

2009 MID-YEAR REPORT

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BFL before 1984

1984 MARKS THE DATE 25 YEARS AGO that BFL was officially organized and began incorporation proceedings, but it doesn't tell the whole story. We'd be wrong not to recognize what happened before 1984.



Mary Jayne Borrello
BFL founder

In 1982, Mary Jayne Borrello began paying attention to what was going on as a result of the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision. Born and raised a Baptist, she understood that abortion is murder, but wondered,

"Why haven't I heard anyone preach about it? They've been killing babies for ten years!" She called local pastors and other Christian friends to find out why more hadn't been done. "We, of all people, should have been saying something."

She soon identified various reasons for inaction. Some deemed abortion an unfit topic for churches to handle. Others viewed it as just one of many evils confronting Christians. The issue was "too political," or "too Catholic." She was shocked to learn that some believers approved of abortions for rape or incest. But a more insidious reason emerged.

Abortion was becoming entrenched, even in Christian circles, as a convenient escape from reality. Some conservative Christians were secretly glad for abortion, because it kept them from admitting sexual immorality. And, while church people were generally opposed to abortion, little did they know that their daughters were



showing up at the local abortion clinics. Young women confided to Mary Jayne that their church-

going parents were forcing them to abort so as to preserve their reputations.

Disheartened but undaunted, she formulated a four-week training seminar to be held at Grand Rapids-area Baptist churches. She recruited speakers to talk about abortion history, laws, statistics, methods, and so on. She developed a mailing list and began sending out prayer letters. Soon the question started coming back: What can we do about abortion?

Mary Jayne began using the name Baptists for Life early on. In February of 1983, she set up a booth at the annual GR Baptist College Bible Conference displaying an early logo (above). She hoped the nascent organization would equip Baptists with knowledge so they'd speak out, vote appropriately, and help women with unplanned pregnancies. The opposition liked to portray the pro-life movement as only caring about babies before birth; a powerful argument could be taken away by caring for women and offering them alternatives to abortion.

Eventually, a board was formed, an office established, and incorporation papers filed with the state. Donations began coming in, a director was hired

(Mark Blocher), and volunteers were trained. Churches began hosting BFL speakers, groups formed state chapters, and pregnancy care centers opened. Brochures and newsletters were published, conferences were held, and eventually a web site was launched. From there, pro-life ministry worked its way around the globe.

Today, churches are more knowledgeable about abortion and involved in helping women throughout their pregnancies and beyond. But it didn't happen without struggle and the tireless efforts of many unsung individuals, such as Lois, Luke, and Nancy Wilson, Mike and Debbie Gommesson, David Egner, Don Wyrzten, and Dan VanderLugt.

For a more comprehensive history, please visit bfl.org > *About Us* > *History*.



Peru '09: International Conference

The first International BFL Pregnancy Care Center Conference was held in Peru, in February of 2002. Its mission was to provide encouragement, fellowship, training, and consultation to Peruvian PCC directors, volunteers, and board members. As we planned for this year's conference – February 5-7 – the mission was the same. According to our guests, we succeeded.

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BFL International Training Consultant Evelyn Stone was also very pleased with the results. She noted that this year marked ten years of ministry transforming lives. “The time, labor, and finances invested in the event resulted in many blessings to over 100 people from five countries. There were eight centers represented. Pray for the representatives from Argentina, Ecuador, Spain, and Peru who are strategizing to start new centers.”

Raul Reyes, President of Life Network in Colorado Springs, shared teaching duties with Evelyn and BFL Executive Director Tom Lothamer, on topics such as: the impact of a people transformed by Christ; the transformed center, church, and community; the ministry transformed by prayer; team building; the sanctity of human life; spiritual leadership; counseling; and ministry development. The trio also had many opportunities to consult with brothers and sisters who serve the Lord through pro-life ministry in Latin America.

Next up on BFL's agenda:

JULY 23-24 Preg- nancy Care Center

Leadership Summit at

the Prince Conference Center in Grand Rapids, MI. Featured speakers: Kurt Dillinger and John Lewis, on “Intimacy with the Father,” plus important workshops on “Center Readiness” and grantwriting. Our goal is to help centers remain as vital and relevant as they can be. To register, call 1-800-968-6086 or visit bfl.org > *Services* > *Events* > *Leadership Summit*.



JULY 27-30 LIFT Training here in our office. Trainees will include Brenda Mastin, ABWE missionary to Togo. Supplemental material on AIDS ministry will be provided by Jerry Thacker of Scepter Ministries.

AUGUST 11 Partners in Ministry Golf Classic at Pilgrim's

Run Golf Club in Pierson, MI. To participate, call the office or visit bfl.org > *Services* > *Events* > *Golf Classic*. Ask about the exciting matching gift challenge that will double new underwriting dollars!

OCTOBER 24 LIFT Caregiver Summit at Grand-

ville (MI) Bible Church, featuring Rev. Ray Paget on grief recovery and mourning, helpful workshops, networking opportunities, and resources. The cost is \$25.00/person (\$40.00/couple) and includes lunch and materials. To learn more, call our office or visit bfl.org > *Services* > *Events* > *LIFT Summit*.

OCTOBER 28-NOVEMBER 18 Survey trip to India/

Myanmar/Thailand – We'll be meeting with friends to discuss the development of compassion ministries and attending an international GARBC conference.

Blogging 4 Life

YOU CAN KEEP UP WITH THE LATEST pro-life news by stopping regularly at our blogs:

- **Pro-Life Pastors' Corner** – <http://bflpastorscorner.blogspot.com/>. Designed with pastors in mind, this blog is a helpful resource on the sanctity of human life and sexual purity.
- **PCC List** – <http://pcclist.blogspot.com/>. This blog is for directors of pregnancy care centers . . . and anyone else interested in unborn children and ministry to their mothers. Full of the latest news, information, and pro-life resources.
- **LIFT List** – <http://liftlist.blogspot.com/>. The focus for this blog is end-of-life and disability issues, including euthanasia and assisted suicide, with special emphasis on caregiving encouragement and tips.

Coins pile up

Twenty-four churches in nine states – from West Virginia to Colorado – participated in the Baby Bottle Boomerang that ran throughout 2008 and concluded with Sanctity of Human Life Sunday 2009. This exciting and fun campaign involved people of all ages and raised nearly \$23,000 for pro-life ministry.

Our goal for the 2009-2010 campaign is to have 40 churches participate. If you'd like to learn how to conduct a Baby Bottle Boomerang fundraiser at your church or Christian school, give Sharlene a call at our office, or email sharlene@bfl.org. We provide you with everything you need to watch the coins pile up!



Frequent Flyer miles add up

Responding to our '08 year-end report, one friend of the ministry donated her Frequent Flyer miles to Baptists for Life. We've already obtained two free airfare tickets through her generosity, which is saving the ministry hundreds of dollars. This donor continues racking up miles, so we'll be able to take advantage of this gift for many more trips!