

2011

Network for REPRODUCTIVE Options

Board of Coordinators

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*Empowering communities
with abortion access,
grassroots health education
and reproductive options*

Inserting Reproductive Justice into Health Care Reform

Following the embarrassing debacle of health care reform, this past year has seen a continuous onslaught against women's reproductive health in general and against abortion access in particular.

Hard on the heels of the Stupak and Nelsen Amendments—which further restrict abortion funding as part of the health care reform passed last March—Congress has tried to restrict funding for contraception and with HR-3, No Taxpayer Money for Abortion Act, is trying to enshrine the principles of the Hyde Amendment into federal law.

The Hyde Amendment is an unjust and discriminatory federal policy that should be discontinued by a so-called 'pro-choice administration.' Sadly, the use of women's reproductive health as a bar-

"The right to make reproductive health decisions is essential for every woman, not just women who can afford to pay."

- Stephanie Poggi, Executive Director of the National Network of Abortion Funds in a statement denouncing HR3

gaining chip in the fight for health care reform has only emboldened anti-choice politicians to further restrict abortion access. We in the reproductive health and justice movements need to fight harder and demand that our government respect the rights of all women, not

just the women who can afford to pay for them. Several recent opinion polls conducted by organizations that support reproductive freedom found that most people do support the principle that the government should provide funding assistance to low-income women and that abortion should be considered a fundamental part of basic health care—not something separate, needing special rules and restrictions. We need to stop being afraid of talking about the importance of abortion, stop falling into the trap of letting the anti-choice movement define our morality. Because we

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Racist Anti-Choice Billboards Rear Ugly Heads

In addition to the nearly non-stop political and legislative attacks on women's reproductive health, anti-choice—or maybe anti-woman is more apt—forces have also amped up the culture war against abortion this past year. Racist billboards, claiming that 'the most dangerous place for an African American child' to be is in the womb have cropped up in Atlanta, GA, New York, NY and Chicago, IL and recently, Los Angeles, CA became the first location for similar

messages focused on Latina women. While we hope that Oregon has enough of a reputation for not tolerating such racist garbage that these billboards won't even be attempted here, NRO is committed to working with other social justice organizations to ensure that if they do show up, they won't stick around for long.

These billboards are nothing less than vile, racist attempts to divide the movement for reproductive justice and we will stand by our sisters to ensure every woman's right to choose when, whether and how to parent.

What's New at NRO

This has been both an exciting and a challenging year for NRO.

Our long-time primary staff person, Jennifer Webster returned to school this past fall to pursue a Master's degree in Public Health. Luckily for us, she did not have to leave, but her new responsibilities and limited availability required her to take on a more focused role within the organization. In her new position as our **Projects Coordinator**, Jennifer will continue to oversee our hotline service, as well as coordinating various seasonal projects such as the publication of this newsletter.

In order to meet the existing and evolving needs of the organization, Susanne Boling has been hired in the newly created position of **Program Administrator**. Susanne comes to NRO with over sixteen years of experience supporting nonprofit organizations in the areas of leadership development, sustainability planning, and resource development. Susanne is assuming most of the traditional responsibilities of the primary staff person with additional focus on updating NRO's technological resources and assisting the board to build its organizational capacity.

In addition, longtime educator and former NRO volunteer Sandi Mann has been hired as our **Office Assistant**. Sandi is deeply committed to the cause of reproductive justice and continues to act as a volunteer escort for a local abortion clinic, in addition to her duties here at NRO.

Rounding out our new staffing configuration, we

Become a hotline volunteer!

Contact the office
for more information.
¿Habla Español?
¡Le necesitamos!

are fortunate to have organizational co-founder Marti Black continuing in her crucial role as our **Fundraiser**.

And while we've been shaking things up in the office, we have continued to pursue new avenues to support the vital work of our organization.

This spring, in addition to our successful Portland based **Bowl-a-thon** fundraising event (for more information see page 5), NRO was honored to be selected as the beneficiary organization of this year's **Ms. Whiteaker Pagent**.

The Eugene based **Ms. Whiteaker Pagent** recognizes neighborhood residents acting as leaders in their local community as well as women making positive contributions to the Whiteaker Neighborhood itself. Each year they select an organization that provides vital services to women in their communities to receive the proceeds raised from the event. NRO staff and volunteers were on hand on May 21st to educate the audience about NRO's services and promote upcoming opportunities for involvement.

