

Spring/Summer 2021

*Our mission: Help people learn to value life from conception to death and receive God's love, forgiveness, and gift of eternal life.*

## Leadership Spotlight



Ira Lupanova is our post abortion ministry director. This ministry conducts 10-week small groups using the "Forgiven & Set Free" Bible study. We currently have 6 active group leaders, and they lead 2-3 groups every spring and fall in different parts of Odessa. This spring 5 women completed the study. The ministry began the end of 2011 when Carolyn Rice took a group of ladies through the study. She later returned to train group leaders. Although Ira never had an abortion herself, during her years of ministry as a pastor's wife she saw how often past abortions continued to cause emotional & spiritual needs in women. God burdened her to participate in the first group leader training and in 2014 she was appointed as the director of this ministry. She coordinates the groups, encourages & helps the group leaders, and organizes training events. Ira's husband Alexander planted and continues to pastor a church in a small town just outside of Odessa. They have 4 children and 4 grandchildren. Their love for people and heart for evangelism is evident in every aspect of their ministry.

We rejoice in God's working in & through the ministry of Choose Life. We are grateful for faithful prayer & financial support and for the volunteers who sacrificially give their time to serve in this ministry. In June we held our annual volunteer appreciation picnic for volunteers and their families. It is a day of rejoicing in what God is doing in the ministry, fellowshiping, and enjoying time together. We currently have close to 50 active volunteers serving in various aspects of the ministry.



In April 10 new volunteers complete our training seminar.

The **Women's Center** volunteers continue to conduct some counseling by phone, but most clients are now able to come to the center. Despite COVID, we had almost the same number of new clients in 2020 as we did in 2019. In 2020, 24 babies were born to clients. Four were born to mothers who were initially very abortion minded and many others to mothers who we consider abortion vulnerable

due to difficult life circumstances. There were 476 one on one meetings with clients in 2020, and at least 15 of those clients were studying the Story of Hope with their counselor. Others were involved in parenting or marriage courses. We also continued to have small group prenatal classes. We have not yet gathered statistics for 2021 but are on track to see similar if not greater numbers. To God be the glory!

### **Stories of God at Work**

*“L” was referred to the center by a believing friend when she found out she was pregnant for the 4<sup>th</sup> time. She was very seriously considering abortion for many reasons. Praise the Lord she chose to give life to her little girl. She worked one on one with a counselor to complete a parenting class as well as the Story of Hope and Way to Joy Bible studies. The center helped her family with some of their physical needs such as diapers, food products, and clothing. She also maintained contact with the believing friend who referred her to us and began regularly attending her church. She has now accepted Christ and is currently preparing for baptism.*

*Recently our post abortion healing ministry leaders conducted a group for women who had miscarriages in their past. One of the ladies in the group had one miscarriage and was never able to get pregnant again. She at one time really struggled with her infertility but had come to a point of peace believing that through ministry to recovering addicts God had given her many spiritual children. While working through the course, she came to realize that she also was the mother of a biological child who was currently with the Lord, but who she would see someday. She said realizing that she truly is a mother brought her great joy & healing for her heart.*



Our **abstinence teaching team** has had several opportunities to speak to teens this year in youth clubs, camps, and youth groups. This has allowed our core group of teachers to fine tune our lessons and to begin preparing to train others in this ministry. We had a young man join our team when we trained new ministry volunteers in April. This is an answer to prayer!

### **Specific Prayer Needs**

**Post-Abortion Ministry:** Ministry Director Ira Lupanova. Pray for the formation of new groups this fall.

**Women’s Center:** Director Luba Abramova. New Assistant Director Tanya Geresimchyk. Pray for the salvation of clients currently studying the Story of Hope. Luba will be in the states for several months, pray for Tanya and Holly as they take over her responsibilities.

**Youth Ministry:** Ministry Director Holly Friesen. Pray for God to prepare one of the teachers to lead this ministry. Pray for fall teaching opportunities and for wisdom as we begin training additional teachers.

**Choose Life Board:** Board chairman Pastor Igor Kucher. Pray for wisdom as we work on some needed changes to our official paperwork.

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**Do you want to know more about “Choose Life”?** Check out our website: [www.ukrainemedical.abwe.org](http://www.ukrainemedical.abwe.org)

Sign up to receive this newsletter by e-mail by writing Holly Friesen at [esperanza@abwe.cc](mailto:esperanza@abwe.cc)

**To support the ministry of “Choose Life”,** send gifts to ABWE account # 0757353 by mail or online at [www.abwe.org](http://www.abwe.org)

ABWE P.O. Box 8585, Harrisburg, PA 17105-8585

Holly Friesen, President of Choose Life – [esperanza@abwe.cc](mailto:esperanza@abwe.cc)

Miriam Wheeler, MD, founder & advisory board member– [mrwheeler@abwe.cc](mailto:mrwheeler@abwe.cc)

