

LUCE LADDER

"Courage is the ladder on which all the other virtues mount."

– Clare Boothe Luce

From the President

October 2026

THE LUCE CENTER

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Meet Our Fall Interns!



(Left to Right) **Taylor Trovato**, **Isel Loria**, and **Cecilia Cline** join the Luce Center team as fall interns.

This fall, three young women are putting their talents to work at the Luce Center, gaining valuable experience while helping advance our mission. Our semester internship program gives college and high school women the opportunity to take on meaningful responsibilities while continuing their studies. This semester's class includes a **Baylor University** senior on the pre-law track and two high school students.

Working alongside our staff, our interns are developing skills in event planning, graphic design, public speaking, and much more. They are already putting those skills to work as they help us prepare for our **College Women's Summit in San Antonio**.

In the coming months, they will have opportunities to learn directly from accomplished women in our network. **Marji Ross** will help them become stronger writers. **Reagan Reese** will join them for a mentorship luncheon and **Beverly Hallberg** will lead a full day of public speaking and media training.

By semester's end, they will leave with new skills, greater confidence, and relationships that will last well beyond their time at the Luce Center.



Taylor Trovato

Home State: Florida

College: Baylor University

Year: Senior

Major: Political Science

Favorite Conservative Woman: Kristi Noem

Favorite Book: *The Odyssey* by Homer

Fun Fact: Taylor plans to attend law school after college



Isel Loria

Home State: Virginia

School: Homeschooled

Year: Junior

Favorite Conservative Woman: Abby Johnson

Favorite Book: *Where The Crawdads Sing* by Delia Owens

Fun Fact: Isel is a nationally certified Emergency Medical Responder (NREMR)



Cecilia Cline

Home State: Virginia

School: Homeschooled

Year: Senior

Favorite Conservative Woman: Alex Clark

Favorite Books: *Sherwood Ring* by Elizabeth Marie Pope

Fun Fact: Before becoming an intern, Cecilia volunteered at Luce Center events featuring Natalie Brunell and Mary Hasson

Building a Community of Conservative Women Leaders at Christendom

The Luce Center is building a strong community of young women at **Christendom College** in Front Royal, Virginia.

Program Director **Nicole Gillis**, Social Media Director **Rachel Hurley**, and Fall Intern **Cecilia Cline** spent September 19 on Christendom's campus meeting students and sharing opportunities to get involved with our mission to prepare and promote courageous, principled women leaders. The response was enthusiastic, with young women signing up to stay connected, receive our mailings, and learn more about our upcoming College Women's Summit in San Antonio.

Some of our best ambassadors at Christendom are students themselves—including 2025-2026 Fall/Spring Intern **Lucy Evich**, 2025 Summer Intern **Fiona Williamson**, and 2026 Young Women's Luncheon attendee **Liza Koach**—who reconnected with our team on campus and introduced friends and classmates to the Luce Center's work.



Program Director **Nicole Gillis** and Fall Intern **Cecilia Cline** invite Christendom students to become involved in the Luce Center's nationwide network of conservative leaders.

Each visit to Christendom introduces us to more impressive young women eager to learn, lead, and become part of the Luce Center community. We are grateful for our growing relationship with Christendom and look forward to welcoming even more of its students to Luce Center programs and events.

A Call To Action: Susan Hanssen Reignites Patriotism in an Age of Anti-Americanism

As the anniversaries of 9/11 and Charlie Kirk's assassination weighed heavily on American hearts, **University of Dallas** professor Dr. **Susan Hanssen** offered a bold claim to a room of supporters, students, and guests of the Luce Center: America's biggest threat is not from the outside.

During the Conservative Network Event titled "How to be a Patriot in an Age of Anti-Americanism," Hanssen underlined that we are under attack from multiple fronts. What many Americans don't realize, she argued, is that our most important fight is on the inside: **"We are under attack from our own elites and elite institutions who are completely given over to radical socialist Marxist ideology."**



Dr. Susan Hanssen charges attendees with three tasks: "Be a populist, look to the West, and support private and Christian education."

Drawing from her background in history, Hanssen called out a major flaw in the current system: "The American founders did not intend America to be ruled by a single great metropolis," Hanssen explained. "If we wanted to be ruled like that, we could have stayed safely in the British Empire and been ruled from London." Hanssen called attention to the countless Americans moving to Texas, and argued that the driving force behind this is simple: people want freedom, and they want leaders who will stand up to Washington D.C. and the institutions that control it.

