

LEAMINGTON AREA RIGHT TO LIFE

1985 to 2020



A CONCISE HISTORY

Henrietta T. O'Neill

LEAMINGTON AREA RIGHT TO LIFE

In The Beginning

“Leamington Area Right to Life is an organization of concerned citizens who believe that abortion is a blight on our society. We believe that all human life should be respected from fertilization to natural death.” (Respect For Life Week bulletin) In 1985, twenty people attended a meeting held at the Leamington Public Library to form Leamington Area Right to Life as a Chapter of Windsor-Essex County Right to Life, which had been active since 1973. Josephine DeGoey stated, “Since we were doing more work in the Leamington area, it became increasingly necessary to organize a chapter and elect an executive to share the workload.” LARTL covered the county and towns in it: Leamington, Kingsville, Wheatley, Cottam, Comber, and Woodslee. After the First Annual General Meeting April 1986, at Leamington Public Library, the executive were as follows: Josephine DeGoey, President; Jeannette Meersseman, 1st Vice President; Karen McDowell, Recording Secretary; Karen Jewell, Corresponding Secretary; Nancy Bernath, Treasurer & Financial Convener; Patti Olsen, Education; Wendy Hildebrand, Membership & Nominations; Marie Leipold, Church Convener; Anna Wilds, Public Relations; and Maureen Eichel, Telephone and Refreshments.

Their mission statement reads: “Through education, we seek to foster respect for all human life from fertilization to natural death. We encourage chastity. We support counselling of women suffering after abortion. We provide information packages and presentations free upon request. We use only peaceful means to promote the aims of our organization.”

PETITION FOR LIFE 1982

Petition Presented to the Board of Leamington District Memorial Hospital

On 28 September 1982, the Leamington District Memorial Hospital Board met with Beryl Caves, President of Windsor-Essex County Right to Life, Dr. Raymond LaRocque, a Windsor surgeon and member of the Physicians for Life group, and Josephine DeGoey, Leamington Representative. A petition, signed by 1,326 residents in the area served by this hospital, was presented to the board. The petition drive began in the spring of 1982. It read:

We, the undersigned residents of Leamington & Area, in view of the fact that the establishment of a therapeutic abortion committee is wholly optional on the part of a hospital board, respectfully request the members of the Board of Leamington District Memorial Hospital to immediately disband this committee in the interest of all humanity and specifically to safeguard the lives of the unborn.

Board members saw a slide presentation showing development stages of the unborn child and methods of abortion. A package of information was given to each board member. The Therapeutic Abortion Committee was formed in 1975. Hospital policy was that no abortions would be performed after 12 weeks. On 8 March 1983, Windsor-Essex County Right to Life received a letter from the Administrator of the hospital which read:

At the September Board Meeting, follow-up discussion took place and there were no definite plans made to change our present policy re: Abortions.



Rita Impens (centre) receives the Michael Byrne award at the Windsor-Essex County Right to Life annual dinner in 2001. Beryl Caves, president of WERTL, is on her left and Josephine DeGoey, president of Leamington Area Right to Life is on her right. Rita and a few other Leamington ladies raised funds by making and selling lace angels.

RESPECT FOR LIFE WEEK 1985 TO 2015

The first Respect For Life Week was held in Leamington from 10 to 16 March 1985. Support was received from the councils of the Town of Leamington and the Township of Mersea by their declaration of an official proclamation. Posters sporting artwork designed by a Leamington Secondary student, Leigh Cobby, were distributed and advertised events included:

March 10 - Sanctity of Human Life Sunday had 23 churches in the Leamington Area participating. About 3000 bulletin inserts with artwork designed by Loree Enns, also a Leamington Secondary School student, were distributed to these churches.

March 11 - Residents of the Sun Parlor Nursing Home were entertained.

March 13 - Information Night consisted of showing the film *Two Is A Crowd* at South Essex Community Council building.

March 12 to 16 – An information display table was set up at the County Fair Mall in Leamington.

A Raffle was held in conjunction with Windsor-Essex County Right to Life. Proceeds were used to purchase pro-life books for donation to Leamington Library, Leamington District Secondary School and Windsor Main Library.

Respect for Life Week Proclamations 1985 to 1996

In 1985, most municipalities agreed to proclaim Respect for Life Week. In the decade following, towns and municipalities began dropping the proclamation. Leamington Area Right To Life quit making the request in 1996.

Silent Walk & Vigil

On the Sunday at the beginning of Respect For Life Week, LARTL organized a silent walk from the First Baptist Church to Leamington District Hospital. There, a short silent vigil accompanied the laying of a wreath for unborn children killed by abortion. The participants met at the church, where they listened to a short speech and then returned to the church for fellowship, coffee, juice and dessert.

