



# PREPARES

## Pregnancy & Parenting Support

Spring Newsletter 2021



## Spring is in the Air!

Spring is in the air! Almost imperceptibly, the days have been getting longer. Immigrant robins from Guatemala are arriving, scouting out sites to build softly lined nests in which to raise their babies. The mother will incubate the eggs, and then the father will help feed them--you knew this. But, did you know that house finches have been seen also feeding the baby robins? This is good, because a clutch of three eats about 100 meals a day!

Human mothers and fathers also rely on the community to help them through the demanding first five years of their children's lives. Grandparents get involved, and often friends with children of similar ages. Everything goes better with a good support system.

But sometimes, the support isn't there. Maybe Grandma lives in Texas, or the new mother faces a mountain of other challenges that complicate her situation. Poor health and insufficient income are two common crises that make raising a thriving child difficult.



The community can still contribute. PREPARES volunteers, Catholic parishioners who have a heart for sustaining life, help by listening, by searching out resources, by playing with the baby so the mother can study – all the things friends do for each other. Volunteers and the families they serve often become friends, after so much close contact.

PREPARES of central Washington is now working in several parishes in the Spokane Diocese. The first referral the Okanogan parishes under Father Luta received was Amber (not her real name). Amber is a single mother with a 14-month old little girl who had nowhere to live. She moved from shelter to shelter, from couch to couch. When she reached the PREPARES team, Amber reported that she was on a housing waitlist and requested simply for prayers that she and her daughter could get into an apartment soon. The Okanogan volunteers gathered and discussed how they might be able to help Amber. Volunteer Lupe honored Amber's request of prayer by making sure a Mass would be offered for her at Immaculate Conception in Oroville. Alyssa volunteered to be her family companion, and would keep reaching out to her to see how she was doing.

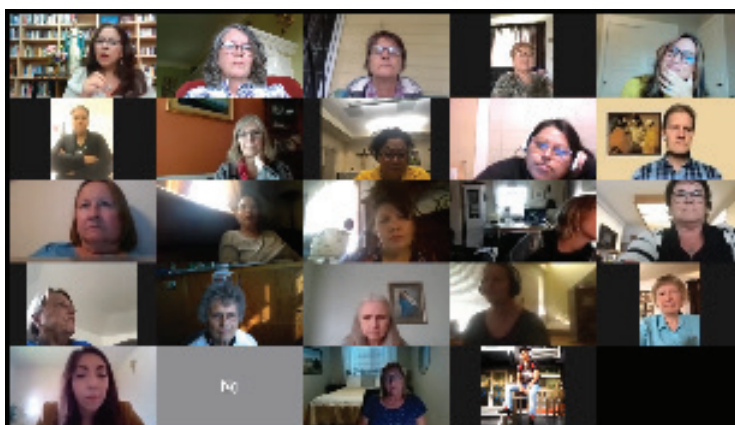
In a few days, the volunteers gathered some resources. There was space for Amber to stay in a trailer, and a community organization would be willing to pay her rent. Amber was very happy to hear the news and stayed there a couple nights, until she learned that she could now move into an apartment. The same community organization that offered to pay her rent at the trailer offered to pay her rent at her new apartment.

Amber and her daughter have been wrapped in the arms of Catholic service. Prayer, friendship, and an outpouring of material support to help her take care of her little one. Thank you, Okanogan County Catholics!

## Sacred Space

What a blessing it has been to get together with volunteers once a month. We created Sacred Space to build community amongst our broader network of new and seasoned volunteers and support continued learning of effective companionship. We share a guided reflection, and talk about ways to prepare for the encounter with families. The fact that experienced volunteers can answer questions from newer people makes the experience so rich!

On the third Thursday, we gather through Zoom at 4:30. If you have not yet made it to our monthly sacred space, or you are not receiving reminders, let us know by calling us at 509-946-4645, and we will get you on the mailing list.



## Faith and the Common Good (from Catholic Charities USA)

It is an unlikely and sad anniversary to mark, but we have now reached a year of quarantining and shut down due to COVID-19. Most importantly, we must also remember the more than 530,000 Americans lost this past year. We mourn them with their families, and we honor all of our essential workers. We also remember scores of individuals have lost jobs and large parts of their income. We thank the staff and volunteers at the Catholic Charities agencies who have continued to provide services during this year to serve those most in need.

### Prayer for a Pandemic

May we who are merely inconvenienced remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips remember those that have no place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home remember those who have no home.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other, let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbors.

*Amen.*

## Letter from staff

*Hello, dear volunteers and friends of PREPARES!*

Are the crocuses blooming in your neighborhood? As the flowers open, and the days lengthen, and more people are vaccinated, we can't wait to open up PREPARES. There are playgroups we want to see active again, and volunteers are looking forward to being able to socialize with families in person. Soon, we hope!

Speaking of groups, we have a new staff member. Olivia Valle will be facilitating support groups and play groups in the Yakima valley. Many of you will get to know her, as she assists with the ministry. Olivia is from California, and now lives in the Tri-Cities. We are so glad to have her join the team!

**Your PREPARES team,**

*Sandra Barrós, Ann Dibble, Alma Gonzales, Syndee Saucedo Cavazos, Olivia Valle*



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