

“So we decided to keep the baby!”



REBEKAH DYER'S JFA UPDATE

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Dear Friend,

I woke up to the sound of rain and figured it would be a more challenging day to talk to people at the San Diego Planned Parenthood. It's already challenging enough to get people to stop and talk right before they have an abortion. Having to stand in pouring rain makes it more difficult.

A couple started walking towards the clinic, and I said something like, “I’m sorry if you are having a hard day today. Are you here for an abortion?” The young woman I’ll call “Shelly” nodded. I offered her my umbrella, and I began to ask her and her boyfriend some questions. I asked them how they were feeling about going through with this, how far along she was, and if they’d had an ultrasound yet. I also asked them if there was a medical problem or if it just wasn’t a good time to have a child. At this point, my friend Nathan Apodaca joined the conversation, and we all huddled in a circle in the rain.

The boyfriend “Mike” shared it was not a good time to have a child since they had just moved from out of state to San Diego and didn’t have a lot of connections here. All of their friends and family are across the country so they don’t have a good support network here. I found common ground with them knowing that it would also be really hard for me if I was in a place where I felt like I had no community, family, or friends around and had to make a huge, life-altering decision.



Picture of the clinic taken back in Jan. 2023

I assured them they were not alone and told them about the different Pregnancy Resource Centers in the area that exist to help people in their exact situation. As we talked, I showed them pictures of fetal development and pointed out some early developmental landmarks including the heartbeat and early brain waves. I said something like:

“I really encourage you to take time to talk to someone else at one of the pregnancy centers to go over other options. You can come back here and make another appointment if that’s what you really want to do. But once you have the abortion you can’t undo it. I know people who have had abortions and it’s something they deeply regret. I want to spare you both from having to carry that burden for the rest of your lives. I am not here to condemn you, but I really care about you both and the choice you are about to make here. I want you to have all of the information before you go through with the abortion, and there are some things that Planned Parenthood won’t tell you. I don’t want you to go through with the abortion and then think, ‘If I had known that, I wouldn’t have gone through with it.’ Have you seen pictures of what abortions look like before?”

They said “No” so I asked them if I could show them. They said, “Yes.” I opened the Justice For All brochure and showed them abortion images in the first trimester. I said something like:



“You are a parent right now. You have a child right now. If you walk into that clinic, they are going to kill your baby. I believe abortion is killing a human being, and I think if you go through with this abortion it’s going to really impact you in a negative way. No matter what you decide to do though, I want to help you. If you go through with the abortion, there is a resource for post-abortion healing on the back of the brochure I gave you.”

We kept talking, and Shelly eventually said she just wanted to go through with it. Before they went inside, Mike shared that he really appreciated the conversation and the information we had shared with them. He seemed really open as did she. I offered them my contact information if they needed to get help, and Mike handed me his phone right away. He wanted to connect via Instagram. I pulled up my account, and he followed me right there. He then gave Nathan his cell phone number.

After they went inside, Mike came back outside. As we talked a little bit more it became clear that he didn’t want her to get the abortion, but he didn’t want her to feel pressured to keep the baby just because he wanted her to. She wasn’t aware of this. I said:

“I think it’s good that you want to respect her choices and not force things on her. There are many men that aren’t like that. With this type of situation though, it’s really important to take a stand and to let her know that you want the child. If you just leave it up to her, she will feel more pressure. As a woman, if I were pregnant and my boyfriend or husband just left it up to me, I would feel more alone and stressed out. I think if you tell her you want this child and that you will take care of her, it would make a really big impact.”

Nathan and I left around 9:00 AM, and I gave the next sidewalk counselor, Roger Lopez, the rundown of what was going on. I had told Mike and Shelly about Roger as well so that there would be a smoother transition for more conversation if that was helpful to them. Roger also spoke to Mike, encouraging him to tell Shelly that he wanted this baby. Mike called Shelly and shared with her that he wanted to keep the baby. She changed her mind, and they both walked out of the Planned Parenthood. Roger reports that they embraced in the pouring rain!

Mike messaged me later: “So we decided to keep the baby!”

It’s been a long time since I’ve been able to “see” someone change their mind outside the clinic. Most of my time at the clinic actually feels discouraging if I don’t remember that God is at work even when results are unclear. When I reflect back on that time as the four of us stood in a circle on the sidewalk with the rain pouring down on us, I see God at work. He saved that baby. I’m so honored and grateful that He used me and my friends to be the avenue by which he rescued that innocent life from being killed.

For all of the other children who don’t make it out of the abortion clinic and for all the parents who have to hold the weight of their child’s death because they didn’t walk away, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is *their* hope just as it is *our* hope, and we get to be messengers of that lifeline.

Trusting Him to complete the work,

Rebekah

P.S. Some of you may wonder where sidewalk counseling fits into my work with Justice For All. Most of my work involves having conversations on universities across the country as well as training pro-life advocates to dialogue well about abortion. When I am home, I also do sidewalk counseling and reach out to those who are walking into abortion clinics. I offer them alternatives and provide a space to talk through the issues that have led them to the abortion clinic.