

# THE ERIE ECHO

*"a voice for life"*

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## Pro-Life Breakfast 2025

Please accept this invitation to People for Life's 47th Annual Pro-Life Breakfast. Lovers of life will gather by the hundreds on Saturday, January 18 for a morning of education, inspiration, and comradery at Erie's Bayfront Convention Center. The Grand Ballroom doors will open at 8 o'clock. The program will begin at nine.

Our Special Guest Speaker will be 21-year-old Kaylee Stockton, a young woman whose life was abruptly rearranged by an unplanned pregnancy at age 18. It happened during Kaylee's first year of college. Her world became clouded with uncertainty, confusion and worries. Courage, tenacity, and faith prevailed, however, and today Kaylee is a devoted single parent and an uncompromising pro-life firebrand. Read more about Kaylee Stockton on page four.

We will hear from two other pro-life students, too. Gannon Students for Life

President Joe Preston will share an update about his group's latest endeavors. Titusville Area High School senior Madeline Johnson will present her award-winning, seven-minute speech on pro-life responses to adverse prenatal diagnoses. Madeline competed in our High School Oratory Contest last April and went on to win the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation Speech Contest. From there she moved up to the National Right to Life Oratory Contest, held last June in Alexandria, Virginia, where she and her mom also attended the two-day NRL Conference.

The musical Hoffman family, James, Annice, Michael (16), & Elsa (14) will perform as a follow-up to their very impressive debut at our Pro-Life Dinner this past October.

Complimentary child care will be provided during the speaking portion of the program.

The program is still very much a work in progress. For the latest news about special guests and program refinements, visit [peopleforlife.org/january2025](http://peopleforlife.org/january2025) and follow [facebook.com/prolifebreakfast](https://facebook.com/prolifebreakfast).

Tickets, on sale now, are \$28 for teens and adults and \$22 for ages 3-12. Younger children are welcome to attend free of charge. There are three ways to get your tickets: mail your payment to People for Life; P.O. Box 1126, Erie, PA 16512, with a name for each ticket if possible; drop by our headquarters at 1625 W. 26th Street in Erie; or register online at [peopleforlife.org/january2025](http://peopleforlife.org/january2025). Your tickets will arrive in the mail, unless you register at the office. Tables for groups of eight or more will be marked "reserved." Please include the group's name when requesting tickets. The last day to register is January 10. But space will be limited, so it is best to act as soon as possible.

## Three Financial Challenges for 2025

These have been financially challenging times for many of us. First came the covid pandemic, then the worst round of inflation that some of us have seen in our adult lifetimes.

Some of People for Life's expenses have risen very conspicuously. For example, the cost of a bus to the Washington, DC March for Life actually doubled from \$2,500 in 2014 to \$5,000 for 2025.

Through it all, People for Life's faithful friends have kept us afloat. We have not only been keeping our heads above water but expanding our projects, growing our network of pro-life boots on the ground, and making our presence felt in new and creative ways all across northwestern Pennsylvania.

With confidence in the dedication and generosity of the Erie-area pro-life community, we have three financial needs to share. One is immediate, one is about six months distant, and one will determine the stability and effectiveness of People for Life for the long-term.

If you would be willing to help with any one of these, please let us hear from you as soon as possible.

### March for Life Bus Trip

Despite the rising cost of bus charters, we have every intention of continuing our tradition of sending buses to Washington, DC for the annual March for Life. Sponsors coming forward to help deserving individuals and families make the trip are likewise a part of that tradition. At \$90 a seat, help is obviously needed like never before. Please consider supporting our 52nd March for Life Bus Trip with a sponsorship donation of any amount.

### Erie March for Life

Rising costs are also plaguing the Erie March for Life, which will be held this spring on Saturday, May 3, 2025, a week before Mother's Day. Starting in 2025, due to tighter budgeting by the City of Erie, we will be expected to pay the full cost of the police officers who direct traffic and provide security for the March. That expense is approximately \$2,000. We can either pay the bill, or retreat from the public square after marching in downtown Erie for the past 47 years. But the public square is exactly where the pro-life cause needs to be, now more than

ever. If you would like to earmark your next donation to support the Erie March for Life, that is exactly where it will be applied. Let's also do everything we can to maximize participation in our hometown March for Life and get the most we can out of our investment.

