Center to offer aid in pregnancy crises

By Suzanne Teten

Pregnancy can create a crisis situation whether the mother is 16 and unmarried, 25 and financially unable to support another child, or 35 and concerned about birth defects, the director of the Lincoln Crisis Pregnancy Center said Saturday.

Sandy Reimers said she founded the center because Lincoln has no other place for a pregnant woman with emotional and psychological problems to go for help.

The center, which will open May 21 in Gold's Galleria, Suite 29, will offer counseling to the woman and her husband or boyfriend during the first three months of the pregnancy, Reimers said.

Abortion is not considered an alternative for the woman, Reimers said, but the center will give post-abortion counseling to women who have problems dealing with an abortion performed elsewhere.

During the second trimester of pregnancy, the center will provide parenting classes. Reimers said many women do not know how to handle the parental situation. The center will teach them how to work through the problems they may face.

During the last three months of the pregnancy, the center will teach Lamaze classes for unwed mothers. It also will give individual counseling to help them plan for the future.

Counselors discuss adoption with each of the mothers to help them make decisions they will not regret years later, Reimers said.

In addition, the center will provide "shepherding homes" for young women who were kicked out of their homes by angry parents. Providing friendship for young women is an important role for the center's counselors, Reimers said. Many adolescents become isolated from their friends and are lonely, she said.

Help does not stop after the birth, Reimers said. The center will have a hot-line number that new mothers can call 24 hours a day, seven days a week to get help or just talk to someone, Reimers said. A trained counselor will answer the phone at all times, she said.

"Having someone to talk to helps a lot," Reimers said.

Peer-level support groups also will be a part of the program, Reimers said.

The center will provide the mother with maternity clothes, baby clothes and baby furniture, Reimers said. Free pregnancy tests also will be provided.

Beginning May 14, the center will sponsor a training program for people interested in counseling at the center, Reimers said. The learning sessions will continue Monday through Friday from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at Grace Community Evangelical Church, 6843 South St. The class also will meet Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon, she said.

Reimers said the class is for anyone interested in crisis counseling, not just for people who will work at the center. There will be a $20 fee for the materials used in the class, she said.

Reimers said the center's services are free to everyone because the counselors will volunteer their time.

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