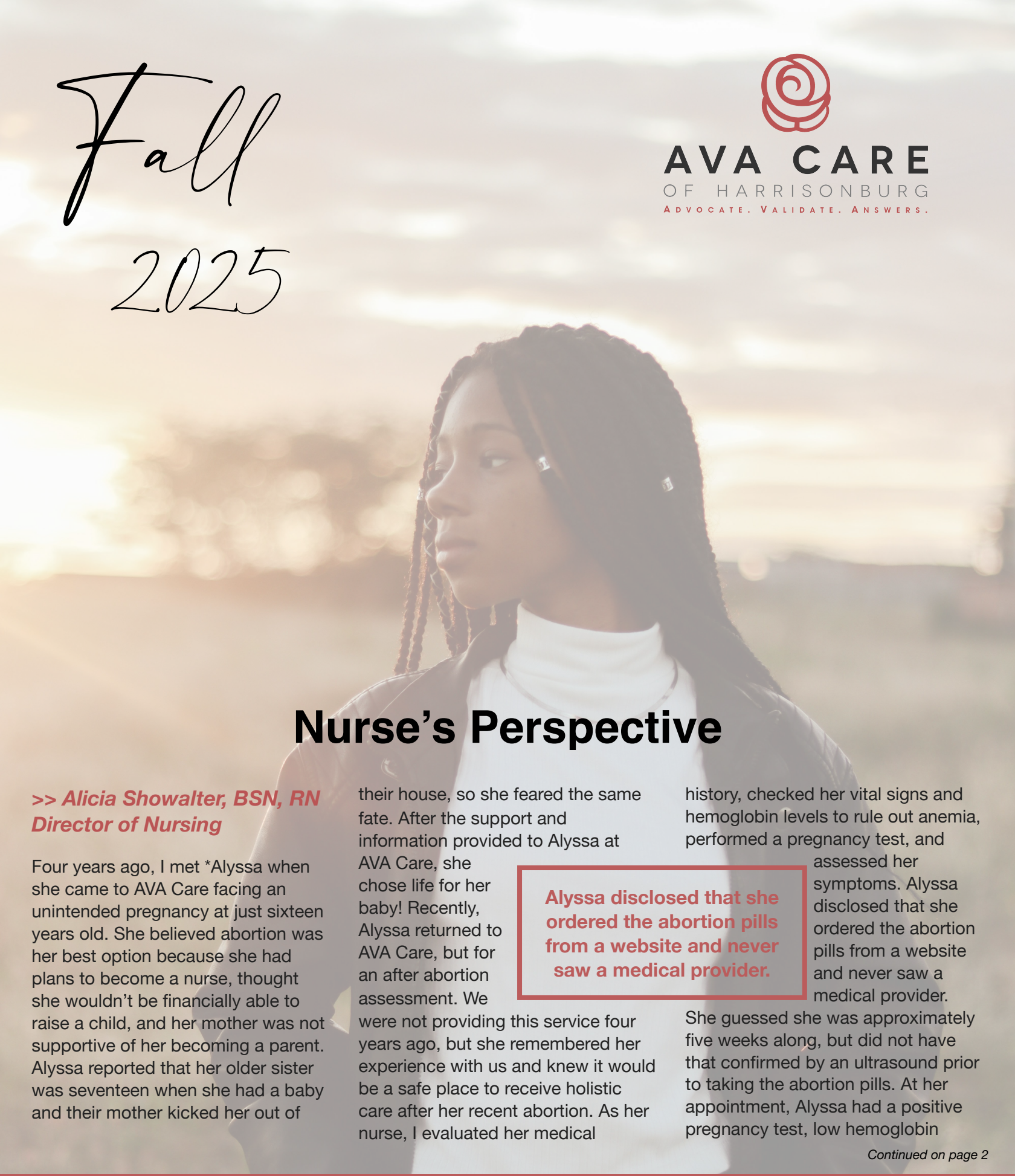
Fall 2025

AVA CARE
OF HARRISONBURG
ADVOCATE. VALIDATE. ANSWERS.