### Our Base of Operations

Finally, we want you to know about an even more serious challenge that has developed. Earlier this year, we learned that our landlord had decided to sell the office unit People for Life has been renting since 1990.

One option for us would be to wait and see if a new owner would ask us to move out or allow us to stay. If we stayed, a significant rent increase would be very likely. At \$7500 per year and with no rent increase in three years, we have been paying well below the average rate for a comparable space.

Yes, we could wait and see, keeping our fingers crossed, and move out if and when it became necessary. That seemed reasonable until we realized just how difficult it would be to find an affordably-sized (easy to heat and cool) office unit with even half of the

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# Attention: Students and Teachers

The People for Life Education Fund will host essay and oratory contests with cash prizes this spring. Both contests will have two age brackets. Prizes of \$150, \$75, and \$50 will be awarded to the top three winners in each bracket. Contestants may choose any topic related to abortion, infanticide, assisted suicide, euthanasia, or embryo-destructive medical procedures. They may address the harsh and tragic realities of any of these practices or cover a more upbeat topic such as fetal development, motherhood, adoption, pregnancy support centers, or pro-life activism. These are only a few of the possibilities. People for Life is happy to help any student select a topic that will be most advantageous for him or her.

## H.S. Oratory Contest

The Oratory Contest is open to all high school students regardless of where they live, as long as they are able to be present for the competition, which will be held on April 12 at the Blasco Memorial Library in Erie. The upper age bracket will be for juniors and seniors, the lower bracket for freshmen and sophomores. The speeches, 5-7 minutes in length, will be scored and constructively

critiqued by a panel of three judges. Originality, depth of research, accuracy, careful reasoning, and delivery style are important ingredients of a prize-winning speech.

One of our 2024 participants, Madeline Johnson, went on to win the statewide contest. She was awarded an expenses-paid trip to the National Right to Life Oratory Contest in Alexandria, Virginia where she competed once again this past June. Madeline will re-present her award-winning speech at People for Life's annual Pro-Life Breakfast on January 18.

Oratory contestants should register in advance by emailing their name, age, grade, school, address, and phone number to office@peopleforlife.org. They may also enter the statewide Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation Speech Contest by submitting a video of their speech to the Federation by April 18. People for Life will record speeches during our contest for any student who would like a video to send to the Federation.

## Student Essay Contest

The People for Life Essay Contest is open to students in: Erie, Crawford, Warren, Mercer,

Venango, Ashtabula, and Chautauqua counties. The upper age bracket includes students in grades 10-12. The lower bracket is for students in grades 7-9. Word limits are 500 for grades 7-9 and 750 for grades 10-12. The essays will be judged according to most of the same criteria as the Oratory Contest. Spelling and the general technicalities of good writing are also factored in.

The submission deadline is April 29, 2025. Essays should be sent to office@peopleforlife.org. They can be included in the body of the email or as an attachment in Microsoft Word or PDF format. Essays may also be mailed to People for Life Education Fund; P.O. Box 1126; Erie, PA 16512, as long as they are received by April 29. The student's name, address, phone number, age, grade, and school must be included.

The same essay may be entered in the Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation contest, in which case the essay must be submitted by that contest's earlier, March 1 deadline.

If you are a teacher, please encourage your students to participate in these very worthwhile exercises.

## Life Run 2024

Our 11th Annual Life Run 5K/10K & Fun Walk was blessed (for a change!) with beautiful fall weather on Saturday morning, October 11. And many wonderful people helped us make the most of it, starting with our 28 business owners and professionals who sponsored Life Run and advertised on the race t-shirts. They are too many to mention here, but please check them out at [tinyurl.com/2024LifeRunSponsors](http://tinyurl.com/2024LifeRunSponsors). Please express your appreciation to some of them if or when you have an opportunity. Our 78 runners and walkers were the stars of the show, of course, from the swiftest to the most, well, leisurely participants. We thank each and every one of them. Board member Karli Van Der Volgen served once again as race director. Former Erie County Council Chairman Brian Shank donated his DJ services and helped Emcee the event. Harborcreek and North East townships authorized the use of their roads, and the event was based at Slade Road Park with the permission of Harborcreek Township. Timing professional Jim Lang kept the competition perfectly organized and documented. Bill Gross, an Erie-area master winemaker, donated 12 bottles of hand-crafted wine for door prizes. (Underage winners received Burch Farms apple cider.) Tim Burch and Burch Farms Country Market once again provided free wine tasting

after the event. Last but not least, special thanks go out to each of our several dozen Life Run volunteers, including the group of really nice young people from Cathedral Prep. Photos at: [facebook.com/liferunerie](https://facebook.com/liferunerie).

