

The Refuge Center

TODAY IS
THE DAY TO
CHANGE
SOMEONE'S
TOMORROW.

October 2020

THE REFUGE CENTER
1307 Milstead Ave.
Conyers, GA 30012
RefugeConyers.org



The
Refuge
Center
PREGNANCY, FAMILY, & EDUCATION

**"THE LORD IS A REFUGE FOR THE OPPRESSED,
A STRONGHOLD IN TIMES OF TROUBLE."**

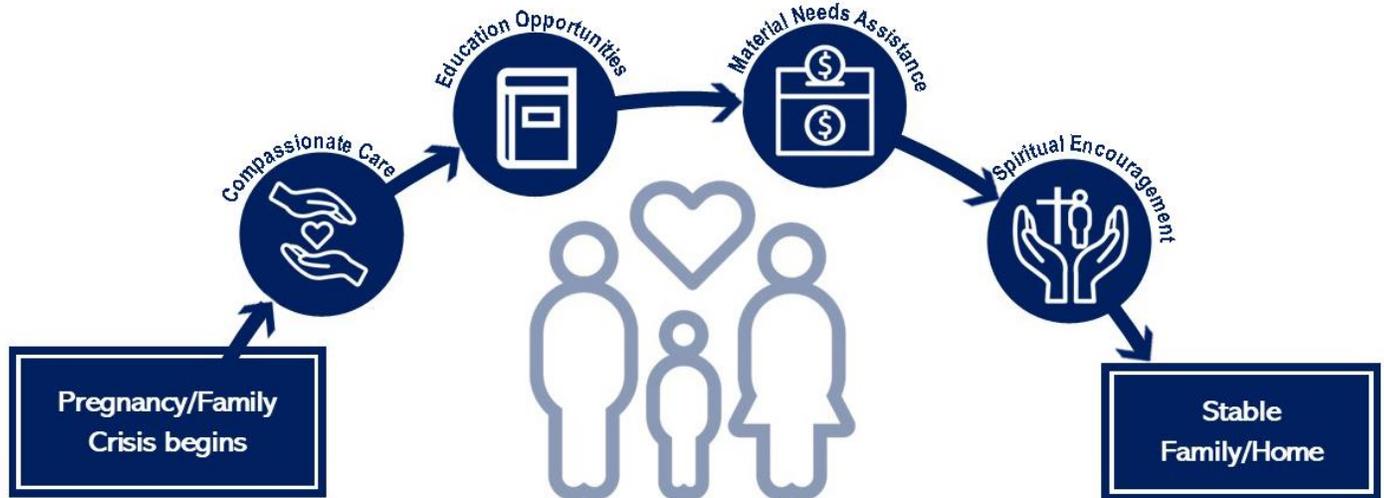
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The Refuge Impact

The Refuge Journey from Crisis to Confidence...One Family at a time...



Since our founding in 1984, when first becoming a registered 501c3 organization, The Refuge Center has existed to serve families with Christ-like compassion by offering support, guidance, and education in times of physical, emotional, and spiritual need for the purpose of promoting healthy pregnancy, birth, and lifestyle. Over the past 35 years we have had the following impact on our community:

- 63,656 client visits
- 14,145 positive pregnancy tests
- 9,305 babies born
- 23,942 material service visits
- 5,126 obstetric ultrasounds
- 72,485 encouragement phone calls, emails, or letters since 2004
- 761 Earn While You Learn Motherhood/Fatherhood classes
- 362 GED Students
- 69 people received healing from abortion trauma
- 16,379 clients received prayer, were encouraged to faith or had a spiritual discussion at Refuge since 2007

"Thank you so much. Slowly but surely everything is coming together. I am very thankful and blessed! I thank you so much for the prayers. We truly do need it and appreciate it."

Pregnancy Client

Our Daily Mission

The Refuge Center is a Christian organization providing services that promote healthy pregnancy, birth, and lifestyle to encourage abundant life for the entire family regardless of race, religion, or economic status.

The Road Behind Us *(History)*

The Refuge Center was developed by two local businessmen with a heart for the youth they served in their church. They were inspired by a woman who spoke to their youth group. She told them about the heartbreaking and difficult unplanned pregnancy she had experienced as a teen. That young woman vowed to reach as many people as God would allow and tell her story. Her goal was to help them make a different choice.

The Refuge Center (then named Refuge Crisis Pregnancy Center) opened its doors in a small shopping complex in Covington, Georgia. During our first year in operation we had a total of 115 visits. With only our founding director, Janice Olejnik, and a handful of volunteers, Refuge set out to let the mothers and fathers of the community know that God loves them and their unborn children.

