

# CCBR: Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform

## *Making Abortion Unthinkable*

November–December 2007

*“Before the presentation, I was kind of in the middle. ... Now I have taken a side, and that is pro-life. ... I would want people to see **the video** because it **changed my mind.**” –15-year-old female, Master’s Academy*

Dear Friends,

Since October, CCBR has given 34 presentations across North America. Here is just *some* (there is always more than will fit in a newsletter!) of the feedback from attendees of these recent presentations:

### Master’s Academy Christian high school (Calgary, AB):

- Opinion before presentation: “I didn’t think it was actually like killing a baby.” Did your position change due to the presentation? “Yes, totally. **I’m against it now.**” –18-year-old female
- Opinion before presentation: “Indifferent.” Did your position change due to the presentation? “Yes, now I think it is wrong and **wouldn’t consider it myself.**” –16-year-old female
- Opinion before presentation: “Wasn’t sure either way.” Did your position change due to the presentation? “Yes, abortion is bad. If I know someone who wants abortion, **I will try to convince them otherwise.**” –16-year-old female

### West Philadelphia Catholic High School (Philadelphia, PA):

- “I was pro-choice; now I’m pro-life. [**The graphic visuals**] **made me totally against abortion.**” –18-year-old male



▲ *That’s me (centre, back row), posing with the pro-life club from West Philadelphia Catholic High School.*



▲ Earlier this year we updated you about Isaiah (left), whose birth was the happy outcome of a crisis pregnancy. The graphic abortion video provided by my colleague Jojo (right) to Isaiah’s mother strengthened her resistance to her boyfriend’s pressure to have an abortion. She recently sent us this e-mail:

“Isaiah is now 6½ months old, sitting up on his own, teething, healthy, and has quite the personality now... Every day I look at him it pains me to think what I would have done *without* him. **Isaiah will be my constant reminder of how great a cause CCBR is and that your work will never be in vain.**”

- Opinion before presentation: “I thought people should have a choice and if they want abortion they can get it.” Did your position change due to the presentation? “Yes. **Now I feel abortion is wrong** and shouldn’t occur.” –15-year-old male
- Opinion before presentation: “Abortion was not for me, but that’s others’ choice.” Did your position change due to the presentation? “**Yes. Abortion is wrong across the board.**” –16-year-old female

### St. Maurice Catholic High School (Winnipeg, MB):

- Opinion before presentation: “I thought that it was wrong, but okay in certain circumstances.” Did your position change due to the presentation? “**Yes, it’s completely wrong.**” –17-year-old female
- Opinion before presentation: “It was a non-issue for me.” Did your position change due to the

presentation? “It made me realize that we need to show people that pro-life is right.” –16-year-old male

- Opinion before presentation: “I wasn’t really for or against abortion. It didn’t really matter to me either way.” Did your position change due to the presentation? “Yes. When I saw the abortion slideshow, I saw their little hands. I am pro-life. **The slideshow and pictures had a powerful effect.**” –17-year-old female

#### Redeemer University (Ancaster, ON):

- The presentation “...was well prepared and **hard-hitting**, without becoming overbearing. The biblical perspective was clearly articulated.” –Fred Schat, Dean of Students

#### New Life Church (Stonewall, MB):

- “Now I am **way more against abortion** than I used to be, now that I have seen what abortion does to unborn babies.” –13-year-old female

#### **Genocide Awareness Project at the U of Calgary**

On October 15 and 16, we helped Campus Pro-Life (CPL) exhibit the Genocide Awareness Project for the fourth time at the University of Calgary. Here’s our report, featuring many testimonies from volunteers at the display:

CPL treasurer Leah spoke to a girl named Natasha who was undecided about abortion. **Natasha became pro-life!**

*Over the year we have been blessed with reference letters from clergy of various denominations. Please check out these glowing endorsements at [www.unmaskingchoice.ca/endorsements.html](http://www.unmaskingchoice.ca/endorsements.html)*

Leah saw a similar outcome with two more individuals: a guy and girl who were fence-sitters, but partial to the pro-life view. They too came fully around to the pro-life perspective!



