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London Area
Right to Life Association Inc.

Newsletter



A London Pro-Life Newsletter

DECEMBER 2009

Volume 43 Number 4



Upcoming EVENTS

Please mark your calendars

Jan. 28

"RELIGIOUS LIFE LECTURE SERIES"

- 7:30 p.m. Bessie Labatt Hall, King's
- Speaker - Sally Winn, advocate for women & children
- "Refuse to Choose: Reclaiming Feminism"
- Sponsored by Western Lifeline & King's Live for Life

Dec. 28 **MASS FOR THE UNBORN**

- 7:30 p.m. St. Peter's Basilica
- Celebrant - Bishop Fabbro
- 7:00 p.m. Rosary

Jan. to Apr.

PRO-LIFE SCHOOL PROGRAM

- 97 presentations, 19 schools
- Grades 5/6 & 7/8
- Come and see - Call Sharon 472-2038

Mar. 29

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- New Horizons Baptist Church
- 7 to 8 p.m. - refreshments following

Apr. 22 **LONDON AREA
RIGHT TO LIFE
ANNUAL DINNER/
SILENT AUCTION**

- Speaker - Michael Way Skinner, adoptive father of five
- Marconi Club, information later

Monthly Hospital Witness

- Last Thursday 3:30-5:00
- LHSC (Wellington & Commissioners)

THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD

President's Message by Phil Arnsby

A friend sent me this story which seems very appropriate for this our season of Hope...

We were the only family with children in the restaurant. I sat Erik in a high chair and noticed everyone was quietly sitting and talking. Suddenly, Erik squealed with glee and said, 'Hi.' He pounded his fat baby hands on the high chair tray. His eyes were crinkled in laughter and his mouth was bared in a toothless grin, as he wriggled and giggled with merriment.

I looked around and saw the source of his merriment. It was a man whose pants were baggy with a zipper at half-mast and his toes poked out of would-be shoes. His shirt was dirty and his hair was uncombed and unwashed. His whiskers were too short to be called a beard and his nose was so varicose it looked like a road map.

We were too far from him to smell, but I was sure he smelled.. His hands waved and flapped on loose wrists. "Hi there, baby; hi there, big boy. I see ya, buster," the man said to Erik. My husband and I exchanged looks, 'What do we do?' Erik continued to laugh and answer, "Hi."

Everyone in the restaurant noticed and looked at us and then at the man. The old geezer was creating a nuisance with my beautiful baby. Our meal came and the man began shouting from across the room, "Do ya patty cake? Do you know peek-a-boo? Hey, he knows peek-a-boo." Nobody thought the old man was cute. He was obviously drunk.

My husband and I were embarrassed. We ate in silence; all except for Erik, who was running through his repertoire for the admiring skid-row bum, who in turn, reciprocated with his cute comments.

We finally got through the meal and headed for the door. My husband went to pay the cheque and told me to meet him in the parking lot. The old man sat poised between me and the door. 'Lord, just let me out of here before he speaks to me or Erik,' I prayed. As I drew closer to the man, I turned my back trying to sidestep him and avoid any air he might be breathing. As I did, Erik had propelled himself from my arms to the man.

Suddenly a very old smelly man and a very young baby consummated their love and kinship. Erik in an act of total trust, love, and submission laid his tiny head upon the man's ragged shoulder. The man's eyes closed, and I saw tears hover beneath his lashes. His aged hands full of grime, pain, and hard labour, cradled my baby's bottom and stroked his back. No two beings have ever loved so deeply for so short a time.

I stood awestruck. The old man rocked and cradled Erik in his arms and his eyes opened and set squarely on mine. He said in a firm commanding voice, 'You take care of this baby.'

Somehow I managed, "I will," from a throat that contained a stone.

He pried Erik from his chest, lovingly and longingly, as though he were in pain. I received my baby, and the man said, "God bless you ma'am, you've given me my Christmas gift."

I said nothing more than a muttered thanks. With Erik in my arm, I ran for the car. My husband was wondering why I was crying and holding Erik so tightly, and why I was saying, "My God, my God, forgive me."

