

August 2017



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The Pro-Life Union of Greater Philadelphia affirms the sanctity of life through leadership, service to those making the choice for life, and witness to a culture of love. We accomplish this through our support of Guiding Star Ministries and offering alternatives, and through education, outreach and public affairs.

## A Summer Intern Story, *Carly Freeth*

My involvement in the pro-life movement began when I joined the Respect Life Club at Bishop Shanahan, my freshman year of high school. Soon after, I woke up early on the first Saturday of the month to hear Mass at St. Agnes and then joined the Rosary pilgrimage to Planned Parenthood in West Chester. Although I had learned about the horrors of abortion in our club meetings at school, nothing prepared me for the first time I prayed outside Planned Parenthood. As I stood outside the building, and my heart sunk to my feet, I knew I had never been to such an evil place in my life.

When I saw distressed young women, not much older than me, walking up to Planned Parenthood with their mothers, while “escorts” directed them away from the woman gently handing out resources and offering help, I couldn’t believe my eyes. Surrounded by The Helpers of God’s Precious Infants, men and women who had been fighting for life long before I was born, I followed their lead and placed all my hope in Our Mother Mary, and I took up the most powerful weapon around; the Holy Rosary. Inspired by the veteran pro-lifers around me, I became dedicated to the pro-life movement.

At Temple University, I was in for another shock when seemingly the vast majority of the campus considered birth control and abortion to be normal and even necessary parts of a woman’s life. In a public health elective, my professor laughed at me when I suggested using abstinence as a preventative measure for AIDS. And I was absolutely astonished when my education professor told the class that gender is a “spectrum” and men and women really aren’t that different after all. As I saw logic being turned upside down, I grasped hold of my Catholic Faith and providentially I had every opportunity to do so at the Temple University Catholic Newman Center. I continued my work in the pro-life movement with a more insightful understanding of the culture today including the underlying indifference for the sanctity of human life. I realize that I am abundantly blessed to have grown up in the Catholic Faith with family, priests, sisters, teachers, friends, and organizations like the Pro-Life Union and 40 Days for Life, who have all instilled within me a deep respect for the dignity of human persons from conception until natural death.

I am honored to be a summer intern for the Pro-Life Union (PLU) and to be involved in the wonderful work they do to support women, children, and families in the Philadelphia area. Each day at Guiding Star Ministries (GSM) or the PLU, I witness women receiving love; *true love* - not the false love that supports whatever decision no matter the harm to body and soul. As an intern, I have had the opportunity to support the PLU and GSM in a variety of ways: editing, writing, website designing, organizing, playing with children, talking with women at GSM, covering overnight shifts at GSM, sidewalk counseling, calling legislators, recruiting other young people, learning about non-profits, learning from my coworkers, and chatting about the faith. I urge you to continue your prayers for the PLU and GSM. Thank you for fighting the good fight and inspiring me to do the same.



## Stand Up for Life Dinner

The 2017 *Stand Up for Life Dinner* is just around the corner! Sunday, November 19, Cocktails 4:30 p.m.– Dinner 5:30 p.m. This year, we are excited to have as our speaker Melissa Ohden, abortion survivor. Melissa was fourteen years old when her adoptive mom told her that she had literally survived a failed abortion. She will tell us her amazing story and how her life came full circle when she gave birth to her own daughter at the same hospital where her life was almost ended.

There are several ways to be a part of this event, the largest annual pro-life gathering in the Greater Philadelphia area. Tickets are \$75 per person with a table of ten discounted to \$700. Student seats are discounted to \$50 per student. Paid reservations may be mailed to Attention: SUFL 88 Pennsylvania Ave., Oreland PA 19075. 215.885.8150

# Charlie Gard and the Dignity of Life

The agonizing story of little Charlie Gard has captured the world. At the time of this writing, his parents have ended their legal battle to pursue treatment. The tragedy is that, had their parental rights been respected, the outcome could have been very different. We share the following statement from the Terri Schiavo Life & Hope Network, a Member Organization dedicated to upholding human dignity through service to the medically vulnerable. We applaud the work of the Network as they serve and support families like Charlie's.

