



Russia Senior Takes Top RTL Speech Prize

On Monday, February 15, six students from Shelby County schools took on the daunting task of public speaking, competing in the annual Pro-Life Oratory Contest sponsored by Shelby County Right to Life. The event concluded with Russia High School senior Erin Gaerke winning first place and moving on to the state competition in April. Runner-up was Nathan Platfoot, a senior at Botkins High School; and third place went to Jacob Schmiesing, a junior at Lehman Catholic

High School. (Pictured, left to right, are Schmiesing, Gaerke, and Platfoot.) Gaerke and Platfoot both also placed in last year's contest.

The speeches were judged by Tara Adams, Amy Gleason, and Pastor Jon Schriber. The event was held at St. John's Lutheran Church in Sidney. The first through third place winners receive cash awards of \$300, \$150 and \$100, respectively.

Speeches were to be in the 5 to 7 minute range and focused on the topics of abortion, infanticide, euthanasia or stem cell research. The winning speech presented the question: "How will history remember us?" Gaerke wondered whether her generation would be remembered like the ancient "Spartan mothers leaving their weak children on the cliffside to die," or rather, as she hoped, that "History will remember us as the Pro-Life Generation."

RTL thanks Pastor Jon and St. John's for once again hosting the contest; each of the judges, all of whom have served for this contest multiple times in recent years; RTL members who provided refreshments; and Anne Schmiesing for coordinating the event.

Convert Your Values to Votes!

Primary Election Day is March 15. Early voting has already begun in Ohio. Shelby County RTL does not endorse candidates but we do encourage our members to learn about candidate positions on the life issues. In this election, many local candidates are unopposed, but there are a few contested races. You can view candidates and issues or get a sample ballot at the Board of Elections: <http://co.shelby.oh.us/ElectionsBoard/issues.asp>.

We encourage you to contact candidates to learn more about their positions. That can also be a great way to educate them about the pro-life position!

Two sources for endorsement information are: **Ohio Right to Life PAC** (ohiovotesforlife.org) which favors incumbents and candidates it deems electable, whereas **Ohio ProLife Action** (ohioprolifeaction.com) uses more stringent criteria to determine a candidate's pro-life position, including support for the Heartbeat Bill and family values.

Thrift Shop Report

December

182 Customers
18 Work-to-Earn certificates
11 Free units (diapers, formula)

January

170 Customers
27 Work-to-Earn certificates
10 Free units (diapers, formula)

Pro-Lifers Witness at Courthouse on Anniversary of Roe

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Although blizzard predictions in Washington, D.C. prevented Shelby County's buses from traveling to the March for Life, here at home, around a hundred pro-lifers turned out in fair weather for Right to Life's annual observance marking the Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, Roe v. Wade. RTL program director Kevin Schmiesing opened the event with a prayer, after which attendees said the Pledge of Allegiance. With 2016 being a presidential election year, Schmiesing stressed the importance of pro-life political leadership to ensure that pro-life organizations remain free to pursue their mission. A candlelight procession around the court square followed.



RTL thrift shop manager Ann Cordonnier updated the group on the services provided at the shop and encouraged attendees to get involved as donors of clothing and baby items and as volunteers at the shop.

Teresa Chaney, a member of RTL's board of directors and also a membership committee volunteer, offered a moving account of her own involvement in the pro-life movement, which started when her grandmother passed away just before the Roe v. Wade decision was handed down. Chaney highlighted the importance of the pro-life cause, urging listeners not to let other things get in the way of being active promoters of that cause.

Following the vigil, attendees enjoyed a time of fellowship, with hot chocolate provided by the Knights of Columbus.

The Garage Sale is Coming Soon...

The Right to Life Garage Sale, our biggest fundraiser, will be held Thursday-Saturday, April 7-9, at St. Remy Hall in Russia. Hours will be 9 am-7 pm on Thursday and Friday, and 9 am-12 pm on Saturday.

There are many ways to help: donate items, attend and buy items, volunteer to work. An appeal for volunteers will be going out over e-mail. If you are not on e-mail or you are not contacted and would like to help, please call Karen Rosenbeck, 937-526-5814.