I had just witnessed Christ's love shown through the innocence of a tiny child who saw no sin, who made no judgment; a child who saw a soul, and a mother who saw a suit of clothes. I was a Christian who was blind, holding a child who was not. I felt it was God asking, 'Are you willing to share your son for a moment?' when He shared His for all eternity. How did God feel when He put His baby in our arms over 2000 years ago.

May the Saviour soften hearts to the plight of the innocent ones and may He bring blessings and peace to you and your loved ones this coming year.





From the Office

by Margarida Andre, Office Coordinator

After a very successful end of summer with our Western Fair, where we gave away thousands of resources to a very Interested public, we are now getting ready for our pro-life school program that will begin early next year. Our office has been preparing thousands of pamphlets to that end. It is truly a tremendous effort to assemble thousands of resources, to line up dedicated volunteers and presenters for such a worthy cause.

We had the opportunity, as well, to educate some Fanshawe Broadcasting students who were doing a documentary about the Life Chain. This was an open door for us to speak about the life issues that have prompted the need for the Life Chain. Both Phil and I were interviewed for almost an hour. After we were "off the air" I had the opportunity of educating them for another hour about the reality of abortion here in Canada, of which,

sadly, like most of the general public, they were not aware. One such example was that abortion is legal in Canada throughout all nine months of pregnancy, in the absence of any laws.

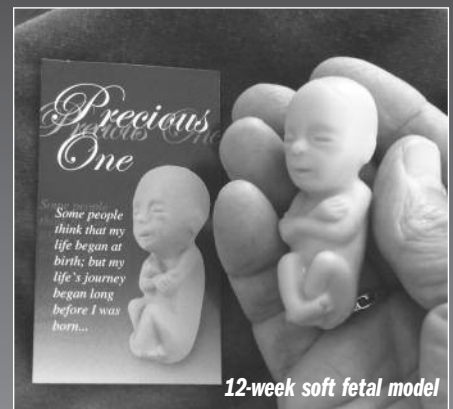
This has been a challenging year for the office as we continually struggle with the lack of office volunteers. We are in need of volunteers every second Wednesday and Friday of the month. Would you consider, in light of the greatest gift we have been given, offering some of your time to the pro-life cause? You could start once per month which is a commitment of only 3 hours per month... The tasks assigned are always in keeping with your comfort level. Please call the office for more information.

Thank you for your continued support to this organization. Without it, we could not be part of the Western Fair, help support the two pro-life student clubs at UWO, advertize in the Fanshawe newspaper, organize a pro-life school program, Life Chain, Walkathon, etc., let alone have our doors open to the public. May you be blessed as you have blessed us and we wish you a wonderful Christmas season.

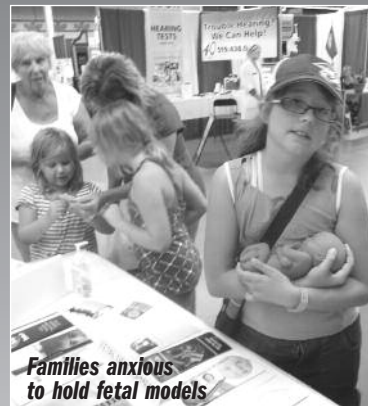
Western Fair Booths

This year we had two booths – an extended double booth with exposure on 3 busy aisles and an adjacent, unsupervised "Truth Booth". Thousands of fairgoers over the ten day period were exposed to our pro-life/pro-family message. An amazing actual size 12-week soft fetal model with fetal development card was offered to each family. 1500 were distributed! (see photo) We also had a new large soft fetal model set that the children loved to hold. (see photo). Our Truth Booth allowed the viewer privacy to observe the 3-minute 4D ultrasound DVD, "Window to the Womb". Each of our 3 aisles had well categorized pro-life pamphlets. The biggest pamphlet display and distribution ever!

