



# Be Not Afraid, Inc.

## Dear Friends of Be Not Afraid,



Often dads are neglected by family and friends when a couple carries to term following a prenatal diagnosis. Sometimes it is almost as if people think they are a bystander in a prenatal diagnosis crisis that only really involves mom and baby. Because we at BNA remember dads in our support, we are offering you this beautiful photo of Paul Puffpaff and his precious baby girl, Isabella Penelope. His story in his own words follows. We share it because the experience of dads is important to us and because Paul's story is so powerful.

Sincerely,  
Judy Townsend, BNA Parent Care Coordinator

When you are going into your wife's 15-week ultrasound to find out the gender of your child, you have the most elated feeling, and for me, that was one of the most excited and happy moments of my life. I truly believe walking into that appointment, was the first "real" moment that I was about to be the father to a child. Ten minutes into that appointment our reality of what was to come was quickly getting turned upside down.

Everyone is laughing and talking, guessing what the gender of the baby will be. Then you notice that as the tech is scanning the baby, she becomes quiet, but reassures you everything is fine. That it appears there is some fluid, but not to worry, the Doctor will look at the ultrasound and discuss everything with you.

As the Doctor enters the room, he looks at your wife and states "I'm so sorry." That is when your heart sinks, your stomach drops to the floor, and you are just staring off into space, wondering if this is really happening. We were told what was wrong and abortion was offered. This is what happened to us with our baby's 15-week ultrasound.

Leaving the office, which you were so enthralled to come to, and now couldn't leave fast enough, tears in your eyes, and everyone apologizing because your unborn child was just given their death notice. I have never felt so alone, scared, depressed, confused. I'm trying to be strong for my wife because I know this must be awful for her, but it's very difficult. What makes it harder is a pandemic is going on and you feel there is no one to reach out to help you because everything is on lockdown. I decide at this moment, that the doctors are wrong and there must be some chance everything will work out.

In my research, I found an article on perinatal hospice and I wondered if there was anything like this in Charlotte. That's when I found our wonderful lifeline of hope – Be Not Afraid. We filled out the online form briefly describing our situation and in no time, we received a reply from Judy and Tracy.

From that moment on it was as if a heavy burden was lifted off our shoulders. Talking with Tracy and Judy, we could feel their empathy and understanding. They took a non-judgmental approach which made us feel comfortable to discuss any thoughts we had. They validated our feelings and thoughts and helped us realize we weren't crazy. They set up a quick support system, from peers that were once in a similar situation as us reaching out and comforting us, prayer groups, to volunteers making personal keepsakes for our daughter to make this horrifying experience better than it was. BNA was always a text, phone call away. When we went out of state to see a specialist, they were on the phone with us. They truly made us feel like it says in Isaiah, "Be not afraid, for with thee I am....". (Isa. 41:10)

Whereas the doctors made us feel like the only option was abortion and death. If not for BNA, we would have never known that we could request a specialist, like a pediatric cardiologist, to assess our situation. That was the lifesaver for us...probably making possible the 10 amazing weeks we had with Isabella after she was born on January 16, 2021.

During the pregnancy, things began to improve. I thought to myself, "This will be where BNA leaves us because our daughter no longer has the death date." I was wrong. They were still there through the rest of the pregnancy, through the hospital stay, the open-heart surgeries, to Isabella's passing. It is a year later, and they continue to show their love and support. We thank God daily for answering our prayers at a time we needed Him the most and sending us to BNA for what we exactly needed in a difficult time. We are truly indebted to BNA for making our prenatal diagnosis into a loving, caring, memorable situation we will always be grateful for even with all the stressors that went along with it.

# Be Not Afraid, Inc.

## Condensed Statement of Activities for the Year Ended 12/31/2021

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### Support and Revenue

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Fraternal and Religious Organizations..... | \$7,159   |
| Donations from Individuals.....            | \$113,698 |
| Fundraisers.....                           | \$1,000   |
| Foundations.....                           | \$11,600  |
| TOTAL.....                                 | \$133,457 |

### Expenses

|                                 |           |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Program Services.....           | \$90,309  |
| General and Administrative..... | \$37,416  |
| Fundraising.....                | \$200     |
| TOTAL.....                      | \$127,925 |

### Estimated Value of In-Kind Donations Supporting Program Services

|  |         |
|--|---------|
| Donated Goods and the Value of Volunteer and Peer Minister Hours of Service..... | \$5,000 |
|--|---------|

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### What do parents say about BNA?

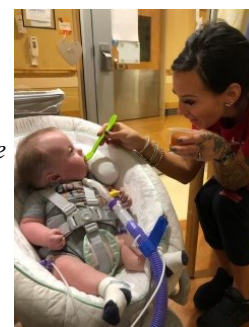


*“Moments a parent will never forget... “There is a finding with your baby that we need to discuss today.” Hopeless, lonely, heartbroken thoughts run through your head as the providers casually ask you if you’re interested in talking about terminating the pregnancy – the beautiful life that grows within you. The first month after diagnosis was the most terrifying, isolating experience of our lives – when we were introduced to BNA it was the first time we were greeted with “congratulations” instead of “we’re so sorry.” BNA was a source of strength, faith, kindness, love, information and understanding at a time in our life that few can understand. We’re so humbled by the love, prayers and support from volunteers across the country who offered packages, supportive notes and volunteered their knowledge, expertise and time to help us advocate for our sweet Harry. For this child we have prayed. For this child you have prayed - and for this, we are thankful beyond measure.”*

