



Members of a new local pro-life teen group, which calls itself E.P.I.C., pray outside A Preferred Women's Health Center on Latrobe Drive in Charlotte June 7.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY
MOLLY RUSCIOLELLI

Pro-life group just for teens organizes in Charlotte

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CORRESPONDENT

CHARLOTTE — A new pro-life group has formed in Charlotte, this time started by teens for teens.

Molly Rusciolelli, an energetic 17-year-old member of St. Patrick Cathedral, led the effort among her friends several months ago and named the group E.P.I.C., which stands for "Each Person is Cherished."

"I thought it would be great to have a pro-life group for teens in Charlotte," Rusciolelli said, noting that most pro-life groups are geared towards adults, either parish-based Respect Life ministries or regional efforts such as the Helpers of God's Precious Infants and the 40 Days for Life campaigns.

What started as a call-out to her homeschool friends has turned into a dedicated group of about 20 teens who go monthly to pray in front of one of Charlotte's three abortion mills. Any local teen interested in the Church's local pro-life activities is encouraged to join, she noted.

E.P.I.C. members attend the 9 a.m. Saturday Mass at St. Gabriel Church, located at 3016 Providence Road, then go to

Want to go?

A YOUTH PRO-LIFE CONFERENCE open to all diocesan teens will be held July 11-12 at St. Patrick Cathedral in Charlotte. The conference runs 5:30-9:30 p.m. Friday and 8 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday. The cost is \$5 and includes a Friday night pizza dinner. On Saturday, conference goers will attend 8 a.m. Mass at St. Patrick Cathedral, then go to pray in front of A Preferred Women's Health Center on Latrobe Drive.

FOR DETAILS, email Molly Rusciolelli at mollymoose.mr@gmail.com.

Nationwide — 41 years after the legalization of abortion on demand in 1973 with the U.S. Supreme Court's decisions in *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* — teens and college-aged young people are becoming the driving force behind the pro-life movement.

This new generation of pro-lifers — which calls itself the "survivor generation" — sees the statistics that since 1973 more than 50

one of the Charlotte abortion mills to pray until about 11 a.m.

Rusciolelli's pro-life inspiration to start E.P.I.C. came from the example of her mother. "My mom did tons of pro-life work when she was in her teen years and in college," she said. Abortion is a "horrible reality and the only way to stop it is by doing something," she said. "How can I be sitting around when there are babies dying? I feel like I should be doing something."

"Prayer also comes with works," she added. "We need to help people come around to the truth."

She is convinced that when it comes to building a pro-life culture, young people have an important role to play. Like her mother, she didn't want to wait until she grows up to get involved.

"I feel that youth can make an impact. You don't need to be a learned person to understand the truth and know what God's will is," she said. "We don't need lots of knowledge to know what the truth is. Innocent kids know the truth even though they are still young – they know it because it's simple."

million babies have been aborted. That's one-in-three-to-four of their generation killed.

"Kids don't want to just sit around and play video games," Rusciolelli said. They want to make a difference, and they ask themselves, "What have we been doing about this? Next door, babies are dying."

E.P.I.C. is now planning a pro-life youth conference for all diocesan high school teens (aged 13-19) at St. Patrick Cathedral July 11-12. Speakers will include:

■ Bryan Kemper from Stand True Pro-Life Outreach, "Social Justice Begins in the Womb"

■ Dr. Martha Shuping, M.D. "Chastity: Preparing for the Future of Your Dreams"

■ Zoe Griffin, a St. Patrick Cathedral parishioner, "Abortion in Africa: Bringing Hope and Healing to the People of Ghana"

■ Judy Townsend of Be Not Afraid Ministry, "The New Kind Of Crisis Pregnancy: Poor Prenatal Diagnosis"

Said Rusciolelli, "We want the youth in our diocese to show the world what the plain truth is" so that we can put an end to abortion.

"We need to stop it."

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