

Rachel Crawford and Jacob Nels at our sidewalk counseling course filming



Updates from the ERI Office

Sidewalk Counseling Course

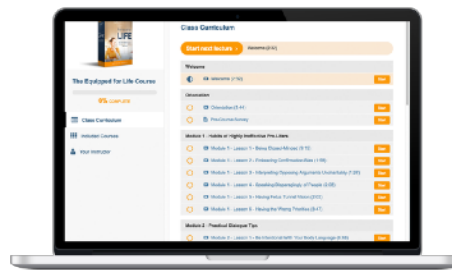
Tim has been spending time in the office on the second round of editing for the sidewalk counseling course. The ERI team is so excited to be publishing the course this year! All of the videos on sidewalk counseling were filmed in an interview setting between Jacob and ERI staff members or guests. Jacob's natural storytelling ability help his advice and tools come to life and we didn't want to lose that authenticity in the filming process.

Now that we are in the editing phase, we are going through each video to decide what should be part of the main course and what sections should become bonus material in deleted scenes. There is an abundance of valuable insight, but we want the main course to be manageable for groups to go through together and we understand that length can be a challenge for groups with limited time.

Switch to Teachable

Last month, we made a switch in the website we use for the Equipped for Life Course. We are now using Teachable as the platform for our online training because of its smoother user experience, especially as we move toward having multiple courses. We have switched over all memberships to the new platform, and when the new course launches everyone will have the opportunity to add the sidewalk counseling videos to their existing profile,

making the transition seamless! We will continue to run the members-only Facebook group for the Equipped for Life Course. We will create a separate Facebook group for members of the sidewalk counseling course because the needs and questions of the students going to the abortion facility will be very different in kind from the students dialoguing in a campus or coffee shop setting.



Andrew Coming on staff

In January, Andrew Kaake reached a point in his support raising that allowed him to start his ministry work part-time. He kicked off the beginning of his work with us in the same way as Rachel last year — with the March for Life trip! Andrew is a very talented writer and has already helped a great deal as a member of the philosophy team. If you haven't had a chance to read his blog posts, then you are missing out! His latest piece, *The New York "Reproductive Health Act": Rhetoric and Reality*, clearly explains the most problematic aspects of New York's new abortion legislation

and refutes some of its misleading points. *Read the beginning of that piece on the back page.*



March for Life Trip

This year's March for Life trip was a huge success for ERI. We decided to invest in networking with the pro-life community as much as we possibly could. This meant hosting a booth at three conferences; having five private meetings with pro-life leaders; and attending the Alliance Defending Freedom reception, two networking events, and a private screening of the *Unplanned* film! It was certainly a packed week for us all.



This was our first year attending the two-day Evangelicals for Life conference. We made some great connections with the people there, as well as the other pro-life organizations that were near our booth. We've already planned a collaborative project that will come out of one of those new relationships! (More on that in the future.)



Of course, we always make it a priority to be at the Students for Life of America conference because many of the students there love ERI and look forward to connecting with us throughout that day. Josh spoke again, as he has done for the past three years, giving the advanced apologetics training, and our table was busy with conversations for the whole day!



On the same day that Josh, Jacob, and Andrew were at SFLA, Rachel and Tim brought ERI to the Cardinal O'Connor conference. They were able to meet many students who had not previously heard of ERI and what we do, but they also had some Equipped for Life course members come up to the table! It was a long but exciting day.

YouTube Videos

This year, we have decided to prioritize producing bite-size, shareable videos for YouTube and Facebook to help us reach a broader audience. It will be more efficient for us to create these videos once we are set up in the new office next month because we will be able to leave the video, audio, and lighting equipment in place. Even though it will still be another month until we are in the new office,

we have already filmed the first three videos in this style at an alternative location. In the first video, Rachel reviews the *Unplanned* film, giving her thoughts about the benefits of seeing the movie in theaters as well as sharing her experience of visiting the set at the time of filming. In the second, Tim talks about blood donation and compares and contrasts it with the obligation a pregnant mother has to her unborn child. He explains the two approaches of responding to bodily rights arguments and discusses why he has shifted from focusing on one to focusing on the other. Finally, Rachel filmed a video in which she talks about responding to the question of rape. She explains her complex feelings about this question and also gives some general advice for those who want to respond better when it comes up.



All three of these videos will be published on the ERI YouTube channel, so subscribe to us at [YouTube.com/EqualRightsInstitute](https://www.youtube.com/EqualRightsInstitute) so you don't miss out when we publish them!

Homeschool Conferences

Josh has two speeches this spring at separate "Great Homeschool Conventions" in Fort Worth, TX and Greenville, SC. We're writing this newsletter right after completing the first of those, and we wanted to share a few cool stories that happened at our booth that Jacob and Josh used to represent ERI.

