

# Powerful Alternatives

A Newsletter for Supporters of Alternatives For Girls

## BECAUSE OF YOU-

**Maria has been able to gain the confidence needed to believe in herself since joining AFG!**

*"I used to be very introverted, but now I can stand up for myself and interact much better."*



Maria joined Alternatives For Girls a little over a year ago, after being introduced by a friend in the program. She joined because she was looking to make some new friends and have new experiences.

Maria was one of AFG's youngest participants in the 2020 Grow Detroit Young Talent (GDYT) summer program. GDYT is a citywide summer jobs program that employs young adults between the ages of 14 and 24. During the summer, Maria was able to participate in a multitude of social and emotional learning workshops, where she was able to share her thoughts and open up in a judgment-free zone.

After spending the summer with AFG, Maria is now interested in becoming a Peer Educator or any other opportunity which will allow her to spend more time with AFG! Maria enjoys time with AFG because she says it's an excellent way for her to do something fun and stay safe.

"AFG helps me to cope better with the stress of the school day."

Maria is the youngest of five, a pet lover, and hopes to become a surgeon one day; she is currently learning to drive.

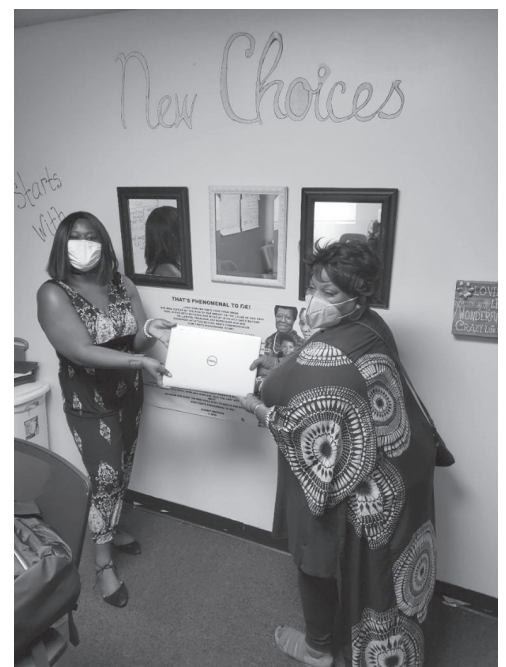
## THANKS TO YOUR KINDNESS:

### From Homeless to Home: Catalina's Journey

Catalina came to Alternatives For Girls in 2018. She was trafficked for four years and brought to Michigan from Minnesota by her trafficker. She soon found herself experiencing homelessness and struggled to find her way. Catalina was introduced to AFG by another organization that works with sex trafficking survivors. While at AFG, Catalina has accomplished so much through the New Choices program.

After being involved with AFG for over a year, the Outreach and Education (OES) department offered Catalina a paid position as a Peer Leader. AFG offers its participants who have engaged with the program for at least a year and who have displayed leadership skills the opportunity to become Peer Leaders. Catalina gladly accepted the opportunity to reach out to other at-risk young women within the community!

Throughout her time at AFG, she has earned her GED and has started college this year at Oakland Community College. Through generous donors like you, Catalina obtained a much-needed laptop to assist her with her education. Thank you!



# A new start. Positive alternatives.

## Letter from CEO

---

September 15th marked Alternatives For Girls 33rd anniversary.

On the one hand, what happened 33 years ago this fall did not seem all that dramatic: it is the anniversary of our incorporation, which we learned about a week later when we received the paperwork in the mail. That is, on September 15th, 1987, someone in a state office stamped “approved,” with the date, on our application for incorporation as a Michigan nonprofit.

On the other hand, it was more momentous than any of us could have imagined at the time.

There were many events during AFG’s early days that were significant:

- The community meeting in June 1987, during which southwest Detroit stakeholders determined that leaving girls and young women in our community “out in the cold” with no access to shelter, support specific to girls and their families, or services for those engaged in sex work, facing gang involvement, or dropping out of school, was intolerable, and during which the community pledged to take action.
- The launching of our prevention services, delivered by neighborhood volunteers, that fall.
- The submission of our first significant grant proposal in November of 1987 to HUD, seeking funding to open a shelter—denied the following month.
- The opening of our shelter in January 1988, despite the lack of funding, in response to an urgent need for which there was no alternative, and our commitment to sustain the shelter for as long as we could, solely, based on volunteers.
- The phone call on a wonderful day in April 1988, letting us know that we were receiving HUD funding, after all, effective July 1st.
- Our first street outreach shift on Christmas Eve, 1988.