In 2006 the First Baptist Church no longer had a room available for LARTL, so the meeting place was changed to the Leamington Christian Centre on Elliott St. In 2008, LARTL started the walk at the South Point Community Church. For the last couple of years, participants were asked to meet outside of the Leamington District High School, from which location they organized and walked up to the hospital.

In April of 2016, for the first time in 31 years, Leamington Area Right to Life did not conduct a Silent Walk & Vigil to Leamington District Memorial Hospital. LARTL sent out an information paper in which Josephine DeGoey said, "To our knowledge, no abortions are being performed at this time as the hospital is without an OB/GYN physician. However, the board has hired two such physicians. At this time, we are not certain if they also perform abortions. We realize that an OB/GYN unit is essential to the women in this area. We must continue to be aware of what is happening in our community."



Pictured above: supporters and members of Leamington Area Right to Life, escorted by police, walk to Leamington District Hospital.

Essay Contest

An essay contest was held in conjunction with Respect For Life Week in 1986. The theme was 'L.I.F.E. - Life Is For Everyone - Will you lend a hand?' Cash prizes were awarded. Several public, separate & private elementary schools were asked to participate. It was open to Grade 8 students, but participation was not mandatory. The Director of Education of the Essex County Public School Board informed LARTL that he would not allow the distribution of pro-life or pro-choice materials in his schools. That year there were 8 submissions.

Other essay contests were organized sporadically. Many of the ones LARTL supported were initiated through other pro-life organizations such as Alliance For Life and Priests For Life. Getting the information out to students was always problematic, and results were limited.

Bulletin Inserts

Bulletin inserts were written and provided to local churches as long as Respect For Life Week took place: 1985 to 2015. The inserts included an editorial, a list of activities, a membership request and a mission statement.

Visiting and Entertaining at Local Nursing Homes

Every year during Respect For Life Week, LARTL members picked one nursing home to visit. They provided entertainment – often the Italian Choir or dancers. They also provided a gift and snacks.

Welcoming Newborns

A small gift was brought to Leamington District Hospital for every baby born in that facility during the Month of May.

Information Table at the County Fair Mall in Leamington

Beginning in 1985, LARTL had a manned pro-life display in the hall area of the County Fair Mall during Respect For Life Week. Mall visitors could stop by and pick up pamphlets or look at the fetal models. Josephine DeGoey had more than 22 volunteers involved in that outreach. In 1994, after eight years, they were denied the use of this mall space.



Top left: participants carrying the right to life sign lead the walk to the Leamington Hospital.

Top right: Josephine DeGoey mans a display table at the County Fair Mall.

Bottom: Members of Leamington Area Right to Life stand prayerfully in front of Leamington District Memorial Hospital.

Pictured right: Bulletin inserts provided to all churches in the county to educate and advertise Respect For Life Week.



Pictured below: Kingsville and Leamington area supporters of 40 Days For Life stand on the sidewalk along Talbot Street in front of Leamington District Memorial Hospital, October, 2012. Lia Mills, who was in the area to give presentations, (3rd from left) is pictured with the group. Helen Lewis (1st on left) was on the sidewalk with volunteers every day.



40 Days For Life Although Leamington Area Right to Life did not organize 40 Days For Life at the Leamington District Hospital, many members participated in that endeavour, which was led by Helen Lewis. Pro-life supporters stood on the sidewalk on Talbot Street in front of the hospital with signs that read 'Pray To End Abortion'. A 40 Days For Life Campaign was begun in the fall of 2012 and ended in the fall of 2015 when Helen learned that the hospital was no longer offering abortions. LARTL then dropped its Silent Walk and Vigil along with Respect for Life Week.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH 1: Ontario Right to Life Rally 1985 Sixty-four people from Leamington & Kingsville attended a rally held in Toronto on 21 September 1985. Leamington Area Right to Life booked an Essex County Separate School Board bus. 2: Ruthven Apple Festival 1985 to 2018 Leamington Area Right to Life had a booth at the Ruthven Apple Festival beginning in 1985. Josephine DeGoey and her cadre of numerous volunteers manned this booth throughout the weekend. Being at the Apple Festival gave LARTL a chance to educate interested passers-by. During the 2018 event, we were blessed to learn that the presence of LARTL at an earlier festival had made a difference to at least one mother and child. A woman approached the booth to thank us for being there and let us know that she had a 24-year-old son because she was able to talk to a compassionate pro-life volunteer at the Apple Festival. After explaining her situation and uncertainty, the volunteer asked, "Can you love this child?" The mother knew that she could and responded in the affirmative. The volunteer responded, "That is all you need to do." It is not often that we learn about babies saved, so this story, coming to us when it did, was an unconditional gift to LARTL supporters. The sad news would come later when in 2019, the Festival organizers decided that they no longer wanted advocacy organizations present. Our opportunity for outreach through that venue was over. 3: Leamington Fair 1984 to 1997 Leamington Area Right to Life tried to acquire a booth at the Leamington Fair starting 1981. They were finally approved in 1984 and were fairly consistent until 1997. Gradually attendance at the fair dropped off so LARTL decided to withdraw. 4: Comber Fair 1996 to 2018 Volunteers from Leamington Area Right to Life occupied a booth at the Comber Fair from 1996 to 2018. Most years, they were situated indoors, a better place for pamphlets and the fetal models, but that also meant that traffic was limited. In 2019 LARTL was unable to contact the organizers; consequently, they did not have a booth for that year. 5: Raffle 1985 to 1991 Combined with Windsor-Essex County Right to Life, a raffle was held each year beginning in 1985 and ending in 1991. Proceeds bought VHSs, books and pamphlets which were then donated to interested schools and local libraries. 6: International Plowing Match 1988 Since Plowing Match booths are expensive, a booth was shared by Windsor-Essex County Right to Life and Leamington Area Right to Life. The plowing match ran from 19 to 23 September 1988. 7: Helping Hands From Loving Hearts Often as we attempt to teach about the pre-born baby, we are confronted by people who say something like this, "You only care about the baby. Where are you when an expectant mother is in need?" In many ways, this is an unfair accusation because we cannot do everything, so we must choose our focus. Rose Marie Barczak decided to try something different in her home parish of St. Anthony of Padua, Harrow. She initiated an organization called Helping Hands From Loving Hearts. This small group, under the umbrella of LARTL, collected and disbursed baby clothes and accessories to mothers in need. The group, highlighting the many facets of pro-life concern, was in existence from 2006 to 2012.

