



Passing the Baton

- Looking Back at 28 Years with JFA -



Tammy Cook's Monthly Update

August 2024

Dear Friends,

My journey at Justice For All (JFA) began because of my desire to do God's will and save the lives of His precious unborn children. But what motivated me to leave my job at a law firm and become a full-time missionary? The answer is that it wasn't just my love and tender heart for babies, but also my strong desire to right the wrongs of injustice. I may have an outward gentle spirit, but beneath the surface lies a passion to advocate for victims of injustice. What a joy it has been to be an advocate for the unborn, as well as their mothers, fathers, and families.

That passion still remains after 28 years, and I plan to always speak up for the unborn. But now it is time to give my body a rest. It is time for retirement, and time to pass the baton to others. My employment with JFA is coming to a close on October 30 and this is my farewell letter. It is bittersweet. After volunteering for JFA starting in 1993, I'm grateful that I trusted God and took a leap of faith to join the staff in 1996. He has taught me so many beautiful lessons.

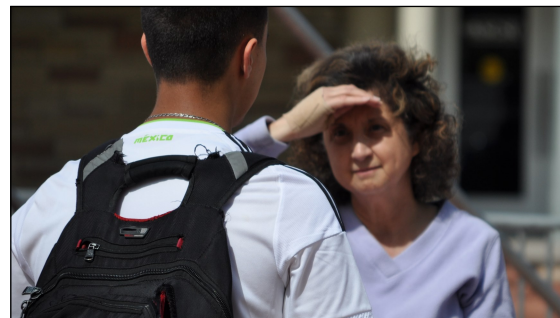
I discovered a passion for conversations with college students. This became a two-way learning process for me and the students. As my knowledge about pro-choice beliefs increased, I gained a deeper understanding. This allowed me to relate more effectively to pro-choice students, resulting in changed hearts. It was humbling to witness transformations right in front of me. Here are just a few examples of the many lives that were changed because of your partnership with me and JFA.

- ◆ Chase: We often used a poll question on campus to get students to stop and talk. When I spoke to Chase at WSU, he had just voted yes on our question, "Should Abortion Remain Legal?" He said he was pro-choice. By using JFA's Three Essential Skills (asking questions, listening, and finding common ground), I saw his pro-choice position slowly fade. After a 30-minute conversation he proclaimed, *Okay, you convinced me! I'm against abortion 100%!*



- ◆ Christina: I met Christina in 2004 at a campus in Colorado. She was incredibly angry with me at first. I learned that she had had three abortions. It was a tough conversation, but she slowly opened up and shared about years of emotional pain. Two days later, though, she came back and gave me a big hug saying, *Thank you for giving me my life back.*
- ◆ Dixon: Dixon's first statement to me was, *I don't think I have a say. We can't tell other people what to do [regarding abortion].* He was personally against abortion, but in favor of abortion staying legal. I asked Dixon to picture two buckets, and I proceeded to ask questions about choices that are merely personal preferences versus moral wrongs. This

became my *Two Buckets* story. By the end of the conversation, Dixon said, *Wow! This has been enlightening. You've given me a lot to think about. What if I hear of someone who is thinking about having an abortion? What should I do? Amazing!* In just a short 15-minute conversation, Dixon had a change of heart that also changed his life.



Talking with Dixon at Colorado State. I never wear sunglasses so I can have eye-to-eye conversations.

It has been a joy to see many other JFA trainers and volunteers bear similar fruit by using the *Two Buckets* story.

Some conversations never leave me. I think of Harper. He was one of about 25 protesters on a Texas campus in Spring 2020. He was adamantly pro-choice. The conversation lasted the better part of three hours. We made a genuine connection in the first hour, and this allowed him to feel safe enough to become vulnerable. Harper revealed the agony of his girlfriend's rape and subsequent abortion two years earlier and how helpless he had felt. I was able to empathize with Harper, and he was deeply moved. He told me that my kindness was completely unexpected. I went on to share the positive impact that God had had in my life during times of suffering. And by the end, he had changed his position from abortion being legal for *any reason* to abortion *only in the case of rape, or life of the mother*, which amount to a very small percentage of abortions (jfaweb.org/facts).

What did I do to help Harper change? I sought to find out WHY he believed abortion should be legal. I discovered it was personal to him. Honestly, I have found that it is personal to most people. Look for the root cause of someone's belief. Ask the question, *How did you come to believe the way you do?* I'm confident this could open doors in your conversations.

It has been an honor to have a respectful dialogue with *thousands* of college students since my first campus outreach in 1998. I enjoyed sharing my gifts of compassion, love, and the hope that we have in Jesus.



