

New voices in the Silent No More Campaign

By Leslie Palma-Simoncek

Director of Communications, Silent No More Awareness Campaign

Abortion is like an earthquake whose violent shockwaves unsettle the earth for hundreds of miles around. The loss of one child to abortion impacts everyone involved; the mother and father, the grandparents, the siblings, family and friends, even the abortion clinic workers and abortionists themselves.

To acknowledge and begin to repair the damage that abortion has sent rippling through our society, the Silent No More Awareness Campaign launched a new initiative at the March for Life in Washington, D.C. and the Walk for Life in San Francisco.

Called Healing the Shockwaves of Abortion, the new initiative seeks to give a voice to all those who have been hurt, all those who regret the abortion they took part in, and all those who mourn the loss of each innocent child.



At a press conference at the National Press Club in early January to explain the new initiative, Georgette Forney, co-founder of Silent No More, talked about the abortion she had at the age of 16.

"It doesn't happen in this little room and you walk away and it's all over. It's not like having a tooth pulled and you go back to work and it's no big deal," she said. "It is a trauma. It's life-changing, and not only for the woman herself, but for people around her."



In Washington, D.C., during the March for Life Youth Rally, and the next day at the March itself, mother and daughter Brice and Zoe Griffin spoke of the day that Brice, a committed pro-life activist, told her four children she had an abortion before she met their father. Though she was stunned, Zoe said her own pro-life work had gained a new focus:

“I want to be able to say I avenged my big brother by abolishing abortion,” she said, “and I am confident that I am part of the generation that will do that.”



At the National Memorial for the Pre-born and Their Mothers and Fathers at Constitution Hall on the morning of the March, 17-year-old Daniel Rosa spoke of his oldest brother, one he never had the opportunity to meet.

“I am testifying for those who are children of post-abortive fathers,” Daniel said in a speech he would repeat later at the Silent No More gathering in front of the Supreme Court. “We do

not march to fight against a law written on paper. Instead, we march in support of the law written upon our hearts.”



At the Silent No More gathering, as Andrea Pearson told of her own abortion regret, her daughter Madeline stood by her side, holding a sign that read “I Mourn My Lost Sibling.”

Nick Kraft and his mother Jennifer both spoke at the gathering. Jennifer told of a lifetime of challenges that pushed her to choose abortion, twice, and Nick spoke of how his trip from North Dakota to the March for Life had been given new meaning when he found out about his mother’s abortions.

“I was no longer going to D.C. for the trip but because I had people at home and in my family who I had to fight for,” he said. “Not just my mom but the brother and sister I lost. This is the first time my mom and I are going public with this news. We feel secure that you are the right people to share this with.”



At the Walk for Life in San Francisco, Julia Holcomb talked about the shockwaves that reverberated through her family when Aerosmith singer Steven Tyler wrote in one of his books about the abortion she had at his insistence in 1975, when she was his teenage fiancé and legal ward.

After the abortion, Julia's married, became a Catholic and is raising seven children. None of them could believe that the woman Tyler wrote about with such callousness was the devout and loving mother.

"The Shockwaves touched my family, and I had to become Silent No More in my living room," she said.



