

The Abortion Clinic Escort Who Defended Me

by Guest Author (<https://blog.equalrightsinstitute.com/author/guestauthor/>)

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This post was written by a pro-life sidewalk counselor who preferred to remain anonymous.

The first time I sidewalk counseled at Kay’s abortion facility, she blocked my path.

Kay was a volunteer clinic escort, meaning it was her job to escort women from their cars into the abortion facility. I was there to calmly and kindly invite women into conversation, and offer them a card with information about free pregnancy resources and after-abortion support. Kay was there to stop me, or at least to stop women from getting the information I offered them. Every time a woman pulled up, Kay walked out to the woman’s car, stepped in front of her as she got out to make it hard for me to talk with her, and led her away into the facility as quickly as she could. That certainly made things difficult, but I still managed to get into a longer conversation with one woman.



(<https://blog.equalrightsinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Clinic-Escort-700x467-copy.jpg>)

Photo by [Lorie Shaul](https://www.flickr.com/people/number7cloud/) (<https://www.flickr.com/people/number7cloud/>)

Estimated reading time: 12 minutes

But when that conversation wrapped up, Kay escalated things. I turned to go back to my spot, and she stepped right in front of me to block my path. I said nothing and went to walk around her, but she blocked my path again. She laughed and said something about how she “wasn’t going to let me harass women.” I replied that I wasn’t harassing anyone and that I was just offering information about free pregnancy resources. Kay laughed again before whispering something to another clinic escort standing near her. I decided not to engage, moved to a different spot, and kept trying to engage women and pass out the cards in my hand.

Then something else changed. Around noon, more pro-life advocates began to arrive. Most of them prayed or handed out information about free resources, but one middle-aged man took an extremely hostile approach.

“I DON’T WANT YOU TO GET HIT.”

He walked up with a large picture of the Virgin Mary, stood right in front of the clinic, and yelled the Hail Mary prayer over and over.

"Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

Then, after a while, he started going up to the clinic escorts one by one, jabbing his finger in their faces.

"You're a murderer!"

"You're demonic!"

"You're killing babies!"

One blonde-haired pro-life girl who was standing next to me and praying the rosary raised her head.

"You shouldn't talk to the clinic escorts that way."

I chimed in in agreement, telling the man that, even if I didn't agree with the pro-choice volunteers, his actions were unhelpful. He yelled something about how the clinic escorts were all demonic and marched over to a young clinic escort who looked like she was about 5'5", his much taller frame towering over her.

Without thinking, I launched myself between the two of them, holding my hands up in a peaceful gesture as I tried to reason with the man.

"Yes, I agree with you that abortion is wrong, but this is not the way to advocate against it."

He muttered something incomprehensible. I kept trying to talk with him, but my words didn't seem to be getting through. He tried to step around me to yell at the clinic escort some more, and I asked him again to please stop and think about what he was doing. He ignored me. As he started moving toward the other clinic escorts to insult them, I tried once again to gain his attention by standing in front of him. Only this time, I heard someone behind me call my name.

It was Kay.

Throughout the day, I had introduced myself to the women entering the clinic, so it wasn't that surprising that she knew my name. What did surprise me, though, was the soft, unguarded expression on her face. *"From the bottom of my heart, thank you,"* Kay said. *"But I don't want you to get hit."*

While the man's behavior had been aggressive, I didn't think that he'd hit me, and I said as much to Kay. She thanked me again for defending one of her fellow clinic escorts, but repeated that she didn't want me to get hurt.

As Kay and I stood talking to one another, the man gathered up his materials and left without another word. I told Kay that she and I may disagree about abortion, but I didn't think what that man did was right. I said that even if we disagreed, I thought it was important to treat one another like human beings. Kay nodded, saying, ***“And just so you know, if someone who's pro-choice does something like that to you, the rest of us will defend you.”***

AND SHE DID.

After that day, Kay and I developed a cordial relationship. We started saying hi and smiling when we saw each other outside the abortion facility, and even making small talk when things were quiet. Kay would give me make-up tips, or we'd talk about the weird boys we knew in college. Even though she was a pro-choice clinic escort, and I was a pro-life sidewalk counselor, we'd developed a level of trust.

