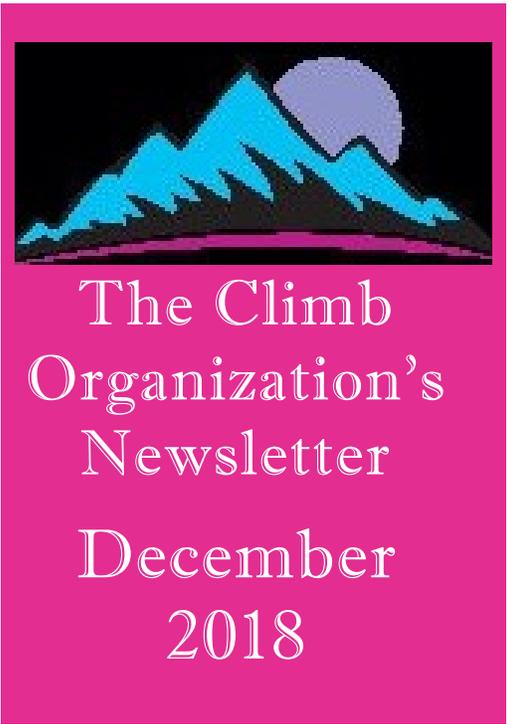


THE CLIMB ORGANIZATION'S THIRD ANNUAL BARBECUE FUNDRAISER



The Climb's Barbecue Fundraiser

On September 15, 2018, the Climb Organization had their third annual barbecue Fundraiser. The feedback from the BBQ has been fantastic!

The Climb is appreciative to the donors, guests, volunteers and to all those who worked so tirelessly to ensure the evening was perfect. The continued big-heartedness shown to our cause has warmed our hearts and filled the Climb with utmost gratitude.

The organization is delighted that they were able to introduce the ourselves to an even broader audience along with our committed "friends".

Dawn Parkot's Speech from the Event

Good evening everyone. On behalf of the Climb Organization, welcome to our third annual Barbecue! Thank you so much for coming today, for supporting the important work of the Climb Organization, for sharing in its mission and successes. My sincere appreciation to my brother, Brad Parkot; Luke and Will Ackerman; and the Climb Organization's board members for all their hard work in making this event happen.

Once again, during the year, this organization has been working hard to fight against ableism. Ableism is a worldwide injustice that isolates individuals with disabilities. Ableism is found in several forms, the most common are: ideas and assumptions, attitudes and practices, resulting in stereotypes and stigma. Ableism leads to inferior education for children with disabilities. It can lead to rejection of disabled applicants for housing and employment. It is the root cause of inadequate healthcare for people with disabilities and creates institutionalized discrimination by limiting benefits systems that keep people with disabilities in poverty.

Ableism doesn't get much press, even though, according to the 2017 census, nearly one in five Americans experiences disability. The main problem with ableism is that most people have never even heard of it. As a result, many forms of ableism



Dawn Parkot at the Climb's Annual BBQ

are completely overlooked. One of the Climb Organization's foremost responsibilities is to educate the public on what are the forms of ableism and how we can fix the system to make of life better for people with disabilities.

Last Christmas Eve, the Climb Organization and I made our national television debut. We were featured in a two-part interview on EWTN, where I discussed:

- * What's ableism?
- * What does the Climb Organization think schools should offer students with disabilities – so that they too can succeed in their education?
- * Why assisted suicide is insulting to the disabled, and why should the country fight against it?
- * How can the Church better accompany the faithful with disabilities?
- * I explained how people with disabilities could have a successful, joyful, busy, and meaningful life, when they are given a real chance.

The interview received tremendous feedback. In fact, we were contacted by a Speech-Language Pathology Student from Vanderbilt University, requesting my assistance with her school project. She saw the interview on EWTN. Although she had experience working with non-Catholics who use augmentative and alternative communication, she wasn't familiar with how difficult it is for people with different communication challenges to be able to go to confession. However, she saw that the Catholic's Bishops Conference wants people to be able to confess with their speaking devices if they chose. She reasoned that there should be more resources available to make Confession available to those using speaking devices.

A discussion with the chaplain at her college led her to the conclusion that she will likely need to develop different resources for people with a speech disability. She knows people with a motor speech disorder tend to type or gaze track on their speaking devices. They can also pre-store phrases with shortcuts, which I use all the time on my device. She e-mailed a preliminary draft of her proposal and requested my comments and suggestions. She thinks that, in many cases, people who use augmentative and alternative communication are very creative about finding ways to adapt to different situations. She hopes, at the very least, to make the practice of confessing with devices more accepted in the Church.



