

Seeds of Change at Georgetown
Against the Grain
Year-Round Student Activism

Special Double Issue!

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THE AMERICAN FEMINISTSM

Feminists for Life of America

FFL ON CAMPUS

The Revolution Continues

THE AMERICAN FEMINISTSM

Feminists for Life of America

"When a man steals to satisfy hunger, we may safely conclude that there is something wrong in society— so when a woman destroys the life of her unborn child, it is an evidence that either by education or circumstances she has been greatly wronged."

Mattie Brinkerhoff, *The Revolution*, September 2, 1869



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THE AMERICAN FEMINIST™ The quarterly magazine of Feminists for Life of America **Editor** Cat Clark **Editorial Board** Nicole Callahan, Laura Ciampa, Elise Ehrhard, Valerie Meehan Schmalz, Maureen O'Connor, Molly Pannell **Copy Editors** Donna R. Foster, Linda Frommer, Melissa Hunter-Kilmer, Coleen MacKay **Production Coordinator** Cat Clark **Creative Director** Lisa Toscani **Design/Layout** Sally A. Winn

Feminists for Life of America, 733 15th Street, NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20005; 202-737-3352; www.feministsforlife.org **President** Serrin M. Foster **Vice-President** Sally A. Winn

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Established in 1972, Feminists for Life of America is a nonsectarian, nonpartisan, grassroots organization that seeks real solutions to the challenges women face. Our efforts are shaped by the core feminist values of justice, nondiscrimination, and nonviolence. Feminists for Life of America continues the tradition of early American feminists such as Susan B. Anthony, who opposed abortion. Feminists for Life of America recognizes that abortion is a reflection that our society has failed to meet the needs of women. We are dedicated to systematically eliminating the root causes that drive women to abortion—primarily lack of practical resources and support—through holistic, woman-centered solutions. Women deserve better than abortion.

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REVOLUTION ON CAMPUS

The History of Feminists for Life's College Outreach Program An Interview with Serrin M. Foster

Nicole M. Callahan
College Outreach Program Coordinator

Soon after Serrin Foster became the first executive director of Feminists for Life on April 4, 1994, she began delivering speeches on college campuses. Her speech, "The Feminist Case *Against* Abortion," was originally designed to educate students about our rich 200-year-old pro-life feminist history—something missing from most women's studies courses. Foster credits FFL past president Rosemary Bottcher's speech, "The Origins of Pro-Life Feminism," for much of the early text for her own first campus talks. "The Feminist Case *Against* Abortion" quickly evolved, identifying current problems and proposing solutions for women in the workplace, women who were abandoned, and poor women.

Simultaneously, FFL Board member Marion Syversen shared with collegians her moving story of rape, domestic violence, and two abortions as a teen in "One Woman's Story." "One of my earliest speeches was at Wellesley," says Foster. "Marion spoke before me. I had never heard her story before and couldn't believe what she had gone through during her teens. I saw the most stoic pro-choice student melt listening to her story. There wasn't a dry eye in the room—including mine."

Together with board members Nancy O'Brien, Maureen O'Connor and Lisa Toscani and with input from then FFL-Ohio president Marilyn Kopp, Foster developed special ads to reach college students that would challenge abortion rhetoric by turning it on its head. The ads asked whether abortion advocates had delivered on their promises and whether a student without practical resources really has a "free choice." One ad revealed Susan B. Anthony's pro-life stance; another, that women who have had one abortion are at higher risk of experiencing it again. Others provided practical information for pregnant women. Toscani married the provocative content to stunning design.

O'Brien and Foster spent many nights poring over the issues and hammering out ideas. O'Connor, a talented wordsmith, polished every word. Toscani, today FFL's creative director, enhanced and enlivened the written word with her genius at design. At the unveiling of the first series of ads in 1995, FFL state leaders gasped.

Students needed a quick reference sheet of pro-life quotes from early American feminists. In 1996, Toscani designed the "Voices of Our Feminist Foremothers" poster, which debuted as the center spread of *The American Feminist*.

In the years that followed, Foster and Toscani expanded the ad series to cover more issues.

"Having no money for expensive focus groups, we simply sent our interns out to ask their classmates for their opinions on the ads. We went to American Collegians for Life's leadership and asked for their input. It was smart, effective, and free," said Foster.

A young activist, Elise Ehrhard, took charge of the internship program. Elise took the job so seriously—setting up criteria, demanding writing samples, checking backgrounds—that the interns were stunned to find out that she was a student herself, attending George Washington University.



Wellesley Alliance for Life members wearing Women Deserve Better® t-shirts in 2004.

FFL gave interns the opportunity to participate at the forefront of the debate. They attended strategy meetings and successfully lobbied for the Violence Against Women Act, worked to improve child support enforcement, and fought against child exclusion provisions in welfare reform.

Andrea Milanowski Robb represented FFL at many welfare reform meetings. Andrea recalls: "Interns from women's groups that supported abortion approached me quietly and eagerly asked me to tell them more about Feminists for Life." Andrea now chairs FFL's Board of Directors.

As Foster went from campus to campus, she noticed that there were virtually *no* pregnant college students. "I started asking the students if they knew pregnant women at their school," she recalls. "While they all knew someone who *had* been pregnant, they had never seen a *visibly* pregnant woman or woman with a child."

Foster knew where the pregnant students were going. “If they wanted to stay in school, they had abortions,” she said.

As the program began to develop, former FFL board member Jeanne Pryor spoke up and told her own story. Pryor had become pregnant while attending college. She and her boyfriend had split up and were not getting back together. She was a graduate student, heavily burdened with student loans, and living with two other women in a small apartment. Foster was struck by Pryor’s words: “I looked around my campus. The school was building a huge new building for the basketball players. And I wondered to myself, where would I live if I had my baby? What about child care? Is there maternity coverage in my student health care plan?”

At the time Pryor was pregnant, day care costs in Washington started at \$6,000 a year, and day care was only available after the child reached the age of two. (Infant care is still very expensive and unavailable.) There was no family housing on campus, and there was no maternity coverage in the student health care plan. Pryor, a well-educated woman, did not want to get an abortion but found herself looking for an abortion clinic, because she could not figure out how to manage having a baby. Under the stress, Pryor miscarried. Years later her words were shared with others in one of FFL’s best-known College Outreach ads: “Without housing on campus for me and my baby, without on-site day care, without maternity coverage in my health insurance, it sure doesn’t feel like I have much of a choice.”

Foster was haunted by this powerful story of unmet need: “Why hadn’t anyone else thought of it before? Then I realized someone had—abortion clinic operators.”

About the same time, a 1996 Gallup poll revealed the “revolutionary impact” that women’s attendance at four-year colleges was having on their attitudes toward abortion. The college experience had little impact on men’s attitudes toward abortion—in polls, men consistently favor abortion more than women—but it dramatically changed women’s views.

“According to the poll, 47% of women were pro-life going into college. By the time they completed two years of college, 59% were pro-choice. But by the time women graduated, 73% were pro-choice.”

This was important information, because it disproved the notion that children of educated people entered college already favoring abortion. “We could see the gradual acceptance of abortion while women were in college. College campuses produce future lawyers and judges, doctors, educators, journalists, and future employers, and three out of four women who graduated from college supported legalized abortion. That is how support for abortion perpetuates itself,” Foster explains. “Now we had to understand why it happened. A lack of resources and support for pregnant students was only part of the story.”

The move toward accepting abortion in college was also a result of a generation of women who had worked hard and sacrificed their families to achieve tenure and who wanted to pass on this distorted “right” to abortion in order to facilitate “success.” Students who had a different point of view were openly criticized and privately penalized with poor grades for papers that opposed abortion. When an Antioch College student wrote that early American feminists opposed abortion, for example, her women’s studies professor



accused her of fabrication and demanded that she provide *original* copies of the suffragist newspaper *The Revolution* as documentation.

Through its work on Capitol Hill, FFL had already established credentials as a women's advocacy organization. FFL had worked hard to help pass the Violence Against Women Act and the Family and Medical Leave Act and had lobbied with other women's groups for enhanced child support enforcement and the defeat of child exclusion provisions in welfare reform.

But FFL was searching for a more direct way to be a catalyst for change in women's lives. Since FFL members Eunice Kennedy Shriver and Sargent Shriver had remarkable experience in addressing the needs of marginalized individuals through the Peace Corps and Special Olympics, FFL sought their advice. They agreed to meet with Foster and Ehrhard to discuss FFL's future direction. Ehrhard remembers: "Serrin was describing our various lobbying initiatives, when Eunice Kennedy Shriver asked, 'Which group of women are at highest risk for abortion?' We knew it was college-age women who had the highest rate of abortion. So Kennedy Shriver said, 'Focus on them. Find out why they have abortions and what they need.'"

"With so many other groups reaching out to teenagers to prevent pregnancy," Foster explained, "or to those in poverty, or to women in need of post-abortion healing and counseling, we realized that the most at-risk group of women—college students—was not the source of any other group's focus." Inspired by Jeanne Pryor's story and the growing realization that so many college women, like her, felt pressured into abortion, Foster and Toscani urged the rest of the board to focus on advocating for college women.

