

Students Speak Out: Why I'm Marching for Life Today

Today, thousands gather to march in support of life in Washington, D.C.

March for Life President Jeanne Mancini leads the crowd of pro-life activists to challenge the cultural narrative that abortion empowers women. The theme for this year's march is: "Life Empowers: Pro-Life Is Pro-Woman."

Several students from Colorado Christian University shared their personal experiences and reasons for participating in today's March for Life. You can read their statements below:

Why I March

By Cassandra McDonald

The reasons I am attending the March for Life have two names: Toby and Boaz. They are my brothers and both have Down syndrome. I could not imagine my life without them. Today's world preaches acceptance, yet we still are not accepting of those around us with disabilities. We limit them, we separate them, and worst of all, we do not give them a chance at life.

According to the Down Syndrome Guild of Greater Kansas City, the abortion rate of babies with a confirmed diagnosis of Down syndrome is about 75%. This equates to having approximately 30% fewer babies born with Down syndrome, as stated in the American Journal of Medical Genetics.

My family adopted both of my brothers from countries outside of the United States. I am so grateful that their mothers chose life, and I wish every pregnant mother understood there are options other than terminating the pregnancy, and one of those is adoption. My life has been transformed by the power of adoption. If you would have met me 10 years ago, you

wouldn't even recognize me because I didn't have the light, the joy, the laughter in my life that I do now because of my adopted brothers.

Since adopting my brothers, we have had the privilege of meeting many other families who have had biological children with the Down syndrome diagnosis. Some of these families knew the diagnosis before birth and some did not. They all agree that they cannot imagine their lives without their family member with Down syndrome.

A misconception about people with Down syndrome is that they will not be able to lead meaningful lives. This is proven untrue based upon my brothers' lives and many other individuals with Down syndrome. Megan Bomgaars is an actress with Down syndrome who owns her own business. John Cronin is an adult with Down syndrome who owns his own sock business. There is even a television show that stars individuals with Down syndrome called *Born This Way*. My brothers Toby and Boaz are included in their school classrooms with their typical peers. They are also in their school programs and plays. Toby plays flag football with his typical peers. Their lives may be different, and they will face obstacles just like any of us, but that does not mean that they do not deserve the right to life. Their lives are just as meaningful as ours.

This is why I am marching. For all of those with Down syndrome. For all of those who do not have the opportunity to march. For Toby and Boaz, who happen to be non-verbal. I am their voice.

Cassandra McDonald is an undergraduate student at Colorado Christian University. She is traveling to Washington, D.C. this week with 200 of her peers to the March for Life on the National Mall, Friday.

A Life-Changing Experience

By Sam Oldfather

This is my second year traveling from Colorado to Washington, D.C. for the March for Life, and it has radically changed my life. A year ago, I was wondering whether I was pro-choice or pro-life, but the 2019 march transformed my view of the value of the womb. I believe that I was pro-choice because I did not fully understand the science that life starts from the moment of conception. As a Christian, my faith also tells me life begins way before birth. Psalm 139:13 (NIV) states, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb." This verse holds true with the knowledge that someone's little hands, feet and heart are all developed in the womb. The women I know who have had an abortion have shown remorse about their decision. My job, as I follow Christ, is to show love and grace to these women and men who have lost their child. As I march for the second time, I want to spread the message that everyone is valuable and has a right to live, no matter the age. The worst thing we can do is show hatred and anger toward those who have had an abortion. The reason I am going this year is so I can stand for the unborn babies who can't speak yet and to show love and care for those who regret their abortion. I want to walk beside these women and advocate for life.

I believe this march makes a difference in people's lives. It did in mine, and I hope to help someone else come to support pro-life movements like this one. One life at a time can seem like a small task, but when you have a whole group from a university marching for the unborn, one life becomes hundreds.

Sam Oldfather is an undergraduate student at Colorado Christian University. She is traveling to Washington, D.C. this week with 200 of her peers to the March for Life on the National Mall, Friday.

I Am a Feminist Marching

By Emma Mayer

They were marching through our school district, chanting "baby-killer" repeatedly. I was in fifth grade. I remember sitting in class by the window as we went through our division tables. My attention was lacking, and my eyes gravitated to the street outside. Groups of people walked by the window holding posters and signs, chanting things I couldn't understand. Their presence was strange, as we were a closed campus, and my classmates began to notice as well.

The worst part was the posters. They held them up high for everyone to see: large, graphic photos of tiny, mutilated corpses.

As a 10-year-old, I watched with the entire class crowded around me to see what was going on outside. Bloody images of prenatal children's limbs and scarred tissue will forever be imprinted in my memory. But I didn't march then.

That was the day I learned our country allows the legal murder of children. Nearly 3,000 of them per day, in fact. I couldn't fathom how it was an action without punishment. Nothing about abortion made sense to me then, and nearly a decade later, it still doesn't. What I have found, though, is how much bigger the issue is.

What I see as a misunderstanding of language and fact, others see as nationwide oppression of female choice. However, it is not a single issue, but a widespread misinterpretation of a variety of issues. While the public may see it as what the *New York Times* editorial board calls the right to exterminate "clusters of cells that have not yet developed into viable human beings," I see it as the unfortunate but legal right to murder a prenatal child. Language like this ignores the fact that the ones arguing to kill these "clusters of cells" were also once a "cluster of cells" themselves.