Karen and Gina Borgna at the 2018 BBQ

First, I wished her well in getting her idea in churches and having them use her project, because the clergy doesn't look at people with disabilities as sinners, especially people with a speech disability. I went on to say, that is just how it is. I told her that I'm still trying to stop them from patting me on my head like I was a two-year-old. I don't blame these men and women for this behavior but view it as an area where a little education and exposure could go a long way. I pointed out to her that we should team up to get her idea in churches and get clergy to use her project. We are thinking of creating a one-hour class for clergy. We are also thinking of doing an online webinar.



AI Wickens – Vice President of Morris County Right to Life, Theresa Kerekes, Mary Yenesel - a board member of the Climb Organization, Louise Juliano and Pat Wickens

My work with her somehow led to an invitation by the Catholic Medical Student group at Vanderbilt to come this school year and inform them that someone with my disabilities can have an intellect. Nothing has changed in 47 years. Medical students still get told that someone with

my disabilities can't have any kind of intelligence. All of my college buddies who are doctors now, got in disagreements with their instructors over someone like me being intelligent. This point of view of the medical world is over due to change. I guess the Climb Organization is the one to do it!

I had an opportunity to give a two-hour lecture at Georgetown University. It was on April 9th. I lectured on:

- * What's ableism?
- * What are the ways the disabled get shut out of society globally?
- * The world's views about individuals with disabilities.
- * How is our healthcare system dealing with the disabled?
- * What are the evolving government policies on euthanasia and assisted suicide?
- * What are my personal experiences with disability?

This lecture made a lot of jaws drop, especially, when I mentioned that the biggest acts of ableism are in the healthcare system. The above-average costs of care for many people with disabilities, and the below-average access to care often leaves us financially vulnerable and unable to live the full, productive lives to which we are entitled.

As it relates to healthcare, the objective of disability policy should be to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the specific high-quality services needed without compromising the ability to live independently and productively. The inability of many people with disabilities to obtain affordable health coverage interferes with this goal by deterring them from obtaining gainful employment and by making them vulnerable to financial catastrophe. Simply put, if a disabled person goes to work, they risk losing government provided healthcare.

Among those unfamiliar with the necessity of Medicaid, an attitude exists that those with disabilities choose to rely on government assistance — even when it restricts their lives and liberties. For Americans with disabilities, being on Medicaid isn't a



Dawn Parkot lecturing at Georgetown University in Washington DC.

choice, it's a means of survival. The disabled recipients of Social Security Disability Insurance or Supplemental Security Income, who thereby receive Medicare or Medicaid, respectively, are often concerned that they will lose their insurance coverage by working and that they will not be able to obtain comparable coverage through their employer. When I worked, I almost lost my Medicaid, which covers my personal aides, because I was making real money.

Another part of my lecture that caused jaws to drop, was when I discussed the housing issue for the disabled community. The choices we have, such as nursing homes, group homes or segregated apartment complexes, are not what non-disabled people consider housing. The lack of accessible housing

in our country has reached crisis levels and people with disabilities have named housing the number 1 issue. There are still far too many disabled people living in nursing homes. Our long-term care system favors providing services to people with disabilities in institutions rather than in their own homes. Four out of every five Medicaid dollars go towards providing services to people with disabilities in institutions rather in their own homes. Because of the lack of employment, educational opportunities, and employment disincentives, over 70 percent of people with disabilities receive entitlement benefits. Probably most troubling though, is the fact that we have not yet moved beyond our policies of state-sponsored segregation. Despite the fact that we now have laws and rights protecting people with disabilities and despite the 1988 preamble of the amended Fair Housing Act which declares "a national commitment to end the unnecessary exclusion of people with disabilities from the American mainstream" the United States government continues to fund, build and operate housing that segregates people with disabilities on the basis and type of their disabilities. While this would be considered illegal

housing, practice based on another protected class, it is still permitted and encouraged by our nation and our government based on disability.

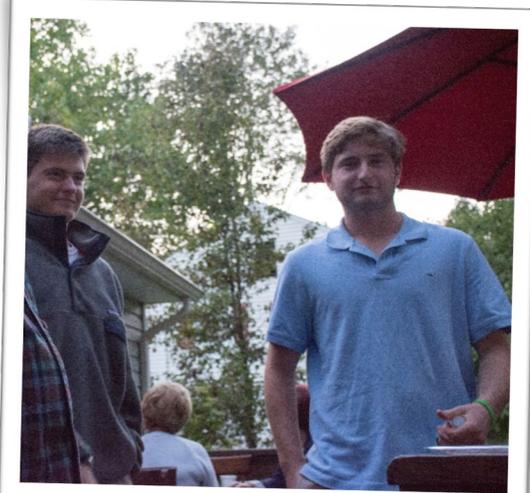
Efforts to work with our local and our national policy makers to rethink how we design housing in ways that it can be both attractive and livable for all – with and without disabilities- have met with little success.