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A Board Member Reflects on Being a Network

Recently the NRO Board of Coordinators had the opportunity to discuss the "Network" part of our name as the result of a letter from a supporter. Marti Black captured most excellently what the Network means to us:

The NRO Board and staff view our abortion fund as a network in the broadest sense. We believe that network accurately describes our associations with abortion clinics and the women we serve, with supporters who reside in virtually every city in Oregon and beyond, with a dedicated group of volunteers, and with NNAF. We expect that NRO will develop additional programs to complement our Women in Need Fund (WIN) Fund. Currently, for example, we are seriously considering establishing a contraceptive fund, since we acknowledge that reproductive autonomy means more than access to abortions.

Since NRO's inception, our hot line advocates have routinely provided WIN Fund applicants with pregnancy options counseling as well as referral and resource information related to abortion clinics and other agencies. In the long run, we also intend to renew and expand our feminist grassroots health education programs to share sexual health and reproductive knowledge that empowers women and men in Oregon's communities.

We on the Board enjoyed remembering the process we went through when we first collaboratively came up with the name for our organization nine years ago. I distinctly remember the desire to capture the spirit we founders felt about contributing to women's reproductive choice in the state of Oregon. Thus began our Network. We believe that the Network gives us plenty of room for evolution.



We who work on the hotline know that there is more to getting an abortion than simply finding a provider and having the money. There is finding a babysitter for your kids, taking the day off work, having the car and gas money to get to the clinic, maybe more than once, having a

phone that works and enough privacy to make several phone calls. Add to that the need to travel more than 50 miles to get to a clinic (which the Guttmacher Institute estimates 27% of women need to do) and the need to raise money to pay for it—suddenly, a legal abortion feels incredibly inaccessible. In Ore-

gon alone, 16% of women in a recent study reported needing to travel more than 100 miles to access care, and 27% reported that travel arrangements were "very or somewhat challenging." (Ostrach 2010).

In Oregon, we are lucky that women don't face legislative barriers, like waiting periods, parental notification, and mandatory ultra-sounds and counseling. We even have OHP, which covers the procedure. If a woman can get on it in time. Everyday, NRO helps low-income women to pay for abortions that OHP would cover if only the applications were processed in time.

Thanks to the fantastic efforts of two OSU students, Bayla Ostrach, MA and Jessica Matthews, MPH, the Oregon Health

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2010 Women In Need Statistics

Hotline Totals

Total Hotline Calls	608
Total Info/Referral Calls	274
Total WIN recipients	334

Average gift per woman	\$178
Total amount given for 2010	\$59,782

Pacific Northwest Region: 18

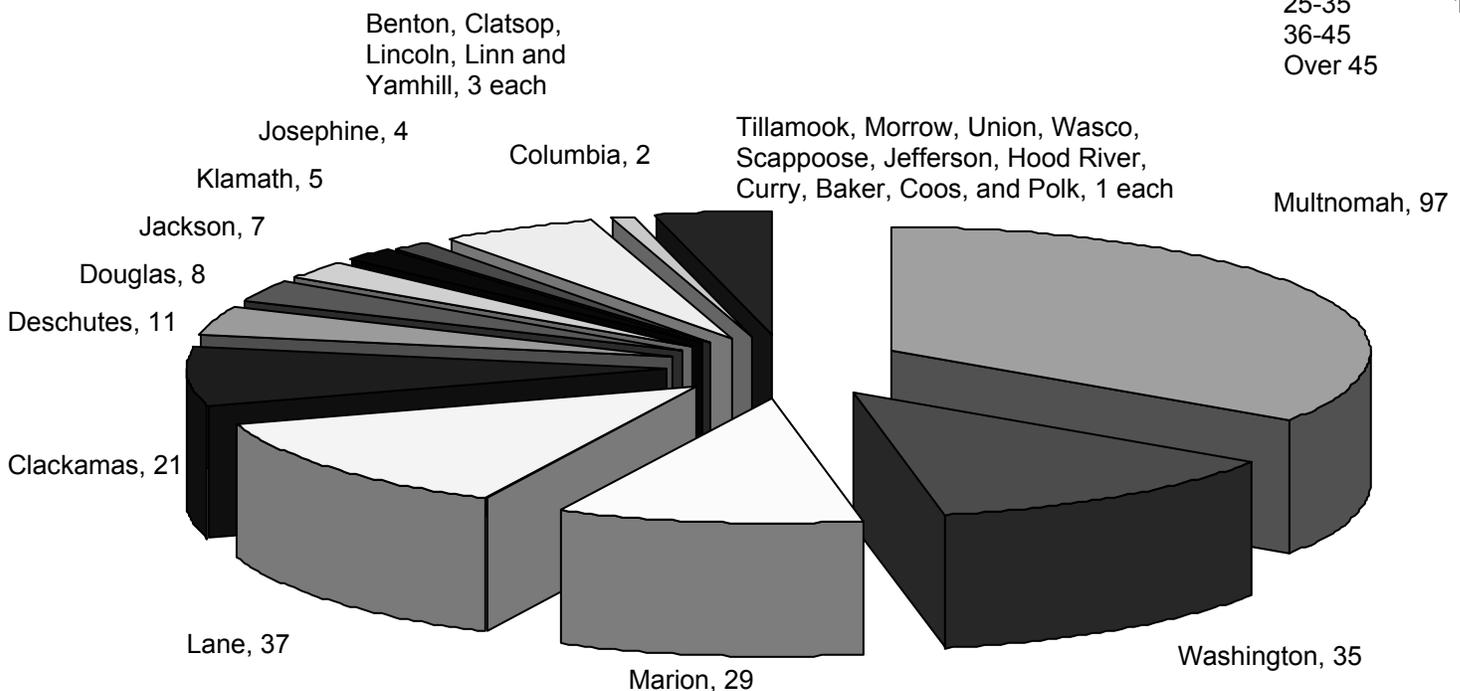
Women whose primary language is not English	58
Spanish speaking	54