One of the greatest areas of growth that I experienced was my time as a speaker and mentor in JFA's training program. I never dreamed of being comfortable speaking to large groups. This was a profound accomplishment. My excitement grew when I became a certified mentor. This allowed me to go deeper with the people I was mentoring in our seminars and campus outreach events. This increased their confidence when they were ready to step out to start their own conversations on campus. I saw many of those same people blossom right in front of me as they ministered to souls thirsting for connection. I had the privilege of mentoring over 700 volunteers. The impact that I was able to see God making through me, however, was not limited to volunteers. JFA has employed over 40 trainers and interns during my time with JFA which means that I had the honor of sharing many of my personal lessons with them as they became trainers.

Over the years, I have taught in over a hundred JFA workshops, seminars, and presentations. Here are



just a few of the encouraging words that I received from participants:

- Tammy, you are amazing! This training helped me understand the human heart. We all want to be seen, loved, and accepted as we are. I cannot imagine anyone who would not benefit from your training. I especially love how you kept referring to the three core strategies. Bravo! - Lori (2020)

- I would highly recommend finding time to attend one of Tammy's training sessions ... The techniques that you learn on how to have meaningful discussions, especially with traditionally polarizing topics, are invaluable. I have actually used the skills taught when talking with my older kids when we are at odds and have been amazed at how well those conversations have gone. - Katie (2021)

- Very informative session today. Tammy has a gift. So compassionate. - Sharon (2021)

- Developing a caring conversation on common ground is a skill that will change the world! Thank you for living the Gospel and teaching others. - Brenda (2020)



JFA's website is a gold mine of beautiful stories. To read more about the stories that I've mentioned in this letter, and stories about the lives of others that I had the privilege of impacting, see the online version of this letter: jfaweb.org/tammy-farewell. You can see how your support has helped to impact lives like Christina, Dixon, Harper, Chase, Landon, Hudson, and so many more.



The past 28 years have been very good, but also quite challenging. During travel weeks, most days began before sunrise and ended well after the sun had set. I experienced mental, physical, and emotional exhaustion, time and time again. I stood outside for hours at a time having conversations in all weather extremes,

including unbearable cold. I was often away from my husband and children for a week or more. I endured health issues including surviving two life-threatening illnesses in 2010 and 2018.

Through all of this, *you* made the difference. There were so many grace-filled moments during the most difficult of times. It was then that I could feel that God was there, and so were you. I clung to God's word and your prayers as my safety net. Thank you for the thousands of prayers for me. They were a beautiful gift.

God always provided for me, especially in the darkest moments. Despite the numerous spiritual attacks, my faith and trust in God grew over the years. This has given me the gift for which I am most thankful: A deep and close personal relationship with God.

You also answered the call that God put on your heart when I invited you to join my support team. I am deeply honored by your support! Some of you have even been giving since before I began 28 years ago. I am speechless. This has been a true partnership—you were a much-needed support

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7



system. Your encouraging emails, handwritten notes, and cards were genuine lifelines. *Thank you.*

I am so thankful to God for such a dedicated spouse. Kevin has been incredible, lending support and encouragement through the years. When I was on the road, he cared for our children and the household, all while working a full-time job. They all made innumerable sacrifices, and I could not have done any of this without them. I am grateful for the love and support of our children and their spouses: Chad, Tierra, Brandon, Brittany, and Heath.

It has been an honor to partner with you. I would love to hear what it has meant to you to be a partner in this work. Please take a moment and send me a reflection at one of the addresses listed at the bottom of this page.

As I move on from JFA, would you consider continuing to support JFA's important work? I've enclosed a special form to help you communicate with JFA about your giving. This form is especially important if you have been giving an automatic gift to JFA, as these gifts continue until you instruct differently. You can send in the form or call the number provided on the form to tell JFA your preferences.

As I have reflected on these past 28 years, I feel one thing remains not quite done, and that is this: Would you allow me to say "thank you" personally one final time through a special event we've created just to allow me to express my appreciation to you in person? This is not a fundraising event. This will be a time to reminisce, show photos, and say thank you. I would enjoy seeing you if you can make it.

You are invited to a Donor Appreciation Open House to be held on Thursday, October 24. See the box for details.

This is my final letter, but JFA will continue to update you. I will miss you all. You will be in my prayers ... always. May God bless you for helping save lives. Farewell.

In Christ,

Tammy

DONOR APPRECIATION OPEN HOUSE

I would like to thank each of you for your contribution to our partnership this past 28 years.

October 24, 2024

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church
Mother Seton Hall
645 N. 119th Street West, Wichita, KS, 67235

6:00-8:00 pm

Light snacks provided.

Stories and Reflections:

I would love to hear your thoughts on our years of partnering together. You can share them here:

www.jfaweb.org/contact

Explore More Stories from Our Work Together and Share this Letter: jfaweb.org/tammy-farewell