



Caris Pregnancy Counseling & Resources

Executive Director

Caris' Unique Approach and Programs

The vision of Caris is to see both women and children thrive, during and after unplanned pregnancy. To see this happen, we must challenge the negative cultural story that a woman's only options are abortion or overwhelming struggle as a mom.

That is why we are Pro-Grace®, a third option to the abortion debate which demonstrates God's desire for both the woman and the child to thrive in a way that can never be addressed through a political platform. The two theological platforms of Pro-Grace are 1) God's design of pregnancy and 2) God's path for transformation.

- 1) **God's design for pregnancy** is to intertwine the life of a woman and a child, making it impossible to try to help one while bypassing the other. Instead of respecting God's design, the political debate around abortion has divided us into two camps—one focusing on the needs of the woman, the other on the needs of the child. While our culture argues politics, the real problem gets ignored—the panic, isolation and shame many women feel, often leading them to believe their only options are abortion or overwhelming struggle as a mom.

We believe God has a solution—a third option for both women and children.

- 2) **God's path for transformation** for all of us, and for the issues of unplanned pregnancy and abortion, is always His grace. When women experience acceptance and support, the power of shame and fear is broken, igniting hope for the future. As a result of receiving this grace, the vast majority of Caris clients continue their pregnancy. But experiencing this hope is just the beginning. God's plan is for both the woman and the child to continue to thrive after the pregnancy.

We believe that the local church is the ideal place for women and children to receive ongoing support. When a woman continues to experience grace through a church community, her view of God and the Church can be transformed and help her to trust a Christian community. As she is transformed, she is empowered to make better choices for herself and for her child, resulting in lifelong impact for both.

When other women facing unplanned pregnancy see communities where women and children are thriving, it challenges the current cultural message that tells them they need to choose between their dreams and their child—changing the story around unplanned pregnancy and abortion.

By demonstrating God's grace, Caris is telling a new story of what is possible for the 59,000 women who face an unplanned pregnancy every year in Cook County.

Caris offers grace and support to women facing unplanned pregnancy through our free services:

- Pregnancy Tests/Ultrasounds
- Professional Counseling
- Peer-Based onsite Connection Groups
- Referrals to Community Resources
- Early Childcare Items
- Bridging women to Pro-Grace Connection Groups at local churches

Over the past four years, Caris has served more than 7,700 women in and around the Chicagoland area.

Caris Journey

Caris began in 1985 as an outreach of The Moody Church in downtown Chicago. The purpose was to provide a positive alternative to the thousands of women who face an unplanned pregnancy every year and feel like their only real option is abortion.

In 2006, under new leadership, Caris began a season of asking some different questions. Instead of simply asking the common pro-life questions of, “Should a woman have access to abortion?” or “How can we help her to not choose abortion?” we started asking, “Why do women feel the need to have an abortion?” This question was answered through extensive research in 2008 that revealed the panic, isolation and shame that women experience—and how those emotions are at the root of many abortions, as well as many of the ongoing struggles of single moms.

Over the next few years, we shifted our programs from those of a traditional pregnancy center (advice, information, brochures, education) to a new model of professional counseling and support groups. We believed this model would be much more effective of meeting a woman’s true emotional needs in a respectful, non-manipulative way. We saw that women felt welcomed and safe—and that a majority of them decided to continue their pregnancy as a result of this counseling model.

Around the same time, frustrated by the polarizing and over-simplified political debate, we started asking a second question, which was, “How can we best demonstrate God’s heart for both the woman and the child?” And beginning around 2010, we started to dream about how we could do two things to accomplish this: provide a new type of Christian response of grace instead of judgment, and connect pregnant women to local churches for ongoing acceptance and support.

This journey led to the creation of a new approach called Pro-Grace, which is based on training we developed while trying to help churches prepare to open their doors and host support groups for women. And as more churches in Chicago, and Africa, began asking for this training, the Board and senior leadership of Caris reached a decision. We now believe that in order for both our direct service programs (Caris) and our training programs (Pro-Grace) to grow to their potential, we need to separate these two distinct functions.

That is why we are currently looking for a new Executive Director who will be able to build upon all we have learned over the past decade, and be able to take our direct service approach to thousands more women in Chicago.

Vision for Future

Our Brand promise and service delivery to our clients is the strongest it has ever been. Women give glowing reviews and tell their friends about Caris. Our Pro-Grace approach has been defined in such a way that it resonates with donors and volunteers who are tired of the debate and want to get involved in the solution. This is fruit of the work that has been done by our staff and senior leadership. We overflow with passion for our work and a desire to change the story for as many women as possible.

