

## Volunteer Corner

All members should have received a membership letter and form. Please return your dues and volunteer form as soon as possible. And please consider assisting RTL in one or more of our outreaches.

## Mark your calendar

- The first Scramble for Life Golf Tournament, sponsored by Shelby County RTL, will be held Saturday, May 14. For additional information or sponsorship opportunities contact Julia, 937-489-9129 or scramble4life@gmail.com.
- Deadline for submissions to the March newsletter: February 24.
- Board meeting: March 1, 7 pm.

## Clothing center report

We served 49 people during the month of December, of whom 43 received free items, 2 took literature, and one was referred to the Women's Center.

## Remember RTL

Please remember the pro-life cause when planning your estate or making funeral arrangements for a loved one. Remittance envelopes for memorial donations to Right to Life are available at the office.

Right to Life of Shelby County is a 501(c)(3) educational and service organization. All donations are fully tax-deductible.

## Annual Vigil Marks Roe v. Wade

Nearly 300 local pro-lifers gathered at the courthouse Sunday, January 23, for Right to Life's annual candlelight vigil in commemoration of Roe v. Wade.

The program began with an invocation by Fr. Steven Shoup, pastor of St. Michael's in Ft. Loramie and Sts. Peter and Paul in Newport. Following a brief presentation by RTL President Ron Meyer, the Knights of Columbus of St. Remy Church led the group in a candlelight procession around the court square, carrying a casket containing 137 pairs of shoes as a memorial to the babies lost through abortion each hour in the United States.

Following the procession, RTL co-director Anne Schmiesing spoke about a new book, *UnPlanned*, by Abby Johnson, which details the conversion of a former director of a Texas Planned Parenthood abortion clinic. Johnson's experience of the peaceful and compassionate presence of people praying at the abortion clinic, Schmiesing explained, helped her to leave the abortion business and become an apostle for the pro-life cause. (See related story on *UnPlanned*, page 2.)

Music for the event was provided by the music ministry of Sidney Apostolic Temple and refreshments followed, courtesy of the Knights of Columbus of Holy Angels.

Following the vigil, more than 100 area youth and other pro-lifers boarded



two buses for a trip to Washington, DC, to join hundreds of thousands at the March for Life on January 24. (The group from Shelby County is pictured at left.)

## Pro-Life Oratory Contest: \$300 Grand Prize!

All Shelby County high school juniors and seniors are invited to participate in the 2011 Shelby County Pro-Life Oratory Contest, which will be held Thursday, February 10, at 6:30 pm at St. John's Lutheran Church in Sidney.

Prizes for 1st through 3rd places are \$300, \$150 and \$100 respectively. The winner will continue to the state contest in April. Contestants are to research, write, and present an original pro-life speech—5 to 7 minutes in length—on abortion, infanticide, euthanasia or stem cell research. See [www.nrlc.org/oratory/index.html](http://www.nrlc.org/oratory/index.html) for rules.

### **ACTION/ITEM**



This is a phenomenal opportunity for young people to learn more about life issues and how to articulate a pro-life position. Please contact Anne Schmiesing at 937-492-5584 with questions or to register. The registration deadline is Tuesday, February 8.

## Right to Life Garage Sale Coming in March

The annual RTL garage sale will be held Thursday through Saturday, March 24-26, at St. Remy Hall in Russia. During March we will be collecting good, clean, salable items. If you would like to donate large items, such as furniture, and are not able to store them until the sale, please contact Maria Hoehne at 937-295-2627. As in the past, most local churches will establish a drop-off site for small items.

More details on how to contribute to the garage sale will be in the March newsletter. This is a major fundraiser for RTL and we are very grateful to all those who donate items and volunteer to work.

## UnPlanned by Abby Johnson: A Review

My first job out of college was for a pro-life educational organization. Having remained active in pro-life activities in several states, pro-life work seems like a major part of my adult life. As the years go by and we rarely get to see the positive results of our efforts, it can be discouraging. Sometimes, we even become numb to the reality of abortion. We can't weep every time we discuss or think about abortion—it would be too exhausting—but, with abortion being the leading cause of death in our nation, it is important to have our passion for this cause restored. This is one of many reasons Abby Johnson's book, *UnPlanned* is a valuable resource: It can nudge us out of complacency.

Abby Johnson is the former director of a Texas Planned Parenthood affiliate who has now joined the pro-life movement. It was after her assistance at an ultrasound-guided abortion, where she really witnessed the reality of abortion for the first time, that Abby decided she could no longer be a part of Planned Parenthood. Abby joins the ranks of other courageous and wounded former abortion providers who have found healing: Dr. Bernard Nathanson, Carol Everett, Joy Davis, and Joan Appleton, to name a few. Their stories are valuable in underscoring the abuses that are inevitable in the abortion industry—inevitable because vice cannot be practiced with virtue. Some former abortion providers discuss how they were in the business for the money and—even if they cared for women at first—there came a point when they cared much more for the money than the women. Continued on page 3

In memory of

Albert Schulze, Pat Wuebker, Clarence Broering, Paul Richard, Charlene Seger, and Freda Daughertry,

In whose name memorial donations were received in December.

