“This Experience Had a Big Impact on My Life”

One of the toughest things about JFA’s training program is that we set a high bar for people who go through our seminar: We always encourage them to join us for outreach to talk with people who support legal abortion. I am consistently surprised by the fact that kids in high school are able to do this since this is so hard for many of us older folks! Our trip to Phoenix, Arizona confirmed again to me that young people are ready, willing, and able to make abortion unthinkable for their peers.

In Phoenix this month, we held two seminars. The first was at Arizona State University (ASU). That seminar included mostly college students, but also some high school students. The second was at St. Mary’s Catholic High School and was attended solely by high school students.

As I mentored the high school students, I wondered if they would have the confidence to go out and talk to college students at the outreach event the next day. This was the first time most students had heard this material and they were a little shaky in our role-playing exercises.

The feedback that the students gave us after the seminars was encouraging:

- **It has really helped me to learn how to use my education in a positive way to help others. I feel I can now speak to others and calmly get my point across.**  
  - Gabby

- **I loved this training because it opened my eyes way more. I know many pro-choice people who I’ve tried to talk to but couldn’t seem to.**  
  - Leslie

Even though the seminars seemed to prepare the students well, the real test was the outreach at ASU. Would the students step up and use what they had learned? Creating dialogue about abortion can be intimidating, which is why outreach events are so essential to our training program. It takes more than memorizing arguments to impact our culture on abortion; it takes courage. Our outreach events help build that courage.

Amazingly, all the students demonstrated courage right from the start! They jumped into conversations immediately and quickly reported that they were changing minds. At the end of the day, many of the high school students reported that the outreach was a transformational experience for them.

That, ultimately, is the power of participating in outreach. It proves to people that they have the ability to change minds and save lives. And once they experience using that ability,
The students we trained in action during outreach at ASU

they often desire to make an impact for the rest of their lives. The comments from students after the outreach confirmed that many experienced this empowering transformation:

This experience had a big impact on my life personally. I learned so much at this training and the biggest part was learning how to talk to people about this topic.

- Bertha

I think that this experience was very inspirational and is making me want to do something like this for the rest of my life.

- Bella

This event helped me to realize how open people are. They are willing to talk about difficult things civilly. This is definitely something that I’d want to continue doing. I am ready to impact others little by little. I feel prepared to do work and help others to think and even talk about such tough topics.

- Gabby

The most effective aspect of the Justice For All training was seeing people agree with us and changing the minds of pro-choice people. Personally, it has a great big impact on me. It made me realize a lot.

- Leslie

Bringing the truth to someone makes you feel better inside. I loved starting the conversation with, “Should abortion remain legal?” then ending it with the same question to hear a different answer. It’s a great feeling.

- Justiana

It is so exciting to see such young people inspired to spend their lives defending the unborn. Even though we only spent two days with them, our work can have a lifetime of impact.

And because of their young age, they will have so many opportunities to save lives. The Guttmacher Institute states that, in the US, about 40% of unintended pregnancies end in abortion¹. This fact indicates that many of their friends will end up in an abortion clinic unless someone makes abortion unthinkable for them. Thankfully, these students are equipped to do just that. And because of their outreach experience, they now have the courage to speak up for those who can’t speak for themselves.

- Jeremy