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# Student Voices: Seeking Truth and Justice Through Pro-Life Activism

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## STUDENT VOICES

balance that goal with the moral burden of giving my energy to an administration that pushes against my core beliefs.

This change in administration has pushed me to open my mind to other methods of serving my community, in areas that I had originally overlooked. Before this election, I always saw the White House as the pinnacle of public service, so this election felt like the door to an avenue of meaningful public service had been slammed in my face. But I now realize there are so many other doors I've overlooked to be the change-maker President Obama spoke about. I've been pushed to reframe how I understand public service and my role within it. Understanding the call to service in an intensely partisan and divided country has challenged my perspectives on how to engage. Since November, I have expanded my vision of how I can best serve this country.

During my time at the White House, I found my voice and discovered the opportunity I hold in affecting and changing the lives of others through public service. While the last six months have been a rollercoaster, my faith in the true genius of the American democratic experience remains strong. Regardless of who sits in the White House, the empowering strength and significance of public service as a tool for good will never fade from my mind.

*Bethan Saunders is a 2017 graduate from the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University.*

## Seeking Truth and Justice Through Pro-Life Activism

By Amelia Irvine

"Is it hard to be pro-life at Georgetown?" the prospective student asked. Members of Georgetown Right to Life (GURL), Georgetown's pro-life student group, are often asked this type of question. Truthfully, it is not always easy to be pro-life at Georgetown, but much of the difficulty stems from long-standing tension between GURL and H\*yas for Choice (HFC), Georgetown's (unrecognized) pro-choice student group. Animosity between the two groups are perpetuated by those on both sides of the issue. As president of Georgetown RTL, I wanted to mitigate this tension however I could. Over the past seven months of my term, I have attempted to seek reconciliation, find common ground, confront the facts, and engage in dialogue.

The opportunity to seek reconciliation came early in the fall. Georgetown RTL wrote chalk messages in Red Square at Georgetown, only to find them scribbled over and vandalized the following morning.

Of course, the natural target for RTL members' resentment was H\*yas for Choice. Georgetown RTL Vice President, MyLan, and I decided to reach out to HFC's co-presidents to have a chat over coffee about the incident. MyLan and I started the conversation by offering apologies and seeking forgiveness for past grievances and problems between RTL and HFC. This act of seeking forgiveness formed the basis of our relationship with the HFC co-presidents.

After seeking reconciliation through forgiveness, we discussed possible areas for collaboration: pregnancy resources and increased access to feminine hygiene products for Georgetown undergraduates. Simply by discussing these issues, we found some common ground. Unfortunately, these discussions did not lead to any actual collaboration. However, RTL still sought to facilitate some sort of interaction between pro-choice and pro-life people around the issue of abortion through confronting the facts and engaging in dialogue.

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First, we decided to host a screening of HUSH, a new documentary with a pro-choice director who wanted to seek the truth about the health risks of abortion, because facts matter. This documentary intends to start a conversation on college campuses about abortion and how it affects women.

Second, we attempted to host a pro-choice/pro-life dialogue on campus between pro-life activist Stephanie Gray and a pro-choice activist. H\*yas for Choice declined to participate in our event because they felt it was not appropriate for them to “facilitate anti-choice speakers and dialogue.” However, GU College Democrats (GUCD) agreed to cosponsor and search for a pro-choice speaker. Disappointingly, GUCD was unable to find a speaker for the event.

I began my year as GURTL president optimistic about the possibility for true dialogue on campus about abortion, but I



have learned that reconciliation takes time and a lot of energy. We cannot hope to change the campus community in only a few months. Rather, pro-life leaders must build on the work of their predecessors and persist amid failures. In truth, life is too important an issue to abandon. The pur-

suit of truth and justice at Georgetown is not easy, but it is always worthwhile.

*Amelia Irvine, the president of Right to Life at Georgetown University, is a sophomore studying government and economics; she is from Phoenix, Arizona*

# Becoming “Us” in a Polarized Age

By Miranda Richard

**The brochures, the** info sessions, TV spots, and bookstore memorabilia all tout some variation of the same refrain: *men and women for others*. Prospective students write essays about their dedication to serving diverse communities, tell tales of transformative service trips, and outline their plans to join campus social justice clubs.

The Jesuit tradition is one of service above self, so logic follows that the students at Jesuit schools ought to be dedicated servants.

All this talk about service to others prompts the questions: What does it mean to serve? And who are these abstract “others?” And how, now, in this polarized political era?

When we speak of serving others, the word takes on a slightly more specific meaning. “Other” here means “that which is distinct from, different from, or opposite to oneself.” Through this lens, serving others not only means providing help to people beyond our own communities or social networks. It means extend-