



Freedom to Exhale

The quarterly e-newsletter of Exhale
Issue #11, Winter 2006/2007

SUPPORT EXHALE: Make a Donation Today

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THANK YOU

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In 1997, I had an abortion. Openly making that statement is ironic to me because for several years I could not talk about it and I kept it a secret.

I am an after-abortion talkline counselor for Exhale, and I am writing to ask for your support. I hope that after you read my story, you too will appreciate Exhale's valuable work and will decide to make a donation today.

When I became pregnant, I was 19-years-old and in an abusive relationship. My parents were strict, conservative, devout Filipino Catholics. They had no idea I was even in a relationship at the time. Sex and relationships were never discussed in my household but I learned that the very idea of being pregnant and unmarried was an absolute shame and disappointment, not just upon a daughter, but on an entire family. A small part of me wanted that baby at 19, but I could not live with the shame and disappointment for the rest of my life. This is what made me decide to have an abortion, not my age or my abusive relationship.

It was very easy to hide these things from my parents because I was away at college. Having grown up in a tight-knit Filipino community, I also did not feel comfortable sharing my abortion with my friends back home for fear of being criticized, judged, and outted. In the end, I felt my relationship, pregnancy, and abortion were absolutely outside the realm of what anybody would accept and understand about me. The result was that I suffered from the emotional scars of my abortion because there were no safe spaces available for me to openly talk about it. Because I could not talk about it, I felt I could not completely heal.

When I moved to the Bay Area, I sought volunteer opportunities and was thrilled when I found Exhale. Finally, I thought, here is a non-judgmental organization that provides

a wonderful service with valuable information and referrals. Exhale is a service I wish had existed for me in 1997.

Looking back, I never want anyone to face the isolation and loneliness that haunted me for many years. For me, being a counselor for Exhale is a great honor where I can provide a safe space to callers marking a healing process for many. In honor of Exhale's valuable work, I hope you will join me in supporting this organization and make a contribution to Exhale today.

To make a donation, visit, [Exhale](#).

Very truly yours,

Elsa O. Valmidiano
Volunteer

EXHALE NEWS

* In the News

[Women's eNews](#) covered Exhale in a recent article, "Abortion Stigma Enters Era of Unburdening." [Bust](#) magazine featured Exhale's new abortion zine, *Our Truths-Nuestras Verdades*, in their December 2006/January 2007 issue. [Conscience](#), the journal of Catholics for a Free Choice, featured Aspen Baker's article, "Pro-voice," in its Winter 2006/2007 issue. The [Guttmacher Policy Review](#) featured Exhale and our work to help women cope after an abortion in its Summer 2006 issue in an article on the myths and realities of post-abortion emotional health.

* Congratulations to Exhale's featured in new book.

Several Exhale's have had their work published in a new anthology, edited by Krista Jacob, on the ever-changing continuum of values, views, politics and beliefs about abortion. *Abortion Under Attack* features essays by Carolina De Robertis (Exhale co-founder and senior program associate), Patty Tumang (Our Truths editorial board member), Jennifer Baumgardner (Our Truths editorial board member; Exhale national advisory council member), and Frances Kissling (Exhale national advisory council member). Congratulations to each of them!

* 2007 Regional Training Dates and Locations

Regional trainings are two-day professional, skill-building trainings on after-abortion counseling that are for experienced counselors who work in a variety of health care settings. Past participants have included nurses, social workers, abortion counselors and grassroots advocates. Together, we are working to increase access to post-abortion support, strengthening support networks and transforming the social climate.

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

February 25-26, 2007

Seattle, Washington

Hosted by Seattle Medical and Wellness Clinic

Download registration form (pdf) [here](#).

October 28-29, 2007

Miami, Florida

Hosted by A Choice for Women

Registration opens March 1, 2007

Please contact [Exhale](#) for registration information.

THANK YOU

Exhale would like to extend our appreciation for every person, business and foundation that has donated their time, attention, skills, or dollars to support Exhale in 2006. We thank you.

