

HIKERS SHOW LOVE FOR LIFE

John Jonelis, May 2007

Hundreds of people of all ages and from all walks of life turned out at this summer's Hike for Life, a national annual event to demonstrate the rights of the unborn. Tri-County Pregnancy & Parenting Centers sponsors the Hike in Crystal Lake and Grayslake. They are celebrating their 20th year of ministry.



Marine Sgt John Culpepper , Brianna, and John Culpepper, with Hanna Joy Paine

Starting at Main Beach, most participants walked, some biked, mothers pushed strollers. Timmy Carol made the 3 ½ mile circuit in a motorized wheel chair.

“This is the hike that affirms that we believe children have a right to be born,” said Joe See, serving as crossing guard for the event.

Why did all these people give up their Saturday to hike? I asked hikers that one simple question.



Timmy Carol



Joe See

Karla Urias told a personal story.

“I got the pregnancy test from the Center and they told me the great news, that I was going to have my boy.”

Her son, Dylan McCartin, was hiking alongside her. It became clear that Dylan was alive because of that encounter, so I asked him straight out if that was true.

“Yeah,” he said with a winning smile. And was he glad to be alive? “Yes I am.”



Karla Urias and Dylan McCartin

Hanna Joy Paine told another story. “I have a friend who got pregnant. She needed support because her parents wanted her to get an abortion. She went to Tri-County and got a lot of help. She ended up keeping her baby and now has three kids. I think it’s great, that Tri-County is there for people who need them.”



Arielle Paine and Eduing Benitez

Arielle Paine told another side of the story.

“I believe strongly in what Tri-County is doing and the approach that they take, the love that they pour in—not just for the children, but also for the women. I think that’s really important, because there are a lot of scars left by abortion. They’re helping a lot of people.”

“Why are you hiking?” I asked.

“Life is very precious,” said Debora Wojaczynski.
“We need to keep those babies safe. They should be born.”

Karen Degner stated, “I believe that children should not be killed.”

Heather Whitfield told me, “I want babies to live.”

Colleen Till said, “It’s important for those precious babies.”

I asked Chris Wienke, director of the Crystal Lake Center, just what Tri-County does.

“We confirm pregnancies by giving free pregnancy tests. We do options counseling, which is talking about adoption, abortion, and single parenting. We also provide practical support for any woman in the community who is struggling with pregnancy or crisis pregnancy—even a married parent who is struggling financially—we provide resources for them. We do post-abortion counseling, because there are all different levels of sadness, grief, guilt, remorse, shame, and despair. Our services are confidential.”

Tri-County can be reached at 815-455-0965. They’re located in the Crystal Point office park in Crystal Lake and also in Grayslake.

These people gave up their Saturday to demonstrate their convictions for the Sanctity of Life. According to Jonathon Holub, “It’s a long route, but it’s worth it.” Marine Sgt. John Culpepper summed it up. “Pro life. Pro-life, period.”
