



WINTER 2016

- Co-Directors: Betty Ann Wilkins, Darlene Griffith, Susan Lampazzi and Bridget Simpkins
- Program Manager: Jessica Ramones
- Newsletter Editor: Christy O'Farrell
- Training Coordinator: Laura Greenspan
- Publicity Coordinator: Monica Galloway

A program of Our Daily Bread Inc., Fairfax, Va.

Statement of Purpose: To work with high-risk pregnant women and new mothers promoting consistent prenatal care, fostering positive parenting skills and supporting them in planning a healthy future for themselves and their babies.

Naomi Project bids farewell to a co-director, and welcomes the mentor taking her place

The Naomi Project has always attracted extremely competent women who volunteer to keep the organization running smoothly, and we are sad to lose one in co-director **Mary Rank** (Spring '13), who is moving to Beijing with her husband, David. He will serve as deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy. Though they have lived in Beijing twice before, and also in Taiwan, Mauritius and Greece, this will be their first time moving without their three children, Maggie, 24, Bob, 22 and Ellen, 19.

It was Mary's experience mothering in foreign countries that drew her to becoming a Naomi Project mentor after reading about the volunteer opportunity in the Washington Post. "As the wife of a foreign service officer, I had raised my children in various overseas posts with no nearby support of friends and relatives who felt worlds away," she said. "Thanks to support of mothering groups, I was able to find my way as a new mother. Naomi Project gave me an opportunity to give

back." Working with clients, many of whom are single mothers, and often new to the United States, Mary learned "how challenging the social welfare system is, and how babies aren't always born into ideal family situations."

"It's easy to volunteer where we're comfortable – our kids' schools, our churches, charities that simply raise money," she said. "Putting ourselves in situations outside our comfort zones is the real test of giving of ourselves to others. Realizing that we all want the best for our children, a safe and healthy place to grow up, makes the connection between mentor and client the common ground. Working with the Naomi Project has opened my eyes and my heart."

Likewise, incoming co-director **Bridget Simpkins** (Fall '13) found she could relate to clients because she was all too familiar with the hardships of raising a child while moving from place to place, or while living alone because her now ex-husband was

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Mary and **David Rank**, left, are moving to China, and **Bridget Simpkins**, above, will become an NP co-director.

BIRTHS



Congratulations!

. . . To Lourdes, client of **Sharon Bomgardner** (Spring '15), on the birth of her daughter, Brianna, on August 15.

. . . To Deicy, mentored by **Jennifer Mendoza** (Summer '15), whose baby girl, Genesis Michelle, was born Dec. 5.



Lourdes and Brianna



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New co-director leads from experience

deployed. As a former Army wife, Simpkins lived in Würzburg, Germany when her daughter, Haley, now 24, was born.

“Moving frequently, and being a frequent ‘single parent’ during training maneuvers, Army schooling and deployments, I realized how difficult it is to manage a pregnancy and a young family when you are far from family and friends, scared, unsure of the resources available to you, and needing answers,” Bridget said.

Volunteering was often part of Bridget’s solution. She developed a story hour program for preschoolers as part of Army Community Services Outreach, and volunteered as The Story Hour Lady for many years. She also volunteered with Army Family Action Plan to improve the lives of Army families, and with Army Family Team Building to teach military spouses how to find resources for their own families, and to act as a resource for other families in their units needing help.

As a Naomi Project mentor, Bridget helped her client, a woman from Sierra Leone with two sons, one of whom is autistic, find health providers, educators and babysitters. They discussed “everything under the sun,” including nutrition, budgeting, breastfeeding, TV limits, literacy and even the impact of the Ebola crisis in her hometown.

“After two years, all the help she needed is in place,” Bridget said. “We have both learned a lot, and she no longer needs my mentoring. While the match is now closed, I will be “auntie” for them forever. I am so proud to see the way her little family has grown and thrived. She is a good mother, she is working so hard to make a good life and good memories for her boys, and she is thinking of the future. She wants to take classes to improve her literacy, get some certifications for her job, earn enough to no longer need the social safety net, and as soon as her toddler is in school, she wants to volunteer to help other special needs parents.

“I think the hallmark of a good charitable effort is that the beneficiaries want to make the same effort for someone else as soon as they can,” she said. “Naomi Project has done that for my client’s family, and the legacy will be the impact on families that are helped in future generations. Because I have been blessed enough to take part in this and see the results, I want to continue my association with the Naomi Project and see how we can optimize that benefit for our community.”

Naomi Project's Summer 2015 Class



We proudly introduce our newest group of mentors.

Back row, left to right: Mercedes Dash, Beryl Dandridge, Peggy Thurston, Joan Arleth, Tais Dominguez, Jennifer Mendoza and Julia Wilson

Front row, left to right: Felicia McClain, Clare O'Keeffe, Rebecca Maloney and Cecilia Maswaya

Women Giving Back provides clothing — and a brief respite — for homeless clients, domestic abuse victims and others

Mentor **Jennifer Mendoza** (Summer '15) recently took her client clothes "shopping" (for free) at Women Giving Back in Sterling, Va. While Deicy chose some outfits from the organization that accepts only like-new donations, Jennifer watched her 1-month-old baby girl.

To shop at Women Giving Back, open on the second Saturday of each month, clients must be pre-registered. Care providers or case workers must first refer women to the group, and notify those who run it who's coming so they can check their name against a list. Clients must present a photo ID. If they do not have a photo ID, WGB can arrange to provide a special letter for them to present instead. They can bring their children, but not friends. For more information, see <http://womengivingback.org/>

"WGB's mission is to support women and children in crisis, and build their confidence and self-esteem, by providing great quality clothing at no cost, assisted by caring and committed volunteers who offer personalized service and interaction," according to the website.

"We are able to provide a little light and fun in otherwise tough situations. Our clients leave standing much straighter and prouder than when they walk in."

THE NAOMI PROJECT

4080 Chain Bridge Road
Fairfax, VA 22030

Phone: 703 860-2633

E-mail: naomiproject@hotmail.com

www.naomiproject.org

<http://www.facebook.com/>

[NaomiProjectofNorthernVirginia](https://www.facebook.com/NaomiProjectofNorthernVirginia)

www.odbfairfax.org

The Naomi Project, in its 19th year, is a volunteer-based resource mothers program. Trained volunteers mentor disadvantaged clients in a one-on-one relationship.

Clients are referred to the program, which is free, confidential and interfaith, by the Fairfax County Health Department, Inova Cares clinics and high school social workers in Northern Virginia.

Since its inception in 1995, more than 300 Naomi Project volunteers have helped more than 500 women. The program is active in Fairfax and Arlington counties, and the cities of Alexandria and Falls Church.

Thank you for the baby blankets!

NP co-director **Betty Ann Wilkins**, below right, accepted handmade quilts from Cindy Kilgore, co-founder of the Lullaby Project. Kilgore's group makes blankets from donated material, and gives them to babies and children in the local area as well as internationally. For more information, see https://www.facebook.com/Lullaby-Project-220143218163908/timeline?ref=page_internal



Next Mentor Training Session Feb. 20

8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Rowland Conference Center at Kelly Square

10777 Main Street, 3rd Floor, Fairfax, VA 22030.

For more information, visit www.odbfairfax.org/NPTraining