"The main thing that made us different? We were *feminists*. So while other pro-life groups at that time had a difficult time getting heard, we had unique access," Foster explained. "While it was difficult for a pro-life group that was *feminist* to get funding, or a feminist group that was *pro-life* to get funding, we had one huge advantage. We could go where 'no man had gone before.' We could advocate for women, emphasize the need for creative, life-affirming, woman-centered solutions. And we could reach students on campus with our powerful feminist message."

Foster began asking students to think about what could be done to inform and assist pregnant and parenting students better. She also

Foster was haunted by this powerful story of unmet need: "Why hadn't anyone else thought of it before? Then I realized someone had—abortion clinic operators."

wanted to learn what happened at college health clinics when students first discovered they were pregnant. As a start, she went to the Washington, D.C., school Pryor had attended and met the health clinic director and staff.

"I told the staff that we weren't there to debate abortion; we wanted to give women the 'rest of the choices,' as well as the practical resources and support they needed to make those choices," Foster says. She asked about what happened when a woman goes to the health clinic for a pregnancy test, and learned that the automatic reaction to a positive pregnancy test was understanding and com-





Eunice Kennedy Shriver, founder of the Special Olympics, advised FFL to focus on women at highest risk.

passion, but that no resources or information about available support were offered. Staff knew that boyfriends weren't usually supportive, parents were devastated, and having a baby would likely compel a woman to drop out of school.

"That's when I learned that the local abortion clinic holds an open house for campus clinic staff. They show them their clean facilities, give assurances of comfort during the abortion, and accept all credit cards to make it as easy as possible. The director said she was relieved to know there were places like that in case her

daughter needed their services."

Foster inquired about available resources and support—on and off campus—for women who want to explore the option of having a baby as a married or single mother or placing the baby for adoption. Since Pryor's graduation, her school had begun to include maternity coverage in its health care plan. "But what about housing and day care? Did they refer to the local pregnancy resource center? Evidently local pregnancy resource centers and school health services had never contacted each other.

"After establishing the idea that no one—pro-choice or pro-life—wants a woman to drop out of college to have a child, or be forced into an abortion because of desperation, I asked how they felt about also offering pregnancy alternatives."

After getting a lot of helpful feedback about the creation of a health clinic kit, a physician's assistant lingered as the rest of the staff left. "She closed the door and told me, 'When I heard that an anti-choice representative was coming to our office, I couldn't believe it. But you've come in and asked my opinion, and you've made me realize that if I believe in choice, I have to believe in *all* the choices. Until now I have only thought of *choice* as *abortion*. You didn't come in preaching or arguing. Because of the way you have approached us, I'm willing to work with you.'"

Next FFL turned to Megan McMullen (now Hamberger), then executive director of the Northwest Pregnancy Center in Washington, and asked her to help create a guide for health clinics so that their staff could better understand the pregnant student's situation and give other options. The guide encouraged clinic staff to ask questions and advise the student and to find out what support she had from her parents, her boyfriend, the faculty, and the administration.

Nancy O'Brien came up with the idea of a Rolodex card listing abortion alternatives or pregnancy resources, and a set was included in a kit for all clinic staff. With these resources, clinic staff would be encouraged to give pregnant students "the rest of the choices." The clinic kit also included FFL's College Outreach ad, "When She's in Trouble, He's in Trouble Too," so women and men could be educated on their rights and paternity establishment. An FFL brochure called "You Are Not Alone" (which later became the

"You Have Choices" brochure) was created to be given to every pregnant woman. In addition to information about paternity establishment, the brochure included toll-free numbers for national pregnancy resource centers.

In the fall and winter of 1996, FFL introduced its university health clinic kits. Foster laughs, "That summer, we asked donors to 'Send a Kit to Campus' instead of 'sending a kid to camp!'" Staff and interns sent 650 clinic kits to hundreds of top colleges and universities, FFL state and other pro-life leaders, and pro-life students. FFL was bringing the discussion to college campuses in a new way, focusing on woman-centered solutions and beginning to teach pro-life students and university representatives how to work with pregnant and parenting students to give them better support and services.

In a January 1997 story about how FFL was working to address the needs of poor, abandoned, and working mothers, *Los Angeles Times* reporter Melissa Healy wrote, "Now, the Feminists for Life are targeting colleges, where the women most likely to get abortions are. The Alan Guttmacher Institute, Planned Parenthood's research arm, reports that of the 1.5 million abortions performed in the nation yearly, at least one in five is to a woman in college or a graduate school. Some 44% are performed on women in the 18-to-24 age group, and many are in college." AGI also revealed that 1 out of 10 women between the ages of 18 and 24 would become pregnant that year.

By that time, several dynamic and enthusiastic Georgetown University student volunteers were working for FFL. The time seemed ripe to organize the first Pregnancy Resource Forum at Georgetown University, to bring students and administrators together. Pro-choice students who had originally come to protest the event were invited to participate by forum moderator Serrin Foster, and the event became a model for future Pregnancy Resource Forums across the country. (See page 12 for full story.)

As Foster hosted more and more FFL Pregnancy Resource Forums, FFL developed a survey for students to evaluate their own colleges. Building on the success of the health clinic kit, FFL began developing more components every year. A feminist history kit was simultaneously unveiled.

Foster asked Pamela Smith, M.D., then-president of the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists, to help with a "right to know" brochure about abortion. Dr. Smith came up with the idea of a questionnaire, which became the Pregnancy Decision Questionnaire. While developing the questionnaire, Foster had it reviewed by a



Dr. Pamela Smith, former president of the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists, helped design the Pregnancy Decision Questionnaire.

former abortion provider and pro-choice healing therapists. The same people also offered input for the new “You Have Choices” brochure. An attorney at the National Women’s Law Center proofed information about child support. “Going to people and organizations on both sides of the abortion debate gave our materials credibility that no one could argue with,” said Foster.

Although the College Outreach Program was in its early days, FFL’s message was quick to resound. The program continued to grow as FFL acquired new information and found channels to share it with college communities. Foster shares one of her stories: “The first time I went to Swarthmore, I could sense the hostility. So I sat with the crowd and introduced myself. When I finally got up and started my speech, talking about pro-life feminist history and what we could do to help women, you could feel the room just *turn*—people who wanted to dislike us were thinking, ‘What can

In 1997 Planned Parenthood’s *INSider* called FFL’s College Outreach Program the “**newest and most challenging concept in anti-choice organizing**” and predicted it could “**have a profound impact**” on college campuses “as well as Planned Parenthood’s public education and advocacy efforts.”

we do about that?” Afterwards everybody stayed for the reception, and we had the greatest discussion—it was the first time I ever heard anybody say, ‘I agree with 95% of your message.’ We actually heard from one student that the university was paying students \$300, always through unofficial back channels, so that they could have abortions.”

The day after Foster’s speech, the headline of Swarthmore’s *Phoenix* screamed, “FIRST PRO-LIFER IN FIVE YEARS VISITS.”

“I spent the night in a guest house at Swarthmore, and at breakfast the next morning a professor from Oberlin was there. Her daughter was the leader of the Feminist Majority on campus, and we were talking about the early feminists. This woman was a feminist history professor who knew that the early American feminists opposed abortion. So I explained that FFL was trying to encourage people to think about pregnancy and parenting resources and what we could do for women.

“She said to me, ‘This is just the tip of the iceberg. The problem begins with the administration and the way they treat women.’ She revealed that women on the tenure track at colleges across the country knew that if they wanted to achieve tenure they should never go on maternity leave.” Hostility toward pregnant women in the higher education workforce was very evident. Colleges that spoke a “good game” about family leave in public policy classes had no maternity leave policies for their own employees. Social pressure also came from the women themselves. After all, women had worked very hard for the sisterhood to make it in the workplace—

especially in higher education—so there was intense pressure not to betray that goal by dropping out and having children. This lack of support for pregnancy and parenting choices, which reportedly started at the top and worked its way down to the students, was later confirmed by a female professor at a Washington, D.C., university. She was the only woman she knew who had achieved tenure despite having a baby.

In 1997 Planned Parenthood’s *INSider* called FFL’s College Outreach Program the “newest and most challenging concept in anti-choice organizing” and predicted it could “have a profound impact” on college campuses “as well as Planned Parenthood’s public education and advocacy efforts.” They were right. And when Foster had an opportunity to challenge Planned Parenthood’s president Gloria Feldt in person, she took the opportunity to invite Planned Parenthood to champion “the rest of the choices.”

Typically FFL steers away from debates, preferring to build bridges and a road map for resources to support pregnant and parenting women. But there was one notable exception. In 2000, at the invitation of former Sen. Alan K. Simpson, Foster participated in a panel discussion on abortion at the Harvard University Kennedy School of Government. She was joined by Dr. Bernard Nathanson, co-founder of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL) and former abortion provider who has since become a pro-life activist; Gloria Feldt, president of Planned Parenthood, the largest abortion provider in the country; and Bill Baird, director of the Pro-Choice League.

