

Justice For All Internship Reflection

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It would be wrong to say that an internship with Justice For All (JFA) was life changing. It would be more appropriate to say that it was life transforming.

The word changing seems to imply that you only develop, whereas the word transforming indicates that you do more than develop, you undergo a metamorphosis.

That is, you undergo a profound change enabling you to view the universe from a perspective you never thought possible. You have a totally different outlook on life, and you are filled with a meaning you lacked before. This was the case for me.

A JFA internship with was not something I would have seen myself doing four years ago. In fact I am still a little surprised that I am here.

Initially, I talked to Steve Wagner and David Lee when Justice For All visited my campus (Colorado State University) my junior year of college.

At the time I was in the process of interviewing for dental school and wouldn't have imagined it possible to work for JFA But I got accepted into two dental schools, one at the University of Iowa which started in the Fall of 2009, and the University of Nebraska which started in Fall 2010.

If I went to Nebraska I would have a year off to do something other than school, but I also thought very highly of the Iowa program, so I couldn't decide. I decided to rest my fate

in the outcome of a coin toss. The coin toss told me to take a year off and go to Nebraska for dental school.

I had been emailing David asking him questions about JFA and keeping him posted on the status of my dental admission. So when the coin told me to take a year off I was a little excited.

Justice For All was something I really wanted to do and it was now a possibility. However, when I found out I would have to raise my own support my interest subsided almost completely. Asking people for financial aid was not something I liked to do.

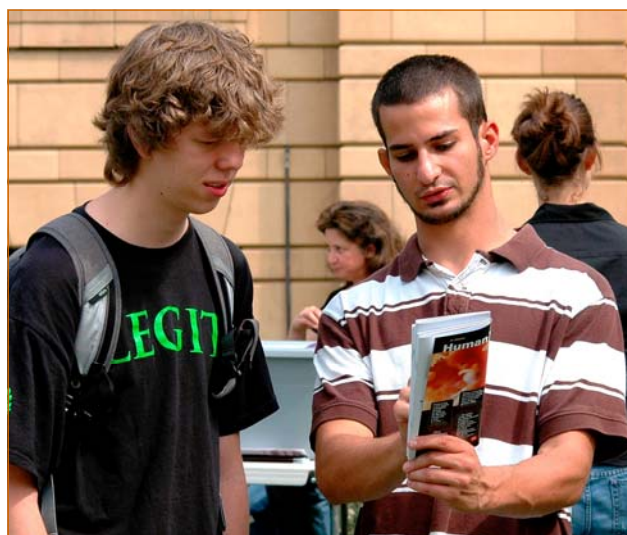
Still though, I thought it was a great thing that Justice For All did. David encouraged me to come on a mission trip with the organization in May. This sounded like a good idea but it meant I would have to come up with about \$200. And I would have to leave the day after I finished school. Being a poor busy college student, I felt I couldn't even do this.

I hadn't told David directly, but I knew it was highly unlikely that I would go on the mission trip and even more unlikely that I would do an internship. I focused on school the last few weeks and didn't think about my plans for the next year.

Until one day, I think it was the last week of school, I saw an email in my inbox with David's name. I thought to myself, "Oh yea, I should probably respond to 'that guy' and tell him I am not going to go with them on the trip." I figured I would wait until the morning to email him since I was worn out and ready to go home for the day.

I left the CSU library and mindlessly began to walk toward the bus stop. When I got over halfway to the stop I realized I was going to the far bus stop which would take me on a different bus than the closer stop. Both would get me home. I had no idea why I started to walk toward the further bus stop. But by the time I figured out my mistake, I was closer to the far bus stop so I just continued and got on that bus.

The bus was very crowded, so I sat toward the back. At the next stop I noticed a young man with Down Syndrome get on the bus. He sat toward the front of the bus.



My stop was one of the last so gradually the amount of people on the bus dissipated and seats around me opened up.

After a few minutes I noticed that one of these seats became occupied. I could sense someone sitting near me so I looked to my right and saw that it was the young man with Down Syndrome.

He had gotten out of his seat, moved to the back and was now staring right at me, with a huge smile on his face. He held his hand out to greet me and asked, "How's it going?"

"Good, how are you?" I asked, shaking his hand. He responded, "I'm good, just finished work."

I asked him what he did. He told me he was a dishwasher at a restaurant called "Farmer's Table." He was very proud of his accomplishments there, and he had a very positive outlook on life in general.

The bus stopped and I told him I had to get off. I told him goodbye as I shook his hand. He said to me, "Bye buddy" and then patted me on the back. I could sense disappointment in his voice, as if I had let him down by getting off the bus.

As I walked home his words kept replaying in my head. He had called me "buddy." We were friends. We'd only talked a few minutes, but he actually cared about my life. I was amazed by him.

My eyes welled up with tears because I knew something that gave me chills, something that broke my heart.

Something I couldn't possibly ignore. I knew that young man I had just talked to was very lucky, because in the United States 90 percent of children diagnosed with Down Syndrome in the womb are killed by abortion.

I also knew that abortion is a concealed injustice that needs to be exposed, and that not enough people are working to make abortion unthinkable.

My internship with JFA is not the end of a journey but the beginning of one.

The next morning I didn't hesitate to call David, firmly letting him know I needed a ticket to California.

I realized it wasn't that I couldn't go on the trip to California—it was that I was

unwilling to make sacrifices. I felt like the money was too much. I was too worn out from school. But those thoughts were selfish. Because the reward I got from going on the trip literally made it the best decision of my life to that point. (I'm not married so I can get away with saying this!)

Going on the trip inspired me to do a full time internship with Justice For All. Not only did my internship have a huge impact on other people's lives, I learned skills that I will take with me for life.



I learned how to raise money, how to have conversations with strangers, how to strengthen my existing relationships (I was amazed by the people willing to sponsor me and I learned that people actually liked getting letters from me!), and I really developed my own character.

I learned how to listen to people better, empathize with them, and truly take their concerns seriously. I truly believe that Justice For All is the best opportunity available in the country to have a meaningful impact on others and to develop your own character.

The employees at Justice For All are all amazing people. I am so lucky to have met such a special group of people. I plan to continue to work with JFA. I realize the battle against the culture of death will be tough and the road long and needs dedicated people.

I realize that it will take much more dedication on my part to fight against abortion and I will be very involved down the road. Thus, my internship with Justice For All culminates not with the end of a journey but with the beginning of one.