

Standupgirl.com: Reaching Teens with a Lifesaving Message

BY Gayle Atteberry

More than six years ago, Oregon Right to Life's determination to reach teens with a lifesaving message took a dramatic step forward. Knowing that this generation was making the Internet its information medium, Oregon Right to Life (ORTL) created an innovative web site offering teens information on abortion: Standupgirl.com.

ORTL's desire was to appeal to girls who would not consider themselves pro-life, but who needed help in dealing with their unexpected pregnancies. And it has succeeded beyond the group's wildest dreams.

Standupgirl.com now has reached over nine million visitors and is one of the world's top five most-visited sites dealing with abortion. Visitors to the site stay for an average of 17 minutes, a long time to stay on a web site.

The Standupgirl.com web site features Becky, who tells how she dealt with her unexpected pregnancy. The site also features an "Inside Scene," which gives the visitor a beautiful in utero tour of the developing baby.

By far the most popular portion of the web site, though, is the "Dear Becky" column. Here Becky posts questions from and answers to many of the hundreds of e-mails she receives. The column inspired what is now a very lively forum, with dozens of daily entries from girls seeking advice on pregnancy and abortion-related issues.

It is very encouraging to see the peer-to-peer dialogue, as young women encourage one another and give pro-life advice to girls contemplating abortion. Some girls relate their tragic stories of the trauma and sadness their abortion brought. Others tell of how thankful they are that they overcame the pressure to abort.

Letters illustrate the wide and varied impact the site is having. Visitors come from all over the world. While the vast majority of visitors come from North America, thousands of visitors come from far-away places such as Nairobi, New Zealand, and Saudi Arabia.

The vast majority of teens who come to the site are looking for information for school reports. Standupgirl.com is successfully giving millions of teens the truth about how abortion affects both the unborn child and the baby's mother.

But the impact is more than merely academic. Many teens say that studying the site for their report on abortion has changed their minds on abortion. We also receive letters from girls who, after spending time on the site, have decided to remain abstinent because they can see the difficulties and complications having premarital sex can bring them.

But the webmaster's favorite letters are the ones who say Standupgirl.com has changed their minds from abortion to life, as an excerpt from one recent letter explains:

So I decided that I would have an abortion so he [the girl's boyfriend] would stay with me, but then I saw this site and changed everything I had in mind. And now I'm going to have my baby. I had my first scan done and I'm 8 weeks pregnant, and my baby will be born 6 July 2007, and I'm so excited for the first [ultrasound] of my baby ... thanx for putting this site up!"

With millions of visitors from around the globe, it is clear that Standupgirl is making a difference in helping form a culture for life.