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Audra Popik
Executive Director

Betty Barlow
Clinical Director

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Dear Friends of Oaks,

I remember the day that I said "yes, Lord I want to give my life to you." I was filled with a love that I never had experienced before but that my heart was looking for. How do you say thank you for all that God has done? The way that Stan & I said thank you was to give our home to the Lord. He brought into our home children who needed a family, pregnant teens, women who were battered in need of protection and a place to heal. What a joy to see lives changed just through the little that we could provide. We wanted to do more because the needs we saw in our community were great. Thirteen years ago we shared our desire with a few friends and Oaks Family Care Center was born.

We believed that by uniting with others we could touch even more lives with the message of God's love expressed in practical ways. We trusted God to meet the financial needs and He has been faithful! The first year we provided help to 200 individuals. Three years after opening we added a Satellite in Lodi, and between the two facilities we meet with over 2300 clients a year. This shows a 1000% increase in the number of people to whom we are providing services. Multiply this number by five or more times that each client comes in and the increase is beyond any expectations that we had when our doors opened in 1998. This is about God working through the lives of many volunteers and supporters who are sharing their time and talents to help those in crisis. My heart continues to rejoice seeing God at work!

A new chapter has opened in my life. In October I was diagnosed with severe heart damage from a virus. God still has work for me to do and lives to touch, but the energy needed to maintain the smooth functioning of a ministry that is so large is beyond my physical ability. It is time to "pass the baton" to a younger person. With the help of a Search Committee God has provided a very qualified and talented person to take the role of Executive Director. February 22, 2010 the baton will be passed to Audra Popik who will become the next Executive Director of Oaks Family Care Center. Audra is a licensed social worker who is coming to us from Cleveland Clinic, Fairview Hospital and is working on a Master's degree in counseling from Ashland Theological Seminary. She also worked as a Help Me Grow Service Coordinator screening children for developmental milestones. Audra also was employed at Berea Children's Home in Adoption and Foster Care and also as a partial hospitalization worker. Before going to Berea Children's Home she was a Foster Care Social Worker at Applewood Centers in Cleveland. She has experience working with the legal/court system, schools, health care and community services. Audra has a heart for missions and sharing God's love with those she meets. It will be a joy to work with her to maintain the vision and mission of the ministry of Oaks.

My role will be as the Clinical Director focusing on the counseling and healing areas of the ministry. I will have more time to train and support volunteers, supervise our counselors and provide counseling and educational groups.

This is an exciting time and I am grateful to be a part of this transition. The organization is strong because of the leadership provided by the Board of Directors, Advisory Board, staff and volunteers. I believe that Oaks will become even stronger in the next year because of the changes that are being made. The year 2010 is about change – not all the changes I see in our world bring me confidence; however, this change is about God and therefore I have great confidence in what He is doing and the people He is working through. The message that I have shared since the inception of Oaks is "that it isn't about me but about us working together for God's kingdom!" I welcome Audra to "us" in her new position.

Blessings,

Betty