Nurse's Perspective

>> Alicia Showalter, BSN, RN Director of Nursing

Four years ago, I met *Alyssa when she came to AVA Care facing an unintended pregnancy at just sixteen years old. She believed abortion was her best option because she had plans to become a nurse, thought she wouldn't be financially able to raise a child, and her mother was not supportive of her becoming a parent. Alyssa reported that her older sister was seventeen when she had a baby and their mother kicked her out of their house, so she feared the same fate. After the support and information provided to Alyssa at AVA Care, she chose life for her baby! Recently, Alyssa returned to AVA Care, but for an after abortion assessment. We were not providing this service four years ago, but she remembered her experience with us and knew it would be a safe place to receive holistic care after her recent abortion. As her nurse, I evaluated her medical history, checked her vital signs and hemoglobin levels to rule out anemia, performed a pregnancy test, and assessed her symptoms. Alyssa disclosed that she ordered the abortion pills from a website and never saw a medical provider. She guessed she was approximately five weeks along, but did not have that confirmed by an ultrasound prior to taking the abortion pills. At her appointment, Alyssa had a positive pregnancy test, low hemoglobin

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FROM THE DIRECTOR



SUSAN NULL

Connect with Susan at susan@avacareforyou.org or 540.434.7528

As the seasons change once again, we find ourselves preparing for the final stretch of the year. The slower days of summer are behind us, and we are hit with the reality that Christmas is only two months away! If you're like me, you're balancing personal and professional to-do lists, preparing for all that the year-end brings. It's also a time to reflect on what truly matters: our faith, our families, and the blessings God has given us. At AVA Care, we're doing the same—pausing to look back with gratitude and ahead with conviction.

This year has been full of meaningful milestones. We received a new ultrasound machine from PreBorn, welcomed a new Medical Director, and celebrated a successful banquet. But above all, we've remained steadfast in our mission to serve women who feel abortion is their only option. We've stood on the front lines—day in and day out—with love, truth, and hope.

If you've not heard about the proposed Abortion Amendment to the Virginia Constitution, please take some time to be informed (see page 3). This amendment, if passed, would enshrine abortion into our state Constitution, stripping away all parental rights and notifications, and any limits to abortion.

We give thanks to God for you, our faithful financial partners, who make it possible for us to empower women to choose life for their unborn babies. Your support not only sustains our work, it encourages our hearts daily, and reminds us that we are not alone.

As the year draws to a close, we ask that you prayerfully remember AVA Care in your year-end giving. Your generosity allows us to continue meeting women at the crossroads of uncertainty and possibility with compassion, truth, and hope.

Together, we are making an eternal difference.

Standing strong for LIFE with you,



Nurse's Perspective *continued*

level, and abnormal symptoms. Since this was four weeks after her abortion, I was concerned. Without seeing a medical provider or having an ultrasound prior to taking the abortion pills, there was a possibility of an ectopic pregnancy and an unconfirmed gestational age. These are important factors because an ectopic pregnancy is not terminated by the abortion pills and can be a medical emergency, and the FDA has only approved the abortion pills up to ten weeks. I expressed my concern to Alyssa and made a plan to get her the appropriate medical attention. I called one of the local OBGYN offices, communicated the situation, and they were able to see Alyssa the next day and provide further evaluation and care. Without AVA Care, Alyssa may not have received the medical care she needed and deserved following her abortion. That is why we provide after abortion assessments—to stand in the gap, providing care and support no matter what a woman decides.



ALICIA SHOWALTER

**All patient names in this newsletter have been changed for confidentiality.*

The Virginia Constitution Amendment

Since its founding in 1984, AVA Care has remained a non-political organization. Our focus has always been to save the lives of unborn babies, and spare women the regret of an abortion. Over the years, there have been potential legislative bills that have threatened to limit or impede the work that pregnancy centers do across the state or nation. However, never before has there been a threat this severe to women, unborn children, and organizations like ours across the Commonwealth.