I don't know if Kay did this intentionally, but when she walked women to the abortion facility, she wouldn't make it harder for them to hear me by telling them to ignore me like some of the other clinic escorts did. And every time I left after a day of sidewalk counseling, Kay would call out “Be safe!” as I gathered my stuff and headed back to my car.

And then I didn't see her for awhile. As the months went by, I started experimenting with other ways to share information with pregnant women and their partners through sidewalk chalk. I'd start each morning by writing things like “Pregnant? Need Help?”, along with the phone numbers for Option Line (a pregnancy help hotline) and Support After Abortion.

After I finished writing, several clinic escorts would usually try to smear the chalk with their feet or dump out their water bottles on it. A few times, one would even try to stop me from chalking in the first place by walking over and standing on the sidewalk square that I was writing on.

I don't know if those clinic escorts were expecting an explosive reaction, but I didn't give them one. I'd usually just redo the chalk writings that they had erased, or focus on sidewalk counseling.

One cloudy morning, as I was walking up to the clinic, Kay appeared again and immediately approached me. She asked how I was and commented on the possibility of rain, noting that it might make it more difficult for me to do my chalk writing. But what she said next stopped me dead in my tracks.

“Listen, I had a talk with the other clinic escorts, and I reminded them that we're not supposed to mess with your stuff,” she said. “I told them that if they had a problem with that, then they could go reread the volunteer manual for clinic escorting. You should be able to do your chalk writing uninterrupted today, but if anyone gives you any trouble, let me know, and I'll talk with them,” Kay assured me.

Surprised, I stuttered out a thank you. Just as Kay said, *no one bothered me that day* as I chalked.

There weren't a lot of women arriving at the clinic that day, so at one point, I found myself talking with Kay as I leaned against the railing of the stairway leading into the facility. It was nearing the time when I usually went home when another pro-lifer showed up, screaming into a bullhorn that the facility didn't care about women and only wanted to profit from killing their babies.

"But we care about you!" she shouted, reciting the phone numbers of several organizations that women in need of resources could call.

I'm sorry, but screaming "*But we care about you!*" into a bullhorn doesn't exactly come across as caring.

I'm not saying that this pro-lifer doesn't actually care about women—I'm sure she does! But **it's insanely difficult to sound gentle, inviting, and caring when there's a bullhorn involved**. It's more likely to make the women you're trying to help feel nervous, and it makes you look unapproachable, whether you intend to or not, and that's the *last* thing you want to do in front of an abortion facility.

A security guard with the clinic stepped outside, shaking his head and smirking as he watched the pro-lifer continue to scream.

"Y'all really piss me off," the security guard said, looking at me. "It's none of your business! Why do you have to be out here chasing people, making them feel guilty, and making them cry?"

"I will vouch for her," Kay said, coming to stand beside me. "She doesn't do that."

Eventually, the sidewalk counselor stopped yelling into the bullhorn, and the security guard went back inside, with Kay following closely behind.

MY FRIEND, KAY

Shortly after that day, I left for a vacation with my family, so I wasn't able to sidewalk counsel for a few weeks. When I came back, I went to my usual spot near the clinic entrance and got ready to pass out my cards.

I heard the facility's front door open, and out walked Kay and another clinic escort. Kay saw me right away. Without a word, she came over and pulled me into a hug. The clinic escort she was with looked surprised, as did the two pro-life sidewalk counselors standing nearby.

"Do as I say, not as I do," she said as she pulled away. "I know we're not supposed to, but, oh well."

I certainly hadn't expected a hug from Kay when I resumed sidewalk counseling, but it wasn't unwelcome, and I hugged her back. When things were slow, Kay and I talked like we usually did, and I noticed she also made an effort to include me in any conversations she was having with her fellow clinic escort.

The other clinic escort, a young girl who appeared to be in her twenties, seemed unsure what to make of this. I tried talking with her, but she mostly gave me one-word answers.

But Kay's willingness to socialize with me encouraged the other two pro-lifers who were present on the sidewalk. The two college-aged girls didn't hesitate to strike up a conversation with her, and she happily chatted with them, even offering advice on the best moisturizers to use.

