



PREPARES
An Initiative of Washington State Catholic Bishops
Five Years of Serving Families



Building a Life Nurturing Ministry

PREPARES, short for Pregnancy and Parenting Support, launched in October of 2014 at the Cornerstone Conference sponsored by the Washington State Catholic Conference. The four Bishops of the State announced that their new Initiative would support parishes to outreach and accompany pregnant women and families with children under the age of five. When we created PREPARES five years ago, our hope was that by building a collective network of parishes led by local parishioners working in conjunction with Catholic Charities we could reach more families who have been left on the margins. After five years, PREPARES has realized our goal to provide meaningful, local and sustainable support to vulnerable Washington mothers, fathers, and families as they nurture their children through pregnancy and early childhood.

	PREPARES STATEWIDE			
	Parishes Engaged	Direct Volunteers	Families Served	Staff
Year 1	75	83	1,435	4.2 FTE
Year 2	100	136	2,400	5.2 FTE
Year 3	122	282	5,298	6.2 FTE
Year 4	143	417	6,432	7.2 FTE
Year 5	158	525	12,231	8.2 FTE

- ♥ To date, PREPARES has a team of equivalent 8 full time staff who have engaged and support over 150 parishes. These parishes span 3 dioceses and 3 Catholic Charity regions. They consist of rural, suburban, and urban areas and are serving pregnant women and families in 34 of 39 counties.
- ♥ With funding through the Catholic Campaign for Human Development we developed a network of parish communities resulting in the ability to serve over 16,000 families. We projected serving up to 4,000 annually but exceeded our goal by serving more than 6,000 families in 2018.
- ♥ We have created sustainable relationships with over 150 parishes, pastors and Catholic organizations such as Knights of Columbus, St. Vincent de Paul, Catholic Daughters, and more. PREPARES has become a valued resource in our community across the state of Washington and an interwoven part of the life and Catholic Charities community.

Making an Impact on Families’ Lives:



Because of her encounter with a caring PREPARES volunteer **companion** from St. Luke (Shoreline), a mom who had drifted away from the church ultimately had her boys baptised and asked the companion to be their sponsor resulting in a faith filled lifelong relationship.



A mom from Wilbur called Sacred Heart Parish PREPARES ministry for **help with maternity clothes**. She was working and did not have extra money for appropriate maternity clothing. The parish took a collection and provided the mom with four new outfits.



“She has become an angel to our family,” says a mother of 6 about her family companion. After 3 years, the PREPARES volunteer in Yakima **continues to walk along side them**. “Meeting this family has changed my life. I am grateful for the opportunity to live out my faith.”



PREPARES **Play with Love** groups expand the Spanish-speaking community’s view of the church to see it *“not only as a place to pray, go to Mass and receive the sacraments, but ... as our second home. This is a way immigrants can build relationships and build an extended family.”* – Marisela Rodriguez, volunteer



St. Mary’s Presentation Parish (Deer Park) hosted eleven families at their last **Baby Shower**. More than 40 volunteers from the parish made decorations, put together gifts, prepared food, and welcomed families to celebrate the birth of their child.



This PREPARES volunteer has been steadfast in walking alongside her family companion. Their relationship grew to a close bond and the family **invited the volunteer to the birth of their child**, yielding this intimate moment.