A big thank you to Sherry Doiron, our Fair Coordinator, Phil Arnsby, our Booth Designer, and the many volunteers who made this Fair so successful. In addition, we are grateful for all those donors who made such a substantial pro-life presence possible.



12-week soft fetal model



Families anxious to hold fetal models



Truth Booth

Grades 5/6 and 7/8 Pro-Life/Chastity Presentations For 2010

LARLA is indeed blessed to have access to the elementary schools in the London District Catholic School Board. We appreciate the cooperation and support of the administration. The 79 presentations will take place in 19 elementary schools (1/2 of the schools each year) from January to May. Approximately 3,000 students and their teachers are there for our message. We are indebted to Sharon Weston and Phil Arnsby for organizing the program and the volunteers who do the presentations. We are grateful to the office volunteers who made up the 1,500 5/6 packages (6,000 items). A special thanks to Anne Clark, Chaplain at St. Mary's Secondary School in Woodstock and her pro-life students club for making up the 1,500 7/8 packages (12,000 items) These same St. Mary's students bussed to Ottawa this year to the March For Life and under Anne's guidance will participate again in 2010. Bravo!



DECEMBER 2009



Christmas Appeal



Dear Pro-life Friends,

Winston Churchill's shortest and most memorable commencement speech at his alma mater during World War I was, "Never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never, never give up." Powerful advice for us all.

Father Frank Pavone, head of Priests for Life U.S.A., wrote the following. "One of my favorite pro-life shirts is the one that says, '100% Pro-life Without Exception, Without Compromise, Without Apology'. That's exactly the stand each of us is called to take; in fact, it is the only pro-life stance. Abortion is an intrinsic evil. It is evil by its very nature and that evil is not altered by circumstances. To put it another way, if one lived for a million years – or forever – and did nothing but try to imagine circumstances that could justify a single abortion one could never imagine one. It simply does not exist. The circumstances in which a child is conceived, whether in love or by rape, can never make an abortion morally permissible. To say that an abortion might sometimes be permissible is like saying an act of terrorism, of child abuse, of rape, or of Satanism is sometimes permissible."

One might think the above statement somewhat over the top, insensitive to the unexpected pregnancy, may even be judgmental. On the other hand, how over the top is the dismembering of our tiny brothers and sisters in their mothers' wombs each day in our city?

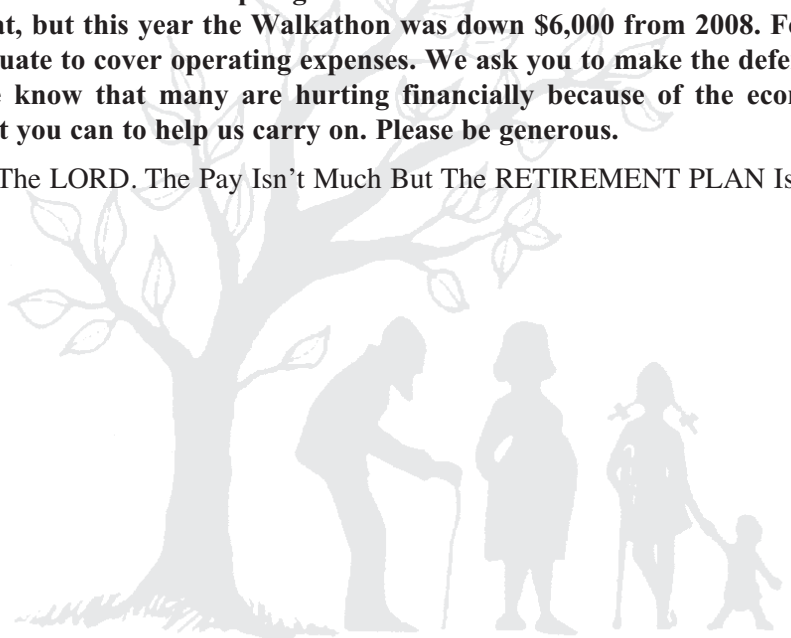
Our Right to Life office supplies pro-life information and answers hundreds of inquiries from students and adults in our community each year. I am now scheduling 97 pro-life/chastity presentations for 19 elementary schools (2,800 students), in partnership with the Catholic School Board. If funding permits, we will arrange for a chastity speaker for eight Secondary Schools (8,800 students). We tripled the size of our Western Fair booths which were amazingly successful. Our organization helps support UWO's two pro-life clubs, Western Lifeline and King's Live for Life, and National Campus Life Network (the organization that helps university clubs). It is important that we continue advertising in local newspapers and at Fanshawe College - student handbook, backlit board, and Interrobang newspaper. If budgets allow, we will use pro-life radio ads next year to disseminate our message of life.

