

Ex-Girl Scout Saves Unborn One Cookie at a Time

Recently a **pro-life** health-care clinic opened next door to Boise, Idaho's Planned Parenthood, giving pregnant women an alternative to the abortion provider.

Now those in Boise who object to the Girl Scouts of America's partnership with Planned Parenthood have a pro-life alternative to Girl Scout cookies.

That came about when 10-year-old Grace Swanke, who loved selling cookies in Boise for the Girl Scouts, found out about her organization's involvement with the abortion provider. The little pro-life home-school student couldn't abide that.

The Swankes held a family meeting to discuss what Grace should do to address the issue.

"She clearly stated, 'Maybe I shouldn't be a Girl Scout anymore,'" her father, John Swanke, told CBN News.

"And at that point we asked her, 'Well, what are the things about Girl Scouts you like doing?' And No. 1 was selling cookies," he said.

Grace's mother, Mary Swanke, then made a key statement about cookie-selling.

"I just mentioned to her, 'Well, you could always do it for a good reason,'" she said.

Grace decided immediately that she wanted to start selling cookies for **pro-life causes**. Last year, she sold some 80 boxes and made hundreds of dollars, which ended up going to the Knights of Columbus.

They used the money to help buy an ultrasound machine for that

Boise pro-life clinic, Stanton Health Care.

Then a few months ago, Grace and her family saw Stanton staffers do a live ultrasound demonstration on pregnant women. The girl fell in love with the life-saving work of Stanton as she watched the little unborn babies dance about on the ultrasound screen.

And she loved that Stanton bought the building next door to Idaho's biggest Planned Parenthood.

"They're trying to stop abortions right next to the largest center," she said admiringly.

So this year, Grace decided to make Stanton the recipient of whatever money she raises from her "Cookies for Life." So far, that's approximately \$3,300.

Unfortunately, it would take selling many more cookies than Grace could bake on her own to earn that kind of money, so she's learned to reach out to her large network of home school and Catholic friends and their moms.

She told CBN News she'll put out the word, saying "Hey, we're baking a thousand cookies. Can you come help?"

When CBN News visited Grace, she and roughly 20 friends and moms had completely taken over the kitchen and dining hall in a Boise Catholic church. The ovens were jammed with hundreds of baking cookies.

Tables all around the dining hall were covered with thousands of cookies on massive cookie sheets. Girls were loading them as fast they could into large colorful boxes marked "Cookies for Life," or they were busy mashing down dough into cookies that were next in line for the ovens.

Grace's mother, Mary, came to help, standing next to her industrious daughter in the middle of this controlled mayhem.

CBN News asked Grace's mom what she thought of all her daughter has put together.

"Of course I'm very proud of her," Mary said, and broke into tears, swooping her daughter up into her arms, but making sure not to get cookie dough in Grace's hair.

Then Brandi Swindell, founder of the Stanton Health Care clinic, came into the dining hall to hear for the first time about that \$3,300 Grace and her friends are donating to Stanton.

She gasped and exclaimed, "No way! Are you serious? That's a lot of money."

Grace received yet another bear hug.

Swindell mentioned that a majority of Americans oppose abortion.

"This emerging generation is more pro-life. And they're not just the leaders of tomorrow. They can actually be the leaders of today," Swindell said of today's youth. "And Grace is an example of that."

In the church kitchen, Grace's father, John, beat peanut butter dough into cookie shapes on those massive cookie sheets. He too said he is intensely proud of what his daughter is doing. Then he started to talk about the cultural war in America over things like abortion.

"If you just want to complain about things, you certainly have that option," he said. "But if you actually want to get your hands dirty, maybe scoop out some peanut butter and make some cookies for a great cause; this is putting your faith into action."

Back in the dining hall, Swindell helped load some of those thousands of cookies into their colorful boxes.

And she said to Grace, "There are going to be a lot of babies saved because of this."