▲ Leah (left) dialogues with a passerby.

While these on-the-spot conversions are incredibly encouraging, we must emphasize that they are *rare*. We

are competing against years of overwhelming pro-abortion propaganda, and therefore it is unrealistic to expect that everyone will be convinced immediately. Conversions much more commonly take *time*. Therefore, if we can challenge people to even *reconsider* their views, we’re moving forward.

CCBR’s new intern, Hannah, asked a young man who was walking by the display, “What do you think about abortion?” As he took a pamphlet he responded, “**I’m not sure anymore.**”



▲ Hannah (left) allows two students time to absorb the GAP imagery prior to beginning a discussion with them.

Similarly, I spoke with a young man who said he supported abortion, so I pointed to the graphic image behind me and asked, “That?” It is always difficult for those with functioning consciences to maintain a “pro-choice” position when the horror of an abortion choice is defined visually. Sure enough, the man became quiet as he stared at the image; he then commented that he would have to think further, admitting that he was challenged.

The images certainly provoke thought, as well as bring clarity to what seems to be a confusing debate. The aunt of one of CPL’s members came by the display and said, “I’ve been Catholic my whole life and been mostly pro-life but always had doubts about children being brought up in suffering. **These photos washed away my doubts.**”

CPL vice-president Tasha spoke with a guy who was “on the fence” regarding his views about abortion. In conversation, he was moving towards the pro-life viewpoint, but had to leave to attend class. Shortly afterwards, he returned, saying, “**I went to class but too much was going through my head so I had to come back.**” By that point, Tasha had already begun debating with another student, so this young man listened in. By the time he left, he was really against abortion!

Another person, this time a female student, spoke with Tasha. This student said that both she and her sister were

“pro-choice,” and she was even bold enough to admit that her sister “hated” our group. Tasha compassionately spoke with this woman and by the time the woman left she was changed, saying, “**I don’t know if I can stand with pro-choice anymore.**”



▲ CPL execs Tasha (second from left) and Asia (right) discuss abortion with two fellow students.

As I type this, I have a smile on my face thinking about how well-trained CPL members are. It is such a joy to work with these students. We constantly remind them to teach by asking questions and I’d like to share with you a comical encounter where CPL member Jacinta did just that:

A “pro-choice” student approached a group of abortion supporters to give them warning about Jacinta, saying, “**You better be careful because I know their tricks.** Notice how they’re answering your questions with questions?”

So the girl dialoguing with Jacinta exclaimed, “**Yeah! You’re trying to force your opinion on me by asking me questions!**” Jacinta responded, “We’re asking you questions and not giving you flat answers because we want you to come to the realization that abortion is wrong, all by yourself. We’re not here to force our opinions on you; we’re here to help you along.” At that, the girl refused any further discussion and walked away.

Volunteer Rick had a similar encounter with a student who “discovered” our Socratic approach: he said to Rick, “**You keep asking me questions just to prove I don’t have the answer.**” He said he felt that Rick wanted to force him to change his opinion. Rick replied, “No, I want you to change your own mind.”

And the ball started rolling in that direction for a young man who spoke to Asia, CPL’s other vice-president. He approached her after he spoke to the pro-abortion crowd, saying, “Let’s hear your point of view.” So Asia

explained it briefly and he said, “Yeah, that makes much more sense.” Although still unsure on the issue, he was leaning towards pro-life.

Besides creating dialogue on-site, the GAP display stimulates conversation well beyond the perimeter of the exhibit. In fact, a student passed by and said his journalism class was discussing genocide. He had never thought about genocide in terms of abortion but because he was intrigued by our perspective, he planned to bring it up in class.



