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## Nine Accomplishments from 2009

As usual, last year was a busy one for NARAL Pro-Choice Texas. Here are just a few of the things we accomplished in 2009—**none of which would have been possible without the support of our members, volunteers, and pro-choice Texans like you.** You inspire and remind us every day of who we work for and why we do what we do.

### Last year, with your help, NARAL Pro-Choice Texas:

- 1) Worked in coalition with other pro-choice organizations to block proposed anti-choice bills including Sen. Patrick and Rep. Cortez's mandatory ultrasound bill, a targeted restriction of abortion providers bill, and Sen. Carona's "Choose Life" license plates bill.
- 2) Shared the health needs and personal stories of hundreds of Texas women with lawmakers through a *Healthy Women, Healthy Families* briefing during legislative session.
- 3) Successfully blocked the appointment of anti-choice candidate John Longoria as Bexar County court-at-law judge by generating hundreds of letters of protest to county commissioners.
- 4) Collected over 350 personal messages of support from pro-choice Texans in the wake of Dr. George Tiller's murder, and delivered them to every abortion clinic in Texas.



Texans pay their respects to Dr. George Tiller at a candle-light vigil in June

- 5) Produced a scorecard that rates every Texas lawmaker based on how they voted on reproductive health and rights issues in 2009.
- 6) Was one of eight organizations around the country to host a focus group for young women of color to discuss sexual health issues as part of the national RISE Initiative, a groundbreaking project that aims to raise the voices of underrepresented young women around reproductive justice.



Dr. Lauren McDonald, Chair of the Parkland Hospital Board of Directors, speaks at a Healthy Women, Healthy Families community forum in Dallas

- 7) Hosted two local luncheons and one state-wide conference call open to all NARAL Pro-Choice Texas members in order to provide an overview of what took place at the Capitol during legislative session and answer questions.



Texas legislators at a NARAL Pro-Choice Texas member luncheon last summer

- 8) Helped turn out approximately 100 supporters to attend the Travis County Health District Board meeting at which the Board ultimately voted to continue abortion funding for low-income women enrolled in the county's Medical Assistance Program (making Travis County the only Texas county with such a policy).
- 9) Represented pro-choice Texans in dozens of newspaper and blog articles, television interviews, and radio appearances.



NARAL Pro-Choice Texas staff and volunteers with other members of the national RISE Initiative for youth

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[Please note: Our tax ID number is 74-2543342.]



## Letter from the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

This year marks the 37<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Roe vs. Wade* and while we in Texas are waiting until February 2 to commemorate this important occasion (see below), NARAL Pro-Choice America hosted the fifth annual Blog for Choice Day on January 22. In honor of Dr. George Tiller, who often wore a button that read simply, "Trust Women," this year's Blog for Choice question was: **What does Trust Women mean to you?**

What a surprising cloud-burst of answers popped into my head when I first began to contemplate my response. My thoughts mirrored the range of emotions this question evokes. To me, it means:

- ◆ "Stay out of it, Sen. Dan Patrick (and your cronies, too); it simply has nothing to do with you!"
- ◆ "I'm an intelligent, thoughtful woman capable of making decisions about my body... I'll take it from here, thanks."
- ◆ "Why are we STILL having this fight?"
- ◆ "In what mind-bending feat of arrogance do some deem themselves more capable than I am to make major life decisions about me?"
- ◆ "No one knows better than the woman making the decision what is best for her, for her family, for their lives."

I like the phrase "Trust Women" for all of those reasons, and because it very concisely gets to the heart of the matter. I love my job because I believe in autonomy, respect, and faith in women. I know that you are members and supporters because you know how important it is for women who can't speak for themselves to have a voice. **NARAL Pro-Choice Texas is the only statewide organization funded solely by our supporters that works full-time to defend and advance the reproductive rights of Texas women.** Thank you for your dedication, your passion, and your fundamental beliefs that enable us to do what we do – that is, to continue working hard until someday Trusting Women is the rule rather than exception in Texas. Happy anniversary, *Roe*.

Best,

Sara S. Cleveland  
Executive Director

## An El Paso Mother's Voice

By Bianca Lugo, *Healthy Women, Healthy Families* Intern

As a young mother, I had my share of doctor's visits, especially when the due date came nearer. My gynecologist at the time of my pregnancy was great with everything that came up that was related to pregnancy. When I delivered I decided to have a C-section, because I knew I wouldn't be emotionally strong enough to do a natural birth. The delivery was great and everything seemed great as well. Then it was time for my follow-up after giving birth. That is when things got a complicated for my doctor. He didn't seem to be very informed about birth control and pregnancy prevention. He prescribed the regular monthly cycle of birth control, but every morning I woke up not feeling well. I went back and found out that the dose was high and that didn't help me at all. I went through about four different sets of birth control until I just gave up and decided to change my doctor. Finally I got the help I was looking for and now I feel positive about taking birth control.

