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Pennsylvanians for Human Life **Do You Need Help Healing From An Abortion?** By Lou Baldwin

Pennsylvanians for Human Life (PHL) has had many different speakers at its annual banquets, including pro-life legislators, pro-life workers and reformed abortionists. But its roster of speakers has never included a woman who has had an abortion. Not until the PHL's Feb. 9th banquet.

The PHL, which promotes a pro-life message through youth education, asked Catholic Donna Huttenlock to speak at a banquet held at the Springfield Country Club.

"The five words that have freed me and empowered me to stand before you today are 'Neither do I condemn you'", she told the approximately 500 people gathered for the banquet.

It took many years for Huttenlock to come to terms with her abortion. As a suburban Catholic high school junior deeply in love and sexually active, she suddenly found herself pregnant. "I was part of the 'it can't happen to me' culture", she said. Despite the surprise, Huttenlock was actually happy about her pregnancy. She tried to imagine her baby, thought of names and presumed her boyfriend felt her excitement. "It would be the cement that would bind us together for life", she said.

However, while her boyfriend professed his love, he told Huttenlock she wasn't really carrying a baby yet, and they couldn't have a baby at this point in their lives. The boy borrowed money to pay for an abortion, and brought her to a Philadelphia clinic.

"I cried when I climbed on the table that day", Huttenlock said. "I was scared, desperate, and alone. No one asked if I wanted to change my mind. Without anesthesia, they sucked my baby out of me, limb from limb.

“When I left, I was a different person than when I walked in. More than my baby died that day. All the good within me, my dreams and hopes, died too”.

Predictably, she and her boyfriend broke up within a few months. She gave up plans for college and drifted in and out of loveless relationships.

Twenty years passed, her life achieved outward normalcy – she married and became a mother to two children – but was never whole within. She remained Catholic but felt disconnected from her Church.

“I was not pro-choice”, she said. “How could I be when I hurt so badly? And how could I be pro-life, when my child was dead at my own hands?”

Finally she came across a pamphlet in church on post-abortion syndrome and realized everything in it applied to her. After attending a retreat for women who had undergone abortions, she began the healing process.

Since that time, she has labored to bring the story of post-abortion syndrome to light. She speaks at Chastity Day programs for teens, has appeared in a film about her experience and works with others who are going through post-abortion trauma.

“Each person’s story (with abortion) is as unique as the life that it takes”, she said. “As a pro-life people, we must embrace the post-abortive woman. Remember those five simple, saving words, ‘Neither do I condemn you’”.

At the banquet, awards were presented to Joseph P. Aquilante and Barry J. Kirsch, pro-life educators at Bishop Shanahan and Archbishop Carroll high school respectively, and to Marianna Roan, a long-time PHL volunteer.

PHL president Terence K Heaney saluted all who attended the banquet, saying, “You are the foundation stones on which we stand every day in one of our presentations and we truly thank you. You, the dreamers, are the voices of future dreams and aspirations and because of your efforts we are going to realize those dreams”.



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