

The Dread Teenage Roberts

Please Don't Try This at Home



STEPHEN WAGNER'S MONTHLY UPDATE

AUGUST 1, 2011



Dear Friend,

Three days ago I had to go in to have a tooth examined. There was a constant, dull ache on the left side of my mouth, and occasional shooting pains had become frequent. As I waited in the dental chair and surveyed the pictures on the wall, I felt unsettled.

After a few minutes a young man in a T-shirt and jeans slid into the room. He couldn't have been older than twenty-two. I saw the name "Roberts" embroidered on his white lab coat as he pulled it over his shoulders. I dutifully opened my mouth. He took one look and said, "It looks like we'll have to pull this tooth here." I was startled. He was pointing to a canine on the side of my mouth opposite the pain. This visit was going to be a lot worse than I had expected.

He brought his tray of tools closer and I turned my head to see what he was doing. I looked frightfully at a pair of dirty pliers. It looked like they were borrowed from the mechanic next door to the medical building.

"Aren't you going to give me some anesthetic?" I asked. He didn't hesitate. "I'm using the newest techniques. Experts have found recently that giving the anesthetic *after* the extraction is most effective and impactful." I cringed, edging to the other side of the chair. My shoulders were rigid, my face ablaze with fear.

"Oh, don't worry," he said. This won't hurt...much." And he gripped my right canine and began yanking with firm determination. My eyes bugged out of my head. He kept yanking without letting go. My scream was muffled by the jumble of fingers he had in various parts of my mouth. He tried to calm me with some mumbling about "Who needs dental school when you can *just do it* – like Nike." As I began to black out, he was singing a line from "I Am Sixteen, Going on Seventeen." Then he said, "Can somebody get me a Bunsen burner to cauterize this wound?" I went unconscious.

When I woke up, I decided to write this newsletter. (Yes, you've been had.) There's a reason none of us would ever willingly sit through this sort of a session with a teenage "Doctor" Roberts who never got a degree from dental school. If we needed a tooth pulled, all of us would instead go to an oral surgeon like my friend Rich Poupard. He has the appropriate degree from a trustworthy dental school and has the certification from the appropriate board of dentistry which both oversees his continuing education and monitors his practice.

Even if the dread teenage Roberts had good intentions when he picked up the pliers, and even if he had other skills (say, Facebook picture clicking), we wouldn't stick around. In the same way, the fact that Dr. Poupard also happens to be a thoughtful pro-life advocate who blogs for the Life Training Institute (www.prolifetraining.com) wouldn't be the deciding factor for selecting him and rejecting "Doctor" Roberts. Dr. Poupard's certification in oral surgery would be key.

Tragically, though, many pro-life advocates don't treat abortion conversations with the same seriousness. Some assume a few clicks on the Internet are enough to be "informed" – they start sharing "facts" and "truth." They mean well, but sometimes their sloppy advocacy only helps to harden hearts. Sometimes they pass on what they "know" to other pro-life advocates...training them to be poor ambassadors. Each of these pro-life "teachers" is a "Dread Teenage Roberts" doing damage to those discussing abortion.

Who would ever think to get certified in dialogue? Is such a thing available? Now, it is. The *JFA Trainer Certification Program* reflects our belief that teaching people to create dialogue is a skill that can be studied, practiced, critiqued, and mastered. Through the program, pro-life advocates can apply themselves to a course of study that's similar to academic teacher training programs. Participants in JFA Certification, though, are mastering the knowledge and skills necessary to create good dialogue and to teach others to do the same.



JUSTICE FOR ALL TRAINS THOUSANDS TO MAKE ABORTION UNTHINKABLE FOR MILLIONS, ONE PERSON AT A TIME.

WEB: WWW.JFAWEB.ORG

STEVE'S UPDATES: WWW.HBMM.NET

CONTACT STEVE: 310-686-4409

This is just what the (real) doctor ordered for the more conscientious pro-life advocate who is so concerned about quality that without a program like this (a “degree”) he or she wouldn’t dare teach someone else. While the program includes short reading and writing assignments, the bulk of the time is spent in one-to-one mentoring, small group workshops, and campus outreach. That’s my kind of education! (The program is by invitation only. If you’re interested, we’d love to consider you. [Contact me for details.](#))

Right now, nine of our mentors are putting their finishing touches on their piece of our summer 2011 goal: Certify eight people to teach the entire *Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue* seminar. Staff trainer Matt McKinley has been a big help in assisting them. In the coming months, I’ll introduce members of that core team. They’re taking on the duties I’ve been shouldering for years with JFA! (See the spotlight on Claire Rice at right. →)

These trainers are the people in whom you’ve been helping me invest over the past months, and in some cases, years. You haven’t just touched *their* lives. As you’ll see, you’ve touched hundreds of lives *through* each of them. And that’s just the beginning. Each of them will impact hundreds more in the coming year.

With Thanks for Your Partnership,

Stephen

Ministry & Family Updates

- Rebecca Haschke, Jon Wagner, and I trained a group of 44 students at Louisiana Right to Life’s *Joshua Leadership Institute* in Baton Rouge, LA, on **June 27-28**. During our Poll Table & Survey Outreach at Louisiana State University on Day 2, these 44 students administered 178 surveys! (Results will be posted soon at www.hbmm.net.)
- On **July 5**, I discussed the topic “Should We Be Friends with Pro-Choice People?” on Life Report w/ Josh Brahm & Liz Goddard. (www.prolifepodcast.net - not yet posted)
- Our staff will present the *Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue* seminar in Wichita, KS, **August 28**. For details, see the JFA Event Calendar: www.jfaweb.org/Calendar.html
- Along with the Certification project I’ve mentioned above, I have three major projects I’m working on right now: (1) a new kiosk design for creating dialogue [Completion target: **August 28**], (2) revisions to our *Interactive Guide* and training content [Completion target: **August 10**], and (3) my support raising [My support is currently at 73%].
- Baby Wagner #3 (!) is expected to show his or her face sometime in **early September!** Please pray for Rebeccah, the kids, and I, as we prepare to meet and care for this precious little one.

August JFA Trainer Spotlight: Claire Rice

JFA Mentor and Field Intern in Colorado



Claire mentors Bracken Christian High School Students at a UTSA Outreach

Note: Twenty-year-old Claire Rice is now certified to teach all of the sections in JFA’s ADD Seminar. To find out more about Claire, see www.JFaweb.org/Meet_the_Mentors.html.

“The JFA certification program has been one of the most challenging, yet exciting, things I have ever done. It stretched my abilities to their limits, and helped grow other gifts that I didn’t know I had. Learning to research, speak, teach, and mentor all at once in less than one year taught me how to move from being extremely nervous about speaking to a group of three people to confident about speaking to crowds as large as 400.” – Claire Rice



Claire gives a chapel presentation to 400 students at Faith Christian Academy in Arvada, CO