



# Catherine's Conversations

August 2016



More than 60 high school and college students attended JFA training this summer at Louisiana Right to Life's PULSE pro-life leadership camp in Baton Rouge.

Dear Friends,

Summertime at JFA means our team is busy with preparations for the upcoming school year: confirming speaking and training events around the country; arranging housing, meals, and transportation for our staff; raising funds; and hiring interns.

Amidst all of this, however, we have continued to train pro-life advocates through events like PULSE, Louisiana Right to Life's annual pro-life leadership camp for high school and

college students (photo, above), and weekly campus poll-table outreaches at Wichita State University (photo, below). Please pray for all of our preparations for the coming year, as well as for the people we've encountered during these summer events, such as the five I spoke with last week.

Kevin is a student from Vietnam who was raised in a Christian home and feels strongly that abortion should be an option for parents whose children are diagnosed prenatally with severe deformities. We spoke about the difficulties – and opportunities – inherent in suffering.

Jacob came up to the poll table saying he didn't want to talk about abortion, but rather, as a sociology student, he was more interested in our goals and methods as an organization. I shared that our goal is to help to make abortion unthinkable by creating good dialogue about it, and to teach others to do the same. I asked Jacob to tell me more about the things he cares about (namely, "science, sociology, and morals"). He responded by bringing up abortion, and we ended up having a fruitful discussion about it.

Two young pro-choice women from India came by after taking their computer science exam. One of them said abortion should be available in all nine months of a pregnancy, for any reason at all. She went on to describe the situation of a neighbor of hers in India who had tried for ten years to get pregnant, finally



JFA's Becca Haschke facilitates a discussion with students at Wichita State University.

giving birth to a baby with severe disabilities. The child died at just six years old. The student said it would have been better to prevent the suffering of the mother and child by aborting the child early on. I asked her if her neighbor, the child's mother, had felt the same way. She thought for a moment, smiled, and said that no, her neighbor was glad to have had six years with her child. We spoke for a while longer and I shared some resources with them, including our JFA brochure, which includes images of children who have been aborted. As they left for class, both women shared that they were rethinking their views about abortion.

Kevin, a new grandfather, was on campus for a conference, and stopped by the poll table on his lunch break to talk with me and my colleague, Paul Kulas. He said he believes that all life is a gift from God and that he doesn't like abortion at all. He then shared, however, that he doesn't think we can tell a woman who has conceived a child through rape what she can or can't do.

Kevin had been in the Army, so I offered an analogy. If a soldier returning from war with PTSD is found abusing his child, the truly compassionate response is to get the soldier professional help, while keeping the child safe until his father can parent again in a healthy way. We don't demonize the soldier, keeping in mind the severe trauma he has been through. Nor, however, do we turn a blind eye to child abuse because "we haven't been through what this soldier has been through, so we can't make his decision for him about how to parent." I asked Kevin if he would agree with me that we could—even should—have the same kind of truly compassionate response for women who have gone through the trauma of rape. Don't we need to do all we can as members of her community to care for both her and her child? He said he agreed with that and shook our hands, thanking us for the conversation.

Thank you for your support, which makes these, and many other conversations like it, possible! Please let me know if there is ever a way that I or JFA can be a resource for you and your loved ones.

In Christ,



Catherine Wurts

P.S. Recently, two young, Catholic seminarians attended JFA's seminar. They send you their thanks!

"Today's JFA seminar reinvigorated me and my desire to bring an end to abortion. I, at times, begin to lose hope about this cause, but the energy, clarity, and compassion demonstrated by the JFA leaders gave me much hope that we can change the world by transforming the culture, one heart at a time." – Garrett

"I've always been pro-life, but how in the world do I share that message in a culture that isn't?... an impossible task! After attending a JFA seminar, the impossible finally feels attainable. I have practical, simple tools to engage someone in a productive dialogue on abortion. Thank you sooo much for providing support to make that possible! God is good!" - Michael