The people who volunteer and those who are on the board are fiercely devoted and talented people who have a clear sense of mission. However, this organization will continue to exist only if good people like you want us to exist. We receive no government subsidies, and no endowments. The Spring Dinner/Silent Auction and June Walkathon are fund raising events that help us stay afloat, but this year the Walkathon was down \$6,000 from 2008. For the first time in many years our income is inadequate to cover operating expenses. We ask you to make the defense of life a priority in your charitable giving. We know that many are hurting financially because of the economic downturn and we simply ask that you do what you can to help us carry on. Please be generous.

I have a T-shirt that says 'Keep Working For The LORD. The Pay Isn't Much But The RETIREMENT PLAN Is OUT OF THIS WORLD'..... Let's hope so!

Beggar for Christ,

Phil Arnsby, President



Life Chain – Public, Powerful, Prayerful Witness

This year's Life Chain on Oct. 5 consisted of about 500 true pro-lifers. It included a number of clergy and a good number of seminarians. With 30 minutes of the one hour witness to go, the north end of our 32-block, city-wide Chain received a torrential downpour. However, a rain soaked witness can send an even stronger message about our resolve to stand for the unborn. We give thanks to those who took the time to participate, rain or shine, and to Theresa Fenik for her great organizational skills.



40 DAYS for LIFE

40 Days for Life is a time of prayer and fasting in front of abortion mills 24 hours a day for 40 days. It is 40 days of prayer and fasting, 40 days of peaceful vigil, 40 days of community outreach. 40 days in the bible – Noah and the Flood, Moses in the Wilderness, Jesus in the Desert, the Disciples in the Upper Room – has represented an extended time for change, empowerment, introspection, transformation, crying out to God in prayer.

40 Days for Life began in 2004 by a pro-life group in Texas (The Coalition for Life). In that year, the local abortion statistics showed a drop of 28%. **Since its inception, 2000 babies have been saved – that's 180 teams of little soccer players!**

Planned Parenthood Director Resigns

The director of the Texas Planned Parenthood abortion mill has resigned, saying she experienced a conversion. Abby Johnson said she began to feel uncomfortable when Planned Parenthood suffering from the economic downturn, told her to try to bring more abortions in the door. The turning point for Johnson was reportedly when she witnessed an actual ultrasound image of an abortion in progress. "I now feel so pure in heart. I don't have this guilt, this burden on me anymore," said Johnson. She has since joined the 40 Days for Life prayer near her old workplace. Johnson is one of eight abortion industry workers who left their jobs during the coordinated 40 Days for Life Campaign in 212 cities in the U.S.



Former Planned Parenthood Director Abby Johnson and Coalition for Life Shawn Carney.

40 Days for Life going global

Since 2004, there have been 200,000 volunteers, with some local 678 campaigns conducted in 283 communities, covering 50 American states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Canada, Australia, Northern Ireland, and Denmark.

This fall, Sept. 23 to Nov. 1, there were 7 Canadian cities involved in 40 Days for Life: Halifax N.S., Fredericton N.B., Montreal P.Q., Ottawa ON, Kitchener ON, Toronto ON (2) and Winnipeg MB. Edmonton ALTA, Held a campaign in the spring of 2009. In London we don't have a free-standing abortion mill. Most of the abortions are done at the Westminster campus of LHSC.