Advocates in the disability rights movement have worked hard to create housing whose accessible features are undetectable, yet usable by everyone. We must start to think outside of the box – be creative and innovative and inclusive. The disability community does not think of a wide thirty-two-inch clear doorway or a twelve to one ramp, or a fifteen-inch-high outlet as merely building codes, but as civil rights – as those elements which will allow people with disabilities to have shelter while becoming truly active members of our community. The disability community feels such urgency to have the policy makers, architects, designers and developers be thoughtful and inclusive not just to the needs of our citizens living with disabilities now, but to all the people who will acquire disabilities in the future.

This organization believes that we can fix these issues and defeat ableism by teaching future leaders, doctors, teachers, architects and parents that people with disabilities are in their essence, just like you. From my lecture, I hoped that the students had gained some insight into the problems and unique challenges people with disabilities face. Some of those issues will only be solved by changing government policy. All of them will be changed by caring, compassionate people who seek to make the world a better place for all people. The information from the lecture was so important to the students that some of them took notes.

Mary Forr, who is the director of Life Issues for the Archdiocese of Washington, and who setup my lecture at Georgetown University, wants me to be a part of a pro-life panel at Catholic University, and Howard University sometime in this school year. I will be the advocate against Assisted Suicide. In addition, I should be going back to my beloved Alma Mater to lecture on the disabled life issues. It should be a wonderful busy year for the Climb.

On Monday, March 12, 2018, the NJ Assembly Judiciary Committee heard hours of testimony against the "Aid in Dying for the Terminally Act" from physicians, and other health care professionals, disability advocates, including the Climb. The committee released the act to the full Assembly for a vote. This legislation is damaging public policy to NJ. It impends the physician-patient relationship,



Will and Luke Ackerman, the Climb's Volunteers

because the bill will turn doctors into agents of death, who will act directly to cause the death of patient. The safeguards in the bill are empty and do not protect the patient. The act grants full immunity to everyone but the patient. This legislation also allows for the involvement of third parties in the request for lethal drugs, and is a recipe for abuse, especially for the elderly and disabled citizens. Although the Assisted Suicide bill (A1504) did not get scheduled for a vote in June, supporters of this bill are working incredibly hard to try to get this legislation passed before the end of the year.



Dawn Parkot with Graham and Cathy Ackerman

At this time, we are asking you to please do the following:

* Plan to meet NJ Right to Life in the State House Cafeteria on Thursday, September 27th by 9 a.m. On that day, all members of the Assembly and Senate will be at the State House to attend Voting Sessions, so it is very important that we have a strong presence in the halls of Trenton that day to let our lawmakers know that NJ citizens strongly oppose the legalization of Assisted Suicide.

Unfortunately, I'm not able to be there. The Climb has been fighting against the legalization of Assisted Suicide

since 2012, and I never missed a meeting, or an event until this one. I am asking you to step up by being at the State House on September 27th for me. For more information about the event, please see the Climb's table.

* In addition, please tell your two state Assembly Members to vote no on the "Aid in Dying for the Terminally Act", A1504.

And now, we invite you to have a wonderful time at our Barbecue. Your presence means so much to me and the organization. Thank you.

THE CLIMB ORGANIZATION'S UPDATE:

- On November 12, 2018, the American Medical Association House of Delegates voted 275-259 to refer the Council on Ethical & Judicial Affairs report back to Committee. The Council on Ethical & Judicial Affairs report recommends continued opposition to assisted suicide. This is the same action which occurred at the June 2018 meeting of the House of Delegates. The current American Medical Association opposition remains in effect as the policy was not changed.
- On December 17, 2018, Dawn Parkot is going to the State House in Trenton, New Jersey to lobby Assembly Members and Senators to Vote No on the Assisted Suicide Bill. Proponents will be there, and we must be there as well to lift our voices and demonstrate that there is significant opposition to this bill. It is vital that we continue to have a strong presence at the State House.
- The company which supported our website went under. Therefore, Dawn Parkot had to create our new site. We are proud to presenting theclimborganization.org. Check it out and let us know what you think.

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