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Introduction to the MRGE

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Professor Pittman

Comp II

29 April 2015

Introduction to the MGRE

There is a vital reason and purpose for taking the precious gift of time to discuss a fundraiser for the Pregnancy Resource Center. The Center is vital to the Clark County community, possibly even the communities surrounding it, and ultimately our world. But those who wish to brighten the future can, indeed, take an opportunity today to be a part of a hopeful mission.

The Pregnancy Resource Center in Arkadelphia has sought to alleviate these women's fears of motherhood through what I believe is the only meaningful way. The Pregnancy Resource Center offers all women a chance to look at other ways to deal with unwanted pregnancy instead of abortion, such as offering them tools, encouragement, and concepts to equip them to raise their child, or giving them an opportunity to allow someone to adopt their child. In this organization men and women will find help in the midst of a scary time. Lately though, The Pregnancy Resource Center has been in need of funding. They are a non-profit organization, so all of their resources go to those who come seeking help. This is great, because clients coming in know that people are really volunteering and they are there to help, but if there is not enough money coming in to keep the doors open, these women will not have a place to go. This is why I am presenting an annual Ball for Life, where a community can come together to raise money for this cause.

That is where local businesses, universities, and churches can play a crucial role. Businesses and churches are needed to fund the Ball for Life in areas such as decorations, and also items to be donated so they can be auctioned off during the Ball. The area of music could fall to churches, businesses, and universities. There are plenty of musicians in Arkadelphia and this could be an opportunity to use it as a service, and possibly get one's name out in the public. I was thinking that

both universities have beautiful rooms in which to host the event, so if they were open to it, they could hold it. If not, then perhaps one of the churches would have a large enough area to host the event.

To rally businesses, churches, and the colleges, I would send out invitations to the owners, pastors, and presidents of these places and ask them to meet with me and each other at Second Baptist Church. I would then present my proposal with a slideshow, and a prepared speech to go along with the slides. Hopefully by informing community leaders, and convincing them to get on board with the fundraising event, I'll be able to have a sure foundation to get started on.

Ball for Life

Fifty years ago in the United States, the elderly were the group most concentrated on when it came to poverty. But since then, laws and policies have been drawn up, the elderly (in context of poverty) are not the ones Americans should be concerned about anymore. Presently, it's our children. The topic of this presentation probably came across purely as Pro-Life. You would not be wrong in assuming that, but I and the Pregnancy Resource Center not only want children to have a chance at life, but for them and their mothers to be able to actually *live*.

To begin explaining the challenges for children here in the United States, let's start at point A. Since 1973, America has legalized abortion. I am not here to discuss, but to persuade, so forgive me if I seem blunt, but I do not want to waste your time, so I will not trifle with the issue. First of all, abortion is the ending of a human life. It is general knowledge that around eighteen days after conception the heart of a human fetus begins to beat. Most women do not even know they are pregnant until long after eighteen days, so therefore, abortion stops a beating heart. The abortion industry has had some revealing stories come out lately causing people to see that they are not as safe as they seem. For instance, Dr. Steven C. Brigham has had complaints dating back to the 1990s about abortions he's performed, and one young African-American girl had to be airlifted because of an abortion gone wrong. Also, he would sometimes begin abortions in New Jersey, and then finish it in Maryland if it was a late-term abortion (Goldberg). If abortion doctors are in this business for the mother, then why are they putting her at risk? Pro-Choicers would say that they are driven to this extreme because there are too many laws by Pro-Lifers and that these laws are too confining. But, many people, over the past forty years have begun to see the effects abortion has had on our nation. The loss of value for human life can be many among them, and broken lives seem to be more broken after a mother ends her pregnancy.

