

## New Director, Same Direction

**B**irthright of Columbia has its first paid, full-time Director! It is a position that was newly created to better help the pregnant girl or woman while supporting the efforts of the office volunteers. Amy Gill-Horton was hired based on a decision made by the hiring committee, consisting of the members of the Board of Directors. Sally and Hank Chardos founded Birthright of Columbia 32 years ago and will be looking to Amy now to lead the office volunteers. Amy started working in her new position on December 19th 2011. Sally and Hank will be continuing their volunteer work at Birthright.

Amy and her husband Brian recently moved back to her husband's home state of South Carolina to be closer to family after living away in Alaska and the Midwest for many years. She comes to Birthright with a background of working for non-profit organizations and has a passion for volunteer-led service projects.

While in Alaska, Amy was employed by Girl Scout councils and often traveled to rural areas to set up Girl Scout troops and hold day camp events. She most enjoyed meeting people from diverse cultures throughout the state and designing and leading a series of Women in Aviation events for teen girls and a British Girl Guide exchange.

Although this work provided educational activities and was enjoyable, Amy had a desire to be involved in a more service-oriented setting, assisting people dealing with challenging situations. During her time in Indiana she volunteered for a women's shelter as a crisis line attendant and after moving to South Carolina, was drawn to volunteer at Birthright when she heard an announcement at St. Peter's Catholic Church that Birthright was in need of office volunteers.

Amy's new role at Birthright assists volunteers with providing ongoing, one-on-one support to women and girls distressed by unplanned pregnancies and finding alternatives for clients who may see abortion as their only solution. She looks forward to increasing the visibility of Birthright in the community and volunteer participation.



*Amy Gill-Horton, Director, Birthright of Columbia*

Amy grew up in Louisiana and earned a degree in Journalism from Northwestern State University in Louisiana in 1991. For a short time before moving to Alaska, she worked as a writer and photographer for television and print news media. She later earned a M.A. degree in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Amy and her husband are active parishioners at St. Peter's Catholic Church in Columbia. They enjoy traveling to historical sites and interpretive events at state and national parks and outdoor excursions with family.

Needless to say, Birthright of Columbia will always remain the core of volunteers that makes Birthright so special. Birthright of Columbia is truly blessed to have had Amy as an office volunteer and now, as our new Director.

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# USC Student Makes a Difference

*Below are the thoughts of a student who made time to volunteer at the office:*



*Iciar Bravo, USC Exchange Student*

I am Iciar Bravo, an exchange student at USC. I am 21 and I used to live with my family in Paraguay, in the middle of South America. I have a big family with two brothers and two sisters, all younger than me (Mariano, 20; Ana, 16; Alvaro, 15; and Ines, 11)

My Dad is the greatest man I know. He is an engineer and also a business man. He taught me that I should always try to be better and he always supported me in all my decisions. But the thing I like the most about him is the love he has for my mother. This is something I will always try to have in my family.

My Mom is an amazing woman. She is a fashion designer. She started building her own business when I was born. She has been an example for me in every aspect of my life. I want to make her feel proud of me.

The value of family is very important to me, they are my

support and I know that I can always count on them. Thanks to them, I felt the confidence that I needed to reach my goals.

Three years ago I decided to follow in my mom's footsteps by majoring in fashion design. But the good universities were all in Buenos Aires, so I moved there by myself to start my career and attend the University of Palermo. Then I decided to study abroad a semester in Columbia, SC to improve my English. The first thing I did when I arrived here was to look for a Catholic church. This is how I found St. Thomas More and I met a beautiful group of students there. It was very easy to make friends, especially because people here are really nice. That's how I also met Erin Farrell, a freshman at USC. She was the one who told me about Birthright and the opportunity of being a volunteer there, and I just loved the idea. I always thought that God talks to you through other people and this was definitely something that God was asking me to do. In Buenos Aires, the government is trying to make abortion legal and there is a big group of people trying to stop that. I feel committed to help this cause because I know women need help. We need to do something to protect our values, no-one is going to do it for us.