LIFE CHAIN 1991 to 2020

Life Chain Canada began in 1987. The first Leamington Area Life Chain was held on 6 October 1991, with 650 people taking part. They lined both sides of Erie and Talbot Streets. In Josephine's words: "(they) covered 2 kilometres along the two streets which intersected to form a cross. Participants lined the sidewalks of both sides of Erie Street from Clark Street, extending south almost to Marlborough Street, and of Talbot Street from Fox Street extending east to Princess Street ... 20 groups of various denominations from Leamington and the surrounding areas of Kingsville, Harrow, Essex, Cottam, Woodslee, Comber and Wheatly took part in the event...across Canada 67 cities took part with 73,850 pro-life supporters ..." In Windsor, there were 1000 people lining the streets to form a Life Chain that day as well.

Life Chain became a yearly activity for pro-lifers. By 1992 downtown Harrow and Essex were added as new county locations for Life Chain. In 1997, the town of Kingsville was also holding a Life Chain. These Life Chains were organized by Leamington Area Right to Life.

Josephine DeGoey sent out advertisements to all local papers and used free local TV and radio spots when possible. Schools were informed by letter, and church representatives were assigned to put up posters and generally remind pastors of the date and locations for Life Chain. Local police forces were given a heads-up, as were town councils.

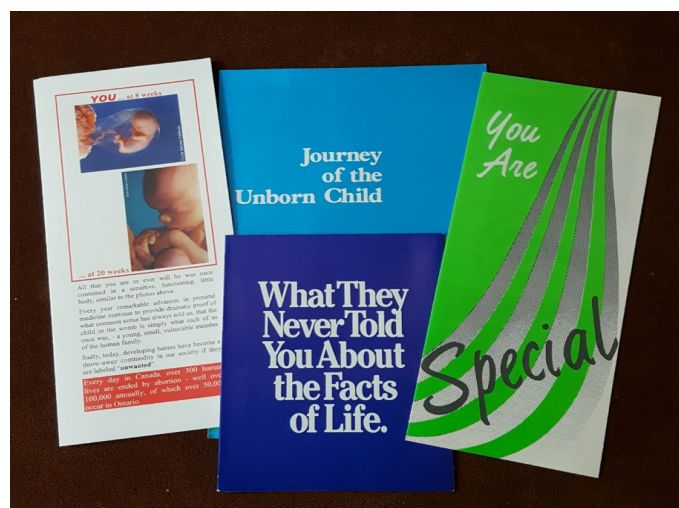
With the Ruthven Apple Festival landing on the weekend before Life Chain (sometimes on the same weekend) and the walkathon coming after it, fall was a busy time for Josephine and pro-life volunteers.

In all of Windsor and Essex, there are now eight locations for Life Chain. As already listed, four of those are in the county. Windsor area now includes Amherstburg, Tecumseh, Belle River and Windsor (near Metropolitan Hospital). Although the locations are within easy driving distance and only one hour is asked of anyone, the number of participants has steadily declined. On 4 October 2020, there were altogether 242 participants in Windsor and Essex County, with only 100 of those coming from the county. It is lamentable that so few people turn out to recognize the loss of so many lives in this country.



Pictured above left: In 1987, organizers intended that this sign would be used by all Life Chain participants. Gradually other signs have been added but this one still says it all. Pictured above right: A Leamington Life Chain supporter braves the rain. October 2020.