Foster also visited the University of Florida and Florida State in 2000. This was the first time she was confronted by the pain of now-adult children who miss the siblings they never knew: “At both colleges, I was approached after the event by young women who shared their personal loss from their mothers’ abortions. One young woman’s mother had aborted the children before her, and she told me it made her wonder if her parents regretted her birth. The second told me that she loved her mother but was also angry with her for aborting her siblings. She thanked me for giving her some understanding of why this happened and for enabling her to reconcile her feelings of love (and now forgiveness) for her mother with her belief that abortion is wrong. She had finally found a home for her pro-life feminist convictions.”



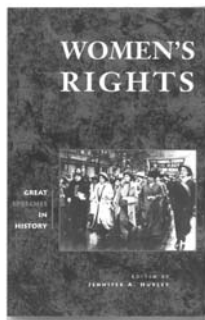
Foster debating abortion proponents Bill Baird and Planned Parenthood of America President Gloria Feldt at the Harvard Forum in 2000 while the moderator, former Sen. Alan Simpson (center) and teammate Dr. Bernard Nathanson (right) look on.

Then the avalanche began. More and more students approached Foster with their stories of aborted siblings. Abortion advocates never anticipated that siblings would miss their 40 million sisters and brothers. Their anger and deep sense of loss are palpable.

In the spring of 2001, FFL ads at a community fair impressed a future donor to offer enormous support for an ad campaign. FFL decided to use the funding to reach at-risk collegians. In subsequent years the ad campaign reached 4 million students across the country, helping to redirect the debate. "For the first time," Foster said, "enormous numbers of students began to *Question Abortion*."SM They realized it was possible to be both pro-woman and pro-life. Even those who didn't want to protect women and children from abortion legally, agreed that *Women Deserve Better*[®] than abortion."

In ensuing years FFL created several kits and made them available online to assist student activists, including instructions for hosting successful lectures and Pregnancy Resource Forums and an orientation kit for new or expanding student pro-life groups. Event preparation and follow-up instructions help students every step of the way. All FFL and *Women Deserve Better*[®] ads are available online and in various sizes. A frequently asked questions (FAQ) section of the website helps with the ever-increasing volume of questions from students. FFL also created a counseling kit for residential advisors, chaplains, and psychological counselors, who may be approached by a pregnant student in need of support.

A decade after the Washington, D.C., office opened and the College Outreach Program began, many other pro-life groups have begun their own college projects. Serrin Foster continues to present "The Feminist Case *Against* Abortion." It has been reprinted many times and heard in numerous colleges across the United States and internationally. In 2001 it was included in an anthology entitled "Women's Rights," part of a "Great Speeches in History" series. (Pictured below.) Portions of the speech are echoed by dozens of other national and local speakers and writers. Foster's decade-old mantra that "women deserve better" than abortion has turned into a national campaign with other partners who share the good news. It has inspired the pro-life movement to become visibly pro-woman. Today FFL's Vice President Sally Winn also travels the United States, sharing her story of how she made it as a parenting student in college.



Since the original ad series premiered in 1996, FFL's campaign has reached more than 5 million students. Today FFL's College Outreach Program series and the *Women Deserve Better*[®] ads are recognized by many as the best written and designed in the pro-life or women's movements. In *Human Life Review*, Kathryn Jean Lopez wrote that FFL's "women-focused philosophy that undergirds the

Women Deserve Better[®] campaign is the most compelling message the pro-life movement has taken up possibly since Roe.... Sleek, smart brochures and posters and other promotional materials are aimed at catching the eye of the young woman who may not be picking up promotional material at church.... The look and feel of the campaign just exudes coolness." Lopez called the *Women*

Deserve Better[®] slogan "potentially revolutionary."

Other pro-life leaders often credit FFL as the spark that drives the rest of the movement to strive to improve its look and incorporate the pro-woman message—and it is forcing abortion advocates to scramble to find new ways to sell abortion.

The FFL website started as a volunteer effort by then FFL-Virginia president Coleen MacKay and has been redesigned twice with pro-life student leaders and at-risk collegians in mind. Today MacKay answers questions online as FFL's Information Management Specialist.

Since opening the office in Washington, D.C., in 1994, FFL has trained a generation of committed pro-woman, pro-life activists, giving them the tools and the information they need to support women and children. Former interns and pro-life student activists now own their own family-friendly businesses and serve as teachers and health providers at various nonprofits, in pro-life and women's organizations, and at all levels of government. Some have gone on to become lawyers to better protect women and children. Others are journalists who want to give women a better, truer voice. Many celebrate womanhood by having and adopting children of their own. Others, like FFL board member Jessica O'Connor-Petts, found adoption to be an "empowering option" for birthmothers.

Pregnancy Resource Forums have been held at dozens of top colleges and universities around the country, starting revolutions on their own.

The Alan Guttmacher Institute wonders why since 1994—the year FFL's Washington office opened—there has been a 30% drop in abortions among college-educated women, and 63% of women and men between the ages of 18 and 24 now identify themselves as pro-life.

Connecting the dots, Kathryn Jean Lopez wrote, "It's no accident, and perhaps the recent decline no coincidence, that Feminists for Life, for instance, has focused on college outreach...Because college women are most likely to have abortions, this is a remarkably significant audience and important success."

The revolution started by the early American feminists, who worked to protect women and children from abortion and who advocated higher education for women, would certainly approve of this revolution on campus. ○



FFL Vice President Sally Winn with her daughters at the 2002 March for Life.

What students are saying about FFL's College Outreach Program...

Diana Ramirez, University of San Diego, California

"[Serrin Foster's presentation] was mind-blowing. I came in pro-choice and I was defensive about it, but she really made me think that maybe I am pro-life."

Shirley Tom, University of Michigan-Dearborn

"We had Sally Winn visit our campus this year. I think that educating students about this multi-faceted issue is so important—especially since FFL promotes ideas that are completely new to most people. I don't think a single person in the room, either pro-life or pro-choice, had ever heard FFL's pro-woman perspective before and I really believe that minds were changed that day."

Michael Sciscenti, Johns Hopkins University, Maryland

"FFL's College Outreach Program has enabled Johns Hopkins Voice for Life to reach out to a whole new group of college students. Serrin Foster challenged students in the spring of 2003 when she presented the 'Feminist Case *Against* Abortion.' The following semester Sally Winn moderated a Pregnancy Resource Forum, which brought together administrators, Voice for Life, and even Students for Choice to discuss the feasibility of being a student parent at Hopkins."

"Most recently we have been running FFL's College Outreach ads. The ads have helped to alter the nature of the abortion debate at Hopkins. We are no longer only talking about how abortion takes the life of the unborn. We now frame the debate on how abortion is a sign that we have failed women and that we need to work harder to provide them with the emotional and financial support they deserve so that they are not coerced by circumstances to choose abortion."

Laura Pierson, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

"The mission of Feminists for Life in exposing the illegitimacy of abortion's role in true feminism is one that is foreign to many students but that is spreading rapidly and playing an integral role in revealing the truth to many young people. Many thanks to you...as we work to spread the word that abortion ends a life, hurts women, and pits women unjustly against their children."

Natalie Nardelli, University of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

"FFL's College Outreach ads do an excellent job of covering the spectrum of issues within the abortion debate. Some of them go straight to the heart of abortion's most complex aspects, while others highlight the most fundamental arguments. Most importantly, they encourage the reader to re-examine her/his ideas about abortion and that's what you want, to get people thinking. They are a great resource for communicating the pro-woman, pro-life message."

"The mission and efforts made by Feminists for Life through the College Outreach campaign have given me great hope for the future of women and the pro-life cause. The 'Refuse to Choose' message rings true for all who believe in the feminist principles of nonviolence, non-discrimination, and justice for all. Feminists for Life had found what I could not find the words to say: that WOMEN DESERVE BETTER® than abortion. No truer statement exists that could more clearly spread the meaning and motive of our movement. Women *do* deserve better."

"I have found my pro-life home. Thanks for finding the words."



Rick Hoffman, Oberlin College, Ohio

"When Ohio Right to Life contacted me about being a part of an Ohio tour for FFL Vice President Sally Winn, I only had an inkling of what Feminists for Life was about. Sally did a great job. She is very dynamic, very powerful, funny too. I still hear people at Oberlin talking about her and the whole FFL message. Now we have pulled off a successful lecture and are in the midst of hosting a Pregnancy Resource Forum at Oberlin College. In preparation for the forum, I met with one of the co-chairs of Oberlin Students United for Reproductive Freedom. The pro-choice group is going to co-sponsor our forum! ...That's one of the things I love about Feminists for Life... how their pro-woman philosophy is able to cut across boundaries to work for women because women deserve better than abortion."

Elizabeth Gramlich, University of Virginia

"I am excited about the outreach that FFL does at colleges and universities. The advertisements placed in college newspapers have particularly powerful messages. Women's voices about abortion, 30+ years after Roe, are finally being heard. Students are still forming the ideas that will shape how they live and work in the future, and there is no better time to reach them than in college. FFL has helped to form my ideas about true feminism, and I feel confident that thousands of other students at schools across the nation are being impacted in similar ways."