We choose the date of our incorporation as our official anniversary because it was our quiet but yet deafeningly loud claim that we were here for the long haul, that we had legitimacy, and big plans. We declared our mission and put our stake in the ground: all girls and women deserve safety, support, and access to opportunities and fabulous choices.

Since then, our excellent staff members, volunteers, donors, and supporters of all kinds have put their heart and soul into making sure that AFG’s mission is fulfilled every hour of every day. It is awe-inspiring to consider how many lives we’ve impacted, together, over the years, and the lives that have been affected by their lives, and on and on!!

\*Continued on page 3

## SAVE THE DATE:

### 2021 Virtual Role Model Celebration

Next Spring, Alternatives For Girls will host the 32nd annual Role Model Celebration - virtually!

Each year two or more women are honored with awards recognizing their accomplishments and dedicated commitment to the Metro Detroit community. This event raises crucial funds to help homeless and high-risk girls and young women.

Wednesday, March 31, 2021

For more information on sponsorship opportunities, please contact Dawn Barrack at [dbarrack@alternativesforgirls.org](mailto:dbarrack@alternativesforgirls.org).

# Because of you.

Letter from CEO, continued from page 2

September also marks the end of AFG's fiscal year, an unprecedented one, but one in which there is much to celebrate. The coronavirus dramatically exacerbated already precarious circumstances for those we serve, but did not thwart our mission. We kept our crisis services up and running, safely and in-person, including our shelter, transition to independent living program, subsidized housing, and crisis resource center. Our creative staff scrambled to provide life-saving food, supplies, and PPE to our participants and their families throughout the community and equipment to ensure that girls could connect to the internet and remain engaged with school and with AFG's activities.



With the tremendous help of hundreds of friends—individuals, corporations, government entities, churches, and foundations—we were able to meet the formidable expenses of fighting the pandemic on all fronts, from intense cleaning of our building, to transforming meeting rooms into additional bedrooms, to providing the well-deserved “hazard pay” to our courageous front-line staff. We engaged with participants in all of our programs through a combination of virtual and (safe) in-person services and care. The coronavirus brought horrors in the lives of those we serve, leading to severe illness and, tragically, deaths of family members. However, our year-end results reflect the positive impact of the efforts and grit of our teams and the girls and women we serve:

- All ten of the high school seniors in our programs graduated! Nine are in college now; one is headed to college in January.
- Fifty-two girls participated in our summer “Rise ‘N Shine” program, in which they were able to virtually “visit” places such as the STEM Center of Excellence in northeast Texas, the Birthplace of Music in Mississippi, the Nature Conservancy, southeast Asia, a Virtual Escape Room, and Barro Colorado Isle in Panama!
- An additional 47 teen girls were hired this summer as Youth Leaders and completed their virtual leadership training, funded by the Grow Detroit’s Young Talent program.
- Our outreach team served 2,190 girls and women through our street-based outreach, peer education program, domestic violence project, crisis resource center, and social enterprise.
- We helped 19 victims/survivors of domestic violence to navigate the domestic violence court process.
- Participants in our “Sew Great Detroit” social enterprise sewed and donated hundreds of face masks, and are currently creating beautiful hand-stitched greeting cards for sale in time for the holidays.
- We served 124 girls and young women experiencing homelessness, and 34 of their young children in our housing programs.
- 90% (46/51) of those in our transition to independent living program were employed, in school, or both, despite the extraordinary employment challenges of the pandemic.
- 95% remained stably housed six months after exiting AFG’s residential programs.

With your help, we will continue to stay strong, in the season of this pandemic and beyond, and to promote access to positive choices for those we serve. Here’s to many more years of AFG continuing to make a difference, together with all of our friends.

-Amanda (Amy) L. Good

## MISSION:

Alternatives For Girls’ mission is to help homeless and high-risk girls and young women avoid violence, teen pregnancy and exploitation, and help them to explore and access the support, resources and opportunities necessary to be safe, to grow strong and to make positive choices in their lives.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS: OFFICERS

**Christine Moore**, Chair  
*Comerica Bank*  
**Christine Stesney-Ridenour**, Vice Chair  
*Stez Consulting*  
**Kate Cherry**, Secretary  
*Connect Detroit*  
**Nu Tran**, Treasurer  
*TruVista Wealth Advisors*

## BOARD MEMBERS

**D’Anne Carpenter**  
*Trinity Health*  
**Jeriel Heard**  
*Office of the Sheriff, Wayne County*  
**Rochelle Lento**  
*Dykema*  
**Marlene Martel**  
*Ford Motor Credit Company*  
**Ann Nicholson**  
**Carolyn Normandin**  
*ADL Michigan*  
**Linda Ross**  
*Trinity Health*  
**Sammie Van Diver**  
**Casey Willis**  
*College Student*  
**Stefanie Worth**  
*Sickle Cell Disease*  
*Association of America, Michigan Chapter, Inc.*

## CEO:

Amanda (Amy) L. Good

## DEPARTMENTS:

**SHELTER AND TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENT LIVING:**  
AFG’s Shelter Program provides a stable home, counseling, and life skills training to homeless girls and young women ages 15-21 and their children. The goal is to empower them to lead productive and fulfilling lives.