Pictured top right: fetal models used in the schools and on display tables. Pictured below right: various pamphlets handed out to school children and available to the general public. Pictured below left: this educational pamphlet includes a description of human development in the womb, types of abortions performed and a short history of abortion law. Pictured at bottom: silver precious feet pin offered for sale to the general public and rose lapel sticker sold at churches on Mothers Day or another Sunday in May.






Jonathon Van Maren

Meet Lia Mills
Pro-Life YouTube Sensation
 Saturday, October 20, 2012 - 1 to 3 pm
 South Point Community Church
 4 Queens Avenue in Leamington
(Same building as Gabriel's Furniture, 55 Talbot W. - Church front entrance is on Queens)
For All Teens - Free Admission

Lia is an 11th grade student from Toronto. As part of a school assignment for the 7th grade and for entry into a related speech competition, she chose to write a speech on abortion. She was strongly encouraged not to pursue this topic and threatened with disqualification many times. Despite the obstacles, she made it through to the end of the competition.

Afterwards, a YouTube video of her speech went viral and the original posting has been viewed over 1.2 million times around the world. Her first video has been reposted many times and translated into several languages. Since then, Lia has worked on several other YouTube videos.

Lia is the spokesperson for both Teen Defenders and Student Life Link.
www.studentlifelink.ca



Make a Difference for Life
Help Build a Pro-Life Canada
Defend Life
 Sponsored by Leamington Area Right to Life
 519-325-0929 * lartl@porchlight.ca



Lia Mills, a high school student when she was invited by LARTL to speak to the youth, passed the bar exam at University of Ottawa in 2021. Congratulations Lia!

YOUTH CONFERENCE 2013 TO 2016

Leamington Area Right to Life volunteers were involved in several youth conferences. The most complex of these was a province-wide weekend conference held at St. Thomas of Villanova. Entitled *Life Is Great*, it was organized locally from 20 to 22 October 1995. Hosted by Windsor-Essex County Students For Life and The Pines Pro-life Group, students were invited to spend the weekend at St. Thomas of Villanova. Registration was \$60.00 or \$50.00 if one registered early. Forty-three youth attended, and without being in charge of it, volunteers from LARTL stepped up. Food was prepared, chaperones were designated and speakers were brought in. It was a good conference which would demonstrate the need and encourage Josephine to consider running one for local youth. But it would be several years before that idea took substance in the form of a one-day, Saturday conference during the March Break.

On 4 May 2013, LARTL held a conference for local youth. *Shout Out For Life*, as it was called, was planned for a Saturday at St. John's Parish Hall, West Belle River Road in Woodslee. Rebecca Richmond of National Campus Life Network was the main speaker. Pamela Plante from the Pregnancy Resource Centre spoke about caring for mothers and babies. Alexandra Jezierski and Martha Lapain, high school pro-life activists, spoke about their work. There were 20 youths and 13 adults present. Mike Schlater, CEO of Domino's Pizza of Canada LTD, provided the food. Registration cost \$10.00 or \$7.50 if one registered early. There were enough youth to make this seem like a worthwhile educational venture.

The second *Shout Out For Life* conference was held on 22 March 2014, at St. John's Parish Hall, Woodslee. Mike Schlater, CEO of Domino's Pizza of Canada LTD, once again was kind enough to donate the pizza. Jonathon Van Maren, the communications director for the Canadian Centre For Bio-ethical Reform, was the main speaker. Mary and Nick Fournier spoke about the benefits of Natural Family Planning and chastity. Helen Lewis explained the 40 Days For Life Campaign in Leamington. Sr. Linda Dube talked about Our Lady of Guadalupe Home in Windsor. A band of young people, Cante Deo, filled the breaks with lovely music. There were about 50 people at the conference.

St. John's Parish Hall, Woodslee played host to the 3rd annual *Shout Out For Life* conference on 28 March 2015. Lia Mills was the main speaker. She was a high school student who made a name for herself on YouTube by speaking out on the abortion issue. Lia quickly became involved in the pro-life movement and, as she did here, spoke out against abortion and euthanasia whenever requested. After Lia, there were testimonies from various local youth and the band, Cante Deo, was asked to provide music. Mike Schlater, CEO of Domino's Pizza of Canada LTD, provided the food. The event was free and 25 youth registered.

The fourth *Shout Out For Life* youth conference was held at Holy Name of Jesus Church, Essex on 2 April 2016. Mike Schlater, CEO of Domino's Pizza of Canada LTD, donated the food. Dan Zeleny talked about abortion and euthanasia. Alissa Golob, former Youth Coordinator for Campaign Life Coalition, and Scott Hayward, co-founders of an organization called "Right Now", spoke about their new endeavour. Jeff Durham talked about Molly's law. Cassandra Kaake was seven months pregnant with their daughter Molly when she was murdered. As in this case, in Canadian law, a pre-born baby is not recognized as a victim. Jeff and Cassandra's family were campaigning for legislation that would recognize pre-born children as separate victims when harmed during attacks against their mother. (This law was unfortunately never passed.) Registration for *Shout Out For Life* was again free, but poor attendance at this conference discouraged LARTL from planning another.