Hanssen urged attendees to consider the Marxist agenda replacing real education. Driving her point forward, Hanssen shared a sobering story from a catechism class she has taught for years: "The kids were perfectly fine with honor God, honor God's name, honor God's day... but when we tried to explain male and female, they turned on us as if their CCD teachers were a bunch of bigots. **They had already been turned into activists. We're talking about third graders.**"

Following Hanssen's remarks, attendees brought their questions to the microphone, honing in on institutional corruption, education beyond high school, and the challenge of saying no to prestigious universities that teach radical leftist ideas.

Dr. Hanssen concluded with a final word on the Luce Center's mission: "There are really no good all female colleges left in this world. **A place where you can get women together like the Clare Boothe Luce internship program where women are talking to women and learning how to be articulate is phenomenal.**"



*(Left) President's Club Member **Austin Ruse** and Board Member **Cathy Ruse** gather before the program. (Right) Fall Intern **Cecilia Cline** meets with Hanssen.*

The New York Times Introduces Millions to the Luce Center

This summer, the Luce Center's internship program received extraordinary national attention when *The New York Times* spent six days with our interns and staff for an in-depth look at how we are preparing the next generation of conservative women leaders.

It began with our June 26 **Washington, D.C. Summit**. *New York Times* reporter **Vivian Yee** registered after seeing speaker **Alex Clark** share our Summit announcement with her nearly 575,000 Instagram followers. After attending the Summit, Vivian asked to spend more time observing our summer internship program.

We welcomed her in. Over the summer, Yee attended an etiquette training, a book discussion on Erika Bachiochi's *The Rights of Women*, a seminar with Brenda Hafera of the Heritage Foundation, and our interns' research presentations. She also spent hours talking with our interns and staff about their conservative beliefs and hopes for the future.

The result was a full-page *New York Times* article that appeared online August 24 and in the Saturday print edition five days later. The article offered millions of readers a glimpse inside a program unlike a typical Washington internship. Here's an excerpt:

*The interns don't fetch coffee or answer phones. Instead, they receive a crash course in practical and professional skills, alongside tutelage in conservative principles. One day is dedicated to **media training and public speaking**, another to **constitutional law**. In July, the interns visited the United Nations in New York. A *National Review* columnist, Caroline Downey, came to speak about what she described as **Gen Z's dangerous embrace of socialism**. Later came training in **self-defense and firearms** and a **tour of the Museum of the Bible**.*

The article also gave readers a sense of the young women themselves and how they think about their futures. **Mary White**, a 19-year-old **University of Dallas** student, told Yee that she is considering law school or academia but could also see herself following her mother's example and stepping away from a career to raise a large family. "I would love to be a stay-at-home mom," Mary said, while also rejecting the idea that women should not work. She preferred a "middle ground" where motherhood is celebrated and women can "share your talents with a wider public spirit."

We were grateful to see the *Times* capture what makes the Luce Center internship distinctive: preparing young women not simply for successful careers, but for full and flourishing lives.

On September 22, we were delighted to host a special Zoom conversation about the experience for our supporters. We hope to offer similar calls several times a year about our work and timely issues affecting young women. **To be notified about future calls, please contact Membership Coordinator Anastasia Leffas at aleffas@conservativewomen.com.**

The New York Times



Can Conservatives Win Back Young Women? Kimberly Begg Tells Patrick Henry College, “Yes”



(Left) A student joins the conversation during Q&A. (Middle) Senior **Evelyn Sittner** welcomes students before the talk she organized. (Right) **Kimberly Begg** offers a path for reaching Gen Z women with conservative ideas.

Luce Center President **Kimberly Begg** spoke at **Patrick Henry College** on October 1 as part of the **Keith Work Speaker Series**, addressing the question, “Can Conservatives Win Back Young Women?” Senior **Evelyn Sittner**, who leads the college’s pre-law society, invited Begg after reading the recent *New York Times* article about the Luce Center’s work.

Begg argued that **conservatives can win back young women, but first they must earn their trust**. That requires understanding the experiences that have shaped Gen Z.

Now ages 15 to 29, Gen Z came of age under one-size-fits-all Covid mandates that closed their schools and a cultural upheaval that pressured them to deny that humans are created male and female. **“For Gen Z, lies aren’t the exception to public life,” Begg said. “They’re normal.”** A Luce Center survey found that 75 percent of young women ages 18 to 24 don’t trust most of their elected leaders.