Among those reporting Ethnic Identity:

African American	11
Asian American	7
Latina	76
Native American	7
Mixed	4
Other	2
White	109

By Age

15-18	42
19-24	115
25-35	134
36-45	33
Over 45	2



The State of Reproductive Justice

Anti-Choice Forces on the Attack Nationwide

Energized by massive gains by Republicans in last year's elections, anti-abortion legislators in statehouses around the country have launched a torrent of restrictive measures. In the first three months of 2011, according to the Guttmacher Institute, legislators in 49 states introduced 916 bills related to reproduction. More than half of them sought to restrict access to abortion. As of May 8th, fifteen had been enacted into law and more than 120 had been approved by at least one house of the legislature.

When the Supreme Court legalized abortion with *Roe v. Wade*, it said states could not restrict abortion in the first trimester. It went on to say that after the fetus became viable (now considered to be around the 24th week), states had an interest in the "potentiality of human life." Now much pro-life legislation on the state level aims to force any woman seeking an abortion to first view an ultrasound of the fetus, listen to the fetal heartbeat, and hear her doctor describe the fetus' body and organ development. A law enacted in South Dakota in March forces any woman seeking an abortion to first attend a consultation at a "pregnancy help center" to learn what assistance is available "to help the mother keep and care for her child."

Some proposed laws go even further. Last year Nebraska enacted a law that bans abortion at 20 weeks on the theory that, at that point, the fetus can feel pain. One proposed in Ohio—presumably unconstitutional—would make it illegal for a woman to have an abortion if a doctor detected a fetal heartbeat, which can occur by the sixth or seventh week.

On both the state and federal levels, funding for Planned Parenthood, whose clinics perform about 330,000 abortions a year, has been attacked. At present federal funds cannot be used for these procedures but anti-choice forces argue that any money the organization receives from the government indirectly strengthens its abortion program. The Indiana legislature recently passed a bill that would cut off state-administered federal funds for Planned Parenthood—the nation's largest provider not only of abortion but of other medical services such as contraception, treatment for STDs, and cancer screening. It's unclear whether the state has the right to do so.

Also in the legislative hopper are measures that aim to ban insurance companies from including abortion coverage in policies to be made available in the new health insurance exchanges. Numerous states are poised to impose such restrictions on plans to be offered to small businesses and individual insurance buyers under the Obama administration's health plan.

Perhaps most egregious of all this year was the passage on May 4th by the nation's House of Representatives of H.R. 3, "The No Taxpayer Funding for

Abortion Act." It aimed to cut off the use of federal funds for abortion via Medicaid and other federal health programs, deny the right of the District of Columbia to use its own money for abortion care for poor women, and prohibit abortion coverage in the health care exchanges set to launch in 2014. It denied funding even when continuing a pregnancy could lead to paralysis or interfere with cancer treatment. Fortunately, it was generally assumed that neither the Senate nor the President would permit this bill to become law.

