

THE NATIONAL DAY OF APPRECIATION FOR ABORTION PROVIDERS REPORT ON MARCH 10, 2000

This year, over 700 abortion providers around the country were appreciated on the 4th annual National Day of Appreciation for Abortion Providers. Clinics and individual providers received “appreciation packets”, which contained letters, certificates, poems, bumper stickers, pins, posters, a copy of *Ms.* magazine, and even condoms from Choice USA.

The Day of Appreciation was publicized in three national magazines: a feature in the “Making Waves” section of the February/ March issue of *Ms.* magazine; an ad in *The Nation*; and a beautiful full page back cover ad in *Teen Voices* magazine. The National Day of Appreciation for Abortion Providers was also recognized by Priests for Life who sent out press release denouncing the Day’s activities. In addition, the Catholic League also published a “warning” in their monthly newsletter about the Day of Appreciation, and the radical activities of Refuse & Resist!

Initiated by Refuse & Resist! (R&R!)

Co-sponsors:

ACLU Reproductive Freedom Project
American Medical Women’s Association
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
June Barrett
Boston Women’s Health Book Collective
Catholics for a Free Choice
Center for Democratic Renewal
Center for Reproductive Law and Policy
Choice USA
Civil Liberties and Public Policy Program at Hampshire College
Clara Bell Duvall Education Fund
Feminist Majority Foundation
David Gunn, Jr.
Emily Lyons
Medical Students for Choice

Ms. magazine
National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League
National Council of Jewish Women
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Network of Abortion Funds
National Organization for Women
People for the American Way Foundation
Physicians for Reproductive Choice and Health
Pro-choice Public Education Project
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
Gloria Steinem
Third Wave Foundation

In cooperation with:

National Abortion Federation
National Coalition of Abortion Providers
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Planned Parenthood of New York City

What a great surprise. Your packet of thanks is very appreciated. I m sure you spent a lot of time putting it together. We continue to be under the gun as always. The Right to Life in Ohio is continually trying to obstruct a woman s right to choose. We just wanted to let you know that as we wage the battle to continue to provide abortions, it is rewarding to receive positive feedback. It helps balance all the negative pressure we get from legislators, picketers, antis, etc. Keep up the good work. We know you re out there supporting us.

--the Vice President of a clinic in Ohio

Here are some of the reports we've received on the diverse ways the Day of Appreciation was celebrated around the country this year.

NATIONAL ACTIVITY:

The Association of Reproductive Health

Professionals sent a message to their listserv about the day, encouraging communities and individuals to participate and express support for abortion providers as important members of any community.

The Center for Democratic Renewal appreciated a local provider and passed out materials about the Day of Appreciation to the public.

Center for Reproductive Law and Policy featured a cartoon in their monthly newsletter.

Medical Students for Choice publicized the Day on their website, linking to the R&R! website. They featured an article on the Day in the January 2000 MSFC newsletter, and urged students to get active on the Day in listserv announcements and in the monthly electronic newsletter. In addition to mailing over 100 additional organizing kits to affiliates and campus groups who wanted to get involved, MSFC sent out separate appreciation letters to all the providers and clinics in their database. They issued a national press release, and students around the country helped with media outreach, writing letters to the editor and local press releases, and coordinating local efforts at clinics.

Reproductive Freedom Project, ACLU

contributed a Certificate of Appreciation to the Provider Appreciation Packet. They also publicized the Day on their website and sent organizing kits to approximately 70 affiliates.

Third Wave Foundation baked and shipped brownies to seven clinics around the country that they work with through their young women's reproductive rights fund, along with a letter: "We trust that you know how invaluable your work is to the work that we do. These brownies are just a small token for that work. Thank you—and we hope that you feel appreciated today and every other day, too."

LOCAL ACTIVITY:

Alabama

Birmingham: Activists made big cards for each of the local providers, collected signatures, and delivered them to the clinics on behalf of Alabamans for Choice and the community.

California

Claremont: Members of Medical Students for Choice at the Western University of Health Sciences delivered flowers to local clinics and sent cards to another provider. The students also did educational activities on campus.

Los Angeles: A representative of R&R! put together a basket of goodies and cards for a local clinic that had been under attack. Additionally, activists organized in support of Dr. Steir, as he prepared for trial. (see www.refuseandresist.org for more info on Dr. Steir.)

Stanford: Members of Medical Students for Choice at Stanford School of Medicine sponsored a Provider Appreciation Reception and sent cards of appreciation to local providers.

Colorado

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice clergy members delivered posters, which were signed by congregates and ministers, to area clinics. Other RCRC members delivered home made brownies and other goodies to 5 clinics around the state. The participation of Board members expanded the Day's activities and made it a "HUGE success!"

Florida

Miami: Members of the Miami Clinic Access Project set up an information table in South Beach where passers-by were invited to donate \$1 and fill out an appreciation postcard. The postcards were distributed to the 25 clinics in Miami-Dade county.

Pensacola: Members of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice sent gourmet baskets of chocolates, fruit, and other treats or bouquets of flowers to local providers. They also sent "love notes" to the providers.

Your packet, the cards and flowers we have received from local organizations, all your organizing efforts, have meant so much to us. Keep on keeping on. We promise to do the same. Love and Choice to all.

--a clinic in Massachusetts

Georgia

Atlanta: R&R! Atlanta and GARAL (GA Abortion Rights Action League) worked together to bring NDOA to Atlanta. They sent out the NDOA call and a cover letter to many local groups to alert them to the day and invite them to participate together or separately. They also solicited messages of appreciation from local organizations to be included on oversized collages that were delivered or mailed to all area clinics on March 10. Messages were received from Youth Pride, Medical Students for Choice, POW (Power of Women, a student group at GA State Univ.), GARAL and R&R! Atlanta. Additionally, MSFC took breakfast and flowers to the employees and doctors of the area hospital where they are interns.