Later on, they asked how I had developed such a good relationship with her. I told them about the incident where I had felt the need to step in when another pro-lifer became aggressive, and how Kay and I were always friendly and respectful towards each other from then on.

THE WAY PRO-LIFERS TREAT CLINIC ESCORTS MATTERS

"Yeah, we tried talking with some of the other clinic escorts, but they mostly ignored us," one of the girls said. "But not Kay. She was super nice, and she kept talking to us."

I truly believe most clinic escorts are good people. They genuinely believe they're protecting women from a confrontation that will only make an already stressful day even worse. They're here because they have immense compassion for women, and they're willing to put their bodies between these women and screaming bullhorns, finger-pointing, and aggressive behavior to protect them. Their presence should make pro-lifers consider how they've approached women entering abortion facilities and whether it's time to change tactics.

If you're a sidewalk counselor, consider how you try to start a conversation with the people entering the facility. Are you acting in a way that would make someone turn to one of the clinic escorts for protection? **No one is going to listen to what you have to say if they don't feel safe coming near you.**

And if you're sidewalk counseling outside an abortion facility with clinic escorts, then interacting with them will probably become a part of your outreach efforts. It's understandable that some pro-lifers may feel frustrated when a clinic escort prevents them from sharing information with an abortion-minded woman. But how does it make pro-lifers look if we antagonize clinic escorts by calling them "deathscorts," or scream at them that they're terrible people? It's extremely counterproductive—in order to show women that they can turn to us for help instead of the clinic, we have to show that we are peaceful and approachable.

And it's also just plain wrong to antagonize people.

Yes, I know some clinic escorts are not exactly kind to pro-lifers, and I've experienced that myself. I also know some pro-lifers have encountered clinic escorts who became threatening and physically violent, and [you should absolutely call the police if that happens \(https://blog.equalrightsinstitute.com/why-i-called-the-police-at-the-abortion-facility-last-month/?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email\)](https://blog.equalrightsinstitute.com/why-i-called-the-police-at-the-abortion-facility-last-month/?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email).

I'm not saying pro-lifers should just be silent if a clinic escort is behaving rudely or aggressively. I am saying we should keep a few things in mind when we're deciding how to respond:

1. Does your response embody the peaceful and loving approach you're using when sidewalk counseling? If you're quick to anger and snap back with an aggressive response, then how can you genuinely embody these traits when approaching women on the sidewalk?
2. And how can they expect you to? Consider how the women walking into the clinic are going to feel if you respond to a clinic escort's taunts with yelling and name-calling. Not exactly someone you'd want to talk to, right? Remember that you don't want to be seen as the aggressor. If you respond at all, it should be to de-escalate the tension, not add to it.
3. How are you behaving when a pro-life person antagonizes the clinic escorts? Even if you aren't hostile towards them yourself, do they know that you don't support aggressive behavior by other pro-lifers? Are you willing to speak up if another pro-lifer's behavior is inappropriate?

We have an opportunity when we're sidewalk counseling to show abortion-minded women *and clinic escorts* that the pro-life movement is about supporting non-violent solutions to the very real difficulties that women and families face. Even if they don't change their mind about abortion right away, we can build trust by demonstrating that we're kind people who want women to feel supported. We want them to see that there are pro-lifers who genuinely care about women and who are mindful of what they're likely going through as they approach the abortion facility. And we don't support violence, *regardless of whether that violence threatens an unborn child or a pro-choice clinic escort.*

The first day I met Kay, she laughed at me, blocked my path, and did everything in her power to keep me from talking to the women entering the clinic. **But today, I can genuinely call her my friend.** I believe that if we openly treat all people—even pro-choice clinic escorts—with the same dignity and respect we want for the unborn, we can change hearts like Kay's. And someday, we can change minds too.

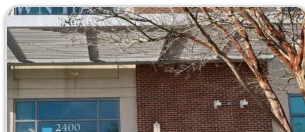
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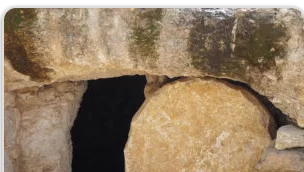
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