Through the help and support of our community, Refuge now owns a building in the medical district in Conyers, Georgia. Over the years, we have expanded our space and program offerings to better serve our community. Since 1984, we have worked with over 27,000 women and men in our community averaging over 1,000 visits a year, promoting total family wellness.

Below is a timeline of the free programs we have implemented over the years:

- 1984 - Pregnancy tests and material assistance
- 1999 - Motherhood parenting classes
- 2000 - Post-abortion recovery classes for women and men
- 2001 - GED prep classes for women and men
- 2003 - Ultrasounds offered through our medical clinic
- 2016 - Job readiness training, in partnership with Ceek to Fulfill Foundation
- 2018 - Fatherhood mentoring sessions
- 2019 - Car Seat safety classes and free car seats, in partnership with Prevent Child Abuse Rockdale
- 2020 - Joining Restoration Storehouse coalition to expand and connect our clients with other needed services and support

"I don't know how we would've made it back then without the help of Refuge Pregnancy Center.

Thank you so much for your help."

Material Service Client

Challenges & Obstacles We Face

Community challenges

The Refuge Center is located physically in Conyers (Rockdale County), Georgia. We see clients from Rockdale, Newton, Dekalb, and Walton counties on a regular basis. In our immediate community, our clients face many challenges for raising a stable and prosperous family.

- 44% of households are living on less than \$50K/year or about 200% poverty level
- 26% of children (ages 0-21) live in poverty
- 47% of children in this community are living in a single parent home – 14% above the national average
- 50% or more of over 25-year-old population has achieved no more than a high school diploma or GED

Obstacles facing our clients

Research shows that “Unintended pregnancy remains most common among poor women, women of color and women without a high school education. Women living in poverty have a rate of unintended pregnancy five times higher than those with middle or high incomes.”¹ Our own data concludes that 91% of our clients live below the poverty level, making less than \$30K per year. Of our pregnancy clients, 83% intend to carry their child to term and parent them. However, most of the families we serve need some form of financial, emotional, educational, or spiritual support. Out of all our pregnancy clients, 17% of them feel that abortion is their only option. In these cases, Refuge offers solutions to help reach the goal of abortion avoidance. Our advocates strive to meet the practical needs of each client’s individual life situation. The obstacles facing families dealing with unintended pregnancies include but are not limited to:

- Poverty
- No family safety net
- Outside pressure to abort (father of child or parent)
- Lack of confidence for parenting
- Drug abuse
- Homelessness
- Relationship stress
- Job loss
- Education sacrifice
- Fatherlessness (generational)
- Financial stability for the future

¹ * <https://www.umassmed.edu/news/news-archives/2019/05/who-are-the-1-in-4-american-women-who-choose-abortion/>
Author: By Luu Ireland, MD

Today's Answers *(Programs & Services)*

The Refuge Center currently offers a variety of free programs and services to our community. Our goal is to foster a path of total family wellness. Refuge stresses the importance of health and wellness for parents and children: physically, emotionally, and spiritually. We are committed to providing support, encouragement, and education for the benefit of the entire family.

Throughout the years, we have made a point to listen intentionally to the community we serve and provide answers to the problems our clients face while adhering to the limitations of our budget. We have focused on three main areas of programs to meet the needs of our community: Pregnancy, Family, and Education.

Pregnancy *(approx. cost \$119K/year)*

- **Pregnancy Tests** - clinical grade tests administered by trained staff for early detection of pregnancy
- **Limited Obstetric Ultrasounds** - providing proof of pregnancy viability, gestational age of the baby, as well as the first step in a journey toward pre-natal care and a healthy delivery
- **Pregnancy Options Education** - one on one, confidential conversations to discuss individual situations and begin forming a plan. This may include referrals for care and promoting health and total wellness.
- **Post Abortion Recovery** - compassionate, non-judgmental counseling based on nationally recognized "HEART" biblical curriculum and "Surrender the Secret" program to promote healing and encourage emotional and spiritual health

Family *(approx. cost \$70K/year)*

- **Material Assistance** - food, clothing, diapers, and other necessities provided to those in need for pregnancy and children (newborn to 3 years old) to help provide financial stability for the family
- **Community Resource** - referrals to help resolve immediate family needs and promote wellness in crisis situations that are outside the scope of the Refuge programs

