

### *My story...*

I was living hundreds of miles away from my family and recently broken up with my baby's father, when I found out that I was 5 weeks pregnant. I had recently earned my degree and was searching for my dream job.

I never really wanted children of my own; in fact, I never really even liked kids. At that time, I was content focusing on my career. I had never been pregnant before, and I can remember thinking that this was a most inconvenient time in my life for this to happen. I tried to imagine what it would be like to actually keep and raise this child as a single mom in a very low paying career field, and it seemed nearly impossible.

I was terrified and didn't know what to do. In my mind, I justified a possible abortion by telling myself it wasn't fair to a child to bring it into the world with an absent father and a mother who couldn't financially support it.

The first pregnancy center I visited was similar to PMI but was located near where I was living. Like PMI, they were very welcoming and understanding. They first had me come in and take a confirmation pregnancy test, counseled me in breaking the news to my son's father, and set up an ultrasound and future counseling sessions and classes.

When I moved to Pennsylvania 4 months into my pregnancy, I began coming to PMI for weekly counseling and learning more about the ins and outs of caring for a child. I was able to earn points towards maternity clothes, baby furniture, diapers, food, and baby clothes. My counselor was excellent. She made me very comfortable in that I felt like I could discuss anything that was on my mind without feeling judged.

Even when I had doubts about my decision to keep the baby, or questioned whether or not I should consider adoption, my counselor was there to listen and guide me in what would be the right direction for my situation. PMI made me feel supported and gave me the strength and confidence to keep and raise my baby.

Today, my son is a person with a name and a personality, as opposed to just a scary idea that is growing in my stomach. Everyday he's the highlight of my day, and I couldn't imagine my life without him. I'm not going to say our life is perfect now, but we are making it one day at a time. His father is not involved in his life, but we have the support of friends and family, and we have each other.

I am very thankful for PMI. Their counseling and support was incredibly helpful during my pregnancy and monumental in my decision to keep my baby. They were very generous in allowing me to earn baby items, which was especially helpful after my unpaid maternity leave from work when we were severely short on finances. Through their car seat program, I was able to rent a safe and sturdy car seat for my son, so that I can breathe easy when we travel. Overall, the experience with PMI has been life-changing, not just for me, but for my son too.

“Ann”