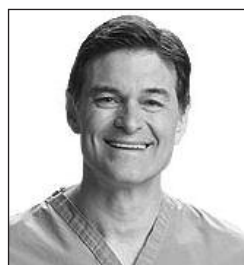
The Truth on Stem Cells from Dr. Oz

This summer on the Oprah Winfrey program, Dr. Oz, a cardiovascular surgeon at Columbia, made it clear to Oprah and her guest, Michael J. Fox, that the "[embryonic] stem cell debate is dead".

Michael J. Fox is a well known embryonic stem cell research advocate who has warped and twisted the positions of pro-life advocates during previous elections.

Dr. Oz said the problem with embryonic stem cells is that they come from

embryos, like all of us were made from embryos. The use of them means the destruction of human life. Embryonic stem



cells can become any cell in the body, but it is very hard to control them and so they can become cancer. Embryonic stem cells have yet to

catch up to their adult stem cell counterparts.

He believes researchers are within ten years of making major breakthroughs using adult stem cells, which have already helped patients with more than 100 diseases and conditions. Parkinson's, diabetes and heart disease are only a few of them. Because they are the patient's own stem cells, rejection is not an issue as is the case with embryonic stem cells.

Guelph Obstetricians and Nurses Ordered to Care for Unborn

The following is taken from a letter to the editor of a Guelph newspaper by Jakki Jeffs, Alliance for Life Ontario:

A couple of weeks ago, ...three obstetricians and four obstetrical nurses at Guelph General Hospital made a shocking claim to have “no duty of care” to the unborn child. **In fact, they had to be directed by an Ontario Court judge that they indeed do have a duty of care to an unborn child in their obstetric capacity...**

For many years we have seen how health professionals can on the one hand support induced abortion yet also assist mothers during pregnancy and delivery of their children. How can an unborn child be a precious child in one circumstance and not in another? Obviously given the “no duty of care” position taken by these medical professionals, the unborn child is of no consequence at any time.

The environment of Canadian Criminal Code has also been polluted by abortion treating the mother and child as one –

the child being invisible. A section of law that was written almost 60 years ago prevents current law from protecting the lives of unborn Canadian children. How can this possibly be?

Our law cannot continue to pretend that children in the womb are only an extension of the mother – it is totally unsupportable at any level.

This heinous and illogical supposition must certainly spread a cold shadow of fear over expectant couples as they draw closer to the birth of their child. If medical professionals involved in obstetrics do not believe they have a duty of care towards your expected child and the law does not recognize his existence, where do you turn? In this case we have to say “God Bless the Judge”.

Western Lifeline and King’s Live for Life Sponsor Speaker

Jojo Ruba UWO Sept. 29 - A dedicated pro-life speaker with Canadian Centre for Bioethical Reform (CCBR) gave a Pro-life 101 instruction life based on S.L.E.D. (S-size of a human, L-level of dependency, E-environment i.e. inside or the womb, D-level of development). Jojo’s talk was shouted down by pro-abortion students at McGill University in Montreal a few weeks later. The audience at Western was respectful and Q & A produced good discussion.



Rebecca Kiessling Oct. 22 - At age 18, Rebecca Kiessling found her birth mom and that’s also when she discovered that she was conceived in rape. Her mother would have aborted her had the law permitted. Roe v Wade came into effect the very next year... Her story is riveting and instructive as to the twisted logic that Planned Parenthood and people in general have on the topic of rape/abortion. Rebecca challenged prejudicial ideas on the value of life conceived in love or rape. Four of her children who accompanied her added very loving touch to her talk.



Abortion and the Middlesex Health Unit

ONE OF THE ‘IMPORTANT’ QUESTIONS

Two years ago, London Middlesex Health Unit held a conference at St. Joseph’s Hospital. The presenter said that when a young, single woman comes to them pregnant, one of the important questions they ask the woman (or girl) is: “If there was one thing you could change about your life, what would it be?” Of course, the young woman wishes that she could change the fact that she’s pregnant. According to the presenter, that is enough reason to advise abortion. We find this to be shocking and totally manipulative!!

