

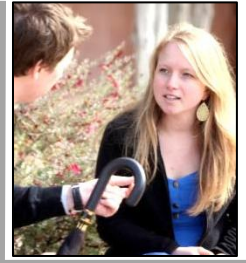
# She's Anonymous, but Not Forgotten

*How My Work with JFA Helps Women before They Are in Crisis*

JOANNA WAGNER'S YEAR-IN-REVIEW UPDATE



JULY 2013



"Amy" has come in for a pregnancy test.

She's quiet, but answers each question about her medical history patiently. I sit in the corner of the room, simply observing and taking notes as the peer counselor, Judy, prepares her for her test result.

After Judy checks the result, she comes back to Amy who is waiting in the counseling room and says gently,

**"Congratulations. Your test is positive."**

**Amy's face falls.**

"I can't be a mom right now," she stammers, and after beginning to share her very difficult circumstances, she pauses to say quietly to herself, "I can't believe this is happening... This is just too crazy."



My heart is beating fast as this woman's world falls apart before my eyes. I can feel the weight of her fear and anxiety. But as Judy and I are moved with sympathy for Amy, we share an acute awareness that a sharp curette and a suction machine are waiting for her child, just about one hundred feet down Bleckley Street. It's a sort of fog in the room that threatens to suffocate all of us.

## ***The Problem***

Amy is not just a story. She is a real woman I met when I went to work last Friday, during my weekly four-hour shift at Choices Medical Clinic, a local center that provides confidential counseling and free sonograms to women facing unplanned pregnancies.

### **Would You Consider Investing in My Work?**

As a new Training Specialist with Justice For All, I am responsible for raising my entire salary. I still have to raise about **\$1,800 per month**. As I move forward in this critical work, would you consider joining my regular financial support team? Use the enclosed form to give a monthly, quarterly, or annual tax-deductible gift.

Of course, "Amy" is not her real name, and I can't describe the specifics of her situation. Doing so would violate her client confidentiality, and that confidentiality is a good thing. It's important for women who visit Choices to remain anonymous.

But that anonymity also presents a challenge.

Because women like Amy are anonymous, it's easy to simply forget that they exist. It's easy to assume that there aren't very many women going through these crisis situations. "Not in my neighborhood" or "not in my church," some might say.

For many, it's even easier to assume that the children inside of these women don't exist.



Dr. Stringfield, the medical director at Choices Medical Clinic, is pictured above holding baby Natalie as her father looks on. When Natalie was diagnosed with a congenital heart defect in September of 2009 her parents were pressured to get an abortion. Because of the perinatal hospice team at Choices, Natalie's parents were able to treat their daughter with dignity through the pregnancy and birth process. To everyone's amazement, Natalie survived. Since her successful surgery in 2010, her parents have often brought her by Choices to share their joy with the staff!

But these women and their unborn children *do* exist. Choices staff see nearly two hundred of them every year (and that's only the number who are considering abortion when they walk in the door).

Choices opened in 1999, right next door to the clinic where the late George Tiller performed abortions. That neighboring property has recently been reopened by a new establishment, the SouthWind Women's Center, the first abortion facility to open in Wichita since Tiller's death four years ago. Last fall, as I prayed regularly on the sidewalk across from SouthWind, I was continually drawn to the building next door, the home of Choices Medical Clinic. I requested that a part of my job description be devoted to gaining counseling expertise at Choices, and the leadership team at JFA agreed. I've been observing at Choices these last couple of months — preparing to offer information, support, and resources to women.

**How can we reach them sooner?**

The women I've observed at Choices feel completely inadequate to carry their pregnancies to term. They feel inadequate financially, physically, and certainly emotionally. Some are in high school, some are mothers who are working two jobs just to make ends meet, and some thought their child-bearing days were over. As I've watched these women-in-crisis, offered them cups of water, and chatted with them as they've nervously waited for their pregnancy test results, I

haven't been able to help but wonder: "How could we reach them sooner?" There must be a way to help women discover their own value and the value of their unborn children before they have to make an emergency decision.

Thus, it's been in the counseling room at Choices that I've really started to grasp how vital my work is with Justice For All.

### ***The Solution***

Meet Katie Worley.

An enthusiastic basketball player at Washington University in St. Louis (Wash U), Katie (pictured right, in pink) met us during her senior year of high school in Phoenix, Arizona. Katie is one of those rare individuals who loves to strike up important conversations with absolute strangers, and thus, she fell head-over-heels for the JFA training program from the start.

Not long after her introduction to our work, she came to Wichita as a summer intern in 2012. Katie learned to deliver nearly all of our seminar speaking material in just six weeks and served as an enthusiastic mentor of our volunteers at seminar and outreach events. I recall watching her sitting in the grass in a circle with her mentor group of high school volunteers at Louisiana State University after a particularly difficult day of outreach. Even then, she was cheerfully debriefing the day with them, helping them work through the training material they hadn't yet grasped.

So, what happens when someone with Katie's passion, informed by this sort of advanced JFA training experience, goes off to college? Simple: she begins to transform the campus.



## This Year in Brief \*

- JFA **Mentor**: I became certified to guide volunteers through seminar and outreach events.
- JFA **Speaker**: I became certified to deliver all major seminar content.

I helped train volunteers at the following JFA events:

- **29 Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue** seminars (About **995** participants took part in these events.)
- **25** dialogue outreach events (About **505** volunteers were trained at these events.)
- **10** outreach sites  
Including: Wichita State University, Louisiana State University, University of Kansas, University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University, Georgia Tech, Arizona State University, and Colorado State University

I've also helped to arrange and lead:

- **5** presentation events
- **2** mentor workshops

\*One of my duties while in the office is to keep track of our event numbers. So here you can see a little of what I work on while I'm home!

