

LOVE EVERY HUMAN BEING

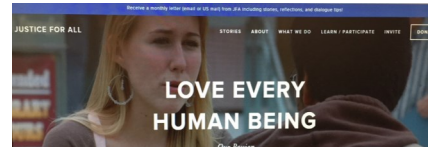
Creating A DIFFERENT KIND OF ADVOCATE, A DIFFERENT KIND OF CONVERSATION, and A DIFFERENT KIND OF WORLD, while loving every human being.

Tammy Cook's Justice For All Monthly Update

January 2016



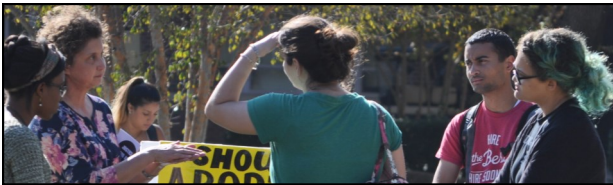
Miriam's story is just one of the gems on the Justice For All (JFA) newly designed website: www.jfaweb.org. Miriam's story illustrates our passion for loving every human being.



JFA's updated website: www.jfaweb.org

JFA's training program is centered around this key principle. The quality and logic of our arguments are crucial elements for having conversations with pro-choice advocates, but they must be coupled with love, or our words will fall on deaf ears.

Angel, a JFA volunteer, had an opportunity to practice those skills when she spoke last fall to Dani and Ari, two defensive pro-choice students at the University of Oklahoma (OU). They had voted "yes" to our poll question, "Should Abortion Remain Legal?" Despite Angel's nervousness, she patiently asked questions seeking to understand their views.



Left to right: Angel, Tammy (me), Ari, Brennan and Dani

Angel later wrote this about her experience:

... during the JFA training we learned about multiple common arguments. I remember using them in conversation with the two young ladies and the questions being effective to challenge their viewpoint.

Angel was doing a wonderful job lovingly challenging Dani and Ari's pro-choice arguments, and I observed her growing in confidence. There was a point in the conversation, however, when Dani stated that a woman has a right to an abortion because the unborn are not sentient. I took a cue from Angel and jumped in to assist her. After seeking to understand Dani's view better, I asked her to consider a different kind of requirement for our value based on our human equality.

Tammy: You've agreed that our common humanity is what gives us equal rights. So since the unborn are biologically human like us, shouldn't they also be included in the community of those who are treated equally with us?

Dani: Well, I see your point, but no. They also have to be sentient.

Though Dani agreed with my reasoning about human equality, she still had a hard time granting equal rights to non-sentient humans. But before I had a chance to respond to this specific point, Dani raised another concern.

Dani: But what about a woman who has an unexpected pregnancy and is forced to have a

child? That child will end up in the adoption system and age out and not have a good life.

I then realized that Dani didn't understand the differences between the process of infant adoption and the foster care system. I decided to clarify, but also build common ground with her where I could.

Tammy: I understand and share your concern for children who end up in the foster care system. Did you know that there are about one million abortions every year and it's my understanding that there are about one million couples waiting to adopt those infants? And it doesn't cost a birthmother anything to give her infant up for adoption. I've worked for adoption attorneys and many adoptive parents pay all medical expenses. And in situations where the birthmother has no place to live, they often pay living expenses.

The scowl on Dani's face slowly disappeared and she acknowledged that we have more in common than she ever thought possible. Even though she and Ari remained pro-choice, I believe this conversation was a success because both of them no longer ascribed to legal abortion through all nine months with no restrictions.

JFA's goal is to create a different kind of pro-life advocate and I feel that we did that with Angel. She proved that by coming alongside me to create a different kind of conversation with Dani and Ari.

Angel's reflection on her experience:

"It was very helpful having a mentor during the training seminar and during campus outreach. Learning from my mentor's experiences during the seminar and practicing some techniques with them really reinforced the material in a hands-on way. The security that having a mentor brought during campus outreach was also helpful because it removed a lot of the fear of talking to people and messing up. I got to use what I had learned but when I got stuck someone was right there to help me! Since the campus outreach I am no longer afraid to talk about abortion in everyday conversation. I no longer shy away from hard questions."
-Angel

"... [Tammy] extended tremendous grace and love to both of them ... they were unable to get the fight they were looking for, and they left unable to hate the pro-life movement ..."

But this story comes with a bonus. Brennon (pictured in the group picture on page one, and to the left with me) had been listening in on the entire conversation. He approached me afterward to tell me that he was fascinated at how much Dani and Ari's demeanor changed as they spoke with me. He said, "You extended tremendous grace and love to both of them ... they were unable to get the fight they were looking for, and they left unable to hate the pro-life movement."



Thank you for your support that allows us to share God's love with students like Dani, Ari, Brennon and Angel, and thank you for praying daily for our work.

In Christ,

Tammy

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A Different Kind of Conversation
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