

# The Post and Courier

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## **ANNE BADGLEY: Her message for today's youth: Save sex for marriage.**

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It's easy to believe that Anne Badgley used to be a cheerleader as she runs up to the front of the conference room in her pink business suit, yelling as if she's at a pep rally.

It's harder to believe that, in contrast to the freshly scrubbed twenty-somethings watching her, Badgley graduated from college nearly three decades ago, and this summer joined the first wave of baby-boomers to turn 50.

But Badgley is as ambitious as she is savvy. She knows it will take a lot of energy to sell her message to young people - a message many may not want to hear.

You see, Badgley wants to educate people about sex, or more to the point, about not having sex, at least not before marriage.

The young men and women gathered in the Myrtle Beach conference room want to hear her message. They signed on to spread the word about abstinence and character through Badgley's Lowcountry-based organization, Heritage Community Services, which recently won a \$1.3 million government grant and is vying for more local dollars.

They join in the cheering and clapping, and once the hoopla dies down, they pull out their Heritage Community Services note pads as Badgley takes the microphone.

She poses some questions:

How will they take advantage of this chance to talk to young people?

What do they say to someone who is already sexually active?

How do they step on someone's "cultural toes"?

"My theory, again, is that you treat people's minds and hearts very tenderly, with a tremendous amount of respect," she says. "Nobody asked us to come set them straight, 'kay? If we have an opportunity to talk to someone, it is our privilege to do that."

Tim Taylor, 28, videotapes her from the back of the room, then fields questions from newcomers at the break. Badgley brought him on board at Heritage Community Services a year and a half ago.

"She really understands what the problem is in this country, and her approach is unique," Taylor says. "She's very cutting edge."

The facts of life

Badgley learned the facts of life when she was around 12 years old, not from her mother or a health teacher, but from her pastor, who gathered a group of girls together at church to explain the mechanics of sex.

"I remember saying, 'No, that's impossible. I don't think that's true'," she recalls with a laugh in her home in a Hanahan subdivision.

Her voice is still girlish, and when she smiles, her eyes nearly disappear. But she is no longer naive, and she knows that today's children aren't either.

"Now, a 12-year-old could tell you all the definitions of different forms of sexual activity," she says, "and probably way too many of them are way too familiar with the subject."

Girls as young as 12 have come to the Lowcountry Crisis Pregnancy Center, which Badgley started in 1986 to encourage young women to give birth instead of resorting to abortion. The North Charleston center offers free pregnancy tests, counseling, baby supplies and prenatal services for 300 women a month, working in partnership with social services and the Medical University of South Carolina.

Heritage Community Services was born in 1995 as a result of Badgley's work at the pregnancy center. After seeing countless casualties of casual sex, she wanted to do more to prevent unwanted pregnancies, and she thought it was time to try a new approach.

"Our definition of the problem is that children are having sex outside of marriage," Badgley says. "The definition of the problem by people who think that we're confused and on the wrong track would be that people don't properly know how to use contraceptives."

In short, she pushes self-control rather than birth control. And she believes it will take nothing less than an overhaul of our sexually-sated society to succeed.

Soon, the men and women she is training will fan out across South Carolina, separating into seven regions. They will target adolescents, teen-agers and twenty-somethings, but they also will also reach out to others in the community who influence young people: parents, principals, social workers, even raunchy morning disc jockeys and others in the media.

"That's probably the most mega-approach you can take," Badgley says. "You've decided you're going to work with the culture rather than just individuals."

Married in white

Badgley's own childhood was idyllic, though not exactly "Leave it to Beaver."

When she was born in Salisbury, N.C., in 1948, her mother was 38, and her older brothers were already 14 and 22. Her father died a year later from cancer, after which the family moved to the coastal city of Hampton, Va.

She grew up crabbing, sailing in the bay, and later hanging out at the drive-in and the beachfront amusement park.