There was a young woman representing a different non-profit at a booth across from ERI, and she spent a lot of time on all three days giving Josh and Jacob advice on how to make their booth better and attract more people. This was super kind of her and she had lots of ideas on what they were doing that was working, and where they could make improvements.

It wasn't until later that they learned that she considers herself "staunchly pro-choice"! She said, "I've been listening to you guys talk

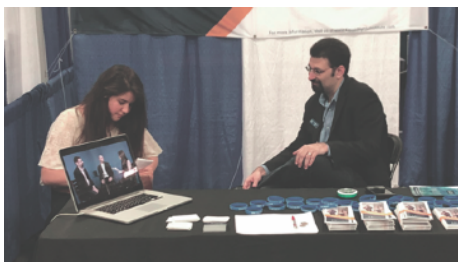
Speaking this Spring



We have a very packed upcoming speaking schedule! Josh, Tim, and Rachel will all be presenting ERI's training this Spring, as well as doing outreach on college campuses. Here is an overview of what we have planned:

- > **MARCH 3, 2019 – CHARLOTTE, NC**
Josh Brahm spoke twice at StoneBridge Church Community as part of a pro-life leaders panel.
- > **MARCH 5, 2019 – SPOKANE, WA**
Timothy Brahm spoke and did outreach at Gonzaga University.
- > **MARCH 6, 2019 – SPOKANE, WA**
Timothy Brahm spoke and did outreach at Whitworth University.
- > **MARCH 7-9, 2019 – FORT WORTH, TX**
Josh Brahm spoke twice at the Great Homeschool Convention.
- > **MARCH 17, 2019 – CORNELIUS, NC**
Josh Brahm spoke at Life Fellowship Church for a Sunday school class as part of a six-part series going through the *Equipped for Life Course*.
- > **MARCH 21-23, 2019 – GREENVILLE, SC**
Josh Brahm will be speaking at the Great Homeschool Convention.
- > **MARCH 23, 2019 – WILMINGTON, NC**
Timothy Brahm will be speaking at the 2nd Annual Coastal Apologetics Conference.
- > **APRIL 4, 2019 – BOONE, NC**
Rachel Crawford will be speaking and the ERI staff will be doing outreach at Appalachian State University.
- > **APRIL 6, 2019 – PORTLAND, OR**
Josh Brahm will be speaking at the Oregon Right to Life Conference.
- > **APRIL 11, 2019 – NORTHFIELD, MN**
Rachel Crawford will be speaking and doing outreach with Timothy Brahm at St. Olaf College.
- > **APRIL 15, 2019 – CHARLOTTE, NC**
Josh Brahm will be speaking at Charlotte Catholic High School for a private event.

about your work, and I love what you have to say." She loved our message so much that she wanted to help us market our message better in order to get it in front of more people!



Josh and Jacob also have fond memories of three siblings in their teens who attended both of Josh's talks. They had lots of questions about how to best dialogue with pro-choice family members. Later when one of them found Josh in the halls he ran up to ask for a picture with him. At the end of the conference they pooled their money and bought the Equipped for Life Course with their own money because they want to take their dialogue skills to the next level!

Kennesaw State Outreach with JFA

The day after Jacob got back from the homeschool conference in Texas, he joined our friends at Justice For All doing outreach at

Kennesaw State University where he had one of his most memorable conversations ever:



A young man was walking past the JFA booth:

Me: "What's your opinion on abortion?"

Ben: "I've done my research. About 16 weeks is when the fetus feels pain so it should be legal before that and illegal after."

Me: "Ok." (I pull out a JFA brochure from my back pocket and quickly turned to the page of fetal development. Pointing to 2 pictures of a 12 week and an 18 week fetus.) "You were saying abortion should be legal right in between these two stages?"

Ben: (points to the photo of 12-week fetus) "F***, THAT'S A BABY! YOU CANT KILL THAT!"

Ok. (pointing to the picture of a seven-week old embryo) Does it feel pain there?"

Me: "There is some debate about when exactly the unborn can feel pain, but I think I have a solution to your problem. Why don't we just give the fetus some kind of sedative or pain blocking medication? I'm pretty sure the doctors can figure out a way to do that."

Ben: "YES! THAT'S WHAT WE SHOULD DO!"

me: "Ok, but my problem with that is (pointing to a picture of toddler in the brochure) if it's about not causing pain why can't we sedate a toddler and euthanize them for the same reason someone would get an abortion?"

Ben: "F***, YOU'RE RIGHT! Tell me what you think."

Me: (I give him an abbreviated equal rights argument.)

Ben: "Ok, that makes sense! I've really got to think about this. Hold on and let me think. (Long pause, then looks at his watch.) I'm sorry I've got to go to class, but I've really got to think about this. Thank you for talking to me!"