NO QUESTIONS ASKED

At the Western Fair this year, a young couple with their baby came by our booth and told us their story. The young woman only found out she was pregnant at 20 to 22 weeks. Because she was taking migraine pills, they wanted to get resources concerning the effect of the pills on their little one. Since her doctor is in another city, she and her boyfriend were directed to go to Women’s Health at Victoria Hospital. The receptionist there began setting her up with a social worker and the following day for a dilator. At this point, she and her boyfriend protested, telling the receptionist they were not there for an abortion! This young mother was quite shaken up. **It was just assumed they were there for an abortion – no questions asked!! The good news is they are now thrilled with their beautiful baby boy, Edward! Where does the publicly funded Middlesex Health Unit get the mandate to automatically assume a pregnant, single woman is a candidate for abortion?**



THE DEMOGRAPHIC TSUNAMI *by Phil Arnsby*

When I was growing up I remember hearing that the world was overpopulated (the population bomb) and if we continued to have children there just wouldn't be enough space or food for everyone. Now it turns out just the opposite is true. **One of the most ominous events of modern history is quietly unfolding.**

Birthrates have been falling for the past 40 years and the United Nations now predicts that over 75% of the countries of the world will be below the replacement rate by the year 2050 and there will be 248 million fewer children.

Population stability (no growth or decline) occurs when the average woman has 2.1 children during her lifetime. Overall the European fertility rate is 1.3. No European nation has a replacement-level birthrate. Italy's fertility rate is 1.2 and Spain's is 1.1. that means these countries will lose half their people in every generation. Russia's birthrate fell from 2.4 in 1990 to 1.17 today – a decline of more than 50%. Each year, there are more abortions than live births in the Russian Federation. Russia is losing three quarters of a million people per year. The U.S. fertility rate is 2.0 due in part to higher immigration birthrates. Canada is below 1.6 birthrate.

The population of the world is aging. In Western Europe, one-sixth of the population is 65 and older. By 2030 that could be one-fourth and by 2050, almost one-third. By 2040, there will be 400 million elderly Chinese.

Today's world population growth is due first to higher fertility rates of the 1950's and 60's and second to the fact that people are living longer. However, it is projected that in the next few centuries the world's population numbers will level off and start to decline.

In our own province 335 Ontario schools face closure in the next three years due to declining enrollments. Statistics Canada predicts school enrollments in elementary and secondary schools will drop by 500,000 in the next 10 years.

So how will this affect us?

The baby boom generation is reaching retirement and will need to be supported by the younger generation most of whom have fewer and fewer children. This means fewer workers paying taxes for social, medical and welfare systems. Production will dwindle because of limited workers and economies will be strained. Human Life International states that one person living in the U.S. affects the economy to the tune of \$2,000,000, i.e. the ripple effect of working and paying taxes, and purchasing goods and services over his/her lifetime. Amazing!

Some countries have tried encouraging their people to have more children with little success. The Russian Federation pays families bonuses of the equivalent of \$9,200 for every child after the first born in a nation where the average monthly wage is only \$330. France and Australia are trying the same approach.

All the factors leading to the present demographics are present here in Canada as well – high divorce rates, the rise of cohabitation, families putting off procreation to pursue careers, an anti-family culture (3 million abortions since 1969) and voluntary childlessness.

Canada now has approximately 245,000 immigrants yearly. To compensate for the aging population, immigration would have to increase in such colossal numbers that it would be impossible. Developing countries have seen their birthrates reduced by 50% since 1970. When developing countries lose large numbers through immigration and other factors, their economies start to collapse. It is understood that "human capital" accounts for 80% of wealth in most economies.

Last year during one of my pro-life/chastity presentations to a grade 8 class I asked how many girls might consider a career choice of being a stay-at-home mom and raising a family. Only two of 16 girls raised their hands. When I received the teacher evaluation of my presentation, she commented that she felt the question was totally inappropriate. Apparently, it is politically incorrect to discuss this subject.

