

Abby Fennema (Desert Christian HS)
Reflection: January 2009

As I read the letter sent home by my school announcing we were required to attend a training program with a group known as Justice For All, I felt anything but joy.

I begged my mother to sign me out of school, "All my friend's mothers are doing it," I attempted to persuade her, but no luck. So there I was, on a Friday afternoon stuck in a hot gym with some "crazy abortion people".

The training wasn't terrible, but it was not my idea of how to spend a Friday afternoon. After the training, we were asked to accompany them to the University of Arizona to dialogue with college students on the topic of abortion.

All weekend this opportunity kept being brought to mind. Finally Sunday afternoon I decided to go. "Why not, I told myself, it's better than school."

Monday morning I embarked down to the University with about twenty other students from my school. After a short pep talk we were sent out. I walked around observing for the first hour or so. Being the reserved person that I am, I had no intention of starting up any conversations for the fear that I would not be able to answer their questions or prove my point or I would just sound plain stupid.

A streak of boldness came upon me as I decided, with my partner at hand, to start up a conversation with a man standing observing the display. Though our conversation seemed ineffective, I felt proud. As terrified as I was, my hands were even shaking, I had approached a person who I had never met and had spoken truth.

I was beginning to get the hang of this but about then day came to a close. But the next morning I asked my mom to call the school to inform them that I would be attending the opportunity again that day with JFA.

As I got into my car and proceeded to drive down to the University a tempting thought popped into my mind. "I could totally ditch this and just spend my day reading at Starbucks," I actually began to turn around and head to Starbucks when I clearly felt God's conviction: "Abby, You have the opportunity to save lives. I have brought you here for a reason, now go." Reluctantly I went.

Most of the day I remained hesitant about speaking to anyone. I would cop out with, "Oh they don't really care to hear what I have to say." Later I was challenged by Jon Wagner to not let anyone stop without talking to them.

I tried to approach people, but I just didn't seem to have the nerve to do it. I felt useless, like God really didn't bring me down there for a reason and just ditching would have much more productive.

As these thoughts circled through my head I walked around the exhibit trying to look like I was actually doing something. A girl sitting on a bench suddenly caught my attention. She sat there with big brown eyes just staring at the Exhibit.

A streak of boldness came through me and I moved towards her and sat down beside her. "What do you think of this?" I asked, just as I had been taught to.

"Well I don't think I could have an abortion," she responded, "but there are just circumstances you know?" For about ten minutes we sat engaging in dialogue and in silence from time to

time. The entire conversation I just felt as though something was not right, yet I could not figure out what it was. I kept telling myself that it was probably just my nerves but I knew it was something deeper than that.

While these thoughts rambled around in my head...the girl began to cry. I was unsure what to do, so I simply asked if she would like to talk about it.

She began to tell me her story. This girl had grown up in a very strong Hispanic family. She was the first of her family not only to graduate from high school but to go on to college.

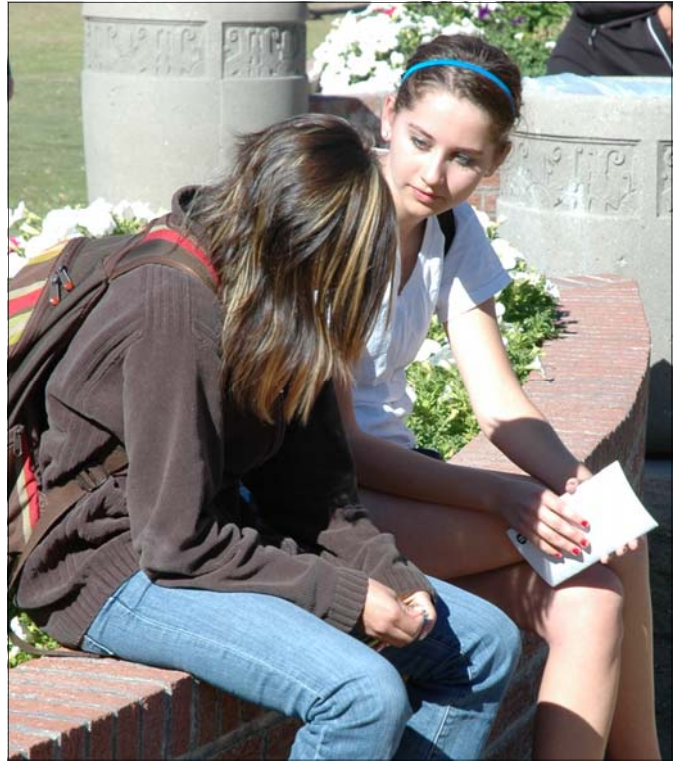
When she was sixteen she found herself in an unthinkable position - pregnant. As much as she wanted to keep her baby she could not come to give up her dream to graduate high school and to make it to the place where no one in her family had gone - college.

She chose to have an abortion. Even now, three years later, I could tell the wounds were not yet healed.

As we talked she tried to convince herself it was her only choice, but the underlying message of her words only condemned herself for what she had done. In her heart she felt unbearable guilt, a burden I'm sure she believes can never be lifted. Sitting there my heart broke for her.

I talked to her a bit more. I suggested counseling to help heal the wounds of her actions and gave her my information to keep in touch. I have not heard from her but I think of her many days. She has been in my prayers.

When God asked me to go to the university with Justice for All I thought he was calling me to go bless other people, and I hope I did, but by going



Above: Abby (in white) holding JFA Exhibit brochure.

down there I was blessed in ways I will remember for a very long time.

Not only did Justice for All stir up a passion for me on the subject of abortion but also they have challenged me to become bold for the things that I believe.

Though I may have had less that a good attitude when I first discovered JFA, God used them to help transform me and do amazing things.

(Abby was 16 when she participated in the JFA Exhibit training with her school, Desert Christian High School in Tucson, AZ, and wrote this reflection.)