

July
2021



The Guadalupe Workers



For this letter, I will provide a detailed narrative of one day, and attempt to explain each detail as we come to it. Nothing extraordinary occurs here: it's just a typical, Guadalupe Workers kind of day. Yesterday was a Saturday, July 17th. It could have been a Tuesday or Friday, or any of the other days on which we go to the abortion clinic, but it just happened to be a Saturday. We pulled up to our usual parking space near the corner of McNichols and Forrer, the place where the sidewalk is patched up with a lot of asphalt. That little detail has a story. That's where a driver slammed into the fire hydrant on the corner, ripping up underground piping, and the sidewalk with it; yet he also managed, as further consequence, to flood the abortion clinic's basement and take it out of business for a couple of days. So I always smile when I see that ugly section of the sidewalk. I also saw, as we pulled up to the corner, that Elijah had set up his give-away table. Elijah is a young man who drives down from Flint in order to preach in front of Summit. Yesterday, Elijah was playing gospel music and dancing on the sidewalk. I greeted him, then walked farther down the sidewalk where our old friend and Guadalupe Workers board member, Patrick, was chatting with Summit's security guard, Gerome. Gerome turned to me immediately to say, "Edmund, remember I told you they were going to be closed on Saturdays for the rest of the month." Now indeed Gerome had told me that they were going to be closed on Tuesdays for the rest of the month, but he hadn't said anything about Saturdays. Plus, I could see that there were at least three abortion clinic workers sitting in cars parked near the front of the building (Summit faces the side street, Forrer). So Gerome's enthusiasm to be helpful immediately struck me as a little suspicious. I turned back the other way, then, and went back to the place where Elijah was now talking to Alicia. He had explained to her that he was dancing because no one, up to that point, had gone into the clinic. When she told him that Summit also had been closed on Tuesday and Friday of that week, he reached into his car, pushed some button to re-start "Oh Happy Day," and went back to his dancing. I still didn't believe Gerome's assurance that they were closed; and I still suspected that the dancing was premature. We three Guadalupe Workers, then, got into sidewalk counseling mode and began to pick out other cars parked on the street, cars that sheltered women waiting for the clinic doors to open.



Over the next hour, women and couples came for abortion appointments, but were intercepted by Gerome who explained to each (with us listening in) that the "manager" had not shown up and no one had a key. We handed out our 5 x 7 cards, cards with very little print but with a large scan code. When anyone scans that code, he or she receives—depending on what version of the card it is-- video links, an explanation of what GW does, and a message to text us for immediate assistance. Several of the women left; others, though, stubbornly sat in their cars, determined to wait and have the child killed.

Around 9:30, Alicia once again approached a car where there were two women we had already addressed several times. This time, Alicia got into a real conversation, lasting about 15 minutes.



When she finally came away she said that the women were going to go get something to eat then come to the office. We then left for the office, stopping at La Rosita for a rushed breakfast. When we arrived at the office, we barely had time to turn on lights and the ultrasound machine before a brown SUV parked in front. It was only one of the women, though, not both. Her name was Felicity, and once she and her four year-old were in the office she explained that the other woman was her "Auntie," and it was actually the Auntie who had wanted the abortion and who had decided not to come with Felicity to the office. Felicity, though, was pregnant and did need help. In technical terms, she wasn't a "turnaway," but any help we gave her would be communicated to her aunt. Accordingly, Alicia did an ultrasound for Felicity, after which I met with her in the counseling room to discuss her situation and what we could do for her. We promised to help her with move-in costs for a new apartment; additionally, she left with three bags of children's clothes and diapers. Dominique was also expected at the office. We had met her a week ago, when she, her grandmother and her 16 year-old daughter came to the office from the abortion clinic, where they had met GW sidewalk counselors Sister Gail and Emmanuel. The very morning that they had gone to Summit, Dominique had learned that her 16 year-old was pregnant; and her panicked reaction was to rush her daughter to the abortuary. However, they had no appointment there; and when Sister and Emmanuel told them of a place providing free ultrasounds, they came over. That ultrasound, though, was quite a challenge for Alicia—because the baby was so big! Dominique's daughter, we learned, is already in her eighth month.

The ensuing conversation with baby's mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, I assure you, was very complicated. In the end, though, we fixed the brakes on Dominique's car, got her daughter in to Emmaus Health for her first baby check-up, and— coming back to Saturday—we had gathered a crib, car seat, and baby bouncer, all waiting to be picked up. But then Dominique called, telling us she wouldn't be able to get there that morning. And after the Friday we had had at the office (another long story)—well, we decided to turn off the lights and go home. If I had picked a different day, perhaps I would have told you the story of our efforts to help the victim of kidnapping and rape (four of them in the last year). Or maybe the story of a pregnant teenager fleeing to us to prevent a forced abortion (three of them this year). Or our efforts to purchase homes for mothers of large families (our most recent purchase, for \$20,000, made about three weeks ago). We all moan and groan about how the world is falling apart, and maybe it is. But there is at least one woman whom we can convince to remove her IUD; one mother who can be reconciled with her pregnant daughter; one woman, too fatigued from chemo to cook for herself or her family, to whom food can be delivered; one mother of seven who can wake up in her own house. So how can an ill-equipped, unorganized, unqualified exhausted few do all this? By never doubting that God can.

Please help us continue to offer a real solution to these mothers. To Kira 900 for security deposit, for Riss 1200 car repair, for Dalia 300 basic house repair, Janae 1500 rent and utilities, Feli 900 moving costs. We need cribs and diapers and newborn car seats, food for our food pantry. Summer is the time of the year when we receive the least of donations. Please do not forget these mothers need help and we are there all year long. Watch our videos on our Youtube Channel at [\(15\) Defensores de Mujeres - YouTube](#) **THANK YOU!**

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