What has been challenging for us is how to put a megaphone to this unique way of serving women, so that more women find us for support, and more donors want to fund us. We are looking for a new ED who understands how to take a successful idea, product or service and get it out in the marketplace while maintaining the integrity of its core values.

In order to serve more women, Caris has to be on the cutting edge of efforts to reach 18-24 year old women. This is a challenging task, because the marketing strategies for this age group are constantly changing, and because many women think any Christian outreach regarding unplanned pregnancy will be loaded with persuasion, judgment and manipulation. The messaging around why we are different is solid—we just need to get that message out into the community.

The Board and staff are looking for someone who is passionate about reaching increasing numbers of Chicago women every year, and who knows how to build the structure to make that happen. We have fantastic marketing and creative support, but the ED needs to be the driving force behind client growth.

We are also looking for someone who knows how to communicate a vision to potential funders and make a compelling case for support. We have a strong fundraising infrastructure and staff, and the ED will be leading by example in communicating one-on-one with a portfolio of donors in addition to being the spokesperson for the organization.

We are so excited about the way we serve women, we eventually want every one of the 59,000 women who experience an unplanned pregnancy in Chicago to be able to hear about Caris and have access to this kind of care.

Executive Director

Position Overview

Reports to: Caris Board of Directors

The Executive Director (ED) leads the ministry of Caris, setting the vision and culture and overseeing all operations. The ED provides strategic leadership by developing staff and working with the Board of Directors to establish and implement long-range goals, strategies, plans and policies. The ED also oversees all fundraising efforts and the annual budget of the ministry. Externally, the ED is a spokesperson in the community, networking with potential funders, partners and referral agencies.

The ED must exemplify a committed and consistent walk of faith and dependence on Jesus, including a personal calling to ministry. The ED must also be in full alignment with the specific mission and vision of Caris and the Caris Statement of Faith and Statement of Principle. The ED must wholeheartedly and enthusiastically lead the organization as a certified Pro-Grace® Model.

Responsibilities

Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

Calling and Passion

- A desire to meet the unique emotional needs of women facing unplanned pregnancy through holistic, counseling-based services, using the Pro-Grace approach.
- A passion to lead and grow a cutting-edge, innovative ministry.
- A heart specifically for the city of Chicago and the 59,000 women who face an unexpected pregnancy every year.
- A personalized belief that God's grace is the only path for true, lasting transformation.

Strategic Leadership

- Using sound judgment, integrity and Christian maturity, lead Caris in a way that honors Christ and moves the ministry forward as He directs.
- Working with the Board of Directors, develop long-term strategic plans, goals, objectives and metrics.
- Provide vision, inspiration and direction to staff team to ensure implementation of the strategic plan and excellent delivery of service to constituents.
- Develop a culture of Christian character and dependence on God throughout the staff team, making space for God to move through prayer, spiritual formation and spiritual encouragement.
- Lead the innovative and aggressive marketing efforts to increase client outreach and brand recognition among target markets.
- Develop a strong network of Chicago community partnerships (business, non-profit and government) to more fully secure Caris as the premier site for women facing unplanned pregnancy.

Fundraising/Spokesperson

- Working with the Advancement Team, grow operational funding for Caris through charitable donations.
- Oversee all aspects of fundraising, ensuring the ministry reaches all fundraising goals and metrics.
- Personally identify, develop and cultivate relationships with 20 – 30 top major donor partners.
- Inspirationally articulate the vision and mission of Caris and be the spokesperson and face of Caris in all arenas.

Operations

- Set operational standards, policies and organizational directives for implementation by staff, in order to ensure achievement of goals and objectives.
- Ensure fiscal accountability and responsibility of ministry finances.
- Working with the Program Director, ensure excellent delivery of Caris programs to women facing unplanned pregnancy.
- Working with the Operations Manager and professional outsourced vendors to oversee all financial, human resources and marketing functions.

Qualifications

Extremely passionate about the mission of Caris and able to communicate that vision and mission both internally and externally in a clear and compelling manner. Able to integrate their personal faith and conviction in their leadership approach.

A leader who is also able to build and inspire a strong team to implement the strategic plan of Caris. A proven leader in either a Christian ministry, nonprofit, or the for-profit sector, with the ability to strategically lead an organization to the next level. Proven experience with either marketing, public relations or other type of strategic growth expertise, so they can create, implement and oversee long-term plans for the growth and health of the organization. Track record of fundraising ability and success.

Demonstrated success in supervision, problem-solving, and strategic planning. Ability to maintain and grow partner relationships with community agencies and churches. Successfully manage and prioritize several projects at one time.

Email résumé and cover letter to careers@caris.org with the subject “Executive Director Application”