

End-of-Year Update from the President

Dear Friend,

This has been the most exciting and most terrifying year of my (Josh's) life. Six months ago I left a job with a steady paycheck to launch a national pro-life training organization. As you can imagine, there are hundreds of necessary steps to get a non-profit off the ground. We only started sending newsletters out last month, so many of you don't know what we have been doing unless you have been watching us on Facebook or Twitter. As President, I want to remedy that on behalf of the ERI staff by sharing some of the incredible things we have accomplished in our first six months, and then tell you about our plan for next year.

First steps...

My brother Tim and I spent six months planning before our June launch, so we already had a name, a mission statement, and a very clear strategy to accomplish our vision. We were also blessed to have some amazing advisors who helped us make this dream a reality.

We had the great benefit of a consultant with non-profit experience to help us with the IRS paperwork. One of the many blessings God has given us this year is that the IRS approved our application and granted us 501c3 status one month from getting the application! (This usually takes anywhere from six months to two years!)

We hired a third staff member named Jacob Nels, a wonderful pro-life ambassador in Georgia. Jacob has a great deal of campus experience and is truly excellent at dialogue, so we are very blessed to have him on the team.

We wrote our seminar...

Students for Life of America flew us to their headquarters in August to give in-depth dialogue training to their staff, so we only had weeks to write our six hour seminar, including original content, before giving it the first time. I was so proud of Tim for the great work he did making that event possible. I think our seminar includes some of the best pro-life training material I have ever heard, and I love bringing college students through it. After the seminar, we took the SFLA staff to the streets of D.C. to dialogue with people (you can see more pictures from that event at EqualRightsInstitute.com/SFLA2014).



We spoke to thousands...

After we went public with the launch, we immediately started receiving speaking requests. A professional speaker once told me that a speaker is doing well if he or she does 10-15 talks a year. I'm excited to report that I gave **18 speeches in the last four months!** We got our message out to more than 3,700 people in California, Arizona, Washington DC, Oregon, Virginia, and Canada.

Here are a few highlights from those events:

Biola University: Biola is where Tim received his philosophy degree and we have great fondness for the institution, its faculty, and many of its alumni. That's why being able to facilitate our six-hour seminar there was rewarding enough, but it was also an honor to be asked to give a lecture on relational apologetics and bodily autonomy arguments to the Torrey Honors Institute students. It was a very well-attended Torrey lecture - about 80 students filled nearly every desk of the room! (We will release the full audio from that lecture in the near future.)



Portland: In the year I have been speaking in public about relational apologetics, I have often spoken of my friendship with Deanna Unyk. Deanna was a pro-choice blogger when she emailed me 21 months ago to dialogue about abortion, and seven months ago she began self-identifying as pro-life. But it was only last month that I got to finally meet Deanna, because the University of Portland flew us both there to tell our story and offer some practical tips for cultivating friendships with people who have different views!

About 80 people from both sides of the abortion debate came and gave very positive feedback afterwards. I will write a future newsletter that goes into more detail about this event, and we will be releasing the full audio in the near future at EqualRightsInstitute.com.

Here's what we have planned for next year...

I will be speaking to several thousand pro-life students at Students for Life's national conferences in January. We are going to do eight seminar/outreach events next year, with three in the spring, then five more this fall. Between these events, our top priority next year is the next stage of development of our training program. First, in order to create a more helpful environment for our volunteers, we are going to design an outreach brochure and a display that we can put up on college campuses. Then we need to optimize our seminar through workshopping, writing better handouts, and developing our arguments further.

I am blown away by the people who have invested in Equal Rights Institute with their generous support, even as we were just starting up. We have raised \$147,751 in our first six months, 74% of our fundraising goal for our first year! That has helped us get this organization off the ground and into a place where we could spend much of our initial months doing "the work," instead of merely fundraising the whole time.

We have a crystal clear strategy for accomplishing our goals next year, and funding is our only significant obstacle. As you are deciding where to put your end-of-year giving, please consider making a special gift to make Tim's work possible. The sooner Tim is fully-funded, the sooner he can focus on designing our outreach tools, continue developing our training program, and get back to mentoring students.

Thanks so much for partnering with Tim, Jacob, and me in the early stages of this ministry. Your prayers and financial support mean the world to us.

Josh Brahm, for the ERI staff

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