Even though my healthcare service was a simple fix, it was still a problem to me. That is why I became involved with the *Healthy Women Healthy Families* project. By working as an intern I get to learn and take in information about women and their healthcare issues. I want to get a deep and detailed understating of women and what is missing in the community in a healthcare sense. By learning about more about what women want from their healthcare service the better doctor I can be. This is my main reason for taking the chance to work with *Healthy Women Healthy Families*; I aspire to become a gynecologist. I will benefit from this internship in more than one way. I can help improve our healthcare, and I can speak for women who need help and are not getting the attention that is needed. I also get the chance to learn about and experience these problems.



Bianca and her husband

# From Stories to Policy Change

By Danielle Garrett, *Healthy Women, Healthy Families* Fellow



My work at NARAL Pro-Choice Texas Foundation this past summer on the *Healthy Women, Healthy Families Project* was truly rewarding and educational. I was excited to be part of a project whose roots were based in the concept of reproductive justice. Texas has a diverse population with equally diverse health care needs. The *Healthy Women, Healthy Families* project seeks to survey these health care needs in order to give all Texas women a voice in advocating for their health care needs.

Throughout the summer I worked to build connections with a variety of new coalition partners, such as the Bridge Breast Network and Dress for Success, who can help us reach out to even more Texas women. I also began looking at the survey results the coalition had collected and found that the results represent a truly representative slice of the Texas population. I learned a great deal about coalition work, outreach, and the state of health care needs in Texas and was happy that I could help NARAL Pro-Choice Texas Foundation with such an important project while building skills that would serve me well as I embark on a career in women's health policy. Most of all, I was challenged and inspired by the stories these women shared. Their stories about battling with disease, struggling without health insurance, lacking access to affordable abortions, and lacking the resources needed to care for elderly relatives motivated me to continue this work.

I'm thrilled that I will have the opportunity to do just that during my final semester of graduate school. As part of my course work at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at UT Austin, I will be working with Professor Cynthia Osborne to take the project a step further. I will continue to analyze the survey data, examine the current health care policies and resources that aren't meeting the needs of women in Texas, and make policy suggestions to improve the state of women's health in Texas. This information will be compiled in May into a professional report that I hope will be useful to NARAL Pro-Choice Texas Foundation in the future. I look forward to sharing the results with you!

## Counter-Protest at Jan. 23 Texas for Life Rally

**On Saturday, January 23 the annual anti-*Roe v. Wade* march and rally organized by Texas Alliance for Life took place in Austin. Anti-choice Texans assembled downtown and marched to the Capitol building to show their opposition to *Roe* and listen to speeches by Gov. Rick Perry and Sen. Dan Patrick. NARAL Pro-Choice Texas reached out to our members to turn out the pro-choice contingent for a counter-protest organized by Central Texas Anti-Racist Action. A crowd of pro-choice supporters was at the Capitol gates to meet the marchers as they approached and held up signs along 11th Street during the rally to a chorus of supportive honks from passing traffic.**



# NARAL Pro-Choice Texas Joins the RISE Initiative

By Fatima Bhuriwala, NARAL Pro-Choice Texas Volunteer



When I first learned about the opportunity to work with NARAL Pro-Choice Texas by participating in the national RISE Initiative as a focus group facilitator—which included a weekend-long training in Washington DC—I admit I was tempted mostly by the trip to DC, a city I had only glimpsed through US history textbooks and TV. My excitement about co-facilitating a focus group for young women of color in Austin actually sprang up during the training where we got a chance to see and go over the discussion questions. Those were really important questions, and yet—as we were to find out at the focus group—questions that are not discussed as openly or as often as they need to be. The questions were about issues of reproductive and sexual health and well-being in targeted communities such as low-income young women, young women of color, and LGBTQ youth—all young people whose healthcare needs are often compromised or forgotten. The RISE Initiative brought together focus groups of such communities all across America to get a more on-the-ground view of what these needs are.