## Meeting Moved to April 7

The next People for Life general meeting will be held on Monday, April 7 rather than the usual third Monday of the month, which falls this year on the day after Easter. We will present a video of the speech given by special guest speaker Alex Schadenberg at our Pro-Life Dinner, this past October 25. Schadenberg's topic was the growing worldwide menace of euthanasia and assisted suicide. To accommodate a larger than usual attendance, the meeting might be moved from People for Life headquarters to the Blasco Library. A final decision about the location

will be announced in an Email Update and on peopleforlife.org.

## Pro-Life Dinner 2024

People for Life held a new social and educational event, a Pro-Life Dinner, at the Ambassador Banquet & Conference Center on October 25. This addition to our schedule apparently caught many people by surprise, and the busy election season was probably partly to blame. We were, nevertheless honored to host 165 people and to present a very interesting and entertaining special guest speaker, Alex Schadenberg, Executive Director of the Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, based in London, Ontario.

We were also honored to have pro-life U.S. Representative Mike Kelly drop by and visit with our guests while they were arriving. He also took time to share a few remarks as the event got underway, before moving on to his next engagement that evening.

Stress levels were perhaps running a little higher than usual, this being our first dinner experience. But thanks to great teamwork by many good people, it was an enjoyable evening, and a 2nd Annual Pro-Life Dinner is already on the slate for October 24, 2025. Music was provided compliments of our great teenage volunteer Michael Hoffman along with his entire family. Grise Audio-Visual provided top-notch service

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2025 PRO-LIFE CALENDAR 2025	
Jan. 18	Pro-Life Breakfast, 9 a.m. – Bayfront Convention Center
Jan. 23	DC March for Life Bus Trip leaves Erie at 11 p.m.
Jan. 24	March for Life – Washinton, DC
Jan. 25	DC March for Life Bus Trip returns to Erie about 1:30 a.m.
March 1	PA Pro-Life Federation Essay Contest Entries Due
April 12	High School Oratory Contest – Blasco Library, Erie
April 7	General Meeting, 6:30 p.m. – Blasco Library (tentative)
April 18	PA Pro-Life Federation Speech Contest Entries Due
April 23	Pennsylvania Primary Election
April 28	Student Essay Contest Entries Due
May 3	Erie March for Life – Perry Square
May 19	Annual Election Meeting, 6:30 p.m. – People for Life H.Q.
June 20-21	National Right to Life Conference – Overland Park, KS
Sept. 22	Pennsylvania March for Life Bus Trip
Oct. 11	12th Annual Life Run 5K/10K & Fun Walk
Oct. 24	2nd Annual Pro-Life Dinner – Ambassador Conference Ctr.

# FROM PAGE 1 Financial Challenges 2025

advantages we currently enjoy. We could always pack up and move, but to where? How easy would it be to find another highly-visible location on a major thoroughfare with: a large plate glass window perfect for displaying pro-life banners; up-to-the-doorstep parking; and ground-level access for routinely transferring materials such as large helium cylinders, tent frame piping, and hundreds of pounds of bulk mail? Indeed, finding another location that is so perfectly suited to our needs would be highly confidential to say the least.

After serious consideration and some

lengthy discussions, our board decided that People for Life should become the new owner, if possible. We made an offer, which has been accepted by the current owner. We are now working on the financing.

We hope to pull together an ample downpayment that will keep our monthly payments as manageable as possible, less, not more, than what we have been spending on rent. The savings will allow us to focus more resources directly on our mission and to enhance and expand our various pro-life programs.

A downpayment of \$25,000 to \$35,000 will position People for Life to continue moving forward and even gain some

additional momentum. Please consider a special donation to help turn this unforeseen challenge into a golden opportunity to better advance the pro-life cause right here in northwestern Pennsylvania.

Erie County is well-known as a bellwether for the entire country. As you are able, help us continue building a pro-life presence here at home that is up to the task of making the Erie area a beacon of hope and a force for the good of our entire nation.