"Shout Out For Life" was the central theme for all youth conferences held by LARTL. In this picture dated 28 March 2015, Jeff Watson, former Conservative MP for Essex, speaks to the youth regarding the Supreme Court of Canada decision in the Carter case which ultimately struck down the law against assisted suicide.

SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS

Primary School Presentations

Beginning in 1984, Josephine DeGoey gave pro-life talks upon request. In 1993 LARTL looked at the presentations being done at schools in Chatham-Kent. There were three separate discussions available: Grade K to 4 'The Wonder of Being Alive', Grade 5&6 'I'm Special', Grade 7&8 'The Truth Will Set You Free – the truth about abortion; the freedom that chastity brings'.

Rose Campbell and Henrietta O'Neill agreed to follow up with the Essex County Catholic School Board for permission to make these presentations accessible to the county separate schools. The programs were submitted to Mrs. Rose McCabe, the Family Life Coordinator of the Essex County Roman Catholic Separate School Board, for approval in June 1993. McCabe and Fr. Lehman approved the 4 presentations. Depending on the grade, children would learn about the development of the child in the womb, respect for life, abortion and/or chastity. Many teachers were interested and contacted LARTL. From 1994 to 2005 there were close to 200 elementary school presentations delivered. Fetal models were displayed; slides called 'How Babies Grow', a video for the older classes, and handouts for teachers and students were delivered in many classes. Dated 22 February 2006, Josephine DeGoey received a letter from Mr. Barry Elliott, Curriculum Consultant, Religion and Family Life. In the letter, he dismissed our input in elementary school classes by stating that "we have decided that in the fall of 2006, we will direct our principals to ensure that only the classroom teacher deals with these areas". This decision effectively cut students off from the extra audio, visuals and handouts that pro-life speakers had to offer.

In the few years that LARTL volunteers were able to go into the classroom, presentations were delivered in: Queen of Peace and St Louis, Leamington; St John the Baptist, Belle River; St John de Brebeuf, Kingsville; St. William, Emeryville; St. Theresa, Malden; St. Joseph, River Canard; St. Anthony, Harrow; St. John, Woodslee; Holy Name of Jesus, Essex; Our Lady of the Annunciation, Stoney Point; St. Gregory, St. Clair Beach; Sacred Heart, LaSalle; St. Peter and St. Pius X, Tecumseh; St. Bernard, Amherstburg; and St. Mary, Maidstone.

Secondary School Presentations

Josephine DeGoey, Rose Campbell, and Henrietta O'Neill were asked to speak in various high school classes by grade 11 and 12 students. UMEI Christian High School, Kingsville High School, Essex High School, Amherstburg High School, Cardinal Carter High School, St. Anne's High School and Leamington District High School are included in the list of schools attended. The presentations were delivered in parenting classes, religion classes and law classes. In 2009 Josephine and Henrietta were approached by Robert Ouellette, Religion Department Head at Cardinal Carter Secondary School, who asked us to give a presentation to every religion class during the course of each semester. The result was that for the next three years, Henrietta O'Neill gave 53 high school presentations in religion classes at Cardinal Carter Secondary School.

School Information Packages were available upon request from LARTL, and at least 136 were sent out to students who were working on school projects.

LARTL supported and encouraged speakers like Bev Hadland (chastity), Molly Kelly (chastity) and Lia Mills (young pro-lifer) by paying their costs and encouraging local schools and churches to invite them in.

High School Bursary

When LARTL had funds available, bursaries were offered to graduating students.



Pictured above: Josephine DeGoey speaks at a Windsor Essex County Right to Life Annual Dinner. Pictured right: a chart handed out to high school students which helps them put death by abortion into perspective.



Various Community Group Presentations

Presentations were delivered in the community to Catholic Women's Leagues, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults Classes, Youth Groups, Churches, Sunday School and Marriage Preparation Classes.

An 'Abortion and Right to Life Debate' was held on 2 December 1994, at Sandwich Secondary School, 7050 Malden Rd. River Canard.

Henrietta O'Neill, representing Leamington Area Right to Life, Sue Morin representing Canadian Abortion Action Rights League, and Dr. Andrea Steen, from Teen Health Centre of Windsor, appeared on a panel-style debate.



Josephine DeGoey won the Michael Byrne award for her pro-life work. Standing with her in this picture are Berle Caves who was the president of Windsor Essex County Right to Life when Josephine started Leamington Area Right To Life. They had a good working relationship as they cooperated on various projects. George Gevaert, centre, was a good friend and an active board member of LARTL. It was following his suggestion that St. John's Parish Hall in Woodslee was used for the youth conference.