I hope that the College Outreach Program ad campaign continues in order to reach more and more students with FFL's important message about women and abortion. Bravo on the work you've done so far!"

Samantha Kepler, University of Virginia

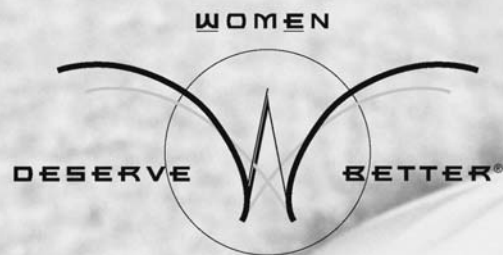
"The Pregnancy Resource Forum was a rewarding experience for everyone involved: the organizers, the panelists, and the participants. Many of the panelists (some of whom are pro-choice) and participants came up to us afterwards and thanked us for hosting the event. Serrin Foster's talk last spring and the Forum this fall really helped us focus our efforts for women at UVA. There were so many resources available through the University, but the left hand didn't know what the right hand was doing. Using the information gathered at the forum, we are writing a pregnancy resources brochure, which will compile all the resources available at UVA in one publication! The brochure will then be made available to Student Health, Planned Parenthood, the Pregnancy Center, the Dean's Office and the Women's Center. In addition, we are currently working to expand our service to women at UVA through baby item drives, volunteer babysitting and childcare initiatives".

"The forum helped us personally recommit to some of the goals pro-life groups often neglect.... Our duty as a social service group is first and foremost to women and children. The event helped me gain confidence in this mission. Just last month our group was contacted by a student in crisis pregnancy. Because of the resources I learned about at the forum, I was able to help her through the crisis and refer her to people who could help her out."

"I would recommend the Pregnancy Resource Forum to any group that is willing to commit to serving women at their respective institutions. You must work hard before, during and after to make it worthwhile. What you have to realize is that the forum isn't an end in itself, it is just the beginning."

Abortion is a reflection
that we have not met
the needs of women.

Women deserve better
than abortion.



www.WomenDeserveBetter.com

Katherine Quah, Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania

"Many have thanked us for bringing some diversity to an all-women's college that is overwhelmingly pro-choice and for voicing an opinion that is unpopular and often goes unheard. The College Outreach Program's approach of taking both a women-centered and life-affirming position helps combat the stereotype that those who are pro-life are offering no help for women and only care about the child.... Abortion does not alleviate the problems that make a woman think abortion is the only option, and I think these [College Outreach] ads are empowering to women and challenge people to think about whether abortion is really the best we can offer women."



Women Deserve Better is a registered trademark of Feminists for Life of America

Kelly Kroll, Boston College, Massachusetts

"The ads comment on basically every aspect of the pro-life movement. They talk about how women feel after an abortion, how abortion kills a child, how rape is not an 'excuse' for allowing abortion, and even how the founders of the women's movement felt about abortion. This approach is very helpful in talking with a wide audience of people who all think of different things when the word abortion is mentioned. They allow you to start talking to someone who is not pro-life at a point where they feel passionate and work from there."

Sabrina Derrington, University of California-Davis School of Medicine

"I think your message is unique, exquisitely logical, sensitively discussed and professionally presented... Your website and the posters of your College Outreach ads were very helpful as I was trying to formulate the purpose statement for Student Physicians for Life; they certainly made me rethink the abortion debate. Thank you!"

Erin Galloway, University of Maryland

"My pro-choice roommate came to the symposium [sponsored by Feminists for Life and American Collegians for Life] and left with a Women Deserve Better® t-shirt and tears in her eyes saying she had a new view on life. Thank you!"





**Nicole M. Callahan, Coordinator
FFL College Outreach Program**

Seeds of Change at Georgetown

When Feminists for Life President Serrin Foster began lecturing on college campuses, she soon realized that few had ever seen a pregnant student, but most knew someone who had been pregnant. Where had all the pregnant students gone? To abortion clinics, almost every one.

The anguished story of a former FFL board member (see page 3), who found herself contemplating abortion when she became pregnant while a grad student, brought some harsh realities to light. Foster couldn't stop thinking about what she had said: "Without housing, day care, and maternity coverage, it didn't seem like much of a choice."

Serrin and other FFL staffers began talking to the interns in the office, several of whom were students at Georgetown University. The interns confirmed that pregnant college students were often unaware of or misinformed about the services available to them. Vanessa Clay, Preeya Noronha, and their fellow GU Right to Life student leaders realized that they could help build a bridge between the students and the university—and directly combat abortion on their campus.

"We wanted everyone to be asking, 'What can I do to help pregnant women?'" Clay says. "Feminists for Life and I were a very good fit.... I was concerned with how to make being a parent an option for women on campus, and that is exactly what the organization was concerned with. I've always been really impressed with FFL.... It's always been addressing the real issue: These are the challenges facing pregnant women today, and what are we going to do to help?"

FFL's inaugural Pregnancy Resource Forum was taking shape. Clay and Noronha recall, "There was this idea floating around campus that the administration was hostile towards pregnant students. As pro-life students, this was very upsetting. So we set out to discover the truth, and what we found out was, in fact, the university was quite responsive to the needs of students. We shared our concern about these misconceptions among the student body. We approached the key people in the university administration and asked if they would be willing to participate in a Pregnancy Resource Forum. They agreed and many new services grew out of the dialogue that began with the Pregnancy Resource Forum."

"When we were planning the forum, we learned that there were so many different points of entry where a pregnant student could look for help—she might go to Health Services, she might go to Campus Ministry, she might talk to her Resident Advisor, she might see a counselor," Clay says. "So we tried to invite panelists that a pregnant student might see if she were looking for pregnancy services."

Representatives from Health Education Services, Residential Life, Campus Ministry and the nearby Northwest Pregnancy Center participated in the first forum in 1997, which was moderated by Serrin Foster, then FFL Executive Director. Carol Day, Director of Health Education Services at Georgetown, has served as a panelist at Georgetown Pregnancy Resource Forums since their inception. She says that the annual event presents "an important opportunity to let people know that there are students choosing to be parents and that the university will support that. It is a good opportunity to say, 'You might not think about [pregnancy resources], but we do, and we're trying to encourage students and let them know that pregnancy and parenthood is a reasonable option for them.'"

Clay concurs: "The real crux of the issue is 'How do you help women on campus and make resources available to them?'" She remembers that there were many misconceptions "floating around campus"—that pregnant students would be kicked out of the dorms and forced to transfer from the university, for example—"so the primary goals of the forum were to raise awareness of pregnancy resources and also dispel some of these campus rumors."

Georgetown pro-life students were excited to plan the forum and discuss ways to help pregnant women on their campus. They knew that promotion and a good turnout would be crucial to the event's success. They wanted as many members of the Georgetown community as possible to come and brainstorm and offer suggestions. Clay remembers that FFL and the Georgetown student coordinators devised a "catchy ad campaign" to get the word out about the forum: "We made posters with phrases that would grab attention—'Where have all the pregnant women gone?' and 'SEX ... can lead to pregnancy!' And we sent personal invitations to every single

female student on campus." On the night of the Pregnancy Resource Forum, the auditorium was full.



Preeya Noronha and Vanessa Clay, former FFL interns and Georgetown University Right to Life leaders, meet again in 2004.

There were several pro-choice students protesting in the foyer outside the auditorium, Clay recalls. "Serrin invited them in to be part of the discussion. She said, 'I understand that we're on two separate sides of the table, but providing services to women is one thing we can agree on—so please come in and hear what needs to be said.' Serrin made it clear that we were there to talk about what pregnant students face at Georgetown."

To keep all panelists and audience members focused on the important objectives of the forum, Foster started by establishing the ground rules, "This is *not* a debate over abortion—or even contraception. This event is intended to identify and develop resources for pregnant women, to empower them to make life-affirming choices."

Georgetown student Kerry Francis began the discussion by reading a letter from a student who had become pregnant and could not find adequate support or pregnancy resources at Georgetown, even after visiting Georgetown University Hospital.

In preparation for the forum, Clay and her fellow student coordinators researched pregnancy services and support at Georgetown, but even they were surprised by some of the information brought to light at the forum. "If a student got pregnant, there was a very disjointed response," Clay says. "If Counseling Services saw somebody who was pregnant, they didn't necessarily follow up or encourage her to talk to Student Health or her professors... and then they couldn't work with the woman to come up with a plan. There was

nobody to say 'These are some of your options, this is how you can make this work.' Once a student decides to have her child and knows that she is going to be out of class at a certain time, someone should be her advocate, speak on her behalf, help her to figure out how she is going to organize her schedule around her pregnancy and her child."

where have all the pregnant students gone?

Housing was another central issue of the forum. Students with children could not reside in the dorms, and off-campus housing might not be affordable for young or unmarried parents. Confidential pregnancy testing was also a concern. Students did not want a pregnancy test or consultation to appear on insurance bills sent home to their parents.

