

Josh Brahm delivers a speech on pro-life apologetics at the National Students for Life East Coast Conference



Our Experience at the National Students for Life Conferences

By Timothy Brahm

On January 22nd and 28th, Josh and I were at the Students for Life National Conferences in San Francisco and Washington DC. It's a great place to connect with students and share about our work even in a year like last year when we aren't speaking at the conference, but this year was special. Josh was asked to speak on pro-life apologetics in the morning and then he spoke on dialogue tips in the afternoon with our friend Rebecca Haschke from Justice For All.

The two days before the first conference were insane. This conference was an incredible opportunity for ERI, particularly given that we're working hard to promote the Equipped for Life Course. We wanted to make the speeches even better than usual, so I went hard to work strengthening different sections while Josh went hard to work learning brand new material I was handing him. One of Josh's strengths as a speaker is an uncanny ability to memorize new content quickly. After seeing the final result, it was well worth the effort. I've seen Josh speak dozens of times, and he was at the very top of his game at these conferences, particularly in DC. You can see both presentations at EqualRightsInstitute.com/Speech.

Gratifying as the success of Josh's speech was, the highlight of both conferences was our time at our booth talking with students. In the last year we have had to spend so much time in the office developing the Equipped for Life Course that it became easy to feel discouraged. Josh's first talk was in the morning at both conferences, and after those talks were finished, our booth was packed with students! It ranged from being sometimes one or two at a time to crowds around the booth asking for our help on arguments they've been wrestling with.

Josh spent a few minutes at the end of his speeches talking about the Equipped for Life Course, where students can go to learn even more and become better equipped for outreach. He also announced that we've raised 70 scholarships from our donors who are excited about training clubs for outreach, and encouraged students to come to our booth to ask us questions and/or purchase the course. By the end of the second conference four students bought individual memberships to the course, 11 groups bought a membership for up to 20 members, one group bought a membership for up to 40 members, and three people paid for scholarships and gave them in person to specific groups they were already connected with!



Top: Josh Brahm performs a mock dialogue with Justice For All's Rebecca Haschke playing a pro-choice student.

Bottom: Josh and Timothy Brahm spent the entire day at both conferences talking to excited students, many of whom told us how much they've already been helped by Equal Rights Institute!



Josh Brahm meets Daniel Bloink from the University of Michigan. Normally one of the more introverted students at U of M's Students for Life club, he began stepping out of his comfort zone and even talking to philosophy students during their outreaches after taking the *Equipped for Life* Course!

One of our favorite moments was when two ladies come up to our booth right after Josh's first speech in San Francisco. They brought two students from Arizona State University with them and announced to me, "We want to buy THEM the course!" I thought it was so sweet that these ladies wanted to bless this club by helping them in a very tangible way to grow.

It was also great to talk to the dozens of students who came to our booth throughout the day. Many of them came to pose interesting and challenging questions to us, a few of them only stopped by to take selfies with us, but most of them wanted us to know the impact we've made in their lives. **We even got to meet one student who told us about how she has used material she learned from us to successfully out-debate her philosophy professor in class!** It was incredibly encouraging to talk with so many pro-life people who have benefited so much from our work, and to see the course really take off.

ERI Speaking Events

- Mar 18: Boston College, MA
- Mar 18: Creighton University, Omaha, NE
- Mar 24: Temple University, Philadelphia, PA*
- Mar 25: Immaculata University, Philadelphia, PA
- Mar 31: Ohio Dominican University*
- Apr 1: Ohio State University
- Apr 7: Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA
- Apr 8: John F. Kennedy Catholic High School, Burien, WA
- Apr 10: Clark College, WA
- Apr 21: Harding University, AZ*
- Apr 22: Brophy College Preparatory, Phoenix, AZ
- Apr 22: Holiday Inn, Portland, OR
- May 11-13: Cobb Galleria, Atlanta, GA

* Tentative

Personal Note from Christina

Happy 2017! I hope this newsletter finds you and your family well. As this new year begins, I find myself reflecting on the gifts of 2016. On September 2, my husband Lou and I welcomed our third child, Catherine Grace. What a joy she is! It is difficult to remember life without her. Catherine's big brother Michael and big sister Penelope adore her, and all of us are steadily getting acclimated to being a family of five.

Because of your generous financial support, it was also in 2016 that I was able to "officially" begin my work for Equal Rights Institute. In my capacity as Director of Digital Media, I have begun to take over the management of ERI's blog, an extremely effective medium by which our message and mission are made available to anyone with internet access. So, moving forward, chances are that when you read a new blog post, I will be the one to have gotten it all ready.

I look forward to the work to be done now in 2017. You have my profound gratitude for your support, both monetary and spiritual. Please keep ERI, me, and our work in your prayers; be assured of my prayers for you.