Yet their hopes for their own lives remain remarkably traditional. **Sixty-eight percent plan to marry and have at least one child before 30**, even as the typical first-time homebuyer is now about 40. Begg described Gen Z as both “realists” and “dreamers” whose ideas about the world are formed more by lived experience than policy arguments.

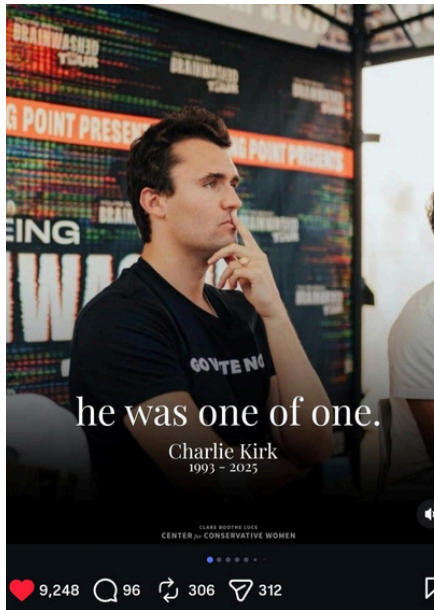
That makes listening especially important. Begg noted **how different Gen Z’s formative experiences are from those of older generations**, including how young women view their own lives. That divide shows up in the data: 72 percent of young women surveyed believe life is generally harder for women than for men. “If our first response to a young woman’s experience is to tell her she’s wrong, we’ve already lost her,” Begg said.

Word choice matters. Conservatives often celebrate “freedom” and criticize “feminism,” assuming those words will be understood as they intend. But **Gen Z does not share the cultural memories that give those words the same meaning**. To young ears, “freedom” can sound like an anything-goes culture with no guardrails, while criticism of “feminism” can sound like criticism of women themselves.

Where conservatives communicate matters, too. Seventy-nine percent of young women surveyed regularly get news from social media, where algorithms can reinforce one viewpoint until it seems everyone agrees.

Begg closed by calling on conservatives to reject voices that diminish women’s intelligence and discourage them from using their gifts in the world. “We want women to flourish,” she said, “and when women flourish, so do their families, their communities, and their country.”

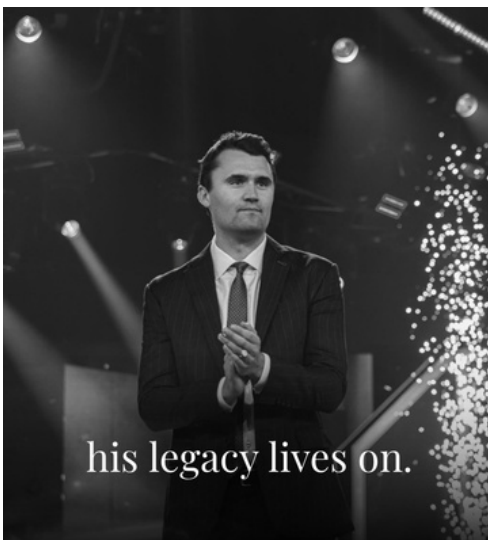
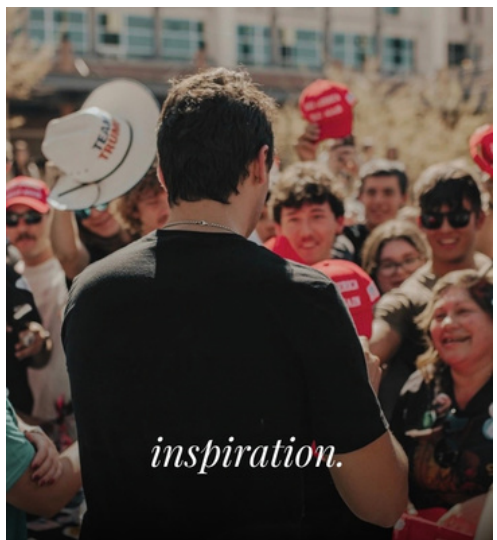
One Year Later: Remembering the Legacy of Charlie Kirk



One year after his assassination, Charlie Kirk's legacy continues to shape countless lives. The carousel we shared on Instagram honoring Charlie's memory evoked heartfelt responses, including a personal testimony from our 2026 summer intern, **Amira Hawat**: "He changed my life after moving to the USA. He took me out of the victim immigrant mentality and now I have been able to succeed more than I could ever have imagined. He is a role model."

