

GENERATING RESPECT FOR HUMAN LIFE

By R.T. Byrum



A picture widely circulated on the Internet showed a close-up of the hand of a surgeon who had just finished repairing the faulty heart valve of a fetus still in the womb. Reaching out of the mother's incision was the tiny arm and hand of the yet-to-be-born baby, its perfectly formed fingers wrapped around the surgeon's index finger.

The unmistakable message to those who saw the unforgettable image was that a living human being was awaiting his or her opportunity to come to full term, to be born into the world, to make a contribution and to be able to enjoy the same benefits enjoyed by those of us who were given life.

The Vitae (pronounced Vee'-Tay) Caring Foundation is a pro-life organization whose mission is to generate a greater respect for unborn human life, primarily through television and radio advertising campaigns and speaking engagements. The organization is constantly developing programs

tailored to the regions in which they are active, including the top 25 American media markets such as Atlanta, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Los Angeles, New York, Seattle, St. Louis and Dallas. Each city presents a different challenge based on how the local culture regards pro-life versus pro-choice.

Vitae Partners with Georgia Right-to-Life

In Atlanta, Vitae has partnered with the Georgia Right-to-Life in a two-fold television advertising campaign that reaches out to women in unplanned pregnancies who are open to abortion. Vitae presents thought-provoking messages to men and women who consider themselves to be "pro-choice."

Specifically, Vitae's "call-for-help" ads include Option Line's toll free helpline number (1-800-395-HELP)—a number that pregnant women can call to find a local pregnancy resource center and the help they need to choose life for their babies. Vitae's "attitude-changing" commercials target pro-choice hearts and minds and move them toward pro-life values. The preliminary results of the

recent Atlanta campaign are impressive, with thousands of calls to the helpline number coming in over the course of a few months.

Vitae History and Operation

Christian Living Magazine spoke with Carl Landwehr, VCF President; Debbie Stokes, Executive Vice President;



Lifesaver... Puts a face on abortion.



Crowd... Listen to your inner voice.

Thomas Cronquist, Vice President-Eastern Region; and Noah Hanson, Marketing Director for Atlanta, to learn about the history and operation of the organization.

Vitae Caring Foundation was started 12 years ago in Jefferson City, Missouri by a number of community leaders, including Carl Landwehr and Janet Ashcroft, wife of former Attorney General, John Ashcroft. (Janet continues to serve on the Board of Trustees.)

"This group of dedicated individuals wanted to deal with pro-life issues in a greater way," said Landwehr, "and together we asked the question, 'How would you market the product of life, if that was your business?'"

The general consensus was to use the media, specifically television. Through research funded by a generous grant from Peter and JoDee Herschend of the

Silver Dollar City Foundation, specific messages were uncovered that could impact abortion-minded women. A series of ads were developed incorporating those messages, and the plan was put into action.

Results and Recommendations

Cronquist tells of a pregnant woman in Atlanta who saw one of Vitae's ads and was so moved that she decided to keep her baby. In fact, she contacted Georgia Right-to-Life and wanted to be a volunteer for the organization. Those at Vitae are convinced that such pro-life victories are due to the non-judgmental, thought-provoking nature of their ads, which end with the tagline, "Think About It."

Using another approach, VP Conquist schedules engagements at churches and other organizations, where the ads are shown as part of the program in order to introduce Vitae's work.

Sean Hannity, Co-Host of Fox News Channel's *Hannity & Colmes*, said of the program, "The Vitae Caring Foundation is at the forefront of where this movement needs to go, and I really applaud you. You're changing minds, you're changing hearts and the world is a better place because of your vision."

Dr. Laura Schlessinger, psychologist and radio personality, added, "I am a great fan of the (Vitae Caring Foundation) ads. They use an intelligent, thoughtful approach to speak to women in crisis pregnancies in a way that doesn't threaten or badger them, but persuasively points out that there are other options besides abortion."

Anyone who is interested in learning more about Vitae or who would like to contribute to the cause of the unborn may contact the organization by mail, phone or website at the addresses listed below. The success of reaching expectant mothers will be measured by the number of precious children for whom the choice is made for Vitae-Life.

Contact Information:
Vitae Caring Foundation
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