In January, an amendment to the Virginia Constitution was introduced by VA lawmakers that would enshrine abortion as a fundamental right in our state. If passed, this amendment will ensure permanent, unlimited abortion, and in the future, no laws to protect innocent children in the womb can ever be passed. This amendment includes legalizing abortion up to birth, erasing parental consent, and stopping all reasonable safety standards. Due to some of the language, AVA Care, and organizations like ours across Virginia, could face greater legal threats that may significantly impede our ability to serve our patients.

This proposed amendment has already passed once through the General Assembly and will be voted on again in the session in January 2026. If it passes a second time, then this amendment will be a ballot initiative for Virginians to vote on in November 2026!

The election on November 3rd was overwhelmingly disappointing as 10 delegates seats were switched over to candidates that will most likely vote ***for*** the amendment. This is devastating news for Virginia. Please continue to pray for our Commonwealth, and that God will have mercy. Your support has never been more urgent as more women will have easier access to abortion in the coming months and years ahead.

Abortion Amendment language

"That every individual has the fundamental right to reproductive freedom, including the ability to make and carry out decisions relating to one's own prenatal care, childbirth, postpartum care, contraception, abortion care, miscarriage management, and fertility care. An individual's right to reproductive freedom shall not be, directly or indirectly, denied, burdened, or infringed upon unless justified by a compelling state interest achieved by the least restrictive means..."

Now is the Time to Act!

Your Year-End Gift Can Save a Life

Your generosity allows AVA Care to:

- Provide ultrasounds at no cost to our patients
- Educate on pregnancy options
- Speak truth in love to women facing undesired pregnancies
- Stand against the proposed Abortion Amendment in Virginia

Every gift given before December 31 is tax-deductible.

Please consider your most generous year-end gift today.

Give online:

support.avacareforyou.org/financial
or scan the QR code

To learn more and stay current on these issues, visit our *Be Informed page.

*support.avacareforyou.org/informed

Annual Fundraising Banquet

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:9).



On September 9th, AVA Care hosted its 2025 Fundraising Banquet at Hotel Madison. Our theme was *Take Heart,* which reflects a call to courage in the midst of challenges. Executive Director Susan Null highlighted several major accomplishments from this past year, including a grant from the nonprofit group PreBorn that paid for our new ultrasound machine, a complete patient website refresh, and a new Medical Director. She shared that her heart is always burdened for donors to understand how dangerous and unregulated the current abortion culture is, and described the 103% increase in abortions in Virginia over the last six years. Null also discussed how a proposed amendment to Virginia's Constitution would guarantee the right to unlimited abortions, and could interfere with AVA Care's work. Two previous patients shared their stories with banquet attendees. Gracie said that before coming to AVA Care, "nobody was listening to what I wanted." Her Patient Advocate reminded her of the God who sees her, and the ultrasound opened Gracie's eyes to the reality of her child's life. Helene described the news of her pregnancy as "isolating and terrifying." Her partner reassured her that everything would be okay, but he was assuming she would terminate the pregnancy. Once she decided to parent, he left. Helene thanked AVA Care "for meeting me where I needed to be met in my sorrow and insecurity…and for empowering me" to choose life. The keynote speaker this year was Kelly Lester, a pro-life advocate and speaker who travels around the country. Lester described AVA Care as a front-runner among similar organizations across the nation, especially with regard to our After Abortion Assessment program, which provides holistic care for women who choose abortion. She said that she has not seen another center offering such care, which she described as desperately needed. Lester also talked about the easily-accessible abortion pill and the new abortion clinic opening in Richmond. She encouraged listeners to support AVA Care in meeting women's needs before they reach the point of choosing abortion. Lester reminded our audience that God will provide, but that He offers us the opportunity to partner with Him as He accomplishes His work. She exhorted the audience to remember to pray for AVA Care and for the women we serve, that we would all be strong and courageous, and *Take Heart.*

Top photo:
Our keynote speaker, Kelly Lester.

