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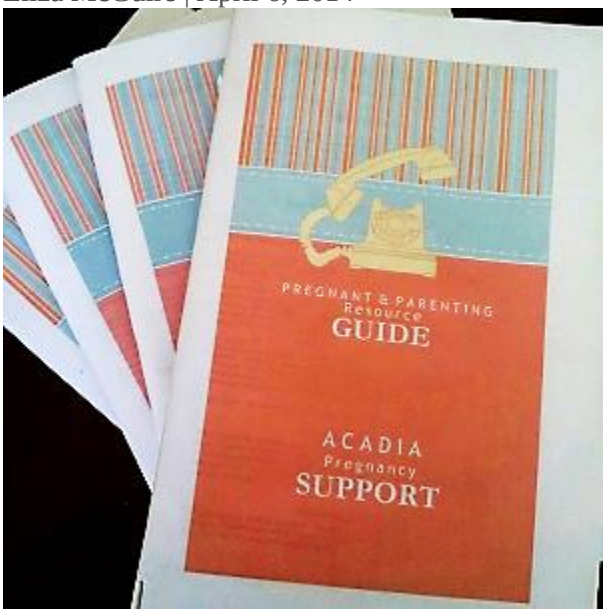
Undercover journalist: the Acadia pregnancy club

Eliza McGuire | April 6, 2014



I feel the need to preface this article with some strong premises before a debate breaks out over whether abortions are morally permissible, or if the acceptance of them will result in your soul roasting over a fiery pit in that special corner of Hell reserved for those who have committed crimes against children. Whichever camp you belong to (or perhaps you sit on the fence in some sort of Switzerland-esque neutrality) I quite simply do not care: that argument can be saved for some school-room debate. I am not some radical pro-choice feminist, nor am I a bible thumper preaching the sins of abortion. I am looking at a national law that permits abortions, and Acadia University's mandate regarding ratified clubs that may neither be pro-life nor pro-choice in nature.

The Pregnancy Support Club has had some pretty heavy accusations levied towards it and, if true, would warrant the termination of the club. A source warned that the club was a disguised pro-life group that had snuck by the Acadia Student's Union and on to campus, and it is the legitimacy of this claim that I sought to determine with a little investigation.

I had great plans—I was going to pretend to be 10 weeks pregnant and ask the club members at their booth in the SUB where I could obtain an abortion, and gauge their reactions. My first attempt at contact was foiled (they were absent from their booth) but was not a total loss as I did manage to grab some pamphlets and booklets about the options of those who are (probably unexpectedly) expecting. While some were so Christian I felt I had to say 'Amen' after finishing, they were actually quite informative. While I did not agree with all of the information inside— "It's a mystery how two microscopic cells can unite and become one human being!" (No, I am fairly certain we figured that one out one, maybe two years ago, thanks)—I still found them incredibly useful, and once putting myself in the position of an undergrad who discovered that they had done goofed and wound up preggers, I could see how these resources could ease a decision. However, the booklet put together by the group, just stapled together printer paper, held the most valuable information; where in the valley to go for help.

This booklet covers pretty much everything from post-abortion counseling, temporary housing and shelters, childcare and support and so much more. If anyone decided to become a parent, anything from financial assistance to food banks was included in here. There is even a section of breastfeeding. Adoption is thoroughly covered as well, from local counseling services to agencies. There was one gross oversight, however—nowhere was the location of an actual abortion clinic mentioned. Apparently, there is only one in the Valley, so giving the club the benefit of the doubt, it is totally possible that this was just missed, or perhaps one of the

pregnancy centers was meant to denote that it offered abortions and not just counseling on the matter. The bottom line, however, is that it was left out, and as a viable option abortion needs equal attention comparably with parenting and adoption. With assistance for adoption and parenting lain out so clearly, the option of abortion cannot be merely mentioned in a footnote.

Based on an obviously (though technically unaffiliated) pro-life website run by the same Mandy Blanchard that runs the Acadia Pregnancy Club, I went fearing the worst to see the group again, and ask my question about the location of the abortion clinic. I was certain that they would try and talk me out of it, and tell me that I had other options— no need to rush!—but I honestly never got my story out. Once I asked for the location of an abortion clinic, I was steered in the direction of someone who could tell me (the fabrication I had so painstakingly worked the kinks out of rendered useless). While somewhat anti-climactic, I was relieved at the result, for when I pointed out that there was no location of a clinic offered, the girls at the booth were quick to assure me that this was merely an oversight. This group does wonderful things for people who need help, and assuming the club keeps their promise of outlining the contact information of the clinic to get an abortion when they reprint their guide, I hope the group will be left in peace to flourish. They provide an excellent resource to people who need the help and are not sure where to turn; this help is free and comes without judgment, and such a thing is priceless. Personally, I am hoping their next step will be to have a stern talk with Acadia about the possibility of a daycare for students who are also parents, but perhaps I am getting ahead of myself.