

New Birthline Director Impressed with Staff's Dedication

SAN DIEGO — For almost 33 years, Birthline has served as a safe haven for women in crisis pregnancies.

As Sharon Shelton takes over as director of Birthline of San Diego County's Clairemont office, succeeding Mary Ann Fentress, she remains impressed by the spirit of volunteerism that makes Birthline's work possible.

"The fact that Birthline continues to operate as a nonprofit today with no paid staff and funded solely by donations is a true tribute to the dedication and commitment of women like Mary Ann and the other 70 volunteers," Shelton said. "I have been so impressed with the diversity and backgrounds of our volunteers."

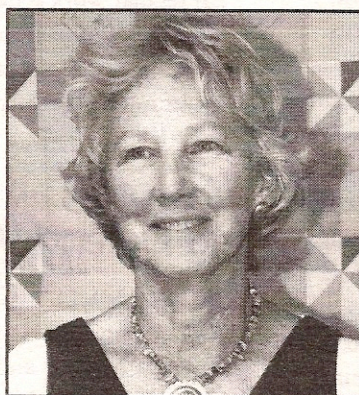
"We have retired nurses, teachers, IT specialists, paralegals and many that are bilingual to help us better assist our Spanish-speaking clients," Shelton added. "What

they all have in common is a belief that all life is precious and comes from God."

Shelton is a retired U.S. Navy captain with 24 years of service. Her opinions on the issue of pregnant women and their needs were formed through many years of counseling and training female sailors, as well as her past four years in the Ignatian Volunteer Corps. Additionally, she has received counselor training from Mary Pat Warner, executive director of Birthline, and from Fentress, whom she replaces at the Clairemont office.

"In a society where the culture of death is dominant, it takes a lot of courage to stand against the tide," Shelton explained. "Our role as lay counselors is to provide our clients with the many options and resources that are out there to support them as expectant mothers."

Shelton, a resident of



SHARON SHELTON

Coronado, lives with her husband, Rolf, who is also a retired U.S. Navy captain. She has worked as a case manager for the National Red Cross and for Catholic Charities. A volunteer at her parish, Sacred Heart Church, she is active with the Ministry to Console and the Interfaith Shelter program.

While Fentress continues to serve Birthline as a crisis counselor, Shelton not only provides

counseling but also will be applying the management skills she learned as a specialist in personnel, manpower and recruiting, to the all-volunteer Birthline office.

Birthline's Clairemont office is located at 3660 Clairemont Dr., Suite 4, San Diego 92117; the phone number is (858) 270-2491. Birthline also has an office in South Bay, located at 1220 Third Ave., Suite 1, Chula Vista 91911; the phone number is (619) 425-5012 during business hours, or (619) 463-8791 after hours. For more information, visit www.birthlineofsandiego.org.

Birthline's annual Walk for Life will be held on Sunday, Oct. 14, at De Anza Cove in Mission Bay. The event will be held from 1-4 p.m. All are invited to take part in the two-mile walk and enjoy food, games and fun.

The Southern Cross

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