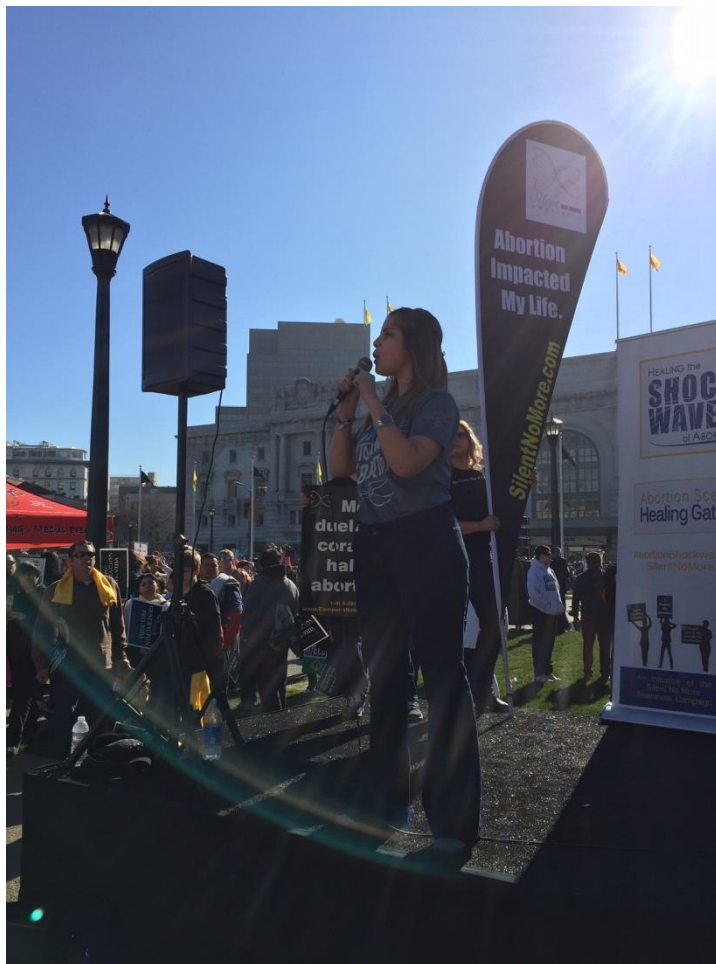
Grandparents, too, are impacted by abortion, even if they were unaware at first that they had lost a grandchild. Speaking about Kelly, one of her three daughters, Silent No More Co-Founder Janet Morana said she had lost two grandchildren, and didn't know about the first until after the second was lost to a miscarriage after an incomplete abortion.

Addressing other pro-lifers, she said: We have to not be afraid to talk about this among ourselves. I'm telling you now that if you know someone who is a grandparent who lost a grandchild to abortion, that we need healing, too. Know that hope and healing is available. Know that it's OK to talk about it and it's OK that you're pro-life and that there was a mistake in your family. And I'm going to be, from this point forward, Silent No More about losing my grandchildren to abortion."



Former Planned Parenthood clinic worker Catherine Adair broke her heart all over again as she spoke of the callousness of clinic workers, who called the remains of aborted babies “pieces of children.”

“The shockwaves of every abortion I took part in reached into my heart and soul, and there are many people like me who have worked in the abortion industry and have been deeply wounded,” she said. “Some of them have made it out and some are still working, burying their feelings the way I did. But I know that healing is possible, and I will be silent no more about the damage abortion causes. “



Patricia Sandoval worked for Planned Parenthood in Los Angeles following her three abortions. She spoke of her experiences during the Walk for Life, describing how it was her job – even as a new employee with minimal training – she had to sift through the baby’s parts to ensure each abortion could be labeled “complete.”

While examining the parts, she could clearly see the baby’s knuckles, the hair on its legs, and the baby’s eyebrows and eye lashes. “I could see the baby,” she said. She didn’t last long at Planned Parenthood; the emotional trauma was too much to bear.



Dr. Anthony Levatino performed 1,200 first and second-trimester abortions in his medical career before deciding never to perform another. Although he has been pro-life for decades, and serves a medical advisor for Priests for Life, this year was the first time he marched with the women and men of Silent No More, holding a sign that was hard to miss even in the sea of signs floating above Constitution Avenue: “I Regret Performing Abortions.”

Dr. Levatino’s testimony was heartbreaking. He talked of “throwing away” nine or 10 babies a week while he and his wife struggled with infertility and could not find a baby to adopt. Then he told of the miracle that brought them their adopted daughter, Heather, and the son they conceived just a month later. With his family intact, he quieted his qualms about abortion. But when 5-year-old Heather was killed in a car accident, he found he could no longer silence the voice inside that told him abortion is wrong.

“As an abortionist, I was at the epicenter of the earthquake but since I stopped doing abortions and became involved with pro-life efforts, I can clearly see how abortion affects everyone connected with the child who dies,” Dr. Levatino said. “I regret performing abortions and will never perform another one again.”



The message that hope and healing are available to anyone who asks was underscored by the words of Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, who opened the Silent No More gathering with words of encouragement: "I am glad to be here in the name of Pope Francis, representing him and his mercy, the mercy of God to each one of you who are taking part in this March for Life. I want to share with you the joy that God has put into our hearts, because we love Him and we want to share with you the mercy He's given to each one of us, especially those who ask for mercy. Pope Francis said that we should ask for mercy."

Let us pray together the prayer that our Lord taught us and in his name in the name of Pope Francis. May God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be on you all forever."