _____

Payment Options: Cheque payable to Birthright Lethbridge. Mail or deliver to above address OR online at www.canadahelps.org and use PayPal to donate with a credit card. You will receive a Charitable Donation receipt.