+May they rest in peace.+

## Abby Johnson's UnPlanned Continued from page 2

In contrast, Abby, although she now recognizes and deeply grieves her guilt, seemed to have maintained a certain innocence. She really wanted to help women, and for the most part, had convinced herself she was helping them. Her book helps us to understand the different types of people involved in the abortion industry: from callous money-makers, to compassionate but misguided volunteers, to those who simply need a job. Abby's story deepens our compassion for them and reminds us that they all need our prayers.

Another reason this book is significant is its message to young people. Abby thought she was "pro-life" as a teen, but she never considered fully what that meant. So, as a young college student, she was easily recruited to volunteer at Planned Parenthood. She was lured by their talking points, including the unbelievable claim that PP "wants to make abortion rare" (even though they are the largest abortion business in the nation). It is important for young pro-life people to be prepared and to know and practice how to respond to those who do not respect human life.

UnPlanned is not only Abby's story. It is also about the pro-lifers who prayed and witnessed daily at her clinic. The powerful 40 Days for Life movement began at Abby's abortion mill. Their experience gives us food for thought about our approach to ending abortion. The prayers outside Abby's clinic were constant throughout her career and she deeply respected those who were evidently motivated by compassion. In contrast, she was turned off, and even strengthened in her pro-abortion stance, when she observed the minority of pro-lifers who came across as harsh and judgmental (the worst of which was a costumed "grim reaper").

I began to read this book during a phase of discouragement about my pro-life work, but Abby's story gives us hope. Abby recognizes that "God was answering the prayers of many--and I didn't even know how many--in leading me out of Planned Parenthood....It wasn't an isolated event that was all about me. It was one scene in a much larger story" (p. 180). Anyone who has prayed for an end to abortion and other abuses against the dignity of life is part of that story and is working with God's grace. Thank you for your prayers.

While Abby is now pro-life, the book suggests that she has not yet fully understood how Planned Parenthood's agenda of sex education and so-called "family planning" measures play into the abortion industry and, in the case of several birth control methods, actually cause early abortion. I believe an understanding of this will help Abby to be even more effective in her pro-life work. So keep praying for Abby and all former and current abortion providers.

By Anne K. Schmiesing      Note: Amos Library in Sidney has ordered a copy of UnPlanned.

## Abortion Numbers Show Slight Increase in 2010

New figures from the Guttmacher Institute reveal the number of abortions in the United States has risen slightly after its last report showed historic lows. The institute is pro-abortion but regarded by pro-life groups as having more accurate abortion figures than the Centers for Disease Control because it receives its numbers directly from abortion businesses and accounts for all 50 states, whereas the CDC does not receive reports from California and others.

The new numbers show the actual number of abortions in the U.S. rose from 1,206,200 in 2005 to 1,212,350 in 2008 — the first increase since steady decreases during both the 1990s and 2000s. Abortion figures peaked in 1990 but had been dropping ever since thanks to pro-life legislative and educational efforts as well as the work of pregnancy centers offering women tangible pregnancy help.

The abortion rate — the percentage of pregnancies ending in abortion — had reached the lowest point in the 2005 Guttmacher Institute figures since the year following Roe. Now that has gone up from a rate of 19.4 percent of pregnancies ending in abortion in 2005 to 19.6 in 2008. Continued on page 4



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## Abortions Numbers Show Slight Increase Continued from page 3

Rachel Jones, senior research associate at Guttmacher, indicated she believed the downturn in the economy had a role in the slight upturn in the abortion numbers: "We expect that the economy did impact unintended pregnancy and abortion, but other factors did as well." One factor is that Guttmacher included in its 2008 report abortion centers that were not accounted for in the 2005 report — making it so the abortion totals and abortion rate likely remained about the same had they been included before.

The report also found an increase in the use of the dangerous abortion drug RU 486, which has resulted in the deaths of at least 13 women worldwide, and potentially dozens more, as well as the injuries to at least 1,100 women in the U.S. as of 2006 FDA figures. The report found 199,000 of the reported abortions, or roughly 16% of the total, involved the mifepristone abortion drug and that total represents a 24 percent increase in usage from the 2005 numbers.

Looking at the number of abortion businesses, the new figures do confirm the trend pro-life advocates have seen around the nation of a move towards larger abortion centers and the consolidation of smaller ones, as the number of abortion centers doing 5,000 abortions or more annually rose 50 percent since the last Guttmacher report.

The report also found an increase in the number offering abortions after the midway point of pregnancy (generally considered 20 weeks after the woman's last menstrual period or LMP). Twenty-three percent offered abortions after 20 weeks LMP, compared to 20% in the 2005 report; eleven percent offered abortions after 24 weeks LMP compared to just 8% three years earlier. This translates to at least 350 providers who offer these late abortions.

Some states saw notable increases or decreases in abortions — with a 13 percent drop in Wisconsin while abortions in Louisiana rose 38 percent as people began returning to the state following Hurricane Katrina.

By Steven Ertelt, LifeNews.com, January 11, 2011. Edited for space and used with permission.