Bottom photo:
Helene and her baby boy Benaiah.



CHANGE FOR LIFE

BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN



Sanctity of Human Life Sunday

1.18.2026

This fundraiser is easy to implement at your church, small group, or business and is great for family involvement.

Contact kayla@avacareforyou.org or call 540.434.7528 to participate!

Visit support.avacareforyou.org/CFL.

Thank you to our top banquet underwriters!

Because of their generosity, 100% of the funds raised go directly to the work of AVA Care.

Platinum:

Crosslink Community Church
Keener Construction
Larson Wealth Management
Mehegan and Sons Masonry, Inc.
MEI Engineering, Inc.
Miller's Storage Buildings, Inc.
Mold Removal Worx, LLC
Pearson Livestock Equipment
PWD Window & Door
Shickel Corporation

Gold:

Carr Masonry and Construction
Cook Attorneys
Copper Key Electrical Services
Green Valley Auctions & Moving
Integrity Custom Builders
Joe & Faye Wampler

Gold: *(continued)*

Landes Heating & Air Conditioning, Inc.
PCB – Pendleton Community Bank
Skyline Roofing Inc.
The Marshall & Whatley Investment Group
(A Member of D.A. Davidson & Co)
Vision Technology Group

Silver:

Aaron & Ruth Lorson
Barbara Beiler Stoltzfus
Houff Corporation
IDM Trucking
LD&B Insurance
Mac & Lorna Nichols
Maxine Z. Magri CPA
SFS Tools and Safety
Tim & Gail Hoilman

If you'd like to learn more about becoming a 2026 banquet underwriter, contact Susan Null, Executive Director, at 540.434.7528 or susan@avacareforyou.org.

An Unexpected Positive

>> Kara Durante,
Director of Patient Services

Katie* scheduled an appointment at AVA Care for STI testing due to some concerning symptoms. However, things changed when her routine pregnancy test came back positive. Our medical and patient services team quickly adapted to help Katie work through this unexpected news and what it might mean for her, and to discuss her pregnancy options. Although Katie was surprised to receive a positive pregnancy test, she did not seem as shocked as other patients. Katie shared that the day before her appointment she was journaling about a suspicion she felt that she was pregnant. She decided to let the worry go and shredded up the journal entry because she knew she could get clarity and answers at AVA Care the next day. As Katie processed this reality, she expressed it was bad timing due to having a toddler with her current partner. She was clearly hurt as she described how her partner went to jail when their son was born and made a lot of empty promises to her. Katie was frustrated that she had to raise their son on her own while he was incarcerated. Because of their history, Katie was hesitant to tell her partner about this unintended pregnancy. She believed he would try to convince her to keep the pregnancy, but she did not want to commit to him again. Together we explored the idea that keeping the pregnancy does not mean she has to stay in the relationship. Katie had already shared her hesitations, but she also shared the strengths her partner displayed. She mentioned that he has stepped up as a father figure and even watches their son while she works at night. She expressed the maturity they have both demonstrated to be successful co-parents. I reminded Katie that she did not have to figure it out now or make any big decisions in the midst of this unexpected news.

Since Katie identified journaling as something she enjoyed and used to work through her emotions, we provided her with a journal to take home. I encouraged her to continue processing her feelings, to give herself time, and to not make a decision based on fear or impulse. What a privilege it was to be the first people to know about Katie's pregnancy and to give her a safe place to navigate those initial emotions. When Katie came back for her ultrasound a few weeks later, she shared she had made the decision to carry her baby to term and parent! If it wasn't for our STI testing services that Katie and our team thought would be the focus of her visit, she may never have stepped foot into AVA Care. Through these services, a life was saved and a woman was spared from the regret of an abortion.

