

Mobilizing for Life

Eight years running, the K of C Ultrasound Initiative continues to advance its lifesaving mission

by Andrew J. Matt



Since the Knights of Columbus Ultrasound Initiative launched Jan. 22, 2009 — the 37th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* — hundreds of state and local councils have assisted qualified pregnancy care centers (PCCs) to obtain ultrasound machines. Because of the high percentage of abortion-minded women who experience a change of heart after seeing their pre-born child's heartbeat or moving body via ultrasound, the machines play an important part in the PCCs' lifesaving work.

When a council raises half the cost of an ultrasound machine — which starts at roughly \$20,000 — the Supreme Council matches that amount through the Order's Culture of Life Fund.

To date, the initiative has funded more than 750 ultrasound machines — valued at over \$36 million — in all 50 states, as well as in Canada, Jamaica, Guatemala and Peru. Jurisdictions with the most machines funded are Florida (59), California (48), Texas (48), Missouri (43) and Michigan (37).

"Our Ultrasound Initiative gives an expectant mother a light that enables her to see the reality, and often the personality, of

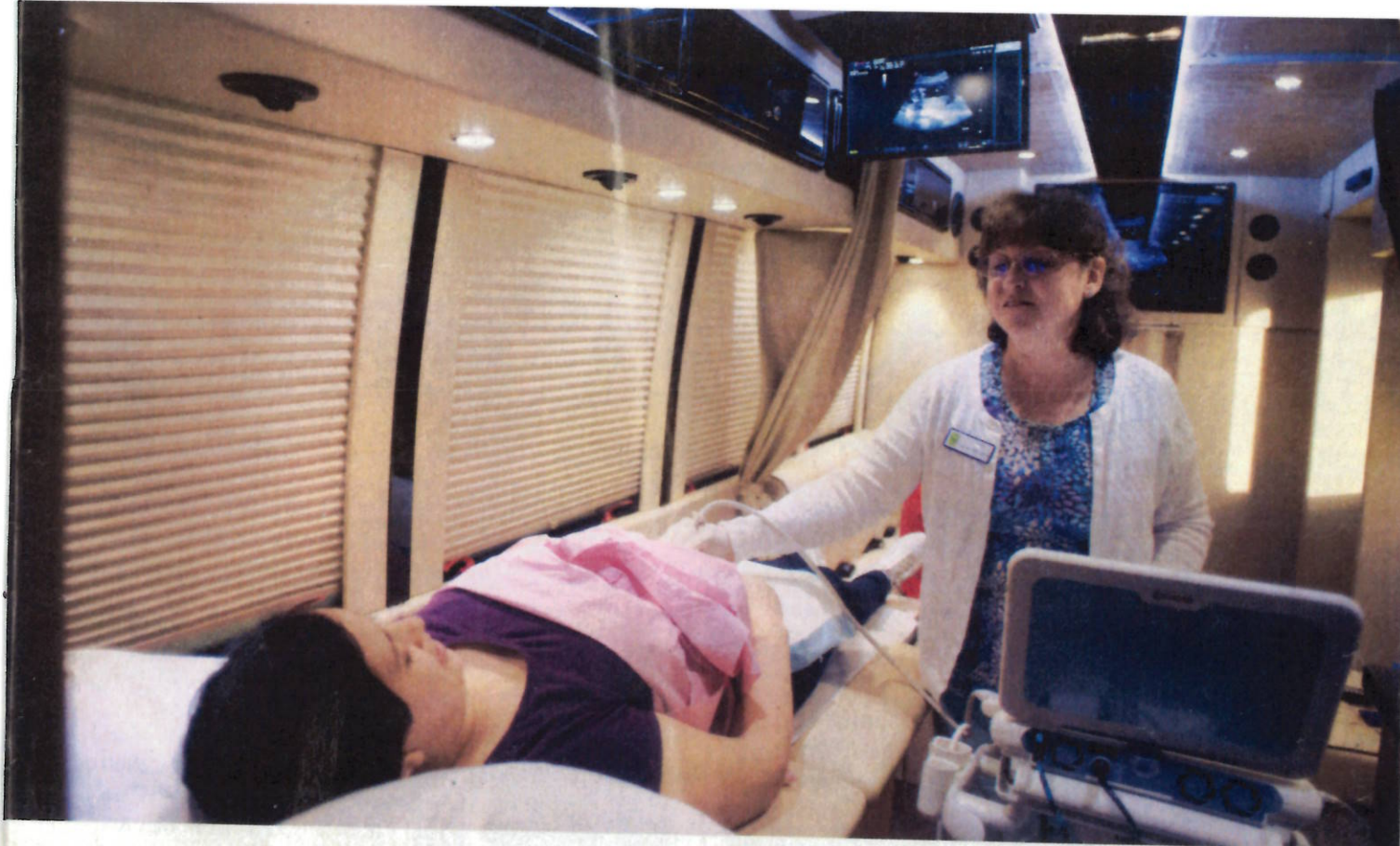
her child in the womb," affirmed Supreme Knight Carl A. Anderson in his annual report last August.

