

About John Pisciotta and Pro-Life Waco

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John Pisciotta founded Pro-Life Waco in 1996. From a newsletter sent to 25 people, Pro-Life Waco has grown into a robust, activist organization battling for the Culture of Life and opposing Planned Parenthood at every turn. Planned Parenthood Waco opened an abortion facility in 1994. The shedding of innocent blood was suspended in August of 2013. Sadly, abortion resumed in December of 2017 in a new facility built in deception at 700 W Highway 6.

In 2004, Pisciotta led a boycott of “Thin Mint” cookies sales, because of the entanglement of local Girl Scouts with Planned Parenthood. For a decade, the local Girl Scout council placed their national logo on Nobody’s Fool promotions. Then the Waco Girl Scout Council named the CEO of Planned Parenthood Waco as a Woman of Distinction—a role model for young girls. PLW’s ad on a Christian radio station made the boycott explode into the top news story in Waco. An Associated Press story brought national attention, resulting in Pisciotta appearing on the NBC Today Show, Fox’s Sean Hannity, CBN’s 700 Club and more. After 17 days and some Girl Scout troops folding, the Waco Girl Scout Council announced it would sever all ties with Planned Parenthood. The national exposure produced broad awareness of the transformation of Girl Scouts USA into a secular progressive organization in conflict with conservative and Christian values.



Years of Pro-Life Waco outreach contributed to two huge victories in 2013. The Planned Parenthood Waco abortion facility closed in August of 2013. Over 19,000 babies in the womb were killed by Planned Parenthood in Waco during 1994-2013. Second, Planned Parenthood announced the termination of its Nobody’s Fool summer “sex education” conference for children entering grades 5-9. For 23 years, The one-day Nobody’s Fool conference each summer was the #1 flashpoint of pro-life/pro-abortion controversy. Dozens of pro-lifers came out each year to hold signs and persuade parents to turn away from Nobody’s Fool. PLW’s 2004 Girl Scout cookie boycott was an outgrowth of local conflict over Nobody’s Fool.

Arrows in the Pro-Life Waco quiver include outreach events holding signs at Love Life Chain, a pedestrian overpass, in the public right of way of Planned Parenthood, and on the sidewalks of CVS pharmacy, which will sell abortion pills. PLW reaches a broad cross section of Central Texas with booths at local fairs and festivals and letters to the editor and opinion essays in the *Waco Tribune-Herald*. Second Sunday Luncheon Gathering features an Italian pasta meal, action planning, and prominent speakers. Speakers for Pro-Life Waco have been Abby Johnson, Dr. Alveda King, Davide Bereit, Jason Jones, Rev. Clenard Childress, Carol Everett, Monica Cline, Shawn Carney, Mayra Angelica Rodriguez, Rev. Scot Hord, and Claire Culwell.

A hallmark of Pro-Life Waco is rapid response to pro-life/pro-family challenges. In February 2015, Pro-Life Waco was the only group in the country that responded with ACTION to Target’s marketing collaboration with the deplorable **50 Shades of Grey** movie. Discussions with department store management (Waco) and a demonstration (Georgetown) brought quick capitulation and created a buzz on social media and internet news.

Pro-Life Waco responded to the horrific undercover videos showing Planned Parenthood harvesting baby body parts. First, on September 22, 2015, Pro-Life Waco delivered the first-in-the-nation “Dawn to Dusk Overpass Outreach” over I-35 near Baylor. ProtestABQ in Albuquerque delivered overpass outreach at the same time in solidarity. Second, on September 1, 2015, PLW launched #ProtestBOA, calling for an end to Bank of America financial support to Planned Parenthood. The support is in the form of 100% matching grants for employee contributions to Planned Parenthood. Groups in other cities joined the protest of Bank of America such as Albuquerque, Lubbock, Austin, Dallas, Nashville, and national BOA headquarters in Charlotte.