Education *(approx. cost \$108K/year)*

- **Practical Motherhood Parenting Class** - an incentive-based group class that educates new/expectant moms about the health, physical and emotional upbringing of their child to provide a firm foundation for future parenting success. In-person group sessions as well as on-line video courses provided.
- **Practical Fatherhood Mentoring** - an incentive-based mentoring program between trained fatherhood coaches and new or expectant fathers. This program is like the motherhood program in scope and goal but takes a more one on one approach. In person and on-line video options are available.
- **GED Tutoring** - hands-on individual help to complete high school diploma equivalency courses. This service is open to the public. We partner with Georgia Piedmont Technical College for testing

"I'm happy someone cared enough to pray with me and for me. Keep up the good work you guys. You give people hope."

Pregnancy Client

A Better Tomorrow *(Goals)*

Short Term

During FY 2021, The Refuge Center plans to move our physical location inside the Restoration Storehouse property. We will then be able to align more closely with other like-minded organizations in our community. This move will give us the freedom to openly collaborate with programs that will provide more complete care for the whole family. Our mission to “promote healthy pregnancy, birth, and lifestyle to encourage abundant life for the entire family” will fit perfectly into the overall mission of Restoration Storehouse, which is “to transform families from instability to sustainability.” (More details at RestorationStorehouse.org)

As part of the Restoration Storehouse collaboration, we will be able to immediately connect our clients with other services available in the community. These additional services can make a significant impact on a family’s journey to success and stability. Services that Refuge clients will be able to connect with through Restoration Storehouse include:

- Medical and Dental
- Food Insecurity
- Emergency Financial Needs
- Transitional Housing
- Employment Training
- Domestic Abuse Support and Recovery
- Family Counseling
- Drug Abuse Recovery
- Childcare
- Nutritional Services
- And more...

Costs Involved *(approx. cost \$600K)*

In order to reach our goal of joining the Restoration Storehouse family, Refuge will incur capital costs associated with the physical move and build out of our facility. These include:

- Architectural Design
- Permitting
- Construction of Interior Space
- Moving
- Office Furniture
- Technology

To cover the onetime costs of moving into Restoration Storehouse, we are inviting local citizens, churches, and businesses to join us in this strategic investment along with seeking foundation grants.

The Refuge Board of Directors has committed a portion of the proceeds from the sale of existing real estate holdings to assist in funding.