New York City Presses Crisis Pregnancy Centers to Stop Deceiving Women

In March, New York's City Council passed a bill seeking more transparency from crisis pregnancy centers that present themselves as medical clinics but offer little more than pregnancy tests and counseling intended to steer women away from abortions. The mayor was expected to sign it shortly.

"The goal of this bill," said Council speaker, Christine C. Quinn, "is to ensure that women are fully informed and not deceived.... They have a right to know whether they are consulting with a licensed medical provider."

Opponents shot back that the bill was unconstitutional because it unfairly limited their freedom of speech. Chris Slattery, founder of a group that operates about a dozen such centers, said he would challenge the bill as soon as the mayor signed it. "I am going to have to read a government script every time a girl approaches us. It's government-regulated speech ... unconstitutional because it does not apply to abortion facilities. It only applies to us because of our viewpoint on abortion."

The New York Civil Liberties Union countered that "It's about deception. Unlicensed ideologues have a right to be ideologues, to espouse their beliefs. But they don't have the right to dress up as doctors and masquerade as health care providers and deceive women into thinking they've been to the doctor when they have not."

Obama Reverses an Anti-Choice Regulation

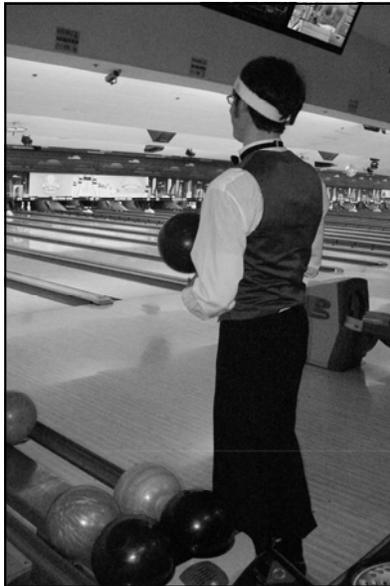
In February, the Obama administration rescinded most of a 2008 rule that granted sweeping protections to health care providers who opposed abortion, sterilization and other medical procedures on religious or moral grounds. This rule had been fiercely criticized by doctors, pharmacists and state officials. Pharmacies said it would allow their employees to refuse to fill prescriptions for contraceptives. Officials said it could void present state laws that require insurance plans to cover contraceptives and require hospitals to offer contraception to victims of rape.





NETWORK FOR REPRODUCTIVE OPTIONS
BOWL-A-THON

Once again, NRO has put the fun back into fundraising with our participation in the second annual national bowl-a-thon for abortion access! We were a smaller crew this year with only one event in Portland and only 8 teams participating, but even with fewer bowlers we managed to raise \$12,000 for our Women In Need Fund!! From the Abortion Avengers, to the Curettes and the Righteous Rolling Radicals, we had a fabulous time raising funds, bowling and collecting awesome prizes donated by such great supporters as City Bikes, Mirador Community Store, BITCH Magazine, BeMused Gifts, Redux Boutique, In Other Words, Julie Lawrence Yoga Center, It's My Pleasure and People's Coop. So be sure to thank them and support their businesses when you are out about town in the Portland area. We are looking forward to an even bigger and better event in 2012, so if you want to participate shoot us an email at jenniferatnro@yahoo.com and we'll put you on our bowler email list! This event wouldn't be anywhere near as fantastic as it is without our amazing bowlers and captains! So we hope you'll join us next year!



Don't think you have what it takes to be a bowling captain? Think again! Here's a message from one of our at-first-reluctant, then later enthusiastic former captains:

When I was first asked to captain a bowling team for NRO, I didn't have strong feelings about it one way or the other. I just said yes. I believed in NRO

and didn't think about what I was getting myself into. After procrastinating recruiting my teammates and procrastinating raising money, I finally spoke out about my apprehension: I didn't like asking people for money. Nor did I like having to write solicitous descriptions about any project—even if it is important.

When four of my friends agreed to be on my team, I thought 'Great. The team was made. My job was done.'

Soon after, my teammates began asking their friends and family for donations and quickly raised money. I regretted agreeing to be a captain, and I wasn't too sure what it would look like if the captain, me, raised \$0 while her other teammates raised over \$100 each.