Among those who have woke up to the reality of the brokenness abortion causes are some who have formerly worked for Planned Parenthood, an advocate of the pro-choice movement. Abby

Johnson was formerly employed by Planned Parenthood. She has had two abortions herself, and she assisted in an abortion (Downs, par. 1). How did she, a woman who had gone all the way (twice!), turn around and retrace her stance? It was pro-life advocates who showed her kindness and opened her up to a whole new view. She always wanted to help women and children. The difference is, she has changed the way she goes about it. Sue Thayer, who for seventeen years was a Planned Parenthood center manager was fired for questioning the motives behind Planned Parenthood's increasing of abortions. She was starting to wonder if their goal was really trying to help women (Downs, par. 2). Modern science and now over forty years of personal experiences have been a voice in the pro-life movement. The lives of tigers (and no, I'm not talking about the Ouachita tigers) are being fought for, the eggs of eagles protected, but why not human life? Why can we see that there are live eagles in those eggs, but not see that there are live humans in the womb?

This leads me into discussing how I felt after going to Planned Parenthood's website. I am a nineteen-year-old college student. I have had friends that have been pregnant at undesirable times, and to be a better friend, I have tried to put myself in their shoes, to understand the situation a bit more. This is what I tried to do when I visited Planned Parenthood's website. I googled it, imagined I was pregnant in my current situation, a freshman in college, no husband, no substantial income, embarrassed, and alone, and looking for options. I found my way to an article on the website called, "I'm Pregnant. Now What?" I read that I had three options. I believe they were categorized alphabetically, but the first option presented was abortion. While I was reading the brief explanation, it seemed like a common sense, easy option. "Abortion does not cause long-term depression or mental health problems" (*Planned Parenthood*). The next two options were adoption or becoming a parent. These two, in contrast of the first option, are presented as having long-lasting effects, especially negative. With that in mind, one can sense there is a possible bias from this organization, and women (and children) deserve to have another place that can specialize in providing them help.

Places like the Pregnancy Resource Center can do just that. I took a small survey of ten students, some of which attend Ouachita and Henderson, and out of the ten students there were nine that said they were Pro-Life, one of whom said the only time abortion was acceptable was at the first few weeks when a woman conceived in a non-consensual circumstance. Only one of the ten said they were Pro-Choice. This survey consisted of five females and five males. There were four white males, and one black male, along with three white females, one black female, and one female of Hispanic descent. Also, two of the ten surveyed were not from the South, to guarantee I was getting diverse voices. This was a small survey, but I believe it reflects a large portion of my generation. Because of this, those who are pro-life need places to serve their cause, and people who are pro-life but find themselves in a difficult pregnancy or an even undesired pregnancy, need pro-life alternatives. They not only need that, but they need options that provide opportunity for a quality living experience.

Public policies have shaped America in two ways, mainly in the past forty years and these policies have affected the quality of life for children in an indirect way. The first way they have shaped our nation is they have aided the elderly, such as the Medicare and Medicaid programs, but have neglected our children. Bob Beckel is a liberal democrat strategist and Cal Thomas is a conservative columnist and yet, they somehow find common ground in a solution to children's poverty. They discuss that since the 1960s, the children in America, not the elderly, suffer the most from poverty. Poverty is seen in 22% more of children's lives today in the United States than in the 1960s. These two both agree that it probably the best way to alleviate poverty in children's lives is to have faith based and/or community based agencies tackle this issue (Beckel and Thomas). Beckel points out that many children suffering from poverty are those who have single mothers.

A story of a young Memphis woman and her nurse provide a tangible example of how much aid many of our young women need. This nurse made home visits, drove her to appointments, and taught her mothering techniques that this young woman had no access to. The young mom had no

one who was around to drive her to the hospital when she was in labor, let alone teach how to take care of her baby. Her family was less than helpful or supporting (Tavernise). There are many out there in our community today that are similar to the young Memphis woman. In the South, teen pregnancies are most prevalent. Arkansas, among the worst has about 50 pregnant teen girls for every 1,000 teen females (The Associated Press). Many young girls are still financially dependent on their families and are limited to what their parents can do for them. In 2013, Arkansas was the second most impoverished state in the United States (Hoffmeyer). It is likely our women, along with their children, are needing assistance, and being there for them during pregnancy is just the beginning, but it could be the most crucial stage. The average age of clients aided at the Center are 20-29 years old, and many are unmarried, although they have helped eight married couples. Like the young mother from Memphis received aid in ways such as transportation to doctor's appointments, and instructions and advice for motherhood, women in the Clark county area can receive the same help through the Pregnancy Resource Center. The Center provides parenting and nutrition classes, along with two different Bible studies (Carozza). These studies give women a time to go through emotional and spiritual aspects of their lives with someone else and to gain encouragement and wisdom.

