

Signature Ad Earns Local Paper an Advertising Award

By Holly Smith with Lisa McNerney

The Powhatan Chapter of the Virginia Society for Human Life (VSHL), NRLC's Virginia affiliate, did an ordinary thing as far as chapters go on Mother's Day 2005; it ran a signature ad featuring the names of 300 community members who support the right to life. But something extraordinary happened, and it is always extraordinary when the usually unfriendly media gives good coverage to pro-life work, let alone an award.

"Powhatan Today, our quaint local paper, recently waltzed away with a slew of prizes from the Virginia Press Association," explains Lisa McNerney, past chairman of the chapter. "Our 2005 Mother's Day Signature Ad earned the first place award for advertising."

The ad, designed by VSHL member Katie Boyer, featured an adorable toddler crouching to pick a rose. McNerney continued, "The words, 'Life is Precious' and 'Thank you MOM for the gift of life' that splashed across the full page ad weren't just for the 300 or so names listed, they were for all moms who have given life. Moms who were deceased, moms whose babies died, moms who chose adoption for their now grateful children were remembered, as they should be."

The excellent reception of the ad by the Virginia Press Association meant the ad got an encore of sorts in the Powhatan Today newspaper. In every story the newspaper ran boasting of its awards, attention was brought to the pro-life ad that won it first prize (and thereby the pro-life message the ad conveyed) and to the community of active pro-lifers in Powhatan, Amelia, Goochland, and surrounding areas.

The success of the ad led Terri Woodruff, Powhatan Chapter chairman, to make an exciting challenge for 2007: "This has been nothing except a positive experience for us. We would love to have a two-page ad next year."

With the generous support of local organizations, such as the Knights of Columbus and an increasing interest by the Powhatan and surrounding community, this is definitely possible. Whether or not the chapter earns more awards and attention for its hometown paper, the attention it is bringing to the right to life cause is both laudable and lifesaving.