The post has been **viewed more than 97,000 times**, reflecting Charlie's enduring influence as a source of courage and inspiration for Americans committed to open dialogue and truth-seeking.

We remain heartbroken for Charlie's wife and children and profoundly grateful for his fearless example. **May we honor his life by continuing the work he believed mattered so much:** seeking truth, speaking it with courage, and never giving up on the young people who will shape America's future.



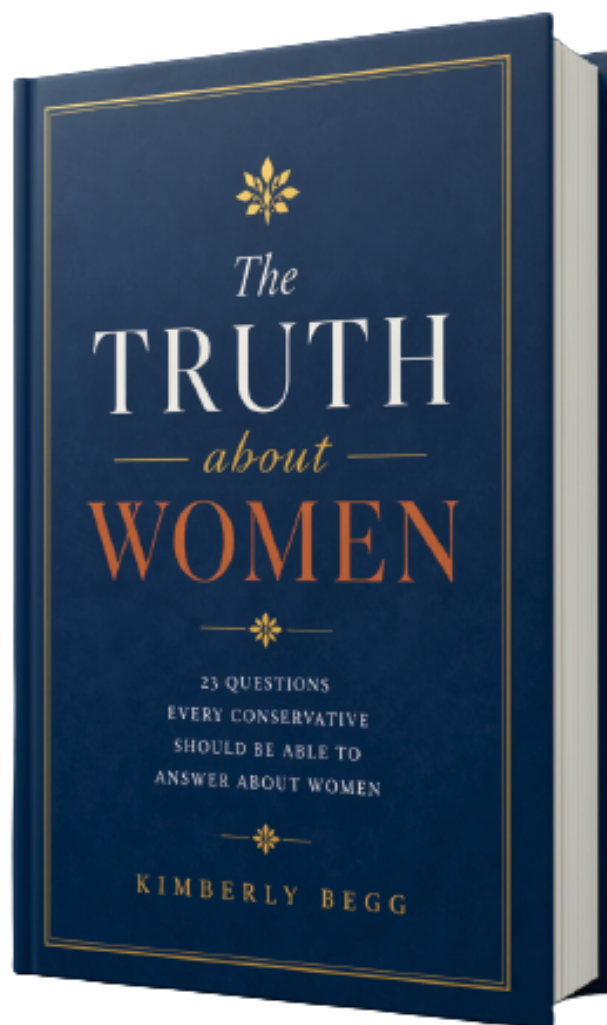
A *truer, more compelling* message about women

Young women are moving sharply to the Left, spending their formative years in spaces where radical ideas are normalized. Some of the most radical ideas they encounter are about women themselves.

The Truth About Women offers something far better: a conservative vision of womanhood rooted in biological, philosophical, and scriptural truth—one that affirms women’s dignity, celebrates their unique gifts, and equips them to thrive in every area of life.

Through 23 timely questions about marriage, motherhood, career, sex, feminism, and more, Kimberly Begg offers clear, compelling answers to the questions young women are asking about who they are and how they can flourish.

Winning young women to conservatism matters—because conservative women are the trustees of a free and flourishing America.



Now available at:

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“a **must-read book** for America’s girls”