"I remember the panelists were surprised by a lot of the misconceptions among students on campus," Clay says. "A huge part of what we tried to do with the forum was raising awareness of pregnancy resources. But [the forum] also gave us a lot to work towards. It gave us a better resolve. We made pregnancy an issue to be discussed on campus. I was surprised that we made such a big difference.... There really were progressive steps made by the university to address the concerns of the students."

Some of these progressive steps included employing a full-time Pregnancy Services Counselor at Health Education Services, who would offer pregnancy counseling as well as rape and sexual assault counseling for women. Health Education Services also began offering free home pregnancy tests and pregnancy resource information and instituted a 24-hour pregnancy hot line so that anxious students could get help at any time, day or night. GU Right to Life started a volunteer babysitting co-op, which students have continued since. Students organized diaper drives for the Northwest Pregnancy Center, an off-campus resource for housing, material assistance, and support for pregnant women and new mothers. The university also responded to students' concerns about housing for parents by establishing a fully subsidized, child-proofed townhouse just off campus for students and their children. According to Carol Day, the university reassesses the property every year to determine whether improvements are needed.

Since these first steps were taken in 1997, the Pregnancy Resource Forum has become an annual campus-changing event at Georgetown. Every year the pro-life students invite panelists from the university administration and Northwest Pregnancy Center to reevaluate pregnancy resources and build upon the improvements of past years. FFL College Outreach Program Coordinator Nikki Callahan was invited to moderate the most recent forum, in October

2003. Students collaborated with university and community representatives to develop a list of possible action items to improve services.

Suggestions included:

- CPR and first aid certification for volunteer babysitters
- Publicity for an existing network to refer mothers-to-be to other mothers at Georgetown
- Expansion of the university's on-campus day care center, Hoya Kids Day Care, to accept children younger than 18 to 24 months old
- Hoya Kids Day Care scholarships and financial assistance for student parents
- Chairs for nursing mothers and diaper decks in all school bath rooms
- A new "slush fund" to provide even more resources for pregnant and parenting students
- Better advertising of all existing pregnancy and parenting resources, so every student at Georgetown knows exactly what services are available.

Carol Day says, "The students have really adopted the forum as a fine idea that needs to continue. [Health Education Services] considers it to be a valuable opportunity for ongoing discussion, so that we can continue to provide pregnancy services and improve upon them each year."

Today, six years after the first Pregnancy Resource Forum was held, students recognize the importance of the yearly event. Laura Peirson, the current President of GU Right to Life, told the campus newspaper, *The Hoya*, that the 2003 Pregnancy Resource Forum had "definitely sparked a dialogue in terms of the resources that Georgetown has and things that could be improved on.... If [a woman is] pregnant, she needs to know that the support services are there, emotionally and materially, so that she doesn't feel alone in the challenges that she'll face."

Clay offers this advice for college students who are interested in planning their own Pregnancy Resource Forum with FFL: "We found it was a confrontational issue, but you can frame it in the spirit of cooperation—make it less of a debate and more about the questions of 'How do we help pregnant students?' and 'Now that a woman has made her choice to carry the pregnancy to term, how can we be supportive of that?'"

"I would also encourage students to challenge the university to serve their students and be aware of their concerns. Half of their students have the potential to be pregnant, and 100% of their students have the potential to be parents. This really is an issue that affects everyone on campus. You need to encourage your schools to support women and address their needs." ○

To find out how you can host a Pregnancy Resource Forum on your campus, contact us at info@feministsforlife.org or call the national office at (202)737-FFLA.



I remember my first encounter with a young woman at Cornell. She was completing her senior year with her three-year-old daughter by her side. She enjoyed sharing her story with me and was encouraged by my desire to listen to her relate her struggles on campus. She had entered freshman year almost five months pregnant and given birth to her beautiful daughter during winter break. She pointedly told me, "Cornell didn't make it easy to be pregnant on campus."

Working as a pro-woman, pro-life activist, I have learned that my campus is overwhelmingly "pro-choice." Yet, in spite of the predominant culture on campus, the school's only pro-life organization, Cornell Coalition for Life (CCFL), has been growing in both membership and recognition over the past several years. More pro-life students are becoming active on campus. The past year alone is an amazing indication of how much impact we have had at Cornell.

CCFL's most successful event was bringing Feminists for Life President Serrin Foster to Cornell in the spring to deliver "The Feminist Case Against Abortion." After her lecture, the pro-choice students in attendance agreed to hold a joint Pregnancy Resource Forum next semester.

Your gift to Feminists for Life is an effective investment in students like me who are changing the campus culture of colleges and universities nationwide.

Feminists for Life has the best message. The best materials. The best collegiate program.

Your support makes it possible for me to reach out to women in need. Thank you for enabling me to give students women-centered solutions and the unique message that only Feminists for Life brings to this debate: "Refuse to choose: Women deserve better than abortion."

I can't do this alone. I am asking for your continued support—because Feminists for Life is the answer.

Malkia Hutchinson

Malkia Hutchinson, Cornell University
Feminists for Life Intern 2004

YEAR-ROUND STUDENT

**So you believe that women deserve better than abortion.
What can you do about it? Plenty.
Change the world one month at a time.
These ideas will get you started.**

AUGUST

**August 18: 19th Amendment Ratification Anniversary
(women's suffrage won)**

August 26: Women's Equality Day

- ♦ Make sure you and your friends and family are registered to vote.
- ♦ Order materials for an outreach booth or table six weeks in advance.
- ♦ Order or download and carry FFL's brochures, especially "What Women Really Want" and "Refuse to Choose," in your backpack, purse, and car to share with interested people or to hand out at pro-life and women's events.
- ♦ **Download and post the "Would You Say That to my Face?" ad.**

Download and print
Feminists for Life's



provocative ads and get permission to post them as flyers in dorms, student centers, libraries, bathrooms, and other visible locations. Hang posters and place brochures in accessible places.



SEPTEMBER

FFL's College Outreach Program Kickoff

- ♦ Put FFL bumper stickers on your car, bike, or notebook.
- ♦ Host a table or booth at student activity and club fairs.
Find other places and times to organize an outreach table.
- ♦ Connect with your campus pro-life group. If there is none, contact FFL to start one.
- ♦ Contact FFL to volunteer or intern if you are a student in the D.C. area.
- ♦ **Download and post the "They Say I Have a Free Choice" ad.**

Pregnancy Resources

OCTOBER

**Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Breast Cancer Awareness Month,
and Respect Life Month**

October, 3rd Friday: National Mammography Day

- ♦ Begin monthly breast self-examinations and get clinical breast exams every 3 years if you are a woman 18 to 39 years old.
- ♦ Work with advisors and contact FFL for a spring semester internship or Washington Semester if you are a student attending college outside the D.C. area.
- ♦ Volunteer at a shelter for abused women and children.
- ♦ Offer your help to parenting students. Depending on your availability and resources, you could babysit, take class notes, run errands, do occasional house chores, and other helpful activities.
- ♦ **Download and post "Don't Lie to Me" ad.**



Abortion/Breast Cancer Link



Pregnancy Services

NOVEMBER

November 12: Elizabeth Cady Stanton's Birthday

- ♦ Treasure the gift of your feminist foremothers: Vote! Participate in local and national elections. Encourage your friends to do the same.
- ♦ Write an editorial about the need for pregnancy resources and support for pregnant and parenting students.
- ♦ **Download and post the "You're Not Alone Anymore" ad.**

STUDENT ACTIVISM



Nonviolent Choices

DECEMBER

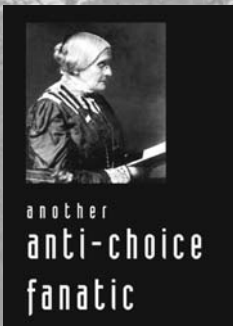
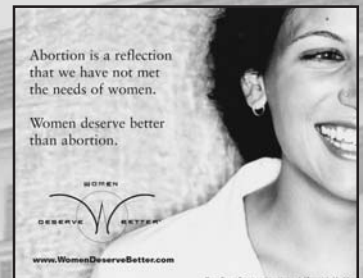
- ♦ Give the gift of FFL membership to friends and family members—a gift that provides hope and inspiration and lasts all year!
- ♦ Check out FFL's Covetable StuffSM online for more gift ideas—including for yourself.
- ♦ Ask your parents to support FFL's outreach efforts to those at highest risk of abortion and to support pro-woman, pro-life student groups.
- ♦ Post a link to FFL's web site on your web site and ask others to do the same. Look for other web sites that could link to FFL.
- ♦ **Download and post the "Is This the Face of the Enemy?" ads.**

JANUARY

January 11: Alice Paul's Birthday

January 22: Roe v. Wade Anniversary

- ♦ Incorporate your pro-life feminist interest into a school paper or project this semester.
- ♦ Give "You Have Choices" brochures to campus health clinics, residential advisors, chaplains, pan-hellenic leaders, and counseling centers.
- ♦ **Download and post the color or black & white Women Deserve Better[®] ad.**



Pro-Life Feminist

FEBRUARY

February 15: Susan B. Anthony's Birthday

- ♦ Welcome a conversation with someone who supports abortion and share your pro-woman commitment to nonviolent solutions.
- ♦ Apply now for a summer internship or fall Washington Semester at FFL.
- ♦ Download FFL's new screensaver to your computer.
- ♦ **Download and post the Susan B. Anthony ad all over campus.**

MARCH

Women's History Month

March 8: International Women's Day

- ♦ Submit a letter to the editor or op-ed citing the suffragists' pro-life beliefs. For ideas, see Serrin Foster's "The Feminist Case Against Abortion" and the FFL web site.
- ♦ Use an FFL coffee mug in your dorm, sorority house, student lounge or office.
- ♦ **Hang "Voices of Our Feminists Foremothers" posters.**



Collaborate!

Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton increased their effectiveness by working together.



Did I deserve the
death penalty?

Conceived Through Rape

APRIL

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

April 28: Pro-Life T-Shirt Day

- ♦ Wear an FFL or Women Deserve Better® t-shirt, hat, button, or lanyard with pride.
- ♦ Participate in a "Take Back the Night" event.
- ♦ Recycle. Give your old copies of *The American Feminist* to friends. Cut off your address and pass them around to everyone.
- ♦ **Download and post the "Did I Deserve the Death Penalty?" ad.**

MAY

May, 2nd Sunday: Mother's Day

- ♦ Thank the woman who gave you life! Give the gift of FFL!
- ♦ Students move frequently. Make sure FFL always has your current email and snail mail addresses.
- ♦ Give up something you do not need, like a daily soda or one meal per week, and make a donation to FFL. Even \$5 a month can make a real difference for women and children.
- ♦ **Download and post the Question AbortionSM ad.**



QUESTION
a b o r t i o n

IF SHE'S IN TROUBLE



HE'S IN TROUBLE, TOO.

Child Support

JUNE

June, 3rd Sunday: Father's Day

- ♦ Thank your dad! Give the gift of FFL!
- ♦ Continue your activism through summer school or break in your hometown.
- ♦ If you are not interning at FFL, volunteer at a local pregnancy resource center.
- ♦ Study the "Pro-Woman Answers to Pro-Choice Questions" issue of *The American Feminist* and be prepared to Question AbortionSM when the school year begins.
- ♦ **Download and post the "If She's in Trouble, He's in Trouble, too" ad.**

JULY

July 19-20: Anniversary of the Seneca Falls Convention

- ♦ Become a member of Feminists for Life or renew your membership. Membership counts!
- ♦ Every active membership makes FFL more effective. Student memberships are still just \$15, the price of a couple of cappuccinos—even less than a pair of movie tickets.
- ♦ Sign up to receive email news updates from FFL's e-list and encourage your friends to do the same.
- ♦ Forward articles to your friends and discuss them.
- ♦ **Download and post the "Been There, Done That, Hated It" ad.**



After-Abortion Healing

FFL's College Outreach Program Components

For a decade, pro-life and pro-choice students have reacted with enthusiasm to FFL's College Outreach Program. Our program materials, lectures and kits help those on both sides of the contentious debate redirect energy towards woman-centered solutions.

Student Kits

The free student kit provides a step-by-step guide that takes pro-life student leaders through four levels of pro-woman, pro-life campus activism. We can help activists organize, recruit, educate and schedule events on campus. Another free kit is available to help grow the pro-woman, pro-life student group during orientation and throughout the school year.

The Feminist Case *Against* Abortion

FFL President Serrin Foster shares the rich history of pro-life feminism and emphasizes the importance of developing support and services for pregnant and parenting students so that no college woman feels forced to choose abortion due to lack of resources. This speech has been included as one of the "Great Speeches in History" in an anthology on women's rights.

Refuse to Choose: Reclaiming Feminism

FFL Vice President Sally Winn, who became pregnant while attending Indiana University, knows first hand the challenges and rewards of parenting in college. For the past decade Sally has been an outspoken advocate for women and children, and her lecture "Refuse to Choose: Reclaiming Feminism" has educated and energized pro-life student activists around the country.

Pregnancy Resource Forum

An FFL moderator hosts a panel of university administrators and students who come together to assess campus and local resources for pregnant and parenting students and to create new solutions for the challenges they face.

Pregnancy Resource Kits

These free online kits tailored for clinic staff, counselors, student groups, pro-life students, group advisors, FFL leaders and other women's advocates provide essential information on pregnancy resources and support.

Feminist History Kit

FFL's Feminist History Kit fills a critical information gap in our institutions of learning. Targeted to libraries, women's studies professors and women's resource centers, this kit includes books like *Pro-Life Feminism: Yesterday and Today*, FFL's "Voices of Our Feminist Foremothers" poster, and a one-year subscription to *The American Feminist*.

College Outreach Posters and Ads

This striking, thought-provoking series of College Outreach Program ads shows students how to Question AbortionSM, educate their campuses and communities on key issues, and create interest in upcoming speeches, forums and pro-life events. There is a new full-color "Women deserve better than abortion" ad, also available in Spanish.



Internships

Volunteer internships are available in the Washington office during spring and fall semesters and summer break. To apply contact coordinator@ffloncampus.org.

Website

The best resource for any information on Feminists for Life! Order Covetable StuffSM from FFL's online store. Download College Outreach Program ads or our new screensavers. Learn "Pro-Woman Answers to Pro-Choice Questions." Find information about our speakers. Read about FFL in the news, and find out when we're coming to your area! Visit www.feministsforlife.org, sign up for the free e-list, and don't forget to bookmark us!

For more information about this comprehensive outreach program and our national speakers, email info@feministsforlife.org. To schedule a speaker, please contact FFL College Outreach Coordinator Nikki Callahan at coordinator@ffloncampus.org.

Please help us send a kit to campus! Support this program by going to <http://www.feministsforlife.org/support>. Thank you.

AGAINST THE GRAIN



Editor's Note: This article is edited reprinted with permission from Crisis magazine.

Serrin Foster is bombing. All around the Temple University lecture hall, bored faces drift in and out of attention—expressionless college women staring and still, college men telegraphing their waning interest by twisting in their seats. A round woman's tiny eyes glare coldly from beneath her eyebrow rings.

I've been assigned to shadow Foster on her exhausting schedule of barnstorming appearances at universities. She has a mighty reputation for changing the hearts of students. But now, at the end of a hectic 20 hours—Villanova at eight last night, a lunchtime appearance at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey, today, and now Temple—it looks like Foster has hit a wall.

She tries her jokes—the ones where the president of Feminists for Life (FFL) becomes a nightclub comedian, using the funny voices, the hand gestures, everything. She's a woman who can tell a joke.

But not here. Temple University puts out a tough crowd.

Alas, Foster and her hosts, the Pro-Life Student Alliance of Temple, knew it would be so. The warnings had started days earlier. Signs advertising the FFL event had been torn down or defaced. When we arrived that evening, trudging through the mud

that is Philadelphia's first sign of spring, the foyer of the Tuttleman building was littered with big "Pro-family/Pro-choice" signs.

"They don't want us to be here," Foster said.

The 40 or so students gathered to hear Foster are mostly women. Not even the pro-lifers are smiling. The student who introduced her asked those with differing opinions to be respectful. It set an ominous tone. Would they start chanting soon? Blowing whistles? Would they get violent?

And I wonder: What will I possibly write about this? How will I tactfully explain her failure?

But then, as things seem to have reached their lowest point, Serrin Foster performs a miracle.

It begins with her telling the students what she calls the "dirty little secret of women's studies departments"—that the first feminists were pro-life. Vehemently pro-life. A couple of quotes bring the point home (Sarah Norton: "Perhaps there will come a time when...an unmarried woman will not be despised for her motherhood...and when the right of the unborn to be born will not be denied or interfered with"; Susan B. Anthony: Abortion "will burden her conscience in life, it will burden her soul in death; But oh, thrice guilty is he who drove her to the desperation which impelled her to her crime!").

A Day in the Life of Serrin Foster

BY TOM HOOPES



"If women were fighting for the right not to be considered property, what gives them the right to consider their *baby* property?" Foster asks.

She's on a roll, now. Eyebrows are lifting, and drowsy heads come to attention. Foster describes how the feminist movement was hijacked by the abortion movement. She describes pro-abortion pioneer Larry Lader's "eureka" experience: "Aha, I have it! And he goes to the leadership of NOW [the National Organization for Women] and says 'Look, little ladies. If you want to be educated like a man and paid like a man and promoted like a man—and hired like a man—then you can't bother your employer with your fertility problems.'"

In a mocking voice, Foster imitates the patronizing boss man: "Ooo, is your tummy feeling bad because you have morning sickness? Ooo, you want time off because you're going through labor? Does the poor baby have mumps now?" Women nod.

Then, Foster gets to the centerpiece of her talk: FFL's College Outreach Program. She asks the students if they've ever seen a pregnant woman on campus. This being 2003, the students knew plenty of pregnant girls in high school—girls who dropped out or who were out "sick" for a whole semester. But that changed in college.