Down the Road *(Goals cont'd)*

Long Term

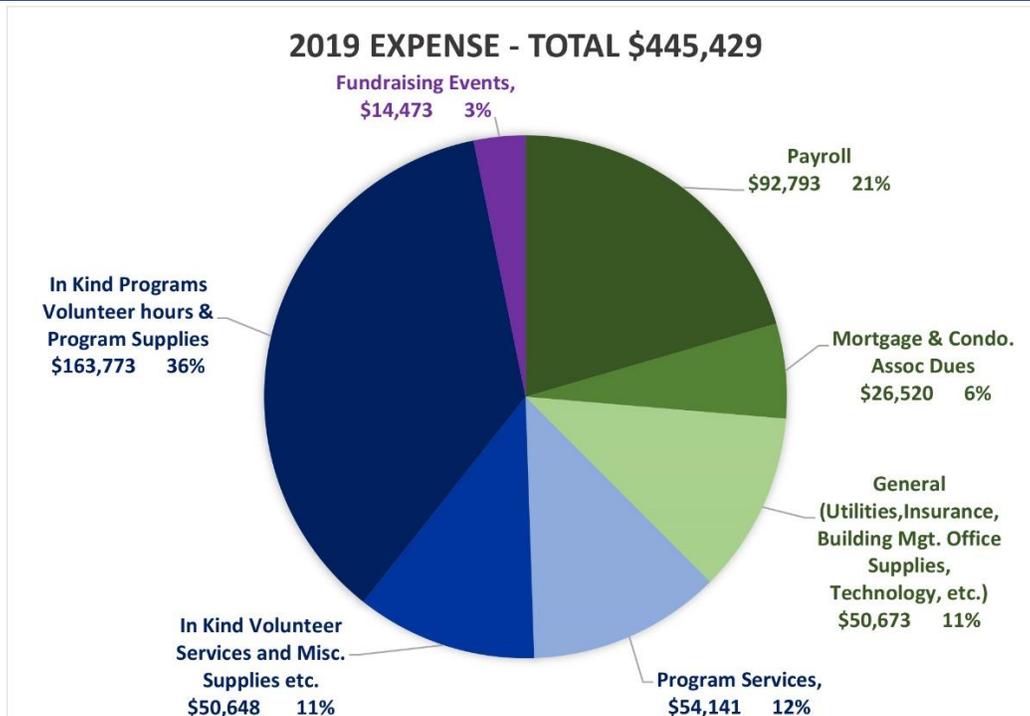
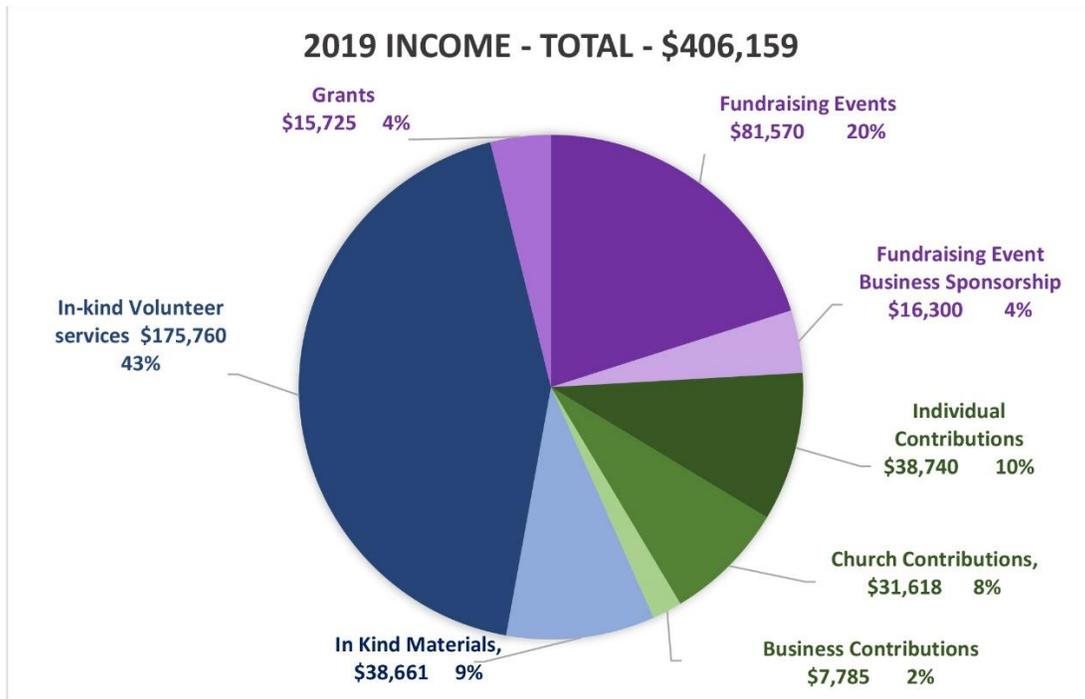
Once our goal of joining Restoration Storehouse has been achieved, we will work toward developing more programs and services to provide for the needs of our clients in the realm of pregnancy, birth, and family. Our future goals, based on funding, include:

- **Pre-Natal Care** *(approx. cost \$1500/client)*
Many of our clients seek our services at the beginning of their pregnancy due to financial hardship and/or inadequate insurance coverage. We are planning to add basic pre-natal care for our clients. This will include pre-natal vitamins, additional ultrasounds, and other general tests commonly given to pregnant women under the care of a physician.
- **Abortion Pill Reversal** *(approx. cost \$550/client)*
Many abortions today are performed chemically with two pills administered over a 48-hour period. Studies show that many women regret their decision to abort shortly after taking the first pill. Science has developed a reversal medication that if administered in time, can counter act the effects of the first pill and stop the abortion process. Refuge is planning to offer this as a service as soon as training, funding, and personnel are developed.
- **Practical Relationships** *(approx. cost \$2500/couple)*
Many of our clients were raised in single parent households. We have seen a great desire among our clients to raise their children in two-parent households. Many clients have expressed a fear of marriage failure. We plan to assist by offering an incentive-based Relationship Care program. This program will be biblically based and administrated by a trained relationship coach.
- **Maternity Home** *(approx. cost TBD)*
There is currently no place in or around our community where pregnant women can seek temporary or transitional housing during pregnancy. We have found that homeless shelters will generally not accept placement of pregnant women because of the increased liability. Refuge has set a goal of providing an external home for pregnant women.

"I liked seeing my baby and receiving useful information. I really liked the way they gave me the news with dignity and calm."