When I first went to Birthright and met the other volunteers, I was impressed by how comfortable I felt. It just felt like home. And just seeing how they took care of us at the training sessions was enough to know how we should take care of the women who come looking for help. During my hours working there, I had the opportunity not only to help people, but to get to know the volunteers working with me. They were an example for me of how to live.

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Helping every person that came to us was hard, but also a great experience. Sometimes I felt very happy with the women who were glad with their situations, but other times when I got calls from women thinking about abortion, I just felt so small and I realized that we are only instruments and in those moments the only thing to do is pray and let God take care of it.

I want to thank Birthright for giving me the chance to experience love, to be part of this family, and for teaching me that we always have the chance to make better decisions.

We would like to thank Ichi for the wonderful gift of herself!

## A Special Thank You

When Sally Chardos was browsing around The Furniture Place in Rock Hill, SC, she began a conversation with the owner and father of the store's manager. Perry Brown is managing the store while his son is recovering from an illness. The conversation turned to Birthright and its mission. Mr. Brown, who has dedicated his life to missionary work in Haiti, Nicaragua, and other Third World countries, insisted on donating furniture to Birthright. Thanks to Mr. Brown, Birthright's Columbia office now has a new love seat and two chairs!

Please remember Mr. Brown in your thoughts and prayers as he is preparing to return to Nicaragua soon to help feed starving children. Our gratitude goes to him and The Furniture Place for the kind contribution.

The Furniture Place is located at 2260 Cherry Road, Rock Hill, SC 29732.



## Birthright's Open House Celebration

**Birthright of Columbia will be celebrating its 32nd Anniversary with an Open House! Join us on Sunday, February 12th from 1 – 4 p.m. at our office. Learn more about Birthright and opportunities to help. Refreshments will be served. Birthright of Columbia is one of 350 chapters that exist worldwide. Birthright was founded by Louise Summerhill in 1969. There are four other chapters in South Carolina. Bring your family and friends for a pleasant afternoon.**

## Gone Green

If you would like to receive the next Newsletter via email,

please send us your email address to:

**BirthrightOfColumbia@gmail.com**

This saves resources and still allows you to read the newsletter at your leisure.

Birthright respects your privacy and does not sell nor rent our email address list.

# Wish List

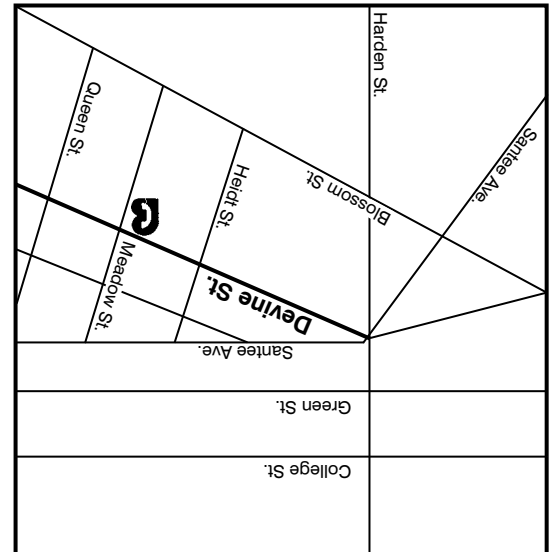
- Baby wash cloths, bath towels and bibs
- Crib blankets and sheets
- Disposable diapers (Newborn and size 1), wipes and ointment
- Hypoallergenic baby wash and lotion
- Infant gowns and sleepers (0-3 months)
- Maternity clothes

*Please consider hosting a baby shower for these much needed items.*

*All donations, new or gently used, are tax-deductible.  
Birthright does not accept car seats, cribs or other furniture.*



*Loving, compassionate, completely confidential help. "It is the right of every pregnant woman to give birth, and the right of every child to be born."*



1405 Gregg Street  
Columbia, SC 29201  
803.765.0-165  
www.BirthrightOfColumbia.org

**BIRTHRIGHT** of Columbia

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