*The Terri Schiavo Life & Hope Network stands in solidarity with Chris Gard and Connie Yates as they conclude their heroic pursuit of treatment for little Charlie Gard, their son. After fighting London physicians, as well as the British legal system, for months, Chris and Connie have learned from recent medical tests that "the window of opportunity to help" Charlie has closed, as the Associated Press reports. Grant Armstrong, attorney for Chris and Connie, stated, "It's too late for Charlie. The damage has been done." In the Royal Court of Justice in London, Connie stated, "Charlie was left to lie [in Great Ormond Street Hospital] and deteriorate. We wanted Charlie to have the chance ... [there] was never false hope, as confirmed by many experts. Now we'll never know..." Connie and Chris underscored that they "should have been trusted as parents." "The international drama of Charlie's case could have been avoided if Chris and Connie had been allowed their basic right as parents to get the treatment for Charlie they sought from the beginning," declared Bobby Schindler, President of the Terri Schiavo Life & Hope Network.*

*Charlie Gard's case is neither isolated nor unique. In its 12 year history, the Terri Schiavo Life & Hope Network has witnessed physicians and hospitals routinely impose their decisions on patients and families without consent through a variety of means. The trend of bioethical aggression that denies patients their basic rights and affords so-called "experts" total control over their lives shows few signs of slowing. It is a trend that threatens our most basic right as human beings to life and to protection from the state.*

*"Charlie deserved the best available treatment in a timely fashion," continued Schindler. "Instead of providing that, the UK medical and legal fields let Charlie languish and deteriorate to the point where treatments that have worked for other children like him no longer had a chance. Charlie Gard is a victim of a culture of medical indifference that turned out to be as corrosive and ultimately lethal as was his underlying genetic condition. His parents are heroes for fighting for him."*

## Abortion Reports

Facility Numbers	2016	2015
Philadelphia Women's Center	5733	5807
Planned Parenthood Comly Rd	2814	2961
Planned Parenthood Philadelphia	4450	4813
Planned Parenthood Warminster	714	913
Planned Parenthood West Chester	917	1013

The numbers are in for 2016 abortion Facility Reports. The staggering loss of life here in our city is beyond comprehension. There were 14,628 lives lost, mothers wounded and families hurt. We mourn that loss and pray for a transformation in our culture.

If you compare the prior year, there is hope. The number of abortions decreased at every facility in Greater Philadelphia. While there are many reasons why, we know that the prayer and witness that has taken place, made a difference. We saw women leave during the 40 Days for Life Campaigns, and we know their children were spared. We have met some of those children.

Together, we have made a difference and that is a reason for hope and a renewed commitment to outreach activities!

## Welcome to Our Newest Board Members

We are so excited to welcome four new board members. **Dr. Monique Ruberu** is an obstetrics/gynecology physician practicing at Holy Redeemer Hospital in Meadowbrook, and is trained in Natural Procreative Technology (NaPro) in the Philadelphia area. Monique began her involvement with the Pro-Life Union as the co-director of the 40 Days for Life Campaign in Center City Philadelphia. **Richara Krajewski** has experience working directly with mothers and families in crisis in clinical and social service environments. Her commitment to pro-life work is rooted in her faith and hope in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. **Helene Hallowell** is currently the Diocesan Field Promoter for the Couple to Couple League based out of Cincinnati, OH. Helene also serves as a member of the Archdiocesan Respect Life Leadership Council, chairperson of the Evangelization Team at Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Secane, Pa, and various volunteer roles at Regina Angelorum Academy. **Lisa Liccione** is the owner at Bottom Line Techs Services and Inspired Touch. Lisa has been a supporter and volunteer at the Pro-Life Union for many years and she has a heart for serving women and children. Ladies, thank you for your service to the board of directors.

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The Pro-Life Union of Greater Philadelphia is a 501(c) 3 organization!