



**2021
WINTER
NEWSLETTER**

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SERVICES PROVIDED

December 1, 2019 - November 30, 2021

16 clients
served

One-on-one
support
through a
matched
Volunteer
Friendship

12 clients &
family
members
served

Care 4U
(Post-pregnancy
care)

12 clients
and 20
children
served

Christmas 4U
2020

61 pregnancy
and holiday
gifts

Encouragement 4U
(New for 2021)

1677.75
Hours

Volunteer
Hours

11
Meetings

Volunteer Team
Meetings &
Trainings



"I was having a hard time emotionally due to no in-person support groups and feeling like I had no good friends to talk to. I wanted to meet someone through here [A Friend 4U] that actually cared about me. I was looking for a friend and resources and support because I felt isolated and alone during my pregnancy since it was during COVID."

Yaricza, Client - When asked why she called A Friend 4U

YARICZA & DASHA

Q. Yaricza, how did you hear about A Friend 4U?

A. I heard about A Friend U through Family Medicine Center, the nurse and social worker connected me to this resource because I asked them if they knew of any support groups or someone I could talk to.

Q. What about A Friend 4U sounded interesting that you wanted to join?

A. I was having a hard time emotionally due to no in person support groups and feeling like I had no good friends to talk to. I wanted to meet someone through here that actually cared about me. I was looking for a friend and resources and support because I felt isolated and alone during my pregnancy since it was during COVID. I was interested and curious in what A Friend 4U was all about and I wanted to be brave and call. My social worker and a nurse talked about how good the program is.

Q. Who was your Volunteer Friend, and how did your relationship with your friend develop?

A. My volunteer friend is Dasha. I called A Friend 4 U and spoke with a lady that connected me to Dasha. Dasha actually called me the next day and was so excited to meet me, she sounded super friendly over the phone and that made me braver to meet her. I get shy or have social anxiety but I felt like I could trust her. Dasha told me all about herself and she was so interested to learn about me too, so we got to know each other right away. I felt comfortable opening up the first day we met at a park. She listened to me and gave me a lot of advice and she cared, I felt valued. Dasha even invited me to her church and suggested our kids meet. She also texts me often to check on me how I am doing and she is nonjudgmental. Our kids met and they got along right away and they could play in the park for hours! Dasha talks about new places to go to in the future because she wants to be my friend for a long time. She is kind and a sweet person, I need more good people like her in my life that I can count on.

Q. Did Dasha connect you with any other resources/opportunities in the community?

A. She talked about sports we can put our kids in together. She mentioned her church as a community support that I could join too. She was able to get me cooked meals to my home when I had my newborn son and that helped me so much!

Q. What kinds of things have you and Dasha done together?

A. We went to the park together in Fort Collins and in the Windsor area. We went to the Centerra area and walked around. Dasha came to my home to see my baby and she said I could visit her too someday. We are talking about going to places like the zoo too when my son is a bit bigger (so it's safer to go due to COVID and when I heal from c section). We still have many other places to go together!

Q. This has been an interesting time being pregnant. How has having Dasha during this time helped you?

A. I joined towards my end of pregnancy, I wish I joined sooner. I felt like I was stuck at home and I felt lonely and isolated. I didn't know anyone pregnant or going through the same things as me. I've always felt judged since I had my first son very young so with this pregnancy I wanted to make sure I had a support system so that I can be a better mother this time.

Q. Dasha, how long have you been volunteering with A Friend 4U?

A. I joined in November 2020.

Q. What about the A Friend 4U drew you to get involved?

A. When I first read about A Friend 4U in a community magazine, I knew it's something I wanted to do right away. I believe that children are a blessing from God, that their lives matter, but as a mom myself I also know that it can be hard to go through pregnancy and to raise children, it can feel very lonely, sometimes overwhelming and even depressing. So I wanted to join this organization to be a friend and have a friend so we can support each other through this season of life.

Q. How many women have you "friended"?

A. I just have one friend so far, Yaricza.

Q. What things have you and Yaricza done together?

A. We have gone on playground dates and walked in the park. I also visited her once when her baby son was born. We also message each other and plan to do more fun activities together with kids this coming year.