As a pro-life advocate and a feminist, I see the difficulty in fighting solely for the support of the most vulnerable, which

is why this subject is far more complex in nature than most would like to see it. People think that by supporting vulnerable prenatal children, we are opposing vulnerable women. The fight is found in trying to support both. We have made finding a balance in supporting vulnerable women while protecting the lives of innocent children much more complex than it should be.

Many believe that you can't be a feminist who is pro-life. But why not? Susan B. Anthony, one of the earliest American feminists, paved the way for core feminist values that I hold to—nondiscrimination, nonviolence and justice for all. Nowhere in that list does it say, "excluding unborn children." To be a feminist under these standards, I believe that you have to be pro-life. I began to believe all of these things, but I didn't march then.

That day when I was 10 determined for me what I decided to believe for the rest of my life. I saw the effects of being able to march for a cause. I don't necessarily believe the group that marched around my school was right to use explicit images, but they sent a message nonetheless: that abortion is murder.

The March for Life in Washington, D.C. is a most unique and opportune way to gather thousands of people in support of life itself. After all, pro-life is pro-humanity. This march is a visual representation of the value of equal opportunity for men, women and unborn children alike. Despite the increasing dehumanization epidemic, the march proves that we have not yet completely lost ourselves.

Michelle Williams, in her speech upon accepting a 2020 Golden Globe award, thanked her right to choose—she stated that without her abortion, she would not be successful today. She was applauded by Hollywood for this statement. If only there were influencers of the same degree brave enough to state the opposite: that life is a gift that we are given, but we are

not given the right to control when life should or should not be most convenient to us. The March for Life allows thousands to stand and proclaim mankind's value, and that's a good start. I'm a 19-year-old Christian feminist, and I am marching now.

Emma Mayer is an undergraduate student at Colorado Christian University. She is traveling to Washington, D.C. this week with 200 of her peers to the March for Life on the National Mall, Friday.

A Personal Connection

By Hannah Bissonnette

I am so thrilled and honored to march in Washington, D.C. and to defend the unborn children across America whose lives are at risk every day. Twenty-one years ago, I was that unborn child, defenseless in the womb while my birth mom stared at the positive pregnancy test and wondered what to do. She was 18 years old with no guy in the picture, no solid path for the future and no promising support system if she were to keep her child. Her plans were falling apart, but God's plans for her were being orchestrated perfectly. Not once did my birth mom consider abortion. She knew she was going to have her child; she just didn't know what to do after that. So she prayed. And God answered her prayers in a beautiful way. My birth mom met a couple named Ed and Joy who were barren for years, wanting desperately to raise children of their own.

They adopted a baby boy who was born to a 16-year-old girl four years before welcoming me into their home. Ed and Joy became dad and mom to me. The boy they adopted became my big brother. And my birth mom is still in my life today as a good friend. My family is not bonded by blood relation, but rather by the blood Jesus shed on the cross, whose grace and love are steadfast. I am so grateful that both my birth mom and my brother's birth mom chose life and the route of adoption. The

unborn have to be protected, and I believe it is my duty to help be that protection. My story should not be the only one of its kind so I will use my voice to defend the voiceless all the days of my life.

Hannah Bissonnette is a sophomore psychology student at Colorado Christian University. She is traveling to Washington, D.C. this week with 200 of her peers to the March for Life on the National Mall, Friday.

Our Opportunity

By Christina Hagedorn

I am attending the March for Life because I am passionate to be the voice for the unborn and because I value the sanctity of life as a human right. I am elated to attend the march representing Colorado Christian University and to use the opportunity God has given me to spread knowledge and educate others on this issue.

My mother was pro-choice before ever having kids. After years of marriage and wanting kids she found out she was not able to have children unless she underwent infertility treatments. After many medical visits and much prayer she became pregnant. Ever since then her views on abortion changed, and she became pro-life. The moment she saw the heartbeat on the ultrasound was the moment she realized that abortion was something she could never do.

My mom's story is why I am pro-life. I only exist because of much prayer and her choice not to abort. How could I not value life? Children, born and unborn, are a gift, and I am compelled to advocate for the unborn.

The film *It's A Wonderful Life* demonstrates how every life contributes something of great value to the world and reveals how different everyone else's life—society itself—would be without them. Imagine how many “holes” there are because of the millions of lives lost to abortion. This is why I march.

Christina Hagedorn is an undergraduate student at Colorado Christian University. She is traveling to Washington, D.C. this week with 200 of her peers to the March for Life on the National Mall, Friday.

God Doesn't Make Mistakes

Eli Schmitt

I believe this march will be an eye-opening experience for many of my fellow students and myself. Being a pre-med major at a faith-based university, I am often drawn into moral conflict with the way science and religion interact. However, after getting into the nitty-gritty details of the human body with professors who truly care about how the Christian faith intersects with science, I have come to see the beautiful way in which God has formed the human body to function and thrive. Nonetheless, I haven't put much research into abortions or even the political side of "pro-life" and "pro-choice." The only thing I know and prayerfully want to speak out going into this March for Life is that God does not make mistakes. In each living, breathing being, God sees and has planned out a future that is impossible for us to achieve alone. When life is being brought into this world, it means God plans to make movements in people's lives. One way or another, that child has a glorious future. A future that has been preapproved by our Father and uniquely weaved together within the flesh of a mother's womb.

Eli Schmitt is a pre-med student at Colorado Christian University. He is traveling to Washington, D.C. this week with 200 of his peers to the March for Life on the National Mall, Friday. {eo}