

Dear Friend,

It's December and you may be thinking about where to invest your charitable contributions, so I'd like to tell you what we accomplished this last year, as well as tell you where we're headed next year. I've quoted my friend Scott Klusendorf before who once described a fundraiser event as being like a job interview. I want to tell you why my team has done a great job this year and why you ought to hire us for more work next year!

My favorite story from this year was my impromptu visit with a pro-life club at St. Olaf College in Minnesota. I had some extra time before a seminar so we reached out to the club and asked if they'd like me to do outreach and a Q&A with them. They quickly agreed and we made arrangements. As we began the outreach I had a very surreal experience of listening to three simultaneous dialogues around me between the club members and pro-choice students, feeling like I was standing in a hall of mirrors. It felt like I was surrounded by ERI staff because they were using different ERI arguments and talking points, down to the exact vocabulary we use in the *Equipped for Life Course*!



During lunch that day, Emily, one of the co-presidents, told me how ERI has transformed her club and the campus. It started when a local pregnancy center gifted them the *Equipped for Life Course*. After completing the training, the club decided to host frequent dialogue-oriented outreaches. Since then their club has grown exponentially and the campus culture has changed. Many pro-choice people have become pro-life, many students who are still pro-choice have begun to defend the pro-life club, and the administration is far more responsive to the club when vandalism happens against their displays.

One pro-choice student "Anna" asked to interview Emily six-weeks after they had a conversation about abortion, saying, *"I haven't been able to stop thinking about the argument you made."* After more discussion during the interview Anna sat back in her chair and said, ***"I can't believe I'm going to say this, but I think I have to become pro-life! I can't think of a single response to anything you've said today."***

The students told me that none of this would have been possible without the ERI's training. They've even created a new role for their co-president Joshua who calls other pro-life college clubs to testify to the power of the *Equipped for Life* course and tries to convince them to get our training! When asked why, Emily explained, *"We want as many people as possible to know about this course and the impact it has had on us because this is a bigger issue than just our campus and we want to make an impact all around the country and all around the world and we really believe that the Equal Rights Institute has the tools to help people do that."*

My favorite email we received this year is from a professor who teaches ethics at a small, liberal arts college who asked that we keep her identity anonymous. Here is a part of what she told us:

"I specifically wanted to thank you for a side-effect of your work that you may not have intended or foreseen. Following your work has made me a better professor. I took a break from teaching at the university level between 2015 and 2017. When I came back to campus after the 2016 election, I had been warned that the campus environment was more hostile than when I had left, and that students generally were having a very difficult time discussing controversial topics in class civilly. Given that I teach ethics, I knew this was going to be a real challenge. So, I restructured my first week of class and devoted it to modeling, understanding, and discussing civil discourse. I shamelessly ripped material from your "Snidely Whiplash is not on Facebook" article for one of my lectures. From talking to my colleagues, I really get the sense that I'm the only professor in the department who hasn't experienced any of the post 2016 election chilling effect in her classes for non-majors. My discussions are just as, if not more, lively, engaging, and civil as they were pre-2015. There is no doubt in my mind that this is due to the practical tips that I've learned from you."



It's been another busy season of speaking at ERI! @UghmYU`k Y[Uj Y(*`gdYYW Yg`UbX`gYa]bUfg`U`c j Yf`h YWti bfnzgdYU_]b[`hc` ž,) `dYcd`Yr` H Uhg`U&, i `]bWYUgY]b`h Ybi a VYf`cZgdYYW Yg, but to roughly the same number of people we spoke to last year, meaning we spoke at more small events than we did last year, like college clubs and church groups. All in all we spoke in Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Washington, Texas, South Carolina, Oregon, Minnesota, Missouri, Michigan, and Pennsylvania!

There's a thing that we have been doing behind the scenes without talking about it very much, although we only began carefully tracking it these last few years: Vt`bgi `h]b[`k]h `dfc!`]Z`YUXYfg. I knew when we started ERI that I wanted us to be consultants for the pro-life movement. I'm happy to say that we have been doing that, and this year we doubled our consulting hours (49), including with some of the most influential leaders in Ireland!

H]g`mYU`k Y`gW]dHYXZ]`a YX`UbX`YX]HYX`U`cbY!\ ci f`Yi H]bg]cb`cZH Y`Equipped for Life Course, with our most advanced philosophical material yet. This was a four-year project that our philosophy team worked on behind the scenes, and after solving some tough philosophical problems we were unlocked to finally write the scripts and quickly film the videos in our new studio. We think this module answers certain top pro-choice arguments better than anybody else does at a layperson level.

K YU`YUgc`f ghZ]b]g\ YX`di V`]g\]b[`a cg]hcZH Y`Equipped for Life Podcast`]b]c`Udi V`]WZYX` This is the roundtable podcast that was previously an exclusive for members of the *Equipped for Life Course*. We decided earlier this year to move most of those episodes into a public feed for two reasons: to make it more convenient for our course students to access the podcast, and to expose more pro-life advocates to our training content. Rachel and I will continue to create regular podcasts next year, covering current events, pro-life philosophy, and answers to listener questions. We will continue creating these new episodes with both video and audio options, as can be seen in the last three podcast episodes we published.

H]g`mYU`ci f`d\]cgcd\ mhYUa `XYW]XYX`tc`a U`YUW Ub[Y]b`h Y`k Unik YfYgdc]bX`tc`VWf]U]b`dfc!W c]WVcX]`mi U]cbca miUf[i a Yb]g" It's a big shift for us, but one of the core values at Equal Rights Institute is to be flexible and innovative, and we felt like this change would be more persuasive to pro-choice students. We published this change in a video titled "Blood Donation and Bodily Rights Arguments" which you can watch at EqualRightsInstitute.com/BloodDonation. We're honored that our good friends at Justice For All have made the same change as us and are playing that video in their seminars now. It was even more encouraging when the student club at St. Olaf College informed us that they tried both methods a lot on their campus and also found our new approach to be FAR more persuasive to the pro-choice students they're talking to.