An increasing number of PCCs are putting this technology on wheels to reach more women in need. Mobile ultrasound units offer PCCs increased flexibility, outreach and effectiveness. They can park right outside an abortion facility, on or near a college campus or military base, or travel to remote areas.

This past November, Msgr. James H. Willett Council 7847 in Hopkinsville, Ky., donated an ultrasound machine to Alpha Alternative Pregnancy Care Center for the center's new ICU Mobile RV bus.

"For many women, transportation is an issue, as well as not knowing about us," said Amanda Westerfield, director of Alpha Alternative PCC. "Now we can go to them, bringing our services to underserved populations. Plus, we're like a moving billboard saying 'Free Ultrasound and Pregnancy Test' along with our phone number, which attracts further interest."

Life Choices Pregnancy Center in Carson City, Nev., recently equipped its Save the Storks "Sprinter bus" with a new K of C-



Above: Laura Brown, a registered nurse and sonographer at Life Choices Pregnancy Center in Carson City, Nev., performs a scan of a woman's unborn baby in the center's new Save the Storks "Sprinter bus," equipped with an ultrasound machine funded by the Nevada State Council. • Left: Past Grand Knight Dick Dymek (left) stands with Frank Amaro and Bob Marko of Msgr. James H. Willet Council 7847 in Hopkinsville, Ky., at the Nov. 30 commissioning of a new ultrasound-equipped ICU Mobile RV bus for Alpha Alternative Pregnancy Care Center.



Opposite page: Kimberly Burchiel, director of Life Choices Pregnancy Center in Carson City, stands with staff members beside the center's Storks bus.

funded ultrasound machine — the second that the Nevada State Council has provided for the center, and the fourth in the state.

The center's director, Kimberly Burchiel, said, "Our goal is now to go where women need our services — in rural parts of Nevada where they don't have a pregnancy center at all, as well as Lake Tahoe and the University of Nevada, Reno, campus."

Mark Foxwell, the Nevada K of C culture of life chairman, described a collaborative effort now underway for local councils across the state.

"Nevada is huge, so we've identified councils that will be ready to host Life Choices' mobile unit in all those areas, advertising when it's coming so people will know how to get the services," Foxwell explained. "We're going to help maximize the utility of that lifesaving vehicle."

Motivated by the growing movement among PCCs to purchase mobile ultrasound units, the Supreme Council recently announced a new component of the Ultrasound Initiative: Mobile Medical Unit Funding.

For state and local councils that raise all of the funds needed to purchase a vehicle — bus, RV, van, truck, etc. — outfitted to serve as a mobile unit for a PCC, the Supreme Council will provide up to 100 percent of the cost of an ultrasound machine for use in the unit.

For more information about the Ultrasound Initiative and Mobile Medical Unit Funding, visit kofc.org/ultrasound.

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