A Jacksonville Women's Health Center, Aimee Thorne-Thomsen, Alexis Smith-Baumann, Alice Shipman, Alison Barker, Amie Newman, Amy Miller, Amy Moy, Andi Zeisler, Angela Sevin, Anna Ruda, Anne Farrah, April Cotle, Aradia Women's Health Center, Ashley Arax, Atlanta SurgiCenter, Aurora Medical Services, Autodesk, Barclay Stone, BeBe Cheng, Berit Muh, Beverly Patterson, Binh Nguyen, Birth Control Care Center, Bread and Roses, Brenda Solorzano, California Endowment, California Wellness Foundation, CAPS Project - Planned Parenthood, Carolina Gonzalez-Villar, Cathy Schreiber, Cecilia Echeverria, Cedar Rivers Clinics, Cherry Hill Women's Center, Choice Medical Group, Christine Tran, Cindy Wu Pelger, Colleen Hughes, Connie & Gary Lavine, Cristina Correa, Cynthia Chavez, Dana McDonald, Dana Russ, David Stuhr, Debbie Evans, Dee Lewis, Dee McGuffey, Dee Ouelette, Deirdre Spencer, Don & Janie Friend, Barbara & Don Weiss, Doug Volkmer & Ann Williams, Eileen Sims, Elaine Kovacs, Elsa Valmidiano, Emma Goldman Clinic, Erin Amundson, Eve Mueller, Evelyn Schecter, Family Planning Associates Medical Group, Family Planning Specialists, Farida & Daniel May, Frances Kissling, Gabriela Rodriguez, Georgia Clariza, Grace Blauner, Grove Foundation, Hartford Gyn Center, Heather Kirlin, Heidi Giordano, Hilda Chavez, Holly Minch, Hope Clinic for Women, Howard & Clara Davidson, Howard Simon & Vivien Igra, Idell Kesselman, Imogene Tondre, Inger Brinck, Iris Montgomery, Ivy Lee, Jan Neufeld, Jane Napoli, Jasbir Kaur, Jasmine Gonzalez, Jeanne Garcia, Jenifer Loesch, Jennifer Keith, Jennifer Rudy, Joan Franciosa August, Joanna Cheung, Joanne Kimata, Jocelyn Yin, Joe Weiss, Julia Yueh, Julie Davidson-Gomez, Kadidja Yansane, Karen Brackbill, Karen Grove, Kathy Arndt, Katy Yanda, Kristen Schultz Oliver, Krystal Aoay, Laura Chao, Laura Perez, Leigh Marz & Michael Zeigler, Linda Pham, Lisa Camp de Avalos, Lisa Lepson, Louise Patterson, Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center, Madison Abortion Clinic, Mai K Vu, Marcy Darnovsky & Barry Zuckerman, Margot & Kyle Biehle, Mark Claycomb, Martha De La Peña, Mary Lynn Morales, Mary Wohlford Foundation, Maureen McLaughlin, Memphis Center for Reproductive Health, Memphis Regional Planned Parenthood, Minda Hickey, ML Siemers Richardson, Molleen Dupree, Monica Lois, The Moriah Fund, Nguyen Louie, Nikki Woelk, North Florida Women's Health and Counseling Services, Inc, Northern Illinois Women's Center, Patricia Calfee, Paul Kramer & Bonnie Ng, Peg Johnston, Philadelphia Women's Center, Planned Parenthood Association of Mercer Area, Planned Parenthood Chicago Area, Planned Parenthood Golden Gate, Planned Parenthood League of Massachusetts, Planned Parenthood New York City, Planned Parenthood of Buffalo & Erie County, Planned Parenthood of Central and Northern Arizona, Planned Parenthood of Central

Washington, Yakima, Planned Parenthood of Connecticut, Planned Parenthood of Hawaii, Planned Parenthood of Rhode Island, Planned Parenthood of Southwest & Central Florida, Planned Parenthood of West Texas, Planned Parenthood Trust of San Antonio and South Central Texas, Pro-Choice Resources, Rachel Bonvillian, Rachel Galgoul, Ragnar Anderson, Ray & Dagmar Dolby, Rebecca Burnside, Rebecca Spector, Red River Women's Clinic, Rita Kim, Rob Tulman, Robert & Diana Gomez, Rona Fernandez, Ruth Fontilla, San Francisco Foundation, Sarah Finley, Shanna Kalem, Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, Sonia Contreras, Stacey Wenzel, Susan Osborne, Talia Walsmith, Tari Hanneman, Teresa Freeman, Thalia Nash-Shoemaker, Third Wave Foundation, Tina Sang, Tin Man Fund, Tracy Salkowitz, Tulin Acikalin, Vicki Breitbart, Volunteer Women's Medical Clinic, William Bardeen, Women's Health Center of West Virginia, Women's Health Specialists, Yvette Cuca, Yvonne Choi.

Thank you and best wishes to Ellen Wu, board member, and Martha De La Peña, program associate, who recently moved on from their positions at Exhale. We greatly appreciate their passion and commitment to women's health and for their incredible service to Exhale.

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Monday - Friday, 5 p.m. - 10 p.m. Pacific
Saturday - Sunday, 12 p.m. - 10 p.m. Pacific
Counseling available in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin and Tagalog.