INVEST*HER*

YOUR INVESTMENT HELPS HER BELIEVE SHE CAN

Want to know how you can make a difference? Become an Invest*Her*!

What is an Invest*Her*?
When you make an ongoing financial commitment, either monthly or annually, you become an Invest*Her*.

Why should I make an ongoing commitment?
Many women walk through our doors believing abortion is their best or only option for their unintended pregnancy. Your generous financial support allows us to provide valuable services at no cost to our patients. By committing to an ongoing pledge, you help to guarantee the continuation of this work and provide stability for our team, the services provided, and our patients.

How do I make my pledge?

- Set up your gift online. *(Our online payment processor, Zeffy, delivers 100% of your donation to AVA Care. However, an automatic percentage is selected as a donation to Zeffy. You can change this to 0% so no fees will be added to your donation.)*
- Send the included remittance envelope to AVA Care.

Please prayerfully consider becoming an Invest*Her* today!

JOIN OUR TEAM!

Staff Positions:

Director of Events & Engagement *(32 hours/week)*
This position is responsible for the planning, organization, and execution of events that AVA Care hosts to offer opportunities for donors and the community to engage in and support the organization's mission.

Staff Nurse *(24-28 hours/week)*
This position is responsible for pregnancy & STI testing, and educating on pregnancy options, as well as pregnancy and sexual health.

Staff Patient Advocate *(15 hours/week)*
This position is responsible for caring for the patients of AVA care. This includes advocating for patients through options counseling, crisis intervention, sexual health counseling, identifying resources, and providing support for program development and projects.

To apply for one of these positions, please send your resume and cover letter to apply@avacareforyou.org.

Volunteer Opportunities:

- Medical Professionals: RN, PA, FNP, MD/DO
- Patient Advocate
- Spanish interpreters
- Spiritual mentors
- Weekly office cleaners

To inquire, please fill out our Volunteer Interest Form.

Staff

Susan Null
Executive Director

Kara Durante
Director of Patient Services

Alicia Showalter, BSN, RN
Director of Nursing

Kayla Weber
Communications Coordinator

Suzy Kanode
Staff Patient Advocate

Amy Hoover
Administrative Coordinator

Miriam Clark
Donor Data Specialist

Jenny Andes
Finance Manager

Carter Gardner, RDMS
Sonographer

Jeff Domingus, DO
Volunteer Medical Director

Emily Ritchie, MD
Volunteer Consultant for Ultrasound Services

Board of Directors

Carrie Combs – President
Katelyn Will – Vice President
Matt Hinkle - Treasurer
Jeff Stapel - Secretary
Michael Marsh, MD
Pam Gray
Matthew Gray, CFP®
Lorenzo Carrazana
Manny Fisher

Vision

To be the most trusted source of care for individuals facing sexual health and pregnancy decisions in our community.

Mission

We are a Christian, life-affirming medical nonprofit that provides relevant testing services, education, and hope to individuals at risk of or facing undesired pregnancies.

Newsletter sponsored in part by:

PXI Print Signs Apparel



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@avacarefriends

Connect with us on Facebook & Instagram!

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Wish List:
Shelving unit
Bins

Material needs:
Emergency eyewash kit
Baby girls clothing (0-3 month, new or slightly used)

Financial
One-time donations
Invest*Hers* – *monthly financial partners*
Planned/legacy giving

For more information on these items listed above, contact susan@avacareforyou.org.

WE'RE THE EXPERTS ON UNINTENDED PREGNANCY AND HERE FOR HER - NO MATTER WHAT SHE DECIDES.

AVA CARE
OF HARRISONBURG
ADVOCATE. VALIDATE. ANSWERS.

847 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way | Harrisonburg, VA 22801
Address Service Requested

FALL 2025 NEWSLETTER