Thank you for your generous donations year after year. We ask that you kindly remember to donate only clean and salable items. It's also extremely helpful when clothes are sorted by size and bagged/boxed accordingly. To donate items: 1) Drop them off at the RTL office; 2) Your church may have a drop-off site; or 3) Deliver items to St. Remy Hall on Tuesday, April 5 from 7-8 pm and Wednesday, April 6 from 9 am-6 pm. For any questions, please contact Maria Hoehne at 937-526-5008.

There is a bake sale and 50/50 raffle held in conjunction with the garage sale. (**Raffle tickets are included in this newsletter and are available at the RTL web site. We must receive all raffle tickets/money in the office no later than Wednesday, April 6.**) Baked items may be brought to the garage sale on Wednesday, April 6, from 9 am to 6 pm. Additional baked goods will be accepted throughout the sale.

Gov. Kasich Signs Bill to Defund Planned Parenthood

On February 21, Governor John Kasich signed Ohio Right to Life's legislation to de-fund Planned Parenthood (H.B. 294). Sponsored by Representatives Margaret Condit (R) and Bill Patmon (D), this legislation cuts over \$1 million in yearly federal grants to Planned Parenthood, the country's largest abortion provider. *From Ohio Right to Life press release; see more at www.ohiolife.org.*

March/April Prayer Intentions

For the success of the RTL garage sale. In thanksgiving for all of our members and volunteers who support the pro-life cause in so many ways.



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Membership Matters: Get Involved!

Our membership committee will soon be sending out postcards for the purpose of thanking those of you who have joined or renewed and reminding those who have not yet done so to renew now. The postcard also serves as a way to educate all those who will see it in the mailing process.

Your membership is what makes our group possible, so please persevere in the noble task of building a culture of life right here in Shelby County. We can then be a leaven for the state and country as our members, especially our young people go forth into all areas of the culture.

As Teresa Chaney shared at our vigil: "Someday, I will stand before the Lord and I want to be able to say that I did the best that I could."

Now that you are a member, what can you do? Please consider:

1. The Prayer to End Abortion is printed on the address side of this newsletter. Pray it every day. Prayer cards are available at the RTL office.
2. Read the Newsletter and all updates from RTL. As you do so, ask the Lord what it is that He wants you to do. Don't wait for someone to call you. Volunteer. Come to an event and bring someone with you.
3. Forward your newsletter to someone who might be helped by an article in it and encourage them to join the movement.
4. Share on Facebook or other social media pro-life information that others may find helpful.
5. Check out our website and other pro-life websites. This is a good way to stay informed and to realize the scope of the pro-life cause.
www.abort73.com; www.priestsforlife.org; www.lifenews.com.
6. Consider attending the Cleveland Pro-Life Convention on March 11 and 12. These kinds of events can be interesting and inspiring. <http://bringingamericabacktolife.org/>
7. If you want to learn more about the Membership Committee, contact Mary Schmiesing: hmschmiesing@embarqmail.com, or 937-492-3761.

Nothing we do to defend the human person, no matter how small, is ever unfruitful or forgotten. Our actions touch other lives and move other hearts in ways we can never fully understand in this world. Don't ever underestimate the beauty and power of the witness you give in your pro-life work.

--Archbishop Charles Chaput.

*In memory of **Joseph Gubeaux** and **Charles Wendeln**,
in whose names memorial donations were made to Right to Life.
+ May they rest in peace +*

Prayer to End Abortion

Lord God, I thank you today for the gift of my life,
And for the lives of all my brothers and sisters.
I know there is nothing that destroys more life than abortion,
Yet I rejoice that you have conquered death
by the Resurrection of Your Son.
I am ready to do my part in ending abortion.
Today I commit myself
Never to be silent,
Never to be passive,
Never to be forgetful of the unborn.
I commit myself to be active in the pro-life movement,
And never to stop defending life
Until all my brothers and sisters are protected,
And our nation once again becomes
A nation with liberty and justice
Not just for some, but for all,
Through Christ our Lord. Amen!