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The Angel of Ashland by Vincent Genovese

Never heard of Dr. Robert Spencer of Ashland, Pennsylvania? Neither had Vincent Genovese, who was raised only 10 miles away and was 23 when he first heard the name of Robert Douglas Spencer on a January Huntley-Brinkley Report on TV telling of the death of this doctor who, between 1925 and 1969, had performed over one hundred thousand abortions, all illegal of course. Genovese was mesmerized by the public silences surrounding Dr. Spencer's existence and the result was this 146 page book.

Dr. Spencer attended Pennsylvania State University, graduating in 1911 with a degree in biology, followed by 4 years at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School. After interning at Philadelphia General Hospital he set up his own practice in 1918 in Williamsport, where he had been raised. But, being reluctant to press people to pay him for his services if they were short of money, he was persuaded by his first wife to take a paid position guaranteeing a salary. Consequently he accepted the position of chief pathologist at Ashland State Miners Hospital, mostly caring for miners' families with the numerous mining injuries and diseases presented to him.

In 1925, money issues were not unlike today's and when Dr. Spencer's pay was cut, he chose to take the opportunity to set up his own practice in Ashland. He quickly hired Steve Sukunda, his lab assistant from the Ashland hospital and the two men ended up working together as a team for 44 years.

To understand how Dr. Spencer was able to perform the amazing number of abortions he did, without any legal backing, it's necessary to understand his role in the mining community. When, for example, there was a major accident at a coal mine, while other doctors waited at the hospital, he went immediately to the mine, treating patients on the spot. He worked excruciatingly long hours, treating patients as long as there were any to treat. It is no exaggeration to say that his work came first and his family

second, his second wife was more understanding of this than his first.

Dr. Spencer had established such a rapport with the mining community that word spread of his compassion and competence, both as healer and as an abortion provider.

His skill as the former shielded him from criticism as the latter. His fame as an abortion provider spread and after a while many Pennsylvania College students knew the directions to Ashland. Eventually he was getting referrals from other doctors, lawyers, high school counselors, college administrators and even Protestant ministers and Catholic priests.

Occasionally someone would pressure the police or District Attorney to crack down on his practice. During those times, he would close his office for a few weeks, refer his patients to other doctors, especially one in New York City, and indulge in his love of travel until things settled down. Dr. Spencer was arrested three times and brought to trial twice, but he never spent a day in jail. The regard the community had for him and clever lawyers brought an acquittal in the first two trials; the third trial never happened because Dr. Spencer died before his case was brought to court.

Despite much time and energy working towards the overturn of anti-abortion laws, Dr. Spencer did not live to witness the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*. Motivated by his compassion towards women and his understanding the effects of poverty, he never wavered in his lifelong devotion to trusting women's decisions. Though this charming book is the only biography of his life, his legacy lives on in the work of countless of abortion providers who today trust women enough to continue to provide this important service.



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know that choosing to have an abortion is a moral decision, choosing to have an abortion is a pro-life decision and restricting access contradicts our national values of freedom and personal autonomy.

We need to bring this struggle to the forefront both at the national level and here at home, because it is not just at the federal level where anti-choice action is happening. In the past year, four states have passed bans on private insurance coverage for abortion, eleven states are considering legislation to ban private insurance coverage for abortion and eighteen states are considering bans on abortion

coverage in the insurance exchanges that will be created as a result of the 2010 health care reform.

On June 7, 2011 the Oregon Legislature passed legislation to create a health insurance exchange for low-income families and small business owners. This legislation is in response to the growing need for affordable health care in Oregon as well as the mandate from federal health care reform that was passed last year. As the state moves forward in designing this exchange system, we will need to be constantly vigilant to ensure that abortion coverage continues to be a part of women's basic health care in Oregon.



Finally, a week before the event, I posted a message on my Facebook wall. It linked to my fundraising page for the NRO bowling event. Initially, I thought that people would see what I was up to and then donate

money. I wouldn't even have to ask them directly. That didn't work too well. How would anyone fulfill my request if I didn't make the request?

So I did it. I asked.

I wrote to people directly. And, sure enough, just like everyone promised, my friends and family came through. It was easy:

Hey, did you know I'm participating in a fundraiser for NRO? They're a pretty awesome non-profit and last year raised over \$55,000 for women who didn't have access to reproductive healthcare.

Oh, yeah?

Yeah, if you have five bucks that would really add up.

Should I just give the money to you?

You could, but it'd work best to just do it on the website.

Then they go on the website and, even though they agreed to give NRO five dollars, most of the time they gave more.