Q. What would you like to share about Yaricza?

A. First I want to say that I feel very blessed to have her as my friend. I feel like we connected right away from our first conversation over the phone. She has the sweetest personality! We easily opened up to each other and we both just wanted to be friends and I think that's the best part. Yaricza has a lot on her shoulders between work, family, and her son's recreational activities, but she still finds time to invest in the friendship. And through all these things, I can see her kind heart.

Q. What kind of growth have you seen in Yaricza?

A. Yaricza loves her children and her family, I can see that she wants the best for them. She is very courageous, I have seen it when her birth plan didn't go the way she wanted, she didn't complain about it, she just had the courage to do what doctors were advising her to do and she wanted the best for her baby. She is also very caring and thoughtful, I can see that when she speaks to her children, the way she takes care of her puppy, and when she just talks to me and my kids, and I really like that about her. I am looking forward to getting to know her more and grow together.

Q. What do you specifically enjoy about being a Volunteer Friend?

A. I feel very thankful for the opportunity to connect to other women, specifically Yaricza. If it wasn't for A Friend 4U we probably wouldn't have ever met. I like all the support the organization provides to us as volunteers and our Pregnant Friends. I also like that they are generous with gifts that I could take to Yaricza to brighten her day.

Q. What would you say to someone who is interested in volunteering with AF4U?

A. I would say you should do it and don't even think about it because it will be a blessing to you.

Q. Do you believe that AF4U is a worthwhile organization? If so, why?

A. Definitely, there is nothing more important than having relationships with people. God didn't create us to be



"It was the support. I don't have any family or relatives nearby so going through pregnancy by myself sounded really hard so I was looking for that type of support. It was good to have somebody that can check in on me and that I can call. "

Vania, Client - Why she joined A Friend 4U

VANIA



MARTY

Q. Vania, how did you hear about A Friend 4U?

A. I heard about A Friend 4U through Matthews House during my first pregnancy in January 2020.

Q. What about A Friend 4U sounded interesting that you wanted to join?

A. It was the support. I don't have any family or relatives nearby so going through pregnancy by myself sounded really hard so I was looking for that type of support. It was good to have somebody that can check in me and that I can call.

Q. You have been friends with Marty through both of your pregnancies! What would you like to share about her?

A. She is great person! Every time she sends me a text or a call, it's good to hear from her. Knowing that I was on her mind is special. It was really nice that I could call her, when I was going through hard times. She was really neutral when I would share things. I'm thankful and grateful that I got into the program because she helped me feel better and it is a great support. She was able to go to appointments with me and it felt like that I wasn't alone since my family lives far away. I moved out of state temporarily and she stayed in touch during the time I was away with texts or phone calls. When I moved back into town, we now see each other now in person. When I needed something specific and special, she took the time to help me. For my second baby's shower, I asked her to make a baby basket out of a watermelon. Even though she had never made one, she did. Oh my, I was so touched! Since I'm breastfeeding, I asked her if I could bring some Mother's Milk tea. She found it and also made me some lactation cookies.

Q. Did Marty connect you with any other resources/opportunities in the community?

A. She recommended a pregnancy resource fair that I got a lot of things for my first child and am using for my second child. She also went with me to pregnancy classes at UC Health.

Q. This has been an interesting time being pregnant during COVID. How has having Marty during this time helped you?

A. It's been really good since we stay in touch and she always checks in on me. It feels so good to know that you're not alone.

Q. What did you think about the post-pregnancy meals and gift package?

A. It was so nice! The creams were so good. It was so sweet to get everything.

Q. Is there anything else you would like to share?

A. I'm grateful that you [A Friend 4U] are in the community, especially for those who are away from family like me.

Q. Would you recommend someone who is pregnant to reach out to A Friend 4U?

A. Yes. It's nice to have to have someone to count on. Especially during pregnancy you need all the help you can get. It's a big transition in your life.

Q. Marty, how long have you been volunteering with A Friend 4U?

A. A little over 4 years.

Q. What about the A Friend 4U drew you to get involved?

A. I think pregnancy can be a special time in one's life. For people who have an unplanned pregnancy that can be a very scary and difficult time. I wanted to do whatever I could do to help these women during this time in whatever way they may need help. I feel privileged being let into their life.