Is it possible to reverse this demographic trend? ... YES! If we stop killing (aborting) our own children and somehow get our government, the media, our policy makers and religious and civic organizations to place more value and emphasis on the family.

As we enter this special Christmas, a Child is born. The birth of the Child Jesus over 2000 years ago brings us hope. Jesus said, "Without me you can do nothing". May we turn to Him this Christmas and ask for His mercy and blessings on ourselves, our families and our world.

Note: Our resource centre now has 2 enlightening DVD's, "Demographic Winter" and "Demographic Bomb"



People running for their lives in Tsunami 2004



Rachel, Precious Gift from God

by Nancy Winslow, Article from St. Catharines Right to Life Newsletter

On a bright, sunny day in July ten years ago, my heart was singing with joy as I cut exquisite roses from my garden and arranged them in the teddy bear vase that was given to me the day my son, Don, was born. He had just called to say that he and his wife, Cindy, had a baby daughter. I was so happy, I thought I would burst. The phone rang again, and it was Don saying, "Mom, maybe you shouldn't come to the hospital for a while. They think the baby has Down Syndrome."

Shock, dismay and disbelief hit me like a truck. My knees buckled and I fell to the floor. My mind raced... we have no history of that in the family... Cindy and Don are young... How can this be? I don't understand... They must be so disappointed... There I was, sitting on the floor, sobbing uncontrollably.

How could I have ever known how blessed we were that day?

Our minds could not conceive what a perfectly wonderful daughter and granddaughter Rachel would be. She is a blond-haired, blue-eyed beauty, with a delightful sense of humour. She does well at school with the help of an E.A., and is accepted by her peers. She is a good swimmer, and enjoys boating and camping. For years now, she has been reading stacks of story books to me and to "Big Grandma" (my 91-year old Mom).

Rachel dearly loves her younger brother, Matthew, and they play well together, whether it's on the Wii, cars and trucks, Frisbees in the backyard, or fancy tea parties. Matt and Rachel are equally loved and equally precious to us all.

New Prenatal Test Threatens "Less Than Perfect" Babies

This year a new non-invasive prenatal test will be released on the markets that will detect children with genetic anomalies before birth. Currently the lack of counseling and awareness about disability means that 90% of these children are aborted. Research reveals that 40% of women who abort for fetal abnormality suffer long-term emotional distress.

In response to the new test, the deVeber Institute for Bioethics and Social Research has assembled an information package to be sent to physicians across Canada. The mail out informs doctors of the need for counseling when couples discover an abnormality through prenatal screening, and provides information about the harmful consequences of abortion for the child and woman.

Former Surgeon General of the U.S., C. Everett Koop, had a great deal of experience with disabled children in his role as a pediatric surgeon, "...it has been my constant experience that disability and unhappiness do not necessarily go together. Some of the most unhappy children whom I have known have all of the physical and mental faculties, and on the other hand, some of the happiest youngsters have borne burdens which I myself would find very difficult to bear."

Christmas Card for Arrested Canadian Pro-life Activist

Please consider sending a Christmas card to Linda Gibbons. She was arrested on Jan. 20, '09 for attempting to speak with women entering the Scott abortion facility in Toronto. Linda wants the freedom to be able to speak freely to any woman considering having an abortion. A panel of 3 judges will hear Linda's appeal on Dec. 10, 2009 and she will be in prison at least until then. Linda may not be home for Christmas. She likes to get Christmas cards when in prison.

Linda Gibbons
Vanier Centre for Women
655 Martin St., Box 1040
Milton, ON L9T 5E6

What does love mean?

touching words from the mouths of babes

"Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen."

-Bobby, age 7

"If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate"

-Nikka, age 6

"You really shouldn't say 'I love you' unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget."

-Jessica, age 8

Merry Christmas!

Christmas is a time to celebrate family, love and appreciate this thing called life. Here is a powerful and truly inspirational love story about a father and his disabled son.