FUNDRAISING

Raising funds for books, videos, pamphlets, advertisements, mailings and office supplies was always a necessity for LARTL. The annual walkathon brought in most of the money needed for the year. Sales of “Baby Feet” pins at community events were ongoing as long as there were events at which Leamington Area Right to Life was welcome. Josephine DeGoey also organized the sale of “Choosing Life” calendars in 1994 and 1995.

Pro-life memberships which were collected for Leamington Area Right to Life were deposited and then paid through to Windsor-Essex County Right to Life. Any donation sent with a membership was kept as LARTL income.

Silent Auction Dinner and Dance 1992 & 1993

The first Silent Auction with a dinner and dance was held at the Knights of Columbus Hall. The DJ for the evening was Chuck Reynolds. When a second Dinner & Dance was held in the same location on Friday 16 April 1993, the event was poorly attended so it was the last fundraiser of this type.

Youth Dances 1991 & 1992

Youth dances were held at Colasanti's Tropical Gardens, sponsored by Colasanti's. LARTL volunteers were there to chaperone youth and were given a percentage of the money made. Other charitable organizations were involved as well. The dances were cancelled by Colasanti's in June 1993 due to problems with the behaviour of some older youths.

Red Rose Sunday

Red Rose Sunday was usually held in May. Small red rose lapel decals were sold after Masses by the Knights of Columbus. Red Rose Sunday did not always happen and not necessarily at all churches in the county. However, many Knights' Councils were very dedicated to this fundraiser over the years.

In Memoriam Cards

At some point in time, In Memoriam cards were distributed to 5 area funeral homes asking for donations to Leamington area Right to Life in memory of a loved one.

Walkathon 1987 to 2015

A walkathon was held every October, beginning in 1987 and coming to an end in 2014. During the first eight years, the walkathon was held at Point Pelee National Park which had free entry during the fall and winter months. The decision by PPNP to charge an entry fee throughout the year forced Josephine DeGoey to find another location, and Hillman Marsh seemed to fit the bill. However, the walkathon was taking place while duck hunting was going on in the marsh, so that proved to be problematic. The following year, 1996, the walkathon was moved to Woodslee, where it would take place for the next ten years. George Gevaert, a dedicated, long time member of LARTL and a member of Woodslee Knights of Columbus, suggested St. John's Hall as a starting point. It proved to be an ideal location.

In 2006, as there were fewer people involved, walkers could do the walkathon in a location of their choice. It was called *Design Your Own Walkathon*. Over the years, walkathon volunteers raised \$92,545.85.

There is no way to thank everyone who was involved, but your active support paid for billboards, bus and bus shelter ads and much local newspaper coverage, as well as handouts and pamphlets. Although LARTL never had an office as such – all work was done out of Josephine DeGoey's house - mailing and office-type expenses also had to be paid. In retrospect, an amazing job was done by all involved.

ADVERTISEMENTS

Newspaper Ads 1985 to 2019

Every year Leamington Area Right to Life advertised in the local newspapers before Respect For Life Week and Life Chain Sunday. Some of this was free community event advertising but much was paid for by donations and fundraising. Advertisements regarding abortion information such as that which was put in the local papers to mark the anniversary of the Supreme Court Decision 28 January 1988, which left Canada without an abortion law, were extra and expensive to run.

Radio Ads

LARTL took advantage of the free community events radio spaces on CHYR Radio but also had paid ads such as those which ran from November to December 1989, at a cost of \$600.00.

Leamington Cable TV

Josephine DeGoey was interviewed by Elsa Koop in January 1987. The program was called "Let's Talk" and was aired 4 and 26 February.

Bus Shelter Ad 1999 to 2003

Leamington began running a bus in town and bus shelters were installed at various stops. Late in 1998, Josephine DeGoey investigated the possibility of running an ad on one of those shelters. An initial quote from J.C. Teron Co. Ltd was \$300 plus GST per ad per month, which included the production of the ad. After contacting authorities and checking out the options, four beautiful signs were eventually designed and used for that purpose.

In May, June and July of 1999, there was a pro-life ad reading "Life is precious – Support Life – Leamington Area Right to Life (Josephine DeGoey's Phone number)". On that sign were a yellow happy face and a rose.

In 2000 a new sign read, "Respect for Life Starts Here ... and Lasts a Lifetime", and included silhouettes of a pregnant woman, a handicapped person and an elderly person. That sign ran from 1 May to 26 June.

In 2001 another ad was designed and used from 30 April to 23 July. The new ad stated, "Every Baby Deserves A 'Birth'day'" with a background drawing of colourful balloons.