▲ Not all students are interested in either reasonable dialogue or justice. For the benefit of readers who might have difficulty reading these signs, the one on the right says, “I’ll have a baby when I’m ready,” implying that the sign’s holder will kill the babies for whom she feels unready. The sign on the left reads, “If loving choice is wrong, then I don’t want to be right,” revealing an equally selfish morality and a disregard for truth. ▼ When that choice is clearly defined, however, other students who are more intellectually and morally honest cannot so easily dismiss the pro-life view. Here CPL members Josh and Matt (facing crowd) engage several of their peers in debate. While virtually none of these students would make room in their busy schedules to attend a talk on abortion, the graphic images compel them to address the issue on the spot and then ensure that the subsequent discussion is factually informed.



At this fall’s GAP, there seemed to be a constant “theme” from the students we spoke with: many argued that abortion was necessary to prevent suffering.

When I encountered a young lady who thought that way, my “usual” arguments were having little effect, so I tried a new angle: I asked her, “Have you ever read Man’s Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl?” She had not.



▲ *The Sean Update: Sean (centre) is a U of C student who abandoned his “pro-choice” stance after listening to debates between GAP volunteers and fellow students at both GAPs in 2006, exchanges which made it clear to him that “...the pro-choice front is riddled with fallacy.” Our previous GAP-related newsletter informed you that Sean subsequently joined Campus Pro-Life and endured cold weather to volunteer at the GAP in March of this year. Here Sean again volunteers at this latest GAP, this time as a member of the CPL executive team!*

So I explained that Frankl was a Holocaust survivor who wrote about his experiences and his theories in psychology. I told her, “You can imagine the suffering, the hell, that he and his fellow prisoners were living in. In fact, some people were so overwhelmed by the pain of torture and starvation that they wanted to commit suicide. Frankl had a profound response to this: he said that **for those who felt there was nothing more to expect from life, he needed to convince them that life was expecting something from them.**”

I let this thought sit with her for a moment, then I went on, “Notice that he didn’t help them commit suicide. Instead, he helped them find hope, find purpose, find meaning. He helped them realize that they had something to give to life.

“If that is our response when born people face suffering,” I asked, “then why not have that same response when

**It is amazing what can be accomplished in a year!**

Thanks to *your* support, we have shared the pro-life message on local, national, and international levels!

Presentations: Talks about abortion, accompanied by our graphic abortion film, were given **67 times to over 5,000 people** at universities, high schools, and churches in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, Alaska, Nebraska, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia.

Genocide Awareness Project (GAP): This was displayed twice at U of Calgary, a campus of **26,000+ students**.

Reproductive “Choice” Campaign (RCC): Our abortion-billboard truck continues to run weekly (having started August 8) in Calgary, a city of **over 1 million people**.

Media Coverage: CCBR was featured at least 23 times by Canadian and American media outlets—**10 radio programs, 9 newspapers, and 4 television programs**.

unborn people *may* face suffering in their future? In other words, rather than kill, why not help people rise above their difficulties?” I then asked her, “Who inspires you? Inevitably the people who inspire us are people who have endured incredible difficulties and overcome them, people who have faced seemingly insurmountable struggles (suffering!) but have not been defeated by them.”

There. Suddenly, she got it. She understood. “Thank you!” she exclaimed, “Thank you so much! That is so powerful and really makes a lot of sense.” Her epiphany was a beautiful moment because she grasped this fundamental point: although we should *alleviate* suffering, we should never *eliminate* sufferers.

As another year draws to a close, we are moved as we think about the people whose lives we have been privileged to affect with these life-changing messages. But we haven’t done this alone: the time and talent of dedicated volunteers—along with your sacrificial financial support—has been integral to our efforts. Thank you for standing with us in our efforts to make abortion unthinkable.

Merry Christmas!

*Stephanie*

Stephanie Gray, on behalf of the CCBR team (clockwise from top-left), Brendan, Jojo, Stephanie, and Hannah



Note: Quotations may have been edited for grammar, syntax, punctuation, spelling, and/or length. Boldface font represents added emphasis unless specified as being in original text.