"Thank you for your comments on behalf of me, my staff, and abortion providers all around the country. The packet that you distributed was both encouraging and informing. Please let me know if there is anything I can do on behalf of your organization."

-- A New York Provider

Hawaii

Honolulu: The local chapter of R & R! showed the film, *I Witness*, on the UH campus on both March 9th and 10th. Thirty-five protestors attended the showing on the 9th, and a discussion between the protestors and R & R! members followed the film. Activists also delivered a large basket of gourmet goodies to Family Planning Services of Hawaii--"They were delighted."

Illinois

Chicago: Youth and adult members of R & R! put together care packages of flowers, bagels and cream cheese, and coffee, and made cards and posters which they delivered to four local clinics. As a result of the Day of Appreciation, R&R! Youth Network members began escorting outside local clinics every week.

Kansas

Kansas City: Representatives of Medical Students for Choice from the University of Kansas had a letter to the editor published in their local paper.

Massachusetts

Boston: The Abortion Access Project, Boston NOW, Mass NARAL, Harvard MSFC, Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice of MA, Boston R&R!, and the Eastern Mass Abortion Fund, issued a joint press release that was covered by one station and sent a joint certificate of appreciation to Boston area providers. They also had oversized thank-you cards to providers at subway stops across the city for commuters to sign. Additionally, individual groups sent out letters of support to providers in the Boston area and throughout the state.

Northampton: Students from Feminists of Smith Unite collected messages of support from the student body to providers on appreciation postcards and mailed them to several local clinics.

Missouri

Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice affiliate members delivered plants and signed postcards to the three St. Louis area providers.

Nebraska

Staff from the ACLU of Nebraska visited each of the 3 clinics in the state, presenting the providers with flowers and certificates of appreciation. Clinic staff were pleasantly surprised by the recognition of the day and were very appreciative.

New Jersey

The South Jersey Clinic Defense Coalition delivered flowers, a gift basket of coffee and chocolate, and a statement of appreciation to the staff of a local abortion clinic.

New York

Albany: Members of Medical Students for Choice at Albany Medical College sent local providers bagels and a thank you letter. They got an article published about the Day of Appreciation in a local newspaper. Organizers say, "Through our NDAAP activities we've made new and hopefully lasting contacts with some of the providers in Albany."

Buffalo, NY: Medical Students for Choice brought bagels to local clinics and sent out cards of appreciation.

New York: The Pacifica affiliate radio station WBAI featured an interview with a R&R! Reproductive Freedom Taskforce member. On March 10, local escorts from R&R! and other organizations visited Brooklyn, bearing doughnuts, cakes, and decorating materials. They decorated the staff rooms at the clinics with flowers, certificates, poems, and posters, and devoted the morning to escorting outside the clinics. Members of the Brooklyn Prochoice Network delivered a decorated cake to their local clinic and spent the day visiting with staff members. Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice members sent out postcards to New York clinics with their newsletter, which contained an ad for the Day.

North Carolina

Medical Students for Choice members at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill sent letters of appreciation to providers in their state.

Ohio

Columbus: A local woman sent letters to the editor to local newspapers, encouraging “all responsible voters to ensure that competent, intelligent pro-choice people are elected to office to ensure that women never have to go back to the alley to pursue safe legal abortion again. I also encourage young people interested in pursuing a career in medicine to consider becoming abortion providers...Thanks again abortion providers for putting your lives on the line on a daily basis when you leave the ‘safety’ of your homes.”

Oregon

Portland: Medical Students for Choice members at the Oregon Health Sciences University sent letters of appreciation to providers in their state.

Pennsylvania

Pittsburgh: Students for Reproductive Freedom at the U of Pittsburgh sent postcards to 5 providers.

Rhode Island

Providence: Medical Students for Choice members at Brown University sent flowers and letters of appreciation to 4 local providers.

South Dakota

SD NARAL emailed information and suggestions to 40-50 people on their activist list. Their focus was on the one clinic in the state.

What a wonderful day it was for us! I have worked at [a clinic in Illinois] for the past 21 years and remember the bombing, kidnapping, and multiple protests. I cannot tell you how special it was to answer the door time after time to receive plants, cookies, cards, lunch, and genuinely good wishes. We felt incredibly appreciated and very grateful for the support. By the time Medical Students for Choice arrived with a bouquet of flowers, we knew there was hope for the future! Thank you for creating this day for us!

--Director of a clinic in Illinois

Texas

Lubbock: A representative of West Texas Medical Students for Choice had a letter to the editor published in a local paper.

Washington

Seattle: Medical Students for Choice members at the University of Washington delivered home-baked goodies and certificates of appreciation to 4 local providers.

West Virginia

The ACLU of West Virginia and WV-FREE (Focus: Reproductive Education and Equality) sent flowers and a note to their 1 provider.

Wyoming

Members of NOW and NARAL sent flowers and visited with their local providers.

CONGRATULATIONS AND THANKS TO ALL FOR SUCCESSFULLY MAKING PROVIDERS AND CLINIC STAFF ACROSS THE COUNTRY FEEL APPRECIATED AND SUPPORTED!

If you don't see a report of your Day of Appreciation activities here, it's not too late to send in a report! Download the follow-up form at www.refuseandresist.org, email us at RFTF@refuseandresist.org, or mail us at Reproductive Freedom Taskforce of R&R! 305 Madison Ave. Ste 1166, New York, NY 10165.