



May 2010

MAKING ABORTION UNTHINKABLE

www.unmaskingchoice.ca

Dear Friends,

It's on my dream list to be present at a birth. I haven't yet—but I came close. In 2006, two of our supporters invited me to the birth of their second child. Given that they were in BC and I was in Alberta, I wasn't sure if it would work out. But lo and behold, she went into labour when I was on a speaking tour in Vancouver! But the morning I received the phone call to attend, I was scheduled to do a debate at Simon Fraser University. Boy, was I disappointed. I reluctantly went to the debate, sad that I was missing out on a birth.

What I didn't know was that at least two people were coming to that debate whose lives would forever be changed because of it. Months after, a pro-life student called me to say that her friend had been pregnant and planning to abort. **But she attended the debate, changed her mind, and chose life for her child! So another birth happened because I missed out on watching one**—I'd say that's worth it!

And just a couple months ago when I spoke again at SFU, I met another student who was impacted by that debate. This is what he shared with me:

It was November 2006. I was a first-year business student at Simon Fraser University, and I was just completing my first philosophy course. This course had had a profound effect on how I approached logic and reasoning. Prior to taking this course, my religious and political beliefs were highly influenced by the media, my friends, and my family. I was liberal-minded, agnostic, and pro-choice (whatever the most popular authors wanted me to be).

This philosophy course, however, trained me to think critically about my beliefs, and re-form them into what made the most logical sense through deductive reasoning. At this time I was in the process of overhauling many of my beliefs, when I saw a poster advertising a debate on the ethics of abortion. I considered myself pro-choice, but I had

never carefully considered my rationale. I decided that I would suspend judgment on the issue, attend the debate, take notes, and form my beliefs afterwards.

The pro-life debater was Stephanie Gray. I remember her presenting the pro-life position in a simple argument:

1. *It is morally wrong to kill a human being.*
2. *An unborn child is a human being.*
3. *Abortion is the killing of an unborn child.*
4. *Therefore, abortion is morally wrong.*

I took the first premise as a given, and I knew the third premise to be true. Ms. Gray spent a lot of time arguing for the second premise, and I ultimately came to agree with her, and thus, had no choice but to accept the conclusion.

Eager to hear a counter-argument, I turned my attention to the pro-choice debater, Lyle Crawford. I was disappointed to hear him reply, 'there is nothing you've said that I don't agree with.' It was clear that he was unprepared to hear the argument presented in such a way, so he re-phrased it into an easier-to-attack version, and awkwardly attacked that. He seemed to attack the first premise (in that it's not morally wrong to kill a human being), but the interrogation period had him backpedalling.

I was forced to go home and shamefully admit to my friends and family that I had become pro-life.

It's this kind of encouraging and intellectually honest response we're privileged to see on a routine basis. In fact, I just completed a talk to grade 7 and 8 students at St. Andrew Catholic School in Oakville. When the vice principal thanked me she said she looked at some of the surveys and noted that several students shifted from a view of 5 ("pro-choice") prior to my talk, to 9 or 10 (pro-life) afterwards!

I'm on this speaking tour because one of our supporters in Brampton books high school venues twice per year. At my

tour last fall, I spoke at St. Joan of Arc Catholic Secondary School, in Mississauga. Joe Miceli, head of the Theology Department there, just sent this word of endorsement:

*Our school had the distinct pleasure to have Stephanie speak to our teachers and students about the moral issues surrounding abortion. **Stephanie's presentation was an experience that left many of our students speechless and in awe. Others were energized and inspired, craving further discussion in the classroom and in their homes.** One student said, 'I have close family members that are pro-choice, and Stephanie helped me understand how much they really don't know...**I now know that my heart was right all along and now I have the knowledge and confidence to speak for those who can't speak...it will be an interesting dinner tonight.**' This year our school will have over 50 students attending March for Life in Ottawa. Thanks to Stephanie and our teachers here at SJA many more of our students are now willing to 'carry the cross' for the unborn.*

Speaking of the March for Life, while in Ontario I am heading to Ottawa for this annual event and will speak at the National Campus Life Network dinner and youth conference in the days following. While I'm there, Jojo will be speaking at the March for Life in Victoria. And while he's there, our remaining staff and summer interns will be bringing the graphic reality of abortion to the March for Life in Edmonton!

Knowing that **CCBR representatives are circulating our message in three different provinces at once** is a great encouragement—particularly this month! It was in May nine years ago that Jojo and I co-founded CCBR. **What started as a tiny operation run out of a bedroom, is now a large operation in Calgary, with 4 permanent staff, an Administrator intern, 7 summer interns, and plans for more staff to join us this fall.**

We couldn't have grown to this level without your ongoing support. So thank you for believing in us.

Looking back, I have no regrets about giving up witnessing that birth so I could debate abortion at SFU. It was worth it because we may never get a second chance to change someone's mind or to save someone's life.

That's why we're asking you to please consider an extra gift this month—or perhaps a first-time one if you've yet to give.

We're happy to report that we have raised \$25,000 towards our summer internship program (**Thank you!**). Only \$20,000 more is needed for it—but that's only the tip of the iceberg. More funds are needed in order to hire more staff

this fall. So please give as generously as you can.

Your sacrifice allows us to reach those who most need to hear the truth. We ask you to partner with us not simply because you see a need for funds, but because you share our *vision* for making abortion unthinkable...because you're excited at how change is indeed happening in the minds of those we encounter. To God be the glory,

Stephanie

Stephanie Gray, on behalf of the CCBR team



On May 4, Jojo spoke at the First Nazarene Church in Calgary. A 24-year-old woman explained her view prior to the presentation as this: **"It was hard for me to justify keeping a baby alive if it was putting the mother in emotional/physical pain and turmoil, i.e., from rape and/or an unhealthy baby."** After the presentation, however, her view improved: **"Just because a baby is a result of rape doesn't mean they deserve to die – they did nothing wrong and are obviously still human."**

Just days before that talk, he spoke to students at Calgary Christian School.

When asked if Jojo's presentation motivated her, a grade 11 student wrote: **"Yes. 1. Now I know that I will never get an abortion. 2. I will never support any abortions. 3. I will speak my opinion to prevent them."**

A 16-year-old boy's **view shifted from 3 to 8** (where 0 means support all abortion and 10 means against all abortion). He described his views prior to the presentation as, **"You can abort if the baby is deformed."** Afterwards he wrote, **"Abortion is not right."**