## OUTREACH AND EDUCATION SERVICES:

AFG’s Outreach Program helps teens and women engaged in high-risk activities, such as human trafficking, drug use, and gang involvement, to understand the risks of such activities and transition to safe choices and healthy lives.

## PREVENTION:

AFG’s Prevention Program serves girls and young women ages 7-19 who are at risk of pregnancy, gang involvement, abusing drugs or alcohol and school truancy. We engage them through after-school programs, a teen leadership program, a college success program, and a summer camp.

*Powerful Alternatives is a publication of Alternatives For Girls*

**LaTasha C. Spivey** Editor  
903 W. Grand Blvd., Detroit, MI 48208  
Phone: (313) 361-4000 ext: 276  
Crisis Line: 888-4FG-3919  
[www.AlternativesForGirls.org](http://www.AlternativesForGirls.org)  
[lspivey@alternativesforgirls.org](mailto:lspivey@alternativesforgirls.org)

# For all you do, thank you.

## BRIEFING ROOM

## GET INVOLVED!

### MAKE AN IMPACT!

When you support AFG, you provide life-changing help for girls and young women. Here are ways you can make an impact today:

Fall Wish List: At this time, to do our part in mitigating the spread of COVID-19, we are only accepting the following items:

- Cleaning/Disinfectant Products
- Hygiene Products
- Canned/Non-perishable Foods (soups, fruit cups, soft granola bars, prepackaged tuna or chicken pouches)
- Bottled Water (cases)
- Juice Boxes (cases)
- Women's yoga pants/leggings, t-shirts, sandals, socks and underwear (must be new and in original sealed packages)
- Non-contact thermometers
- 91% Alcohol
- Gift Cards:  
(Kroger, Target, Meijer, Uber, Lyft, and VISA.)

For more information please contact Taylor Gawlik at [tgawlik@alternativesforgirls.org](mailto:tgawlik@alternativesforgirls.org)

### SAVE THE DATE!

**32ND ANNUAL HOLIDAY TEA**  
**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4TH, 2020**  
**3:00-4:00 PM**

Please join Francoise Colpron, of Valeo and Shirley Maddalena of Maddalena Design as they host: A Virtual Holiday Tea!  
For more information, contact: Katie Bleavins at [kbleavins@alternativesforgirls.org](mailto:kbleavins@alternativesforgirls.org)

### PROJECT GIVING TREE

The most wonderful time of the year is right around the corner, and before we know it, there will be kids jungle-belling marshmallow toasting, and holiday greetings!

As you begin your preparations for the holiday season, we hope you will consider participating in AFG's Project Giving Tree!

Last year, donors like you fulfilled over 400 wish lists, ensuring all the girls and young women and families at AFG had a most joyous holiday season!

To find out how you can sponsor a wish list this year, please contact Erin O'Mara at [eomara@alternativesforgirls.org](mailto:eomara@alternativesforgirls.org)

## TEXT TO DONATE

In collaboration with Co.act Detroit and Design Core, AFG explores design as a vehicle for communicating the social impact of the work of a local nonprofit.

To kick-off the design installation, AFG launched a text to donate campaign to encourage Detroiters to step up and help support our mission of 33 years, helping homeless and high-risk girls and young women avoid violence, teen pregnancy, and exploitation.

The design installation is now on display in the windows of the Co.act Detroit building, located at 6568 Woodward at the corner of E. Grand Blvd.through December.

**TEXT GIRLS TO 345345!**



903 West Grand Boulevard  
Detroit, MI 48208

Phone: 313-361-4000  
Fax: 313-361-8938  
Crisis Line: 888-AFG-3919

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube: Search "Alternatives For Girls"

[www.AlternativesForGirls.org](http://www.AlternativesForGirls.org)

At AFG we respect everyone who comes to us for help as they work towards a brighter future. So, while their stories are true, names and images may have been changed to protect their privacy. Thank you for understanding.