The RISE Initiative is spearheaded by the Pro-Choice Public Education Project, which is based in New York. For the first step of the project, they partnered with different organizations across the country in order to organize eight focus groups in cities from New York to Fullerton, California. This is where NARAL Pro-Choice Texas came in. Through our contacts at PODER, a local environmental justice organization, we recruited about half a dozen young women to participate in our focus group.

The focus group questions had to do with different aspects of reproductive health and well-being, including sexuality, sexual health, and communities. The young women talked about difficulties in access to healthcare, about prejudices they had experienced, about their expectations, their ideals, and the reality of their experiences—a lack of affordable alternatives to expensive medical treatments, and a lack of education and dialogue on sex and sexuality. The focus group provided a chance, a place to talk, and a space to share without judgment, which resulted in an amazing and honest discussion. The next steps of the project involve releasing the data gathered from all the focus groups, and getting young people from across the country involved in creating a young people's reproductive justice session at the upcoming US Social Forum in Detroit. NARAL Pro-Choice Texas is excited to be involved this innovative project, and we look forward to continuing to work to raise the voices of young people around reproductive justice issues!

## We All Pay For CPCs

Since 2005, the Texas Pregnancy Care Network (TPCN) has spent over \$8 million in taxpayer funds to run a controversial program designed to impact pregnant Texas women. The TPCN contracts with crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs)—unlicensed, unregulated anti-abortion “counseling” centers—to provide non-medical “counseling” services to Texas women.

Because they are funded by taxpayer dollars, these programs are controversial at best, and at worst endanger women’s health and violate the Federal Charitable Choice Act. NARAL Pro-Choice Texas Foundation has spent the past four years tracking CPCs in Texas. Last summer, our investigative visits to Central Texas CPCs found the following:

### Taxpayer-funded CPCs violate standards of the Charitable Choice Act:

- 67% of CPCs visited offered either prayer or religious counseling, despite federal Charitable Choice Act regulations and the TPCN’s claims that their service providers must “agree not to promote the teaching or philosophy of any religion while providing services to the client.”
- One center maintains a connection to Care Net, a national organization whose mission is to “promote a culture of life through the delivery of... evangelistic ministry to people facing unplanned pregnancies and related sexual issues.”

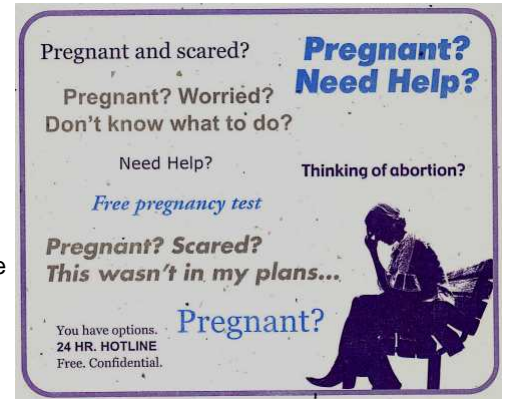
### Taxpayer-funded CPCs endanger women’s health by propagating medical misinformation:

- 100% of the CPCs visited referenced a link between abortion and breast cancer, in spite of statements from numerous leading medical organizations (such as the National Cancer Institute) which state that there is no relationship between induced abortion and a subsequent higher risk for breast cancer. One center even claimed that a woman’s risk of breast cancer is increased by 35% after an abortion.
- 100% of CPCs visited described a fictional “post-abortion stress” syndrome. The American Psychological Association does not recognize “post-abortion stress syndrome” and, as reported by Reuters in 2008, “no high-quality study done to date can document that having an abortion causes psychological distress, or a ‘post-abortion syndrome.’”
- 67% of CPCs visited told investigators that condoms are not effective in stopping the spread of STDs, despite scientific and medical evidence that condoms are effective in preventing the sexual transmission of STDs, including HIV.

### Taxpayer-funded CPC’s are controversial:

- A woman was shown pictures of a fetus while a “counselor” explained that the fetus had a heart beat and was beating at the moment. (The woman had not yet taken a pregnancy test.)
- One “counselor” asked the woman to imagine “putting a vacuum up there” and asked her, “Doesn’t that seem like it would cause damage?”
- One center told an investigator that a woman was built to have children—it would be unnatural to terminate a pregnancy because a woman’s purpose is to bear children.

**What you can do:** Have you or anyone you know visited a crisis pregnancy center? Contact us to let us know about your experience. Help spread the word about this controversial program by writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper—we can help you out with tips and talking points. And make sure you’re on our mailing list so you’ll receive all the up-to-the-minute news and action items about CPC-related bills during the 2011 legislative session. Let’s stop state funding for biased, medically inaccurate CPCs!



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