

The St. Stephen the Witness Council 14987, commonly known as the UNI Knights has been working with Alternatives Pregnancy Center in Waterloo, IA in the purchase of a new ultrasound machine.

Our partnership began with a star. Grand Knight Travis Hoing purchased a decorative star on an online swap sheet from Lindsey King, Nurse Manager for Alternatives. After exchanging contact information, the star illumed an organization who, strives to “present the Gospel of our Lord, both in word and deed, to families with crisis pregnancies”, to the Knights of Columbus- an organization with over 130 years of history of serving the poor, the downtrodden, protecting families, and the unborn.

Throughout our partnership, the ways that our two groups have intertwined have become deep and impactful. After an initial formal meeting where expectations we explained and realistic goals established, the UNI Knights got to work. Their first fundraiser involved the on-campus community of the University of Northern Iowa. They passed out baby bottles and asked for the loose change found in coat and pants pockets, under couch and futon cushions, and in nooks and crannies of their vehicles. After each penny, nickel, and dime was collected, over \$1600.00 was raised, in addition to the number of clothes, diapers, toys, and other much-needed things for both mother and baby.

The UNI Knights also donated the proceeds of our annual SuperBowl pancake breakfast, worked concession stands for football, volleyball, and basketball games, passed the hat at council meetings, and had brother Knights and their families contribute funds.

The most significant amount of funds came from networking with others passionate about protecting the unborn. After receiving generous support from brother Knights from councils in Cedar Falls, Waterloo, Jesup, Dike/Grundy Center, Vinton, and the State council, the UNI Knights shared their story with other non-Catholic churches in the community. Partnering with all faith traditions raised thousands of dollars for Alternatives. The UNI Knights also applied and received \$15,400 from the Supreme Council’s Ultrasound Initiative.

Once all was said and done, over \$37,000 was raised! With the machine costing \$32,000, the extra funds were used to cover training and other needed items to complete this project.

As the Star of Bethlehem brought the shepherds to meet and adore the newborn-King, so this star brought the UNI Knights into a lifelong partnership with Alternatives Pregnancy Center.