The Strongest Dad in the World

Compiled from the internet

Eighty-five times Dick Hoyt pushed his disabled son, Rick, 26.2 miles in marathons. Eight times he not only pushed him 26.2 miles in a wheelchair but also towed him 2.4 miles in a dinghy while swimming and pedaled him 112 miles in a seat on the handlebars – all in the same day (doing the Ironman Triathlon).

Dick's also pulled him cross-country skiing, taken him on his back mountain climbing and once hauled him across the U.S. on a bike. Makes taking your son bowling look a little lame, right?

And what has Rick done for his father? Not much – except save his life.

This love story began in Winchester, Mass., 44 years ago, when Rick was strangled by the umbilical cord during birth, leaving him brain-damaged and unable to control his limbs. "He'll be a vegetable the rest of his life," Dick says doctors told him and his wife, Judy, when Rick was nine months old, "Put him in an institution." But the Hoyts weren't buying it.

They noticed the way Rick's eyes followed them around the room. When Rick was 11 they took him to the engineering department at Tufts University and asked if there was anything to help the boy communicate. "No way," Dick says he was told. "There's nothing going on in his brain." "Tell him a joke," Dick countered. They did. Rick Laughed. Turns out a lot was going on in his brain. Rigged up with a computer that allowed him to control the cursor by touching a switch with the side of his head, Rick was finally able to communicate. They thought his first words would be 'hi, mom' or 'hi, dad'. They were "Go Bruins!"

And after a high school classmate was paralyzed in an accident and the school organized a charity run for him, Rick pecked out, "Dad, I want to do that." Yeah, right. How was Dick, a self-described "porker" who never ran more than a mile at a time, going to push his son five



miles? Still, he tried. "Then it was me who was handicapped," Dick says. "I was sore for two weeks." Rick told his dad, "Dad, when we're running, it feels like my disability disappears." That day changed Dick's Life. He became obsessed with giving Rick that feeling as often as he could. He got into such hard-belly shape that he and Rick were ready to try the 1979 Boston Marathon.

"No way," Dick was told by a race official. The Hoyts weren't quite a single runner, and they weren't quite a wheelchair competitor. For a few years Dick and Rick just joined the massive field and ran anyway. Then, they found a way to get into the race officially: In 1983 they ran another marathon so fast they made the qualifying time for Boston the following year. Then somebody said, "Hey, Dick, why not a triathlon?" How's a guy who never learned to swim and hadn't ridden a bike since he was six going to haul his 110-pound kid through a triathlon? Still, Dick tried. Now they've done 229 triathlons, including six grueling 15-hour Ironmans in Hawaii. It must be a buzz kill to be a 25-year-old stud getting passed by an old guy towing a grown man in a dinghy, don't you think?

Hey, Dick, why not see how you'd do on your own? "No way," he says. Dick does it purely for "the awesome feeling" he gets seeing Rick with a cantaloupe smile as they run, swim and ride together. This year, at ages 66 and 44, Dick and Rick finished their 24th Boston Marathon, in 5,083rd place out of more than 20,000 starters. Their best time? Two hours, 40 minutes in 1992 – only 35 minutes off the world record, which, in case you don't keep track of these things, happens to be held by a guy who was not pushing another man in a wheelchair at the time. **"No question about it," Rick types. "My dad is the Father of the Century." And Dick got something else out of all this too. Two years ago he had a mild heart attack during a race. Doctors found that one of his arteries was 95% clogged. "If you hadn't been in such great shape," one doctor told him, "you probably would've died 15 years ago." So, in a way, Dick and Rick saved each other's life.** Rick, who has his own apartment (he gets home care) and works in Boston, and Dick, retired from the military and living in Holland, Mass., always find ways to be together. They give speeches around the country and compete in some backbreaking race every weekend, including this Father's Day. That night, Rick will buy his dad dinner, but the thing he really wants to give him is a gift he can never buy. **"The thing I'd most like," Rick types, "is that my dad sit in the chair and I push him once."** To watch the Hoyt's amazing story in action Google thstrongestdadintheworld