The 2002 and 2003 ad, showing a picture of an eight-week developing baby in the background, stated, "It's About A Child". All of the above ads were displayed on the shelter located on the west side of Erie Street South in front of Erie Plaza, Leamington.

10 Years - Just Under 1 Million Lives Lost

On January 28, 1988, the Supreme Court of Canada eliminated what little protection that existed for the unborn child. The Court found Section 251 of the Criminal Code (the abortion law) unconstitutional on technical grounds. Since then, Canada has been without any restrictions on abortion. As a result, abortions can be performed at any stage of pregnancy for any reason or for no reason at all.

The Supreme Court of Canada

- found no absolute right to abortion
- stated that Parliament has the right to pass laws regulating abortion.

HOW DOES A BABY GROW?

- **3 weeks of conception** - heart begins to beat.
- **6-7 weeks** - all vital organs are present. Body, arms and legs begin to move and brain waves can be recorded.
- **8 weeks** - he squints and his fingers close into a fist if his palm is touched.
- **11-12th week**, all internal organs are functioning. She breathes, swallows, digests, urinates and is sensitive to touch, heat, sound, discomfort and pain. Vocal cords are forming and motions of crying occur.
- **3 months** - nothing new develops or functions, only growth in size and maturity.

The majority of abortions in Canada are performed for social or economic convenience. Canadian women obtained 106,658 abortions in 1995. In Ontario, there were 46,134 abortions performed. Surely, there must be a better way to help women and families solve these problems than offering them the choice of destroying their children.

Leamington Area Right To Life - 326-7450
Windsor and Area Right To Life - 969-7555

Respect for Life

begins here...

...and lasts a lifetime

RIGHT TO LIFE... 326-7450

LIFE IS PRECIOUS

SUPPORT LIFE!

Right to Life

for Info. call... **326-7450**

TERON Property of J.C. TERON CO. LTD.

Bus ad 1999 to 2017

Leamington buses also had opportunities for advertising on the side or the back. Bookings had to be 2 to 3 weeks at a time. Josephine wasted no time in signing a contract with C.A. Bailey Limited starting Tuesday 25 May to Saturday 12 June 1999. Chapman Signs produced all the signs that were used. The ad for the side of the bus was long and narrow, sporting a big and small heart drawing with the statement, “We Love Them Both ... Choose Life”. That sign was used for several years. In 2008 a new design was prepared reading, “9 Months. The length of time an abortion is allowed in Canada. No medical reason needed. Abortion, Have We Gone Too Far?” In January 2013, two signs were made which would be used on the back of the bus. One showed an eight-week old pre-born baby and a statement that read “Human Beings Begin In The Womb”. The second one asked, “Forgetting Someone?” with the same picture. From 1999 to 2017, one of these signs was displayed for a week at a time, in memory of the January anniversary of the Supreme Court of Canada decision, for the April Respect For Life Week, for the August Tomato Festival and for the October Life Chain Sunday. From April 2016 to February 2017, one of the signs remained on the bus. In February, after a complaint from the public about the pro-life bus ads, the town of Leamington decided to withdraw their permission and this opportunity to educate the public regarding pro-life issues was permanently eradicated.

Videos and books were purchased and made available.

Pictured below: these two ads were used on the Leamington public transit. “Human Beings begin in the womb” was designed and used on the back of the bus while “9 months” was intended for use on the side of the bus.



Billboards

In 1993, Josephine signed a five-year contract with Oliver Signs for a billboard that read “Abortion Stops a Beating Heart”. That billboard was on Highway #3 between Ellis Sideroad and County Road 19. In 1999, LARTL renewed that 5-year contract at the cost of \$2200 plus tax. Leamington area Right to Life paid Oliver Signs for this billboard until 2012 at which time they renewed the contract jointly with Windsor-Essex County Right to Life. It ran again from 1 May 2012 to 1 May 2015. The upgrade to Highway #3 meant that the sign had to be removed.

Josephine also looked for less expensive opportunities and found a “rotating billboard”. Rotating meant that it was on wheels and could be moved from location to location around the county. Beginning in 1999 and running to 2020, LARTL contracted with Oliver Signs to use the billboard with a pro-life message which said, “Respect for Children Begins in the Womb”, at a cost of approximately \$1500 plus tax. In 2016, partway through the last five-year (2014-2019) contract, Oliver Signs sold that part of their business to dBMedia in 2016. Leamington Area Right to Life paid dBMedia for a static road sign on County Road 20 just west of Kingsville. That sign stating, “Respect for Life Begins in the Womb”, was there until May 2020.

Miscellaneous

Business cards were ordered in 1996 and 1998.

An ad was in *The Shepherd's Guide* on a sporadic basis.

LARTL supported an “All Ontario Media Campaign” managed by Alliance For Life from 1998 to 2003.

Soft Fetal Models were purchased from Alliance For Life 1992.



Above right: this colourful but simple sign on County Road 20 west of Kingsville was visible from 2016 to 2020.