– **Ryan T. Anderson, Ph.D.**

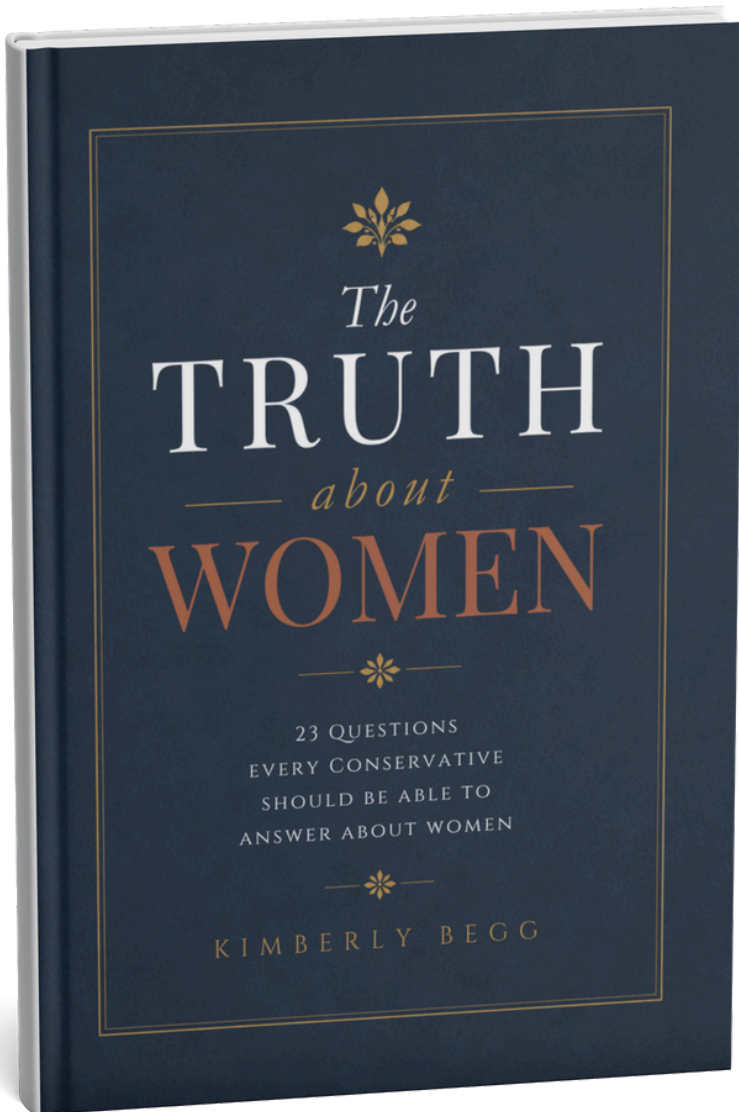
President, The Ethics and Public Policy Center

“Give this little book to the young women and men you know; studied and lived profitably, it could **revolutionize our time.**”

– **Erika Bachiochi**

Author, *The Rights of Women: Reclaiming a Lost Vision*

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On a Personal NOTE

Dear Friend,

As we head into the final quarter of the year, I am so grateful for all you are helping the Luce Center accomplish. The stories in this newsletter show the impact of your support and how one opportunity so often leads to the next.

On page 4, you read about our feature in *The New York Times*, a milestone that put the Luce Center's work in front of a national audience. We're already seeing the results, including an invitation from the head of the pre-law society at **Patrick Henry College**, who read the article and asked me to speak on campus (see page 5). At the end of my talk, a young woman in the audience came up to tell us she plans to apply for a spring internship.



Taylor Trovato (left), a senior at **Baylor University**, and **Cecily Cline** (right), a high school senior, are making their mark as fall interns. It's exciting to see the leaders they are becoming!

The article also reached young people who rarely encounter conservative ideas. One 18-year-old reader, who describes herself as liberal, told us she was surprised to find she agrees with “pretty much everything” we said in the article. *The New York Times* helped us reach people of all ages we would never have reached on our own, many of whom were unfamiliar with conservative views on women.

A reporter at *The Times of London* read the article, too, and reached out for our perspective on women and the economy. I made the case that conservative economic policies create opportunities for everyone to prosper. The **article published on September 24** quoted me saying that economic progress shouldn't be seen as “a competition between men and women.” Instead, we should “celebrate any kind of flourishing” and “lift everybody up.”

The impact of media coverage can continue long after an article appears. Last year, stories about the Luce Center in Fox News, *The Wall Street Journal*, and other outlets introduced our work to new audiences. **Ann Rodgers’** aunt saw one of those stories and encouraged her niece, a **University of Florida** student and aspiring journalist, to apply for our internship. Ann joined us in the summer of 2025 and has since completed internships with **Young America’s Foundation** and *The Daily Caller*.

Reaching new audiences of young women matters now more than ever. In recent years, Gen Z women have shifted sharply to the left. We need to be present where they are and ready with better answers to the questions shaping how they see themselves and the world around them.

Increasingly, that means meeting them on social media, where 79% of young women regularly get their news and information. We are delighted to see our reach growing: our **Instagram following has grown 201% in the past year**, to more than 25,000 followers.

Our new book, *The Truth About Women*, gives us another way to reach them. A President’s Club member recently told us she is giving 20 copies to her grandchildren and other family members!

Thank you for helping us reach more young women with a truer, more compelling vision of womanhood and the confidence to build full and flourishing lives.

In Friendship & Freedom,

President



Support *The
Courage to Lead*
here

P.S. In just a few weeks, young women from across the country will gather in San Antonio for our College Women’s Summit. Your support makes opportunities like this possible, and helps us reach new audiences of young women who are ready to listen, learn, and lead.