Hopefully by now, I have shed more light on the need for an organization that has already aided so many, and has been a part of the reason seven abortion-minded women have changed their minds and in the process changed their lives, and the world (Carozza). Now, I would like to discuss how the Pregnancy Resource Center has asked for help. The Pregnancy Resource Center is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization and survives on donations.

A study by *American Journal of Sociology* shows that presently, donors are now more in control and have a louder voice in how their contributions are being used. In the past, it was the fundraiser who knew about where the money was going and controlled that aspect of the event. Donors gave, and left the rest to the fundraisers. With the donors being more engaged with the

fundraising dynamic, it is more likely people will want to give when they have a say or feel that they can see the difference of their donations (Barman). With this dynamic, donors are able to donate along with other donors, and meet others who have at least one passion in common. This creates a stronger community environment. This issues reaches across demographics, economics, gender, race, denominations, and religion.

This is why I chose to have an annual community event to raise money to support the Pregnancy Resource Center. An annual event causes excitement and gives people a social event to look forward to, while also making them feel good about themselves, because come on, giving always makes us feel like a better people! Plus, donors can come and see exactly how their money is being spent and also help construct the event, if they wish to be a part of that area of the Ball. The Ball for Life would raise money two ways. First, the tickets that would be purchased to get in, and secondly, through the silent auction. That means we need a space to hold the event, chairs, tables, and decorations. Next, we need restaurants to donate food for the dinner. Then, we need individuals and businesses to donate items for the auction. We also need music. There are plenty of musicians in Arkadelphia and this could be an opportunity to use it as a service, and possibly get one's name out in the public. Lastly, it would be great to have one speaker. I fear if there were more than one, people would see it more as a meeting than a fun fundraiser, but also, I fear if we don't have a speaker at all, that there would be time to really take in what the purpose of the Ball was. Someone maybe like Dawn Eden has been hurt, possibly gone through an abortion, and help bring the whole evening into context of the big picture (*A Measure of Justice*). Not only is the PRC there to help families but to bring healing through love from those working at the center. Hopefully starting with community leaders like yourselves, I'll be able to have a sure foundation to get started on.

Let me give you an example of another area that has held a similar event for a cause that parallels the Pregnancy Resource Center's cause. Grant County holds a similar event that the

community looks forward to every year, and this is for their Women's Shelter, who each client coming in brings a child with them. They provide education such as parenting classes, as does the Pregnancy Resource Center. It is something for families to come to, and to socialize, while giving to those in need in the community. They also, have food and a silent auction and have been very successful over the years, one year reaching \$6,000 (Bunch). All of that money was raised because people in the community were willing to unite to help a neighbor.

Hebrews 10:24 states, "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." I wish to invoke in you a spirit of servitude driven by love. The Resource Center first asks for your prayers. Next, the Center asks for volunteers. Hands-on work, and most of all giving one's time is challenging, but it is so rewarding. Lastly, the Center request financial aid. The Ball for Life would affect the Pregnancy Resource Center mainly in the financial area, but I believe the Ball would also encourage volunteer recruits, and through the Ball, the community would be opened up to all that the Center does for our community, and this would encourage those present to place the Center in their prayers. A community can thrive from serving together. Friendships can be made, broken lives restored, and life made sweeter by serving together. A wise young man, Mattie Stepanek, who had a muscular disease and died at the age of fourteen once said, "Unity is strength... when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved" (Stepanek). I know this to be true, and I cannot imagine a better way to serve than with our neighbors *for* our neighbors.

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