Her mother, Hallie Brantley, pursued a successful career as a buyer in the male-dominated industry of boy's and young men's fashions, and didn't have much spare time for the PTA or the Garden Club.

Badgley remembers her as attractive, stylish, smart - a model of goodness.

"Her world was much larger than many of the ladies that lived in the neighborhood," she says. "Her world included the market in New York at that time, later the market in California."

When her mother traveled, Anne typically stayed with friends and neighbors, though she occasionally tagged along on the trips.

Mrs. Brantley relied on Anne to make good decisions, and never talked to her about sex, except to say that she wanted her to wear a white dress on her wedding day.

Anne lived up to her unspoken expectations.

During high school, if a date got fresh with her, she told him to keep his hands to himself and later warned the other girls about him. If anyone else was sexually active, she didn't know about it.

She started at Roanoke College in 1966 when young women still were required to wear stockings and dresses and sorority mothers met dates at the door. Soon, though, the sexual revolution turned the campus upside down. By the time she graduated in 1970, it was accepted, even expected, for girls to have boys and beer in their rooms.

Everyone in the class laughed when Anne gave away that she was a virgin. The revelation was especially surprising since she dated the same boy, Gordon Badgley, for four years.

She met Badgley when he taught her to bugaloo at the freshman follies. She doesn't make pretensions about what attracted her to him. He was good-looking and a good dancer. But on a deeper level, she was touched by his commitment to his family - a commitment that held true as they raised two children together.

They married in June 1970 after they graduated from Roanoke College. She made it to the altar with her virginity intact, she says, as did her husband.

"The wait was worth it, absolutely," she says, thinking back on their wedding night at the Williamsburg Inn, "though I will admit that we downed a whole bottle of champagne first."

Pivotal period

Infidelity has never been an issue between her and her husband, Badgley says, pointing to studies that say people who are sexually active prior to marriage are more likely to have an affair.

"That's one thing that's never crossed our minds, that we would ever have to worry about the faithfulness of each other."

After college, her husband pursued a business career while she taught special education. The couple skipped around from the Virginia mountains to Decatur, Ala., and finally to Berkeley County in South Carolina in 1973.

A year later, she left the classroom when she gave birth to her first child, Gordie.

That was a pivotal period for Badgley for other reasons as well. She became politically active, organizing the Berkeley County League of Women Voters and supporting the Equal Rights Amendment.

Around the same time, she started to truly consider Christianity and commit her life to the Lord. She immersed herself in Bible study and says she was astounded at the depth of truth she found.

She thinks she was watching a religious program - probably "The 700 Club" - when she saw a film clip of an abortion. She was riveted. "It was very clear to me that was a human baby that was being torn apart, and that was taking a human life. There was no debating it. It was right before my eyes, and it stunned me."

Yet, no one, not even other Christians, wanted to discuss the issue when she brought it up. She likens it to the denial of the Holocaust or of slavery. She felt isolated and didn't know what to do, so for several years she did nothing.

"I had no desire to go out and hold a sign or to protest," she says. "I don't enjoy confrontation."

## Crisis pregnancy

Badgley heard about the crisis pregnancy center concept in the early '80s, a few years after her daughter was born.

"I was thrilled because it was a nonconfrontational way to get this information to people who were in the midst of making a decision on whether their little baby would live or die," she says.

She followed the model provided by a pro-life organization started by the Rev. Billy Graham, former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop and theologian Francis Schaeffer and, in 1986, the Lowcountry Crisis Pregnancy Center opened on Ashley Phosphate Road, a few blocks from its current location.

Through the years, other pro-life pregnancy centers have attracted attention for deceptive tactics - for example, misleading women with promises of abortions.

Badgley says she found such methods shortsighted. In the long run, she felt more good would be done with honesty, warmth and support.

She requires volunteer counselors to go through extensive training, and while they may discuss their religious faith with clients, Badgley says, it's with tremendous respect and reserve.

Lorraine Maguire directs the Charleston Women's Medical Clinic, which does perform abortions. She appreciates Badgley's approach and feels comfortable referring clients to the Lowcountry Crisis Pregnancy Center.

