

STATE & LOCAL



Jill Winger shares her family's adoption story Thursday night during the annual Right to Life Banquet.

Annual Right to Life Banquet held

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ODON — Small towns and rural areas, Brad Mattes said, are the foundation of what makes America so great. That, he said Thursday night during his keynote address at the annual Daviess-Martin-Pike County Right to Life Dinner, also makes it a great time to be pro-life.

Mattes, who serves as president of the Life Issues Institute, said in his 44 years in the pro-life movement, he's never seen such momentum and encouragement as he's witnessed recently.

"It's tremendous. The legislators are passing pro-life legislation," said Mattes, as he addressed the crowd at the Simon J. Graber Complex. "And that means there's a lot of people, a lot of good people, doing a lot of great work."

Mattes, who was also the keynote speaker at the banquet in 2007, said President Donald Trump has surprised those in the pro-life community.

"President Trump is the most pro-life president in America's history," said Mattes, who said he has also been a huge Ronald Reagan fan. "Donald Trump has made Ronald Reagan look like child's play when it comes to pro-life."

Mattes wasn't the only one who addressed the group of pro-life supporters. Jill and Mike Winger and their children Elijah and Anna, the Adoptive Family of the Year, also shared their story.

The Wingers, who are from Loogootee, always knew adoption would be a part of their story.

Jill Winger said miscarriages led the couple to their first adoption.

"We started the adoption process in March of 2016," said Winger. "Our hearts would skip a beat every time we had a call from an Indianapolis phone number."

In December of 2016,



Photos by Lindsay Owens | Times Herald

Brad Mattes, president of Life Issues Institute, addresses the crowd at the annual Right to Life Banquet Thursday at the Simon J. Graber Complex.

their phone call came and in January 2017, Elijah was welcomed to their family.

"We have a closed adoption with Miss Whitney," Winger said.

After trying to conceive again, the couple decided to adopt again in 2018.

"We met with our adoption attorneys on Sept. 21 and on Sept. 23, while at our church's fall festival, we got a call," she said. "There was a beautiful baby girl who needed a family."

After Facetimeing with the birth mother, the Wingers drove to Fort Wayne and brought baby Anna home. This time, they had an open adoption which means they communicate with Anna's birth mother, Lorena.

"The best thing we can do is support these birth moms," said Winger, who said whether it's a 13-year-old or a 22-year-old, the women still

need love and support.

Yolanda Taylor, executive director of the Pregnancy Care Center, provided an update.

Since May, Taylor said trained staff members have done 27 ultrasounds for those who had not had any prenatal care and 43 prenatal vitamin prescriptions had been given to those in need.

Progress is also continuing on the non-profits new facility on West Walnut Street.

Taylor said volunteers have made a lot of improvements and several building supplies have been donated for use.



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HOFFMANS RECEIVE HUMANITARIAN AWARD



Photo Provided

Matt and Danielle Hoffman received the 2019 Humanitarian Award for Danielle's volunteering at the Pregnancy Care Center and for their caring for children in the Foster Parent Program during the Right to Life Banquet Thursday. **Louis Kavanaugh Jr.** who made the presentation praised the two individuals for their service to the PCC and to the Foster Parent Program and encouraged others to be a part of this special program.