... WHERE CREDIT IS DUE ...

Josephine DeGoey, who was the strength behind Leamington Area Right to Life from the time of its inception in 1985, died in the spring of 2019. Her unflagging zeal for the unborn will not soon be forgotten. Her home was the LARTL office, and her phone number was on all the advertisements as was her address where necessary. Along with Nancy Bernath, who co-signed the cheques until 1992, and then Beverly Peterson, who took over that role until 2020, Josephine travelled to meetings, delivered bulletin inserts to churches and spent hours behind display tables. She called volunteers, designed ads for newspapers, made local contacts and generally organized Life Chain and Respect For Life Week. Josephine felt that she was accountable to those who volunteered or made donations, and it was important to spend their time and money wisely. With that in mind, Henrietta O'Neill, acting president of LARTL, called an annual General Meeting at St. Michael's Church on 24 June 2019. Eleven members attended, and issues facing LARTL were discussed, including: few active members, lack of funds, no office, dwindling opportunities for educating the public, the need to be 'online' and the lack of expertise. Meanwhile, Windsor-Essex County Right to Life had an office and an office administrator, was already 'online' and was running a 40 Days For Life campaign at the Metropolitan Hospital, which was likely performing abortions on Leamington /Essex County women. Windsor-Essex County Right to Life had activities but needed volunteers and funds to keep them going. We decided to fold back into the parent organization as soon as the LARTL financial account was empty. In the meantime, Henrietta attended WECRTL board meetings and agreed to remain on the board. Leamington Area Right to Life came to an end as of mid-October 2020.

I am sure that if she could, Josephine would join me in thanking you for all of your help over the last 35 years. The best I can do is present this history which documents the work that was accomplished because of your generous time and/or money. We have no way of knowing how many people's minds have changed because of presentations, information, advertisements, or displays. How many commuters were touched by the 'Abortion Stops a Beating Heart' sign? How many children who saw the fetal models on a display table, watched the 3D ultrasound DVD, looked at the fetal development slides or spoke with volunteers are now young parents with children of their own? We can hope that they remember the lessons and pass them on. Leamington Area Right To Life lives on in the families of our community. I encourage you to remain involved in the pro-life movement.



ABORTION AND THE LAW: A TIMELINE

The following abortion access timeline is short but significant. These court cases produced the anti-life society that we are in today. Due to the deliberate negligence by federal governments, we have no law regulating abortions in this country. A baby can be aborted for any reason at any time during the nine-month period of gestation. Babies do not have rights and are not considered people under the Charter until they have safely emerged from the birth canal. Fathers have no say if the mother decides to have an abortion. Taxpayers cover the bulk of the costs of abortions and any health costs for damaged mothers. Bubble zones prevent the possibility of helping mothers who are being coerced into having an abortion and do not know where to turn.

1969: Under the Liberal Government of Pierre Trudeau the criminal code was amended to legalize abortion in a hospital setting under the guidelines of a Therapeutic Abortion Committee (three qualified doctors) who have judged that the woman's life or health might be affected by the continuation of the pregnancy. These abortions would be paid for by Medicare.

1973 – Present day: Henry Morgentaler sets up an illegal abortuary in Montreal. Although he is charged, eventually the provincial government backs off. Morgentaler continues to push for abortions and abortion clinics throughout Canada. He then begins to agitate for government funding of abortions.

1975 – 1988: Joe Borowski, former NDP Minister of Highways in Manitoba, launches a court case to declare the 1969 amendments to the criminal code invalid. This pro-life hero dies in 1996.

1988: On January 28, the Supreme Court of Canada, in a split decision, strikes down Section 251 of the criminal code. It is deemed unconstitutional because access to a Therapeutic Abortion Committee cannot be provided equally across the country. The Supreme Court throws the abortion conundrum back into the lap of the federal government, telling them to come up with a better law. The Borowski and Morgentaler cases are both dropped. 1989 – Present day: Barbara Dodd and Chantal Daigle go to court for abortions after their boyfriends get injunctions preventing their abortions. Fathers lose out as Supreme Court gives Daigle the permission she seeks. 1989 – Present day: A new abortion law, Bill C43, retaining abortion as a criminal offence but permitting it on very broad grounds, passes the House of Commons and heads for the Senate. In 1991 it is defeated in a tie vote leaving Canada with no abortion law at all. 1991 – Present day: Sullivan and Lemay, both midwives, were not found negligent in causing the death of a child whose mother they were attending. The Supreme Court ruled that a child in the process of being born was not a "person" even though the head was outside the mother's body. This decision removes the child's legal rights until/unless he or she has completely emerged from the birth canal. 1995 – Present day: Bubble Zones around abortion facilities and hospitals are used to keep Right to Life supporters from counseling, leafleting or attempting to educate or dissuade people from performing or acquiring abortions.