Don't forget to follow us on social media: Facebook, Instagram, X and YouTube. To subscribe to People for Life Email Updates, send a request to [office@peopleforlife.org](mailto:office@peopleforlife.org).

## Memorials & Tributes

<i>Given by</i>	<i>In Memory of</i>	<i>Given by</i>	<i>In Memory of</i>		
Judy & Gary Hyde	All babies whose lives were taken	Scott & Paula Hilinski	Dolores Mankosky		
Lawrence F. Berdis	Johanna Berdis (wife)	Darleen & David Wilkinson	Donald & Jeannine Miller		
Margaret Mitchell	Fran Birchard	Nancy L. Miller	Glenn G. Miller		
Susan Birkmire	Francis Birchard	Judith Mistretta	Mr. Martin J. Mistretta		
Cathy S. Truden	Tara J. Bisbee	Fr. Jerry S. Priscaro	Mrs. Agnes Ruza Priscaro		
Bernadette & Sean Carroll	John Campbell	Kristin Stravinsky	Mr. & Mrs. Robert J. Terrill		
Bernadette & Sean Carroll	Patrick Campbell	Lori Krasnesky	Joseph F. Wagner		
Bernadette & Sean Carroll	Marty & Denise	Mr. & Mrs. Tom Widomski & Family	Stanley Widomski		
Dennis & Joanne Deiner	Eleanor & Edward Chimenti, Sr.	<i>Given by</i>	<i>In Honor of</i>		
Dennis & Joanne Deiner	Deiner Family Members				
Mr. John K. Fitzgerald	Ray & Peg Fitzgerald				
Amy Roach	Ray & Peg Fitzgerald				
Lee & Mary Simmons	Ray & Peg Fitzgerald				
Mrs. Gerrie Gromacki	Tom Gromacki				
Diane & Bill Stumpf	Robert Haibach				
Lee & Mary Simmons	Tom Kalkhof				
				Ronald Dombkowski	Helen Dombkowski
				Ronald Dombkowski	Xavier Dombkowski
		Sarah A. White	GU Students for Life Alumni		
		Mary Alice DiTullio	Brinley Kaliszewski		
		Judy Krasnesky	Thomas F. Lohse		
		Patty Puline	Virginia Torrelli		

### JOIN PEOPLE FOR LIFE OR DONATE

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Best Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile? Yes  | No  Other Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile? Yes  | No  Do not text   
 AFFILIATED WITH (church, club, organization, business, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_ WORK/PROFESSION \_\_\_\_\_

1. DONATION: \$1,000  \$500  \$250  \$100  \$50  \$25  \$10  Other Amount \_\_\_\_\_

2. MEMBERSHIP DUES (one year): Individual \$10  Family \$20  Senior Citizen /Student \$5  New  Renewal

3. TRIBUTE DONATION AMOUNT \_\_\_\_\_ In Memory of  or In Honor of

4. TOTAL ENCLOSED \_\_\_\_\_

*Donations may also be made using the DONATE button on [www.peopleforlife.org](http://www.peopleforlife.org) or by calling-in your credit card information.*

- VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**
- Educational Booths
  - Phone Calling
  - Office Staff
  - Newsletter Mailing
  - Liaison to Another Organization
  - Public Demonstrations
  - Pro-Life Breakfast Help
  - Life Run Help
  - March for Life Bus Trip Help
  - Erie March for Life Help
  - Call me when you need a hand.
  - Special skill? Tell us!

Please make your check payable to:  
**PEOPLE FOR LIFE, INC.**  
 P.O. Box 1126  
 Erie, PA 16512

Contributions or gifts to People for Life, Inc. are not tax deductible.  
 The official registration and financial information of People for Life, Inc. may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999.  
 Registration does not imply endorsement.

**PEOPLE FOR LIFE**  
[www.PeopleforLife.org](http://www.PeopleforLife.org)

phone (814) 882-1333  
 phone / fax (814) 459-1333  
[office@peopleforlife.org](mailto:office@peopleforlife.org)  
[www.facebook.com/PeopleforLife](http://www.facebook.com/PeopleforLife)

**Mailing Address**  
 P.O. Box 1126  
 Erie, PA 16512

**— Office Location —**  
 1625 W. 26th St.; Erie, PA  
 Usually open 10 to 5 weekdays.  
 Call for evening and Saturday hours.