Personal Note to Josh's Friends and Supporters

It's been the busiest spring travel schedule I've ever experienced! In early January I represented ERI at the Focus conference in Indianapolis, and the next week we had booths at three pro-life conferences in DC (including me speaking to over 450 students at one of them) plus the March for Life and a bunch of meetings. The day after returning I flew to Kentucky for a pastor event and more meetings! Two weeks later I drove to Florida for a coalition meeting of national pro-life leaders, where I shared my idea for helping pastors to save lives in their congregations, which was very well received - one leader is going to try to get 300 pastors in his area to do it! One week later I drove to the North Carolina coast to speak for a Ratio Christi chapter and do outreach with them the next day. Two weeks later I flew to Texas with Jacob for the first homeschool conference trip, and two weeks later we drove to South Carolina for the other one.

Please continue to pray for my Dad, whose exceptionally aggressive variant of Mantle Cell Lymphoma has come back again. He's back in treatment as I write this, and I expect to spend some of my time this summer in Atlanta taking care of him after the treatment has finished, while they monitor him closely for graft vs. host disease, which can be fatal. As my Dad says, "We still that God is good and is still in the throne. Even if the worst should happen and I don't make it out of this alive, I'll finally be (ultimately) disease-free, and God is gracious and merciful, and can uphold those who turn to him in their grief. Prayer works in some mysterious way, and we greatly desire your prayers during this time of stress, anxiety, discomfort, extreme inconvenience, tough decisions, and exhaustion."

Thank you so much for caring for us, and your financial support if you're one of our generous partners.

Warmly,

~ Josh



Top: Coloring with William.

Bottom: We've been driving the kids down to Atlanta more often so they can spend time with my Dad.

The New York “Reproductive Health Act”: Rhetoric and Reality

by Andrew Kaake



New York’s broad new abortion law, dubbed the “Reproductive Health Act,” was sold to the public as merely enshrining *Roe v. Wade* into state law. On the surface, it seems to do just that by extending abortion-on-demand to 24 weeks and allowing for exceptions beyond that point in cases where the fetus is unlikely to survive outside the womb or when “necessary to protect the patient’s life or health.” If the law only codifies what was already federal policy, it seems odd that the governor’s and Assembly’s official statements include multiple quotes praising New York’s “progressive” position on abortion. Perhaps this is a reference to just how “progressive” *Roe* is; after all, it created a national right to abortion so broad that babies could be killed at the point of birth based on an incorrect diagnosis or a temporary emotional state. But no, there are new abortion “rights” in this new law that put it outside even the realm of *Roe*, which the people selling the law knew even as they said it was the status quo. New York is again “leading the way,” but should anyone want to follow?

APPARENTLY, KILLING SHOULDN’T BE A CRIME

One notable change in the Act is that all language regarding abortion has been cut from the penal code and the new provisions were moved to the public health law. On a rhetorical

level, **New York is arguing that abortion is a health care right**, even a “fundamental” one, and that as such it should not be considered part of criminal law. On a practical level, **this means that, even though elective abortion after 24 weeks remains illegal, there are no legal grounds to prosecute whoever performs such an abortion.** What exactly is the enforcement method for the few restrictions on abortion that survive this law? Are we relying on the moral conscience of late-term abortion practitioners to obey a law that shrinks their business yet has no method of enforcement? Consider me skeptical of the value of New York’s legal line in the sand at 24 weeks.

The move to strike any language about abortion or “born-alive infants” from the penal code also removes protection from two groups of children—well, two groups besides the vast number of children already being freely aborted under the law. In the first case, as was argued by opponents of the Act, there is now no law against the “involuntary termination” of a pregnancy, let alone a law against fetal homicide; this means that a woman whose child is killed prenatally in an assault or car accident can’t prosecute the killer in New York state. Supporters of the law attempted to argue that the woman has much better charges available with longer sentences, like felony assault, so it doesn’t matter that there is no law against killing the fetus. By this logic, a shooter who

kills one person and injures nine others should only be charged for the one murder; the nine attempted murders don’t matter, since you’ll just get a life sentence under the higher charge anyway.

Why would state representatives say something that flies in the face of basic principles of criminal law? New York is unwilling to say that any injustice was done to the now-dead fetus, because, if it had any right not to be killed, it would be inconvenient for the logic of abortion as social good. They’re willing even to imply that the only right which is being violated is the mother’s right to her bodily integrity, but in that same bill they claim she has “a fundamental right to choose to carry the pregnancy to term.” On their own terms, they should argue that involuntary termination and fetal homicide are acts of injustice against the woman’s reproductive right, not only her right to bodily autonomy. The mother is disallowed by law from seeking justice for her child and is told that it is enough that the state might award justice to her. **New York is so gripped by abortion fever that it would rather tell pregnant victims of assault how they should view their assault than grant them the right to seek justice for their murdered children.**

Check out the rest of this piece at EqualRightsInstitute.com/NewYork!