Abortion Avoided

Funding the Operations



Income/Expense shortfall covered by carry over from previous year.

Planned purchase of a new ultrasound machine in FY 2019 was financed from funds reserved in previous years.

Two Lives Changed *(Testimonial)*

“I was in my last semester of school and I had a friend that had been to Refuge and she spoke very highly of it. She said that the staff here was very comforting, so I came. I confirmed my pregnancy here. When I first came, I wasn’t sure what I was going to do. I hadn’t told the father or anyone except my best friend. The ladies were so comforting and welcoming of the baby. They were excited and that was so important to me because I was in college. I knew my parents were not going to want to hear that I was pregnant. The guy I was with was not going to want to hear it. I felt nobody was going to want to hear that I am pregnant. No one in my life was going to be excited, but the ladies at Refuge were. That made me feel good! It made me feel confident to speak to my parents and the father, because I had someone in my corner. My parents handled it well. They told me that the main thing was that I needed to stay in school and finish my education.



Next was to tell my child’s father. He did not take it well. I was shocked because we had been together for over 6 years. He was my high school sweetheart. He wanted me to get an abortion. That crushed me. He told me that having the baby and still going off to school would be very selfish. He said that I would be a bad mom, that I would never be able to do anything for my child and that I would have a hard life. He told me that we would struggle, and that he would not be there for us. He pulled out all the stops to convince me that abortion was my only choice. His argument was all based on his experience growing up with a single mom. He said that because his mom struggled raising him as a single mom, that was exactly how I was going to be. I was devastated by his reaction. Then I came back to Refuge.

“He wanted me to get an abortion. That crushed me.”

When I came back, I broke down and told them everything. I thought that my child’s father was the love of my life. His opinion weighed heavily on me. Up to this point I thought highly of him and respected his opinion. When I spoke with my advocate at Refuge (Sandy), she talked me down and she told me that my parents were right that finishing school would be the best thing, so I am able to provide for myself and my child. It ensures that we would be able to live a happy life and we would be ok. She told me that I will face challenges just like anybody else, but overall, I will be ok, and it will be the best decision ever. So, I took that

advice from her and I chose to ignore what my child’s father was saying. He got to a point shortly after I made my decision to no longer speak to me. That was hard, but I love the fact that Refuge continuously reached out for me. Throughout my pregnancy, the ladies at Refuge were there for me emotionally and spiritually. I was able to stay strong. I knew I was going to be ok. Even when I was in school, the phone calls and emails to just get an update and check in on my wellbeing meant the world to me. It brightened my day every time. Even if I was having a horrible day and panic and anxiety were setting in, just having those ladies reach out to me and encourage me gave me the boost I needed to know I was not alone, and we were going to be ok.

After my child was born, I came back to Refuge to get help with baby items. My parents were helping me, but I wanted to contribute. Being able to know that I could get things like diapers, wipes and formula helped me out so much...especially in the beginning. I was trying to get on my feet. Being a student and new mom was very challenging. I am so appreciative of all the help that I received from Refuge. These things helped carry me through until I was able to provide for him myself. I love my child and I am 1000% sure that I made the right choice. I do not regret my decision one bit. I am now finished with school. My child and I are self-sufficient, and we are living our best life. Because I was able to finish school and have a medical diploma that includes Ultrasound Technician, my hope is to someday be able to come back to Refuge. This time it will be as a volunteer. I want to give back to the people that meant so much to me. I want to help other young women, that find themselves in a similar situation, realize that life goes on and that choosing to keep their child will be the best choice they could ever make.”

Affiliations & Leadership

Affiliations

The Refuge Center, while independent and locally supported, has chosen to affiliate with a handful of national and local organizations that provide some financial support as well as a variety of policies, procedures, and best practices under which we operate. These “guide rails” give us a deep knowledge base for many situations, as well as opportunities to grow.



Church Partners

The Refuge Center has developed supporting relationships with 43 local churches. Through these relationships, we have been blessed to receive financial support and material goods donations. Our church partners are committed to supporting the mission of Refuge. They lift our staff and clients up in prayer consistently. Their belief in what we do is vital to keeping our doors open. These personal relationships give us the confidence to refer clients to individual churches for future support. We encourage church involvement for the families we serve to help promote spiritual growth and family stability.

Board of Directors

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Retired Business Change Director-Anthem, Inc.

Board Member, Leroy Hudson
US Postal Service, Retired

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The Refuge Center



The Refuge Center is a registered 501c3 non-profit with a Gold Seal of transparency from Guidestar.org