## March for Life Bus Trip

People for Life has a bus reserved to take us to Washington, DC for the 52nd March for Life. Here are three ways you can help us fill it up and perhaps make it two buses or more.

First, reserve your seat(s) today! Register online or send your payment to People for Life; P.O. Box 1126; Erie, PA 16512. Seats are \$90 each. This amount, if all seats are filled, will be just enough to allow us to recover the cost of the bus charter.

Second, be a bus sponsor and help defray the cost of the trip for a deserving student or family on a tight budget. A donation of \$90

will go a long way, completely covering the cost of a seat for one individual, allowing two people to get their seats at half-price, or giving three people a 30% discount.

Third, please help us promote the Bus Trip by downloading and displaying our March for Life Bus Trip posters, by inviting others to march with you, and by sharing information about the March for Life and the Bus Trip with your church and other organizations that you are involved with.

Learn more about our 52nd Annual Bus Trip and the March for Life at [peopleforlife/january2025](https://peopleforlife.com/january2025) and [facebook.com/marchforlifebustrip](https://facebook.com/marchforlifebustrip).

## FROM PAGE 2 Pro-Life Dinner

at an unbeatable price. The staff of the Ambassador could not have been more helpful. Extra credit goes to Mary Drumm for her spectacular recruiting effort on very short notice as the registration deadline was fast approaching.

Let's not let the Second Annual Pro-Life Dinner catch us by surprise. Go ahead and mark October 24 on that new 2025 calendar, and on all your mobile devices, too!

***A Very Merry Christmas and  
Happy New Year to Everyone!***

## Pro-Life Breakfast Speaker: Kaylee Stockton

Come to the 47th Annual Pro-Life Breakfast this January and be inspired by our young Special Guest Speaker, Kaylee Stockton. At 16, she survived a high school shooting in which two students were killed and three



**Kaylee Stockton & Colton**

injured. Pregnant at 18, she was forced to make a decision about a different kind of deadly violence, the violence of abortion.

She resisted intense pressure to get an abortion and is now a single mom, a nursing student, and a tireless pro-life activist who frequently works with Students for Life of

America. A native of Santa Clarita, California, Kaylee currently attends Grand Canyon University in Arizona.

When Kaylee became pregnant during her first year at college, she thought, "My life is over." A recent high school graduate, she had no job and "no clue how I could raise a child." Her deepest inclinations were to give birth and be a good mother. Mustering up a lot of strength and courage, she said no to abortion.

Her pregnancy turned out to be a test of strength and courage every step of the way:

"As my pregnancy continued, I felt lonelier," explains Kaylee. "Every appointment, I saw women surrounded by their support systems. I was always alone. The closer I got to childbirth, the more I worried that I may have to give birth surrounded by strangers. My stress and emotional duress led to pregnancy complications. At 22 weeks, I felt

buried in doubts and looked into abortion. In Arizona at that time, abortion was legal up to 24 weeks gestation. I genuinely considered it. I even scheduled an appointment.

"I knew my baby was alive, human, and it would be wrong to kill him. I also knew I was strong enough to do this. I decided I wouldn't

be bullied into doubt any longer. I cut off the people who poisoned my mind saying I might be better off not raising my child and less serious complications followed that decision.

"On June 17, 2022, I gave birth to a healthy baby boy. Hearing his cry sent me into tears, and for the first time since being pregnant, they were happy tears. He is the most precious baby and all that now mattered was him."

Kaylee is certainly a pro-life young woman who courageously walks the walk as well as courageously talks the talk. Her story and her passion for the pro-life cause are being noticed. In 2003, she was profiled on [studentsforlife.org](https://studentsforlife.org) where she was described as "an SFL Action State Captain who defied the culture." Also in 2003, Kaylee was quoted in *The Georgia Bulletin*, a publication of the Catholic Archdiocese of Atlanta: "My biggest challenge being a teen mom was everyone telling me to get an abortion." She was featured in a February 5, 2024 report by *The Daily Signal* on the National Pro-Life Summit, a day-long conference held each year in Washington, DC. It is organized by Students for Life and held the day after the DC March for Life. Kaylee also appears in a brief but very effective interview recorded by Students for Life at the 2024 March for Life. Log onto Facebook and find it using [tinyurl.com/MFLKaylee](https://tinyurl.com/MFLKaylee).