"I think she's a caring person. I think she's compassionate," Maguire says. "Obviously, the way she handles this emotional situation carries through with her staff."

Badgley moves in a circle of prominent conservatives. She and her husband recently lunched with former president George Bush during a Lowcountry fund-raiser for U.S. Rep. Bob Inglis' campaign for the Senate.

She also understands the inner workings of government from serving on the Berkeley County Department of Social Services board and the state's Maternal, Infant and Child Health Council.

Close friend Cyndi Mosteller - a local Republican activist - calls Badgley a visionary.

"She's been at the front lines for a long time," Mosteller says. "And you can tell by her energy level that she's still got a lot to offer. A lot of energy and a lot of ideas."

## Advocating abstinence

Badgley has shifted her attention over the past three years from the crisis pregnancy center to Heritage Community Services, located next door.

The agencies are incorporated separately for an important reason. While the pregnancy center has a clear Christian directive, Badgley says Heritage Community Services would be too limited as a religious organization.

"We want to go to the public, to where the people are, and that would include military, corporations, public schools and anyone else who would work for us," she says.

Heritage began in 1995 by putting on seminars for the Charleston Naval Hospital, which saw an immediate drop in unwanted pregnancies in its ranks. Afterward, Heritage worked with the Navy in Beaufort, Cherry Point, N.C., and Jacksonville, Fla.

The organization also put on character programs for Santee Cooper, the Dorchester County Sheriff's Department, Goose Creek police and others.

Last year, Heritage used a small state grant to pilot a program in Dorchester School District 2 on abstinence-based sex education.

The program included after-school clubs at Oakbrook and Dubose middle schools that used reverse peer pressure to encourage students to set goals for the future and wait for marriage. Students visited Charleston Southern University and went on an overnight trip with their mentors one weekend.

"It's fun!" shout some of the Oakbrook Middle School students involved with Heritage Keepers. Seventh-grader Mia Delee adds, "It teaches you about self-respect."

Teacher Roslin Fields credits Badgley for her work on the program. "She doesn't mind sacrificing to make a dream come true," Fields says, "and that's what I like about her."

Badgley pitched a similar but expanded model to state officials when she applied for South Carolina's share of federal money earmarked for abstinence education. Heritage Community Services won the entire \$1.3 million - which drew protests from other organizations that applied.

Badgley's not backing down. She has her eye on an additional \$10.5 million that the state legislature approved for counties to spend on teen pregnancy prevention. And ultimately, she would like to expand Heritage Services to a national level.

She thinks the time is right for the pendulum to swing back to a more sexually responsible society, but knows it will need a push.

"We're not looking for a quick fix here. We're thinking long-term. All we can do is our part."

Anne Badgley

Born: July 23, 1948, in Salisbury, N.C. Grew up in Hampton, Va.

Family: Husband, Gordon Badgley, account manager for Cameron & Barkley. Children, Sally, 20, and Gordie, 24.

Residence: Hanahan

Occupation: Founder and executive director of Heritage Community Services, which promotes abstinence, and the Lowcountry Crisis Pregnancy Center. Former schoolteacher and news editor of The Hanahan News.

Education: Bachelor's in psychology, Roanoke College; graduate work in education, University of Alabama; master's in clinical counseling, The Citadel.

Bad habit: Bites her nails.

Family business: Badgley Enterprises, a toy soldier distributor.

Current political work: She and her husband co-chair the Berkeley County re-election campaign for Gov. David Beasley and the Charleston County campaign for U.S. Rep. Bob Inglis for Senate.

Ideal romantic evening: Eating at a nice seafood restaurant and walking on the beach.

Favorite TV: C-Span. "You hear the news directly, and you can make your own conclusions."

Role model: Her mother, who lives in Virginia. "I still look to her for advice and wisdom. If I ever forget who I am, I can go home and remember where I came from."

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