

The Kincardine News

June 28, 2006



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Pro-Life rally 'felt like terrorist attack', VP says

Dwight Irwin
 Kincardine News staff
 Wednesday June 21, 2006

Kincardine News — They may have got their message across, but Pro-Life protestors made enemies of all ages at Kincardine District Secondary School on June 12.

"The method they used (to protest) was universally despised," said KDSS Vice-Principal Mark Ozorio.

"It's not very often 100 per cent of people agree on something, but everybody I've talked to -- parents, students and teachers -- despised their actions."

The 45-minute anti-abortion protest began at 3 p.m. last Monday, as the second to last class of the school year was being completed. Twenty-five to 30 Pro-Life protestors, armed with six-foot by four-foot placards showing graphic images of aborted fetuses, lined the street around the school. The organization, which calls itself 'Show the Truth', demonstrated at high schools across the province.

Bob Cyr, a Kincardine resident who was part of the group, said what they did was important.

"We showed what abortion is to a lot of people who don't realize ... it's a real live baby who is dying," Cyr said.

He said high schools were targeted because the largest number of abortions are performed on teenagers and young adults.

"Girls are being coerced and told this is the best solution for them at that age. It's important they know (abortions) can harm the girl for life too," said Cyr, who added 300 abortions are performed each day. "(The girls) lose their self-respect and are scarred for life."

Ozorio said his concerns are not with the Pro-Life message -- a political party could not have held a demonstration on school property either, he said -- it was the way the demonstrators chose to get their point across. He said they were unruly, charging onto school property and refusing to leave, despite the fact schools are considered private property. He said he was forced to call police, who pushed the group back to the road. But even the police presence didn't keep protestors away from the students, who were waiting for their buses. Ozorio said some rushed up onto the steps at the back of the school while the group's leaders were discussing the situation with him and police. They began to hand out pamphlets to students, many of whom began ripping them up, as they became increasingly angry with what Ozorio called a 'violation of their rights'. He said many students were prepared to get into a physical confrontation with the protestors, who were mainly from out of town.

"It could have been ugly," he said.

The vice-principal said the group's approach felt like a 'sneak



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attack' and likened it to a 'terrorist attack' because there was no way students or teachers could defend themselves if they didn't want to listen to the group's message. Students had to catch their bus, get in their cars or walk through the picketers, he said. In addition to high schoolers, elementary school students also witnessed the protest, as their buses stop at KDSS to pick up additional students. Ozorio said six-year-olds from any belief background shouldn't have to witness the images depicted on the signs.

He said he has fielded numerous calls from parents and talked to students and teachers, none of whom were impressed with the group's actions.

"I can tell you, they didn't gain any support for their cause by the way they acted," Ozorio said.

But Cyr defended the group's actions.

"People show pictures of the holocaust because they elicit horror. People should be horrified this happens 300 times a day in Canada," Cyr said.

Ozorio said he warned other high schools in the area and former KDSS Principal Cathy Thomson, who is now principal in Walkerton, was better prepared to handle the situation when it occurred at her school on Wednesday.

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