Late in 2016, John Pisciotta learned of the possible return of abortion to Waco with evidence a building under construction was Planned Parenthood. In rapid response,

Pro-Life Waco organized a campaign under the title of **NEVER Again in Waco!** The campaign included billboards, yard signs, letters to the editor, online and paper petition drives, and a full page ad in the *Waco Tribune-*



Herald “signed” by 83 Waco-area pastors. PLW delivered a public rally on February 11, 2017. The “NEVER Again” rally was the front-page story in the *Waco Tribune-Herald*, with TV news coverage as well.

Regretably, on November 15, 2017, Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas announced the opening of its new \$4.3 million birth control and abortion facility at 700 W HWY 6. The centerpiece of the Pro-Life Waco response to the new abortion facility was delivering a 40 Days for Life prayer vigil. An estimated 500 prayer volunteers prayed regularly in the public right-of-way of Planned Parenthood on Highway 6.

Pro-Life Waco challenges the supporters and enablers of Planned Parenthood. When Planned Parenthood Waco opened its new abortion center late in 2017, the monthly WACOAN magazine ran a full-page ad touting the new Planned Parenthood facility. The explicitly promoted “abortion care”. PLW foot soldiers had discussions trying to convince managers not to accept ads from Planned Parenthood. When this effort failed, PLW delivered three monthly protests in front of the magazine office. WACOAN advertisers were contacted about the problem. As with the boycott of Girl Scout cookies, the WACOAN eruption was a complete success. The WACOAN owner-managers agree to not accept advertisements for Planned Parenthood if the protests would stop.

Pro-Life Waco used its experience, resources, and collaborating organizations to mobilize against an awful threat at the Waco City Council. On August 2, 2022, 400 pro-life citizens showed up at the council meeting and demanded that the council drop this initiative without bringing the measure to a vote. Over 40 spoke out for life with 3-minute speeches. The intensity of the local clash over life and death rival the Girl Scout cookie boycott of 2004. This and future city councils heard the clear message that Waco is pro-life! The councilmember proposing the GRACE Act has resigned. Not a word about a GRACE ACT for Waco has come from Waco City Council.

In the outreach of Pro-Life Waco over three decades, faithful pro-lifers have held many signs in the public square. Additionally, PLW deploys many unattended signs. Over the last five years, PLW has averaged 10 to 12 billboards on display. This is a current “junior billboard” seen near the



McGregor Dairy Queen off HWY 84. The billboard size is 5’ x 11’. A well-located junior billboard provides great “bang for the buck”. Pro-Life Waco has one jumbo billboard (14’ x 48’) displayed along W Waco Drive.

One of the most powerful initiatives for penetrating the Waco community broadly is yard signs. PLW has distributed hundreds of yard signs free of charge to individuals, families, and churches in Central Texas.

The sign that is the marque of Pro-Life Waco is the famous billboard truck, which is named for the late and valiant Carolyn Knowles. The first billboard truck was donated to PLW in 2009. Carolyn #2 was acquired in 2019. Instead of hanging flapping signs, for Carolyn #2 the signs are wrapped tight to the truck cab and box. In addition to being seen at many locations in Waco each month, each January the truck is a highlight of the Texas March for Life, seen by marchers along the route to the Texas State Capitol.



John Pisciotta has extended the impact of Pro-Life Waco nationwide and worldwide in July of 2014 with the creation of the Facebook group named Hometown Pro-Life Action (HTPLA). This targeted and vibrant group has surpassed 15,000 members from over 90 countries. HTPLA is not a full-range pro-life forum, but rather a resource for strengthening the local action branch of the pro-life tree. The group shares the focus of Pisciotta and Pro-Life Waco: public square outreach in hometowns across the nation.

John Pisciotta grew up on a family farm near Pueblo, Colorado. John was blessed with terrific parents, Fred and Rose Lee. He earned an undergraduate degree in economics, magna cum laude, from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1966. He completed a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Texas at Austin in 1971.

His teaching career included 9 years at Colorado State University Pueblo and 32 years with the Baylor University School of Business. John retired from Baylor in 2012 to enter full-time pro-life ministry.

John Pisciotta is a life-long Catholic and is a member of St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Waco.