As a freshman, Katie was asked to take leadership over the Students For Life Club at Wash U, and she is now leading by active example. Katie got rid of weekly meetings, and instead conducts weekly outreaches.

She trains students one-on-one for dialogue, using what she learned at JFA. Then she takes them to have campus conversations with their peers using her innovative “Cookies and Conversation” dialogue tool. Katie regularly puts up a table with cookies and a question set on top of it. I helped Katie develop a list of questions specifically designed to lay an initial foundation of common ground with students on campus about some aspect of the abortion issue. For instance, asking the question, “What do you think about late-term abortion?” naturally leads to agreement between pro-life advocates and most pro-choice advocates that third-trimester abortion is wrong. This foundation of common ground allows Katie and her trained club members to productively discuss whether or not earlier abortions are also wrong.

“Cookies and Conversation” has been a huge success, not only because it’s allowed for conversations

with students all over the Wash U campus (the majority of whom either are at risk for unintended pregnancy or have close friends at risk) but also because it’s given Katie’s club members ample opportunity to practice creating dialogue on a topic they care so much about.

## *Balancing Truth and Love*

So what about Amy? How can we help prevent women such as Amy from ever considering abortion in the midst of a crisis pregnancy situation? I believe it’s through people like Katie — people who aren’t afraid to talk with those who believe differently and who are also willing to train others to boldly and graciously create dialogue.

Justice For All staff and volunteers create literally thousands of conversations a year with women and men who are likely to conceive a child at any time. These young adults are frequently sexually active, and nearly all of them can name at least one friend (if not many more) who has experienced an unexpected pregnancy. Not only that, JFA staff train students to be prepared to discuss this issue with those in their own spheres of influence — people who are at risk, but with whom JFA staff won’t have the chance to interact.



Two weeks ago, I helped to mentor CK Wisner (seated on ground) during outreach at Wichita State University. CK is currently beginning a two-year internship with Justice For All.

Justice For All staff know that we can’t reach this country alone. We need many, many Katie Worleys.



That's why I'm excited to accept a staff position as a Training Specialist and continue on with Justice For All. In this position, I'll be learning to facilitate events and train others to mentor and speak like I've been doing in our *Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue* events this year. As a leader in the trainer certification program, I will be helping to raise up leaders who have a multiplying effect in creating dialogue in their communities. I have already begun this work with six interns this summer (including Katie Worley) in addition to coaching other advanced volunteers from around the country.

**I'm excited to accept a staff position as a Training Specialist and continue on with Justice For All.**

And of course I will be continuing to volunteer at Choices Medical Clinic. Soon, I will be offering peer counseling, rather than simply observing. But you might ask, "What does Choices

have to do with Justice For All's *Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue* training program?" At JFA, we're committed to balancing truth and love in every conversation, and we are committed to training all of our volunteers to do the same. One of the reasons I love working with this community of people at Justice For All is that it is a community committed to humility. While we have a consistent vision, we are constantly making adjustments to our dialogue training to help our staff and volunteers balance truth and love. A huge piece of this puzzle is helping our volunteers to be sensitive to the fears of these anonymous women considering what to do with their unplanned pregnancies. That's why JFA has made working at Choices part of my job. JFA has asked me to share the knowledge I gain there with other JFA staff members.

My work at Choices is intimidating. It's intimidating because I know that most of the women I'll see will be scared, and I have to be a strong presence of hope for them. But I trust that God will give me that strength in due time. He has certainly been building up my courage and perseverance this year as I've created dialogue with strangers around the nation. Thank you for your prayers. I could specifically use prayers for endurance and clarity of mind as I transition into this new phase of my work.

**Joanna's Justice For All Events – Summer 2013**

(All events in Wichita, Kansas unless otherwise noted)

**June 17:** Outreach at Wichita State University  
**June 18-19:** Mentor Workshops – coaching new interns  
**June 22:** Seminar at Crosswinds Community Church (Derby, KS)  
**June 25:** Outreach at Wichita State University  
**June 26-27:** Mentor Workshops – coaching new interns  
**June 29:** Seminar at The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception  
**July 3:** Seminar at Trinity Baptist Church (Yukon, OK)  
**July 4:** Outreach at Yukon City Park (Yukon, OK)  
**July 15:** Seminar at Joshua Leadership Institute (Baton Rouge, LA)  
**July 16:** Outreach at Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge, LA)



Holly Meath (3<sup>rd</sup> from left), former president of Wheaton College's Voice For Life club, recently moved to Wichita for a year-long internship with Justice For All! I had the privilege of introducing her to JFA in 2011 when I served as VFL president. Since I graduated, it's been exciting to watch as Holly has prioritized dialogue training and raised up another excellent leader for the club, Sam Martin (far right). Sam, Coco (far left), and James (2<sup>nd</sup> from left) joined Holly during their spring break for our *Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue* events in Georgia.

I am also looking for those willing to come alongside me by investing in my work as a Training Specialist with Justice For All. I am responsible for raising my entire salary as I move forward, and **I still have to raise about \$1,800 per month.** If you have not already done so, would you consider joining my regular financial support team?

With gratitude,

*Joanna*



JUSTICE FOR ALL TRAINS THOUSANDS TO MAKE ABORTION UNTHINKABLE FOR MILLIONS, ONE PERSON AT A TIME.

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