Twenty-year-old Temple student James Barrera took note. He said there were 2,000 students in his high school and 30,000 at

From left: Honorary Cochair Margaret Colin (left) and Honorary Chair Patricia Heaton (center) with Serrin Foster at the White House; Foster delivering her landmark speech to the University of Buffalo, 2001; Foster debating abortion proponents Bill Baird and Planned Parenthood of America president Gloria Feldt at the Harvard Forum in 2000 while the moderator, former Sen. Alan Simpson (center) and teammate Dr. Bernard Nathanson (right), look on; Foster testifying in support of Laci & Connor's Law on Capitol Hill in 2003; Rep. Chris Smith (left) and the late Governor Bob Casey with Foster in 1996.

Temple. "I know *no* pregnant women here. But in high school I did." He finds that "disturbing."

So does Foster. One-fifth of all abortions are performed on college women. "What sort of services does your university offer to pregnant women?" she asks. Several, probably—all abortion-related.

"No compassionate person, pro-choice or pro-life," she says, "wants to see a teenage girl drop out of school and face a lifetime of poverty because she became pregnant. They say I have a free choice. But without housing on campus for me and my baby, without on-site daycare, without maternity coverage in my health insurance, it sure doesn't feel like I have much of a choice."

Foster challenges students—all students, regardless of their feelings about abortion—to go to the administration building and demand a *real* choice.

The message connects. And with it, you feel a change in the room. Suddenly, the jokes from Foster get belly-laughs. The students—even the ones I thought were hostile—are nodding in agreement.

I look at Eyebrow-Rings. Her grumpy face has relaxed into a smile. Foster makes a point about family values—“Women treated men like a check and diminished fatherhood”—and Eyebrow-Rings’s hands come together over her black backpack in a silent clap of agreement.

Victory.

Foster the Feminist

Serrin Foster, 47, is a native of Washington, D.C. Dressed in hip, professional black, she’s the face of Feminists for Life. There’s more to FFL than Serrin Foster, and there’s more to Serrin Foster than FFL, but the two are inextricably intertwined.

Patricia Heaton (Ray Romano’s wife on the TV show *Everybody Loves Raymond*) tells me that even though FFL is small, “opponents think the group is strong and powerful, because Serrin is strong and powerful. She’s the embodiment of what we feel about women. To think that the only thing a woman can do with a child is abort it is demeaning to women and undermines everything that the women’s movement has been working on since the suffragettes.”

Margaret Colin (the press secretary in *Independence Day* and Tom Selleck’s girlfriend in *Three Men and a Baby*), who, like Heaton, is an FFL celebrity spokeswoman, sums Foster up rather well: warm and feminine, not artificial or a control-freak matriarch. Not scary.

“She’s very articulate and very feminine and she doesn’t put people off by a strong designer look,” Colin tells me. “She allows herself to get passionate. She’s funny. She gets a kick out of what she does.”

And both celebrity spokeswomen note one thing you just can’t miss about Foster.

“She talks a mile a minute.”

“She talks faster than anyone I’ve ever met.”

Foster was a child when she learned how to use her most formidable skill—speaking—to make her way in the world. In eighth grade, when she wore knee-length socks, was gaining weight, and was new to her Northern Virginia public school, she was the frequent target of three bullies. Their leader once pulled Foster’s long snake of middle-school hair and stepped on it, kicking her books out of her hands with the other foot.

She wasn’t able to face them until the three volunteered for the class debate on smoking. No one would oppose them—until Foster raised her hand.

Now she spends her time talking, talking, talking—sharing her ideas with people in key places, like Congress and colleges. Talking about FFL. Like a happily married couple, it’s hard to imagine Foster and FFL apart. And like the story of a husband and wife, the tale of how she met the organization is charged with a powerful sense of providence.

In 1993, Foster was working in Washington for the National Alliance of the Mentally Ill and reading the classifieds section in order to word a want-ad for her organization. She came across the advertisement for FFL and had to catch her breath. It was love at first sight.

Though she wasn’t looking for a new job, she interviewed, becoming more intent on it even as FFL almost stopped considering her. She was too far out of reach, earning twice as much annually as their *entire* organization’s income. But Foster wouldn’t be deterred. She took a nasty pay cut, stepped in as executive director, and began the remarkable story of an organization’s new success.

‘70s Feminists

It’s not that the old organization was unsuccessful. I remember seeing members at pro-life conferences in California in the ‘80s. They were known for their very clever, very in-your-face bumper stickers. A friend pointed one of them out at a snack bar in Santa Clara, California. She was dressed like a hippy in the preppy ‘80s. They weren’t your typical pro-lifers. But they were *very* passionate.

Those old-style liberal feminists are still very much a part of FFL. But when Foster joined as its executive director, she brought the ‘90s with her. Working with her board and stepping on toes here and there (changing the name of the newsletter from the beloved *Sister Life* to *The American Feminist*, for instance, started a fight), she developed a more focused organization.

“Serrin eats, breathes, and lives” FFL, one of the group’s board members, Marion Syversen, says in an article about the group. “She is dedicated to this cause like no one else I know. The arguments are frequently best framed by her.”

Hunting Enemies

Surprisingly enough—considering her aggressive approach—it’s hard to find *anyone* to criticize Serrin Foster.

I know, because I spent every off-hour for two weeks searching for someone. The Feminist Majority, NARAL Pro-Choice America, and NOW all promised to call me back. And didn’t. Even Planned Parenthood wouldn’t give me a comment. And it was the group that called FFL’s 1997 Question Abortion campaign “the newest and most challenging concept in anti-choice student organizing.”

Striking out with the Left, I wondered if conservative pro-lifers might find Foster’s message a bit much: Refuse to choose, expect it all, go to school, and demand they pay for your baby. What I found surprised me.

Judie Brown, of the American Life League, has the reputation of being to the pro-life movement what Life cereal’s Mikey is to breakfast (“He won’t eat it. He hates everything!”). She gave me a glowing report about FFL.

“I believe they have examined the culture and decided that in order to save the lives of preborn babies and save women from the tragic aftermath of aborting their own children, they must address the very situations in which such mothers find themselves,” Brown

said. And that means, almost exclusively, finding options for mothers who are in school, at work, and in imperfect circumstances.

Some pro-lifers question the awards FFL has given to the likes of Martin Sheen. But money-conscious conservatives were Foster's opponents when she first started—and won—a fight against one of the provisions of the Contract With America that banned increased welfare benefits for added children.

Now, however, Foster's enemies are few. One 20-year-old Rowan University student is the best I can do, I'm afraid. He told me that Jesus was responsible for his abortion views, and he wasn't warm and happy after Foster's talk. "I resent having to pay through tuition and taxes for irresponsible people's 'choices,'" he said.

Kristin Patterson, Villanova class of 1994 and a 31-year-old mother of three, disagreed. "I'm a little hesitant to subsidize child care for others when I have sacrificed a career and money to raise my own," she says.

"However, Serrin makes a strong point that unplanned pregnancies are a reality, and we have to offer these women a *free* choice and many alternatives to abortion."

Dorm Days

The College Outreach Program was Foster's brain-child. This is the vehicle through which FFL—Foster, really—goes to university campuses and convinces pro-choicers and pro-lifers to work together to give women *real* alternatives to abortion.

And pro-lifers will tell you it's about time somebody did it. It's the crucial battleground. In universities, students form the opinions that they'll have for a lifetime.

Most high-schoolers would vote like their parents if they had the chance. College graduates, getting their first serious bills, no longer have the luxury of challenging their beliefs deeply. But for college students sitting in a dorm room, parents are something half-remembered and far away; real responsibility exists in the imagination of the uptight. The mind of the college student is wide open, ready to set itself in one block of concrete or another until retirement.

Besides, each year our universities refresh the ranks of our teachers, lawyers, doctors, politicians, journalists, and preachers. What they believe matters. Their view today is the Prevailing View tomorrow.

And when it comes to abortion, dorm-room conversations trend in one direction: pro-abortion. A UCLA Higher Education Research Institute survey, which included 38 Catholic colleges and universities, interviewed freshmen and then caught up with them four years later.

According to *Catholic World Report*, in 1997, 61 percent of the freshman class at nonsectarian, four-year colleges said they supported keeping abortion legal. Four years later, 72 percent of the same students said abortion should be kept legal, an increase of 11 percent.

At Catholic colleges, the increase was a bit sharper—a 45 percent pro-abortion freshman class became a 57 percent pro-abortion graduating class, a 12 percent increase. Colleges and universities are machines churning out pro-abortion voters.

Why not try to influence these opinions while they're still forming? Why not bring the pro-life message into the universities?

Crisis Centers

FFL has assembled a kit for students who want to increase their college's support for pregnancy and parenting. The kit includes guides on counseling pregnant women, information on establishing paternity and collecting child support from fathers, and brochures describing the many options other than abortion—getting married, raising the child alone, asking the child's grandparents or other family to care for the

The message connects.
And with it, you feel a change
in the room. Suddenly, the jokes
from Foster get belly-laughs.
The students—even the
ones I thought were
hostile—are nodding
in agreement.

baby, and open and closed adoption.