Q. How many women have you "friended"?

A. I have friended several who have moved away but have 3 friends that I am in contact with including my first friend from 2017.

Q. What things have you and Vania done together?

A. Her husband was gone for her first birthing class, so I went with her for that and I had only met her once before that night. We also meet for lunch, went to some of her Dr's appointments and held her newborn babies. Last week I was able to meet her mom who surprised her coming from Mexico for a visit.

Q. What would you like to share about Vania?

A. She is a sweet, lovely woman who is a great mom. I've enjoyed getting to know her and look forward to a continued relationship with her.

Q. What kind of growth have you seen in Vania?

A. She was very scared at her first birth - both to give birth and to be a mom. She is a great mom and very comfortable in that role now.

Q. What do you specifically enjoy about being a Volunteer Friend?

A. Just getting to know each friend and listening to them and helping in any way I can.

Q. Any last thoughts you would like to share about A Friend 4U

A. 1 Peter 4:10 says "each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace..." God has allowed me to serve and love these women through A Friend 4U and I hope they will see God's love thru me. A Friend 4U is a great support for these wonderful women.

OUR FRIENDSHIP PROGRAM

Every pregnant client receives...



Confidential Support

- * A trained Volunteer Friend is matched to her within 24 hours of her call.
- * Regular, one-on-one support that lasts as long as she wishes, even after pregnancy.
- * Help locating the parenting and/or adoption resources she needs.
- * Connection to local organizations for tangible resources.
- * Unconditional friendship regardless of the pregnancy path, including miscarriage.

Encouragement 4U

Care 4U (Post-pregnancy Care)

Christmas 4U



2021 CLIENT SURVEY RESPONSES

"My matched friend has become part of my family. She was there for me from day one and has been there for even the smallest needs".

"This program helped open my eyes about motherhood. I wasn't exactly prepared to be a mom, but the friend I had gave me support and strength. Today my daughter is 10 months old and I am so happy to be a mommy. It's one of the best things that has happened to me."

"Meeting someone new who had the same experiences as myself. Also, being able to reach out if I was having a hard time".

“Having someone I could really rely on to meet my emotional needs. I don’t get as super depressed during pregnancy, and my friend helped ground me, encourage me, and support me in a way others did not.”

2021 “FIRSTS” FOR A FRIEND 4U

COVID has been challenging for our relationship-based nonprofit, so we have used the time to pivot, still serve clients well and start some new things. We're excited about “our firsts”, as they are helping to reach more clients and provide our clients with an increased level of support!

Direct Marketing - This summer we implemented direct marketing for the first time ever to grow our client base! To date, we have solely relied on referrals from community organizations and we would like to serve more pregnant clients. Our new marketing agency performs specialized services such as search engine optimization (SEO) social media and Google ads. We've already received new clients directly from this new marketing!

Good News 4U - Client Newsletter- In April we launched an email newsletter, called Good News 4U, notifying past and current clients about free services and events in the community, which has been extremely well received.

Online Client Survey - An online client survey was created this summer which provides an easier way for clients to give us honest feedback of how they were served. This survey was created in Salesforce (our data management software) and is more convenient than our previous paper survey. You can see a few of the client responses on the previous page.

Care 4U Improved - Our post-pregnancy care which includes food has changed starting in September from freezer meals made by volunteers to a credit through Schwan's Home Delivery. This has eliminated volunteer preparation, inventory issues and the client (especially those with special dietary needs) is able to pick exactly what she wants.

Encouragement 4U - started in January. Clients receive 3 surprise gifts during pregnancy and 4 holiday cards/gifts. We've received some great feedback from our clients!

“FIRSTS” PLANNED FOR 2022

Virtual Support (planned Spring, 2022) We are working toward offering virtual support to pregnant clients who may be out of the area. This concept is exciting because we will be able to serve more clients who may be in outer lying communities with less available services and support. We will be training volunteers who want to offer virtual support in addition to the in-person support we currently offer.

Client Resource Booklet (planned January, 2022) We are creating two new Prenatal Resource Booklets which go directly into the hands of our clients. These will be enhancements to our Resource Directory we provide to volunteers to assist clients in locating resources.