Mom and Dad of Baby Harry Millard, born November 10, 2021

*“BNA was a God-send to me being a single mother with a prenatal diagnosis. I didn’t know where to turn or what to do, but with the help of BNA, I was able to get through the pregnancy and birth of my son. I can’t thank BNA enough for everything they have done for my son and me, and because of their help and support, I learned how to fight for my son, who is still living and thriving.”*

Mom of Baby Joel Blaze, born February 28th, 2021



# 2021 BNA Service in Numbers

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BNA's primary mission is to provide a service of comprehensive case management to parents carrying to term following a prenatal diagnosis which begins when they accept BNA support and continues for one year following the birth of their child. For that reason, at any one time, staff, volunteers and peers are supporting expectant parents, parents with infants in neonatal care, parents caring for their medically complicated infants who have been discharged to home, and parents grieving the loss of an infant. **There was a 27% increase in the number of parents carrying to term supported by BNA between 2020 and 2021.** This is the third straight year that BNA has increased the number of parents served, and in fact the number of parents served has more than doubled just since 2018.

BNA also offers an "outreach" service which captures data for all referrals made to the program. Outreach consists of providing information and resources via direct contact or by way of email. It includes all parents with whom we had contact who did not accept case management support, and others seeking information regarding BNA, and/or information regarding funeral planning and bereavement resources for families not supported by BNA.

Finally, it should be noted that roughly 30% of our support of parents occurs after normal business hours to accommodate parental needs around births and health crises as well as parental working schedules across time zones.

## **2021 Families Supported Carrying to Term**

Comprehensive case management support was provided to 70 families with varying prenatal diagnoses. Sixty-four of the families served lived in the US, and the others lived in Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia.

## **Outreach Data**

171 hours of outreach support

114 personalized outreach packets of resource information distributed

## **Support (from diagnoses to one-year anniversary of birth) Data**

3,800 hours of case management support provided

(includes direct parent contacts, coordinating referrals, advocacy, etc.)

200 hours of peer support provided

140 hours of birth planning support provided (includes provision of diagnosis-specific packet of resource and research material, birth plan meeting, and birth plan editing support)

100% of birth plans were approved by both obstetric and neonatal providers working with parents

65 hours of neonatal consult support provided

10 hours of ethics consultation provided

64 parent gift packages distributed (includes the following handmade items: two identical knitted blankets, one personalized name blanket, baptism kits, baby soap, bracelet or rosary, and gown)

17 NICU gift packages distributed

## **Bereavement Support Data**

Bereavement support was provided to 42 families

84 hours of peer support

37 newborn loss boxes were distributed

40 packets of grief material were distributed

10 Monthly grief newsletters published and distributed

10 Grief newsletters were published

A Virtual Grief Support Meeting was initiated

30 One-Year Anniversary gifts distributed

## **Presentations & Awards**

Presented at Fourth Annual Philadelphia Trauma Training Conference, Thomas Jefferson University

Displayed at the national conference of the Catholic Medical Association

Semi-Finalist in the OSV Catholic Innovation Challenge

## What do parents say about BNA?

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*“My pregnancy with Sylvia began easily with very few of the difficult pregnancy symptoms, but turned into the most difficult pregnancy I’d experienced when we learned she suffered from several abnormalities at our 18 week anatomy scan. Not knowing what to do or where to turn, a friend of mine connected us with BNA. They gave us the tools and resources we needed to advocate for Sylvia, taught us what questions to ask, helped us make informed decisions when writing her birth plan, and supported us in funeral preparations and in our grief. Because of BNA and the grace of God, my husband and I can cling to the peace that we did our best for Sylvia, and that she is at peace with our Lord. BNA helped this most difficult time to become a time we treasure.”*

Mom of Baby Sylvia Anne, † September 23, 2021

*“I was introduced to the wonderful people at Be Not Afraid the day after we received devastating news in what we thought would be a routine ultrasound. They spent hours on the phone with me helping me process all of the medical information we’d received, sharing their own experiences and knowledge, and providing us with concrete and practical support for the difficult weeks ahead. Although we lost baby Leo at 30 weeks, Be Not Afraid helped us feel so much less alone during that period of intense loss. We are so grateful for their service and open arms.”*

Mom of Baby Leo Francis, † February 17, 2021



*“We will be forever grateful for BNA walking alongside us for the hardest season of our lives after receiving the news that our Emmi had anencephaly. BNA checked in on us regularly with phone calls, texts, and care packages that came at just the right time. BNA shared with us some difficult, but much needed medical information about anencephaly that we were unable to research on our own because it was too emotional. We had no clue how to navigate this journey, from what to expect to what to ask the doctors to what we had access to. The BNA team was our one of our biggest supports during this time (and continues to be in this postpartum season). They were truly a God-send.”*

Mom of Baby Emmi, † October 10, 2021

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## What is BNA?

BNA is a private non-profit corporation which provides comprehensive case management support to parents carrying to term following a prenatal diagnosis. Our staff and peers strive to develop a relationship of trust while providing for the emotional and tangible needs of parents from diagnosis to delivery and whatever follows. We believe that every baby is a gift, and we support parents not only in advocating for basic care, but also in obtaining the treatment they deem appropriate for their child after birth no matter the diagnosis. We follow the ethical teaching of the Catholic Church, but serve parents of all denominations. Finally, BNA also provides professional training for organizations developing services for parents with prenatal diagnoses.

**For more information regarding Be Not Afraid, to refer parents for support, or for information on BNA training options, please visit our website at [BeNotAfraid.net](http://BeNotAfraid.net)**