I quickly reached my \$100 goal and then raised more. Watching my fundraising site was addictive and thrilling. With only four days to go, I had wished I had started sooner. I was bubbling over with energy and excitement. I called the office and said, "You were right! This is easy and it's fun!"

My problem with asking people for money or asking people for anything in general is not something I will ever completely overcome, but I recognize it as just an old cassette tape, the silly stuff we say to ourselves: Oh, I don't like asking people for help. They'll say no. I will feel bad.

Yes, some people say no. Some people don't read the request.

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Plan application process may soon become more accessible for pregnant women. Based on hotline volunteer Bayla's original research findings (see NRO Newsletter, 2010) and her own follow-up research and advocacy, Jessica used a legislative internship with Representative Greenlick's office as an opportunity to get a commitment from DHS that, by the end of June 2011, as our newsletter is going to print, a new state-wide DHS policy transmittal will go out to all field offices clarifying for OHP case workers that pregnant women's OHP applications must be expedited, and reminding staff members that these applications should be processed within one business day. This policy clarification should go a long way towards ensuring better access to prenatal care as well as timely abortion services for qualifying women. Moreover, our hotline volunteers can hopefully refer clients to this policy transmittal, so that Oregon women have another resource to use when advocating for themselves with DHS!

Some people don't believe in what you believe in.

And, some people say yes.

So, should you be a captain? Yes.

You're perfect for this task, better than I was, dopey, introverted me, and if I could do it (and, gasp, enjoy it) anyone can. You'll overcome stuff. You'll learn stuff. It'll be hard at the very beginning (mostly in just getting started) and easy later. You'll have fun. And it is such an important cause!

Fill the Alley!

- Captain of The Best Thing Ever!

BOOKS, BOOKS, BOOKS!

Our library continues to grow, thanks to the generous donations from the Oregon Country Fair Board of Directors, and contributions from community members. As always, we would welcome donations of (current or classically important) films and books in good condition on any of the subjects of reproductive health & justice, feminist health, LGBTQA health, sexual health, contraception, menopause, fertility or anything else that seems relevant to a library dedicated to reproductive and sexual health for our community! If you have questions, just call the office!

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And recently we have also begun the work of developing a **new website** for the organization that we hope to launch by the end of the year. The vision for this new website is to increase opportunities for interactivity between NRO and its clients, volunteers, donors, and allies. It will also be a resource for all of our supporters on upcoming NRO activities and opportunities for involvement as well information on current events relevant to issues of reproductive justice.

Until the launch of the new website, you can still check out our upcoming activities on our Facebook page <http://tinyurl.com/NROonFB> or come out to visit our booth this summer at the PRIDE Celebration in Springfield (August 13th) and the Eugene Celebration's Community Causeway (August 27th & 28th).

We are currently seeking volunteers interested in helping to plan our upcoming Eugene based **Wine Tasting-Silent Auction** fundraising event (which is back after taking a hiatus in 2010) scheduled for the fall. In addition our hotline team is in need of Spanish/ English bilingual speakers to serve as **Hotline Advocates**.

Finally, there is a new way for you to help support NRO- and it won't cost you one dime! **GoodSearch.com** is a search engine that GoodSearch donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. And it's easy- on the GoodSearch homepage just enter *NRO* into the "enter your charity here" field and click verify. Then just search the Internet as you normally would — the site is powered by Yahoo!, so you'll get high-quality search results!

NETWORK FOR REPRODUCTIVE OPTIONS

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Email: info@NROptions.org
Website: www.NROptions.org



*Empowering communities with
abortion access, grassroots health
education and reproductive options.*

Thank you for supporting reproductive justice!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

The Network for Reproductive Options gratefully acknowledges that our work providing reproductive options to women in Oregon would not be possible without all of you who generously support our programs!

NRO also extends appreciation to the following foundations for grants awarded in 2010-2011:

The Jarvey-McCord Foundation
The Brenner Foundation
100th Monkey
The McGeady Family Foundation
The Campbell-Oxholm Foundation
The Gradison Foundation
The North Star Foundation
The Isis Foundation
Eugene and Layton Borkan Family Foundation
The Charla Richards-Kreitzburg Foundation

**Support reproductive justice
in your lifetime and beyond.**

Designating Network for Reproductive Options as a beneficiary in your will, life insurance policy, retirement plan, or IRA is a great way to provide long-term support for NRO's mission. Planned giving is an important decision for any person. Contact an attorney or financial advisor for guidance since many of these options offer some tax deductions or other tax advantages.