

Abortion

By JACK MARCHEN
Examiner Staff Writer

The debate and discussion anti-abortionists were looking to stimulate yesterday was ripe outside Holy Cross Secondary School.

Twenty protesters with the group, Show The Truth, positioned themselves and their signs, some of which depicted aborted fetuses, along Clonsilla Avenue, where they could be seen by departing students in school buses.

Yesterday, the group demonstrated at several other area secondary schools.

Crestwood principal Rick Essex said because Crestwood and James Strath Public School share buses, elementary pupils were exposed to the protesters' graphic placards too.

Outside Holy Cross, about 15 students confronted two protesters, Chris and Melinda Selmys, who were there with their nine-and-a-half-month-old baby, Agnus. They were asked why they were displaying "rude" and "disgusting" signs and why they weren't instead demonstrating on behalf of "many children who are born into a world

'Surely, there are better ways of demonstrating without bringing pictures of dead babies to a school.'

Brandi Hyland, Grade 12 student of abuse and starvation."

Melinda Selmys replied she and others work on behalf of mistreated children, but yesterday their focus was on the unborn child. She argued a six-week-old fetus is "not a mass of tissue or cells," but a human being with a functioning heart and lungs.

Nearby, one female student was overheard arguing with friends the placards were disgusting, but they showed "exactly what an aborted fetus looks like."

Holy Cross principal Michael Nolan, who had alerted students and teachers of the impending demonstration, said "it will be interesting to hear from teachers (today)" as to whether the demonstration sparked any in-class discussion or debate.

Nolan said the abortion issue is part of the school's family life and

protesters target high schools

religious curriculum. He added the school's stance on the sanctity of human life and human dignity supports anti-abortion.

"We (the school) certainly support their issue," Nolan told The Examiner.

Melinda Selmys said the demonstration had an impact at Holy Cross and all other schools targeted.

"We just want people to stop and think," she said. "And, hopefully they will realize a fetus is a human being. And, that we don't have the right to kill human beings."

Selmys said the demonstration was aimed at fostering discussion. In addition, she added, high schools are targeted because one out of every three children aborted come from teenage mothers. Many students took exception to a placard that compared Hitler's Holocaust to abortion in Canada, identified on the placard as the Canadian Holocaust.

"The murder and abuse of Jewish children and others in Hitler's Nazi Germany can in no way be compared to a teenage mother, who

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Clifford Skarstedt, Examiner
Anti-abortion demonstrator Melinda Selmys and her daughter Agnes, 9 1/2 months, sit in front of a poster illustrating a fetus yesterday afternoon at Holy Cross Secondary School on Lansdowne Street West.

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must make a choice on an unwanted pregnancy," Kate McGrath, a Grade 11 student, said.

Brandi Hyland, a Grade 12 student who had confronted Selmys, said she found all of the signs "disgusting" and "gross."

"Surely, there are better ways of demonstrating without bringing pictures of dead babies to a school," she said.

"So what if people get abortions. That's their choice."

Dave Overwijk, another Grade 12 student who debated with protesters, argued there should be more concern about children who have been born and are being abused.

"I don't know why they have to bring all of these rude pictures to a school. Most of the students here are too young to vote (if abortion was an election issue)," Overwijk said.

Mike Miller, a Grade 12 student, said he objected to the protesters graphic images, but he fully supports their position.

"I'm against abortion," Miller said. "Personally,

I think abortion should be against the law. You don't make a baby and then kill it."