

Laurier LifeLink's Anti-Choice Display was Anti-Laurier, Here's Why:



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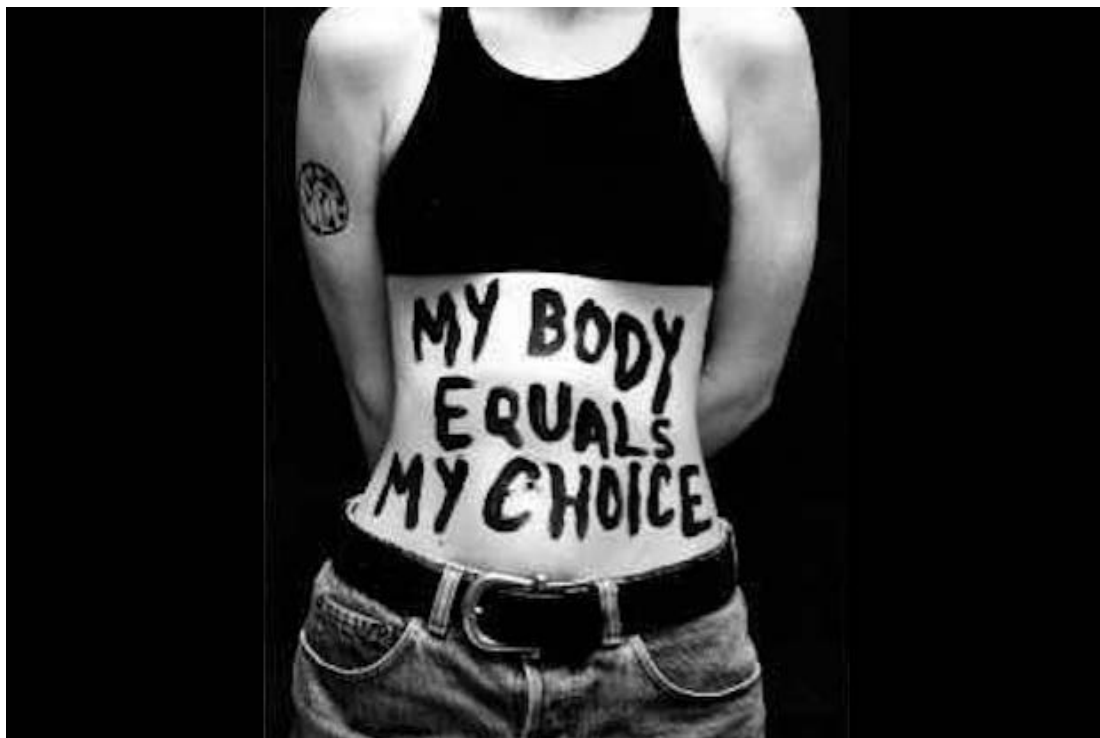
Recently, Laurier's non-sectarian club LifeLink hosted a pro-life/anti-choice demonstration in the Waterloo Campus Quad. They used pink and blue flags to represent the number of abortions, approximately 10,000, happening in Canada per year. The Cord wrote an excellent article covering the demonstration that you can read [here](#). I'm here to give my opinion on how horrifying this demonstration really was.

When it comes to freedom of expression, a right all Canadians have, it can often become tricky when it is regarding a sensitive topic such as abortion. There are a wide variety of views, each coming from people of all walks of life, and all of these views should be respected. Although, I find it hard to respect any form of scare rhetoric or guilt tactics. Seeing all of these pink and blue flags intended to represent human lives gave me a gut wrenching and nauseated feeling. It was distasteful and extremely inappropriate.

It leaves me to question how the university would permit this to happen in such a high traffic area on campus. By putting this display in such a central location, students were forced to interact with the

exhibit whether they were prepared to or not. To my knowledge, students were not forewarned of the planned event, but instead were blindly thrust into a sensitive topic enveloped in a potentially triggering demonstration. I assume LifeLink intended to be edgy and catch people off guard, but this puts rape victims and women who have made the difficult to decision to have an abortion at risk. Mental health is a serious issue and this exhibition failed to account for the wellness of those affected by abortions. The event's shock value is potentially damaging to those intimately connected to abortion, and LifeLink disregarded the wellbeing of those who have made the difficult decision to terminate their pregnancy.

Regardless of your beliefs, it is immoral to shame someone for the decisions they have made, and this exhibit was just that – a stunt to shame the approximately 10,000 women who have faced the pain of having an abortion. Abortion is an emotionally sensitive topic and doing this type of demonstration in a frightening and scare-tactic fashion is nothing short of disgraceful and frankly careless. Overall, if LifeLink wanted to do this type of display, it should have been in a spot on campus where students could choose to participate and not be thrown into something so triggering.



The president of LifeLink was quoted in The Cord saying, "We're not here as pro-lifers to say that people who are raped are fine and it's a fine situation; it's absolutely not and it's a terrible situations that can hurt people, but when is killing a human life the solution to that?" This causes me to question if anyone part of Laurier LifeLink has ever worked with, or spoken to, a victim of sexual assault who has chosen to have an abortion, because if they had they wouldn't have used the term "solution". Unfortunately, there is no "solution" or cure to sexual assault, and abortion certainly is not one. Sexual assault, in my opinion, is one of the most heinous and traumatizing crimes. Sexual assault causes lifelong trauma, and the risk of pregnancy or the decision to have an abortion only exacerbates the trauma. Some sexual assault victims do choose to carry their pregnancies to term while others do not, because birthing a baby created through rape can be a constant reminder of the assault with the potential of causing resentment or hatred towards the child. This does not always happen, but it is a possibility and a perspective that is important to keep in mind.

It is clear that Laurier LifeLink did not consider the repercussions their display could create and how it could affect their peers who have had an abortion. By trying to spread your views and message through shaming and scornful ways, you did not take in to consideration that choosing to terminate a pregnancy is not something that is taken lightly, or should ever be represented by tiny flags. It is much bigger than this. It is an extremely hard decision to make and the procedure itself is extremely invasive and painful for some women. It is extremely disappointing for a member of the Laurier community, a community that prides itself on kindness and inclusion, to be so hurtful toward their fellow students. Did you ever think of how you have hurt the women on campus who have had abortions and walked by your horrifying display? This demonstration was ill-planned and unwelcoming to women who have made the difficult decision to have an abortion. LifeLink failed to act in the community's best interest by not having counsellors present for students if they needed support. Instead, LifeLink recklessly condemned women who have chosen to terminate their pregnancies.

Everyone is entitled to their own opinions and beliefs, but when sharing these beliefs it should not include shaming others for their choices. If Laurier LifeLink wanted to promote their values, and they have every right to do so, they should have done some more thoughtful and responsible planning before doing such a negligent stunt in the Quad. I hope this is a learning experience for everyone here on campus.