CHRISTMAS 2021

This is our 11th year of partnering with local organizations to bring thoughtful and useful Christmas gifts to pregnant women and moms.

This year we are planning to serve 18 women with 29 children. Please help us complete their needs by donating a Target card of any amount or a donation through our website, "Donate" button and noting "Christmas Program". Gifts will be picked up by our clients during our Client/Volunteer Christmas Party.

Thank you for helping our clients and their children receive a brighter Christmas!

WE NEED YOUR HELP

When you give to A Friend 4U, you are partnering with us to practically extend support and friendship to someone who is at a challenging point in her life... to help her through and after pregnancy.

However, we can't reach this goal without continued financial support from our generous donors.

Please consider:

Becoming a monthly donor- this allows us to concentrate on clients rather than fundraising
One-time donation in any amount

Cost Per Client:

Care 4U (meals for her family and gift package for client) - \$125
Encouragement 4U (3 gifts and 4 holiday acknowledgements) - \$120
Christmas 4U (gift card to client) - \$25

Planning for Growth in 2022:

Google Advertising - \$500 per month
Social Media Advertising - \$650 per month
Updated Website planned - \$2,500 one-time expense
Virtual Support for Additional Counties - 550 per month
10 Hug 4U referral boxes - \$25

Ways to Donate:

- Through our website: www.afriend4u.org/donate
- Mail a check to our mailing address:

1001A East Harmony Road, #15
Fort Collins CO 80525



A Friend 4U is a faith-based, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
Donors will receive a prompt receipt for their tax-deductible donation.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This year was one of unique changes for me personally; I am now a first-time grandma...actually you'll need to refer to me as "Mimi"! I was privileged to be a part of my granddaughter's birth at the hospital. No small feat with COVID restrictions and living out-of-state. I was also thankful to be there for the next few weeks as my daughter and son-in-law adjusted to being first-time parents.

I watched my daughter navigate the journey of pregnancy, birth and motherhood, and I was very thankful she had so much support. I remember a specific moment while holding my granddaughter, Lora in the hospital and thinking, "How do our clients go through pregnancy with little to no family or friend support?" I just can't fathom it.

The first few weeks of Lora's life reminded me of the challenges of a newborn and the benefits of extra help. Laundry, meals, learning to read the baby's cues, burping...all in addition to a lack of sleep for the parents! I had renewed admiration and respect for our clients who choose to continue their pregnancy, decide to parent, and bring their baby home sometimes with little to no practical help.

In this newsletter on pages 4 and 6, you'll read about two such women served during COVID—Yaricza and Vania. Both faced unplanned circumstances while pregnant, and overcame personal challenges with the support of their matched Volunteer Friend after calling A Friend 4U.

2021 has been challenging and filled with many "firsts" for us. You can read about these "firsts" on page 9. Clearly, we didn't sit back waiting for COVID to end!

2022 promises more changes as well. We plan to expand our Friendship Program to include virtual support! We want to provide face-to-face connection through technology such as Zoom or Facetime to those who are pregnant in other counties with fewer community resources and opportunities for a woman to receive confidential emotional support.

Therefore, we need your help in 2022! There are a variety of ways to help us financially so we can serve more pregnant women next year. These are listed on page 10 under "We Need Your Help in 2022". Through the support of people like you, we will continue to serve those who are pregnant in our community and soon be able to expand our ministry to women in other counties as well. Thank you!

We wish you a wonderful Christmas and New Year!

Serving With Joy,

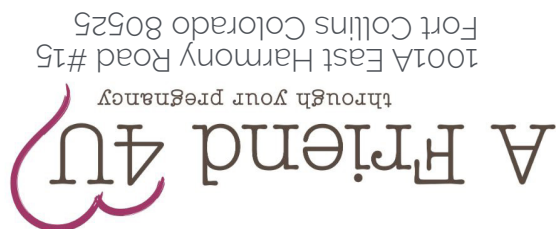


Lorraine Meyer,
Executive Director



~Yaricza, A Friend 4U Client
*See story page 5

"I am glad a program like this exists because sometimes we women feel alone and we need someone who cares to listen to what we are going through."



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