Parts of these kits have been used from Georgetown to Notre Dame to Berkeley. Suzanna Kennedy, 20, a sophomore at the University of San Diego (USD), heard Foster's talk earlier this year, and her pro-life group took up the challenge. "We found that there were weaknesses in our school policy. There's a lack of child care and no specific policy for housing," she told me. "I had a neighbor my freshman year who became pregnant her first semester. I saw her go through a lot. She ended up choosing life, and she ended up having to leave USD." Kennedy doesn't want that to happen to anyone else, and she has been meeting with college administrators to make sure it doesn't.

Pro-life college women like Kennedy are starting to get noticed by the secular media. The March 30 *New York Times* was beside itself with shocked surprise in the article, "Surprise, Mom: I'm

Anti-Abortion,” by Elizabeth Hayt. It reported on rising numbers of college pro-lifers, and the passion of student pro-life groups.

And in January, National Public Radio interviewed Berkeley pro-lifer Molly Bowman about her campus initiative. She told *All Things Considered* that she was trying to get baby-changing tables installed on campus and that pro-abortion students were helping. “The student government has given us funding. We had a rally last year with Serrin Foster, the president of Feminists for Life, which was great. We met with NOW beforehand and said, ‘We’re glad you guys are out here. This will be great. I’m glad this can be a civil debate and rally.’ And it turned out very well.”

On the Road

I begin my 20 hours with Serrin Foster on the phone. Rushing around a hotel room, she mixes up the order of universities we’ll be visiting the next day and asks me not to interview her right before the talks: She needs to psyche herself up for the students.

“Can I drive with you from Philly to New Jersey?” I ask.

She considers the question. “Are you creepy?”

Then Foster has to go: She’s due at Villanova, where more than 100 people come to see her. Mostly pro-life, mostly thrilled, they fill the lecture hall.

Afterward, a pro-choice student thanks Foster for her presentation. *Crisis* passes out a brief opinion survey to the Villanova audi-

ence; they register a deep resonance with Foster’s feminist message, answering questions by quoting her.

Bryn Mawr and Jefferson City Medical School students campus-hopped to the talk, bringing horror stories of being marginalized at their own schools. They’re “anti-choicers” in the most hostile of atmospheres. And this has turned them into pro-life feminists with attitude.

Brigid Heenan, a 19-year-old from Bryn Mawr, was typical. She says she’s pro-life “because of family and feminists who taught me to actually think rather than accept paternalistic crap from NARAL.”

Foster is wired after the day’s high-octane experience of public speaking and one-on-one clashes. She’s finally able to fall asleep at 6 a.m.—about the time I’m passing through Manhattan on the way to our meeting.

When she meets me in the hotel restaurant, I’ve exhausted the possibilities of the day’s *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the cleaning lady is putting away the continental breakfast, and Foster has to beg for hers. “I knew I’d have to grab for it,” she says. “I do everything last minute.” Before she’s able to drink her last-minute tea, two students whisk us off to Glassboro, New Jersey.

At Rowan, Foster’s talk is held in the middle of a cavernous student center. The podium is perched on an out-of-place-looking stage in a lounge surrounded by vendors selling college necessities: coffee, food, and embossed accessories. It’s not ideal for Foster’s purposes—hard to hold an audience’s attention—but it’s great for me. Here, I can observe real college students coming into contact with an articulate pro-life message—some of them for the first time.

It’s a real, new-millennium secular university crowd, with a self-described 19-year-old liberal atheist pro-lifer and a 20-year-old pro-choicer who says his opinion on the matter was shaped by Descartes. Predictably, other groups looking for a crowd have leafleted the student room the day of the talk. “How Is Your Sex?” asks one flier. “An intelligent discussion surrounding sexuality for students by students.” Sponsors: The Gay/Straight Alliance, NAACP, Progressive Student Alliance, United Latino Association, and Black Cultural League. “All Are Welcome & Refreshments Will be

Students are pro-abortion
not because they don’t believe
a fetus is a human life, but
because they’re terrified.
Every student to whom I put
the question directly seems
to know in her bones that
abortion is killing.

Served: Residential and Campus Life Student Center Approved.”

I don’t know what to expect from students in this world. But I quickly learn two things. First, in our relativistic age, young people don’t have opinions about abortion, they have *stories* about abortion. The details of the lives of the people they know have determined their positions, one way or the other.

Second, students are pro-abortion not because they don’t believe a fetus is a human life, but because they’re terrified. Every student to whom I put the question directly seems to know in her bones that abortion is killing. But for those who are pro-abortion, the alternative, having a baby, is unthinkable—they don’t want to be pregnant, they don’t want to be in labor, and they don’t want to be a parent.

Foster’s talk is made for a crowd like this.

The Default Position

The enormous FFL banner that frames Foster's head has a succinct message that proves irresistible to many passersby: "Refuse to choose."

Melissa Ringlora, a pretty, slight 19-year-old freshman, is one of these. She listens intently to the talk, and when questions and answers start, I get her attention.

She's pro-choice, she tells me.

But what about all the things Foster is saying: Do they sway her? Naw, she protests, noticing her friend, Chris Corozza, 18, approaching us.

"I'm starting to see her point," says Corozza, motioning to Foster. When Ringlora hears this, she nods vigorously. Pro-choice is the default position, but if your friends give you permission, you can be pro-life.

"Boys are idiots," Corozza explains. "They think they can use a woman just to score."

I find out both are Catholic, and both are part of the statistic about students who change their opinions in school: They're just starting to be pro-abortion.

Before long, they're repeating to me verbatim sentences from Foster's talk. "They should give women more choices," Corozza says. When I ask them about the rights of the unborn, Ringlora tells me, "I try not to think of the unborn. When I do, I become pro-life."

I also notice Michelle Whitescarver, an 18-year-old freshman, walk into the back of the room, listen, then rush to the FFL table to grab brochures. She shows them with great animation to a boy, all the while staring at Foster.

He notices the free donuts at the back of the room, and I descend on Whitescarver as he descends on the donuts. She has dark hair, thick glasses, and the energetic confidence of an ambitious student. I ask her position on abortion, and she answers by describing an experience. It's *exactly* the kind of experience Foster has come to address.

"A girl I knew got pregnant. The guy cried when she said she wanted the abortion, so she had the baby. She's miserable now, always dropping the kid off with her mom."

The baby's name is Caitlyn. She's nearly two.

Are you saying, I ask, that your friend wishes she had aborted Caitlyn?

"She'd rather have aborted her. Yeah. She wanted to go to college with me and do all the things we planned to do together," she said. "She feels she should have done it because she would have been able to have her life. What about the life that she could have led? She wishes she could go to college. But she's halted where she is."

I've never met someone who wished she had aborted her two-year-old. What's the baby like?

"There are strong facial traits in my friend's family with females going way back," Whitescarver says. "They all look the same.

Caitlyn has those traits."

She wishes she had killed the child who looks just like her mom? Just like her grandma? Just like her?

Whitescarver doesn't answer. The donut guy returns, and I walk away.

Meanwhile, Foster is talking, talking, talking. Delivering a pro-life message to the walking wounded.

"Why do women have abortions?" she's asking.

"Coercion by family or friends. Or family members who say, 'That baby will ruin your life.' Can you imagine picking up a baby and saying, 'You'll ruin somebody's life!' Babies don't ruin people's lives. Poverty ruins peoples' lives. Lack of health care, lack of education: Those are the things that ruin people's lives."

Animated, her voice rising, she delivers the same message she did last night. The same message she'll give at Temple tonight, jolting students out of their awkward calm.

"Women have to take responsibility for this, because when we chanted, 'It's our bodies, it's our choice,' up and down Pennsylvania Avenue, we were also saying, 'It's our problem.' It is time to set aside the rhetoric and horror stories and fund-raising tactics and think again about how we can help women in need."

Applause.○

Attention Federal Employees!

If you or a friend or relative is a federal employee or is in the military, you may make a donation to FFL through the Combined Federal Campaign. CFC donors provide essential support for FFL, including FFL's innovative College Outreach Program.

FFL is CFC #1907 (located in the Women's Charities of America section of the CFC directory).

Thank you!



Student Leaders Respond to “A Day in the Life of Serrin

I thoroughly enjoyed reading Tom Hoopes's article, “Against the Grain: A Day in the Life of Serrin Foster.” As a recent graduate of the University of California–Berkeley, and copresident of Berkeley Students for Life, which worked closely with Feminists for Life (FFL), I feel that Hoopes's representation of their college-outreach program could use some clarification.

He quotes a Rowan University student who “resent[s] having to pay through tuition and taxes for irresponsible people's choices,” and a 31-year-old mother of three who says, “I'm hesitant to subsidize child care for others when I have sacrificed a career and money to raise my own.”

FFL's pro-woman, pro-life focus on college campuses seeks not simply to look for handouts from the university for student-parents but to expose the discrimination that pregnant women and students with children face in obtaining resources that are accessible to other students.

FFL then serves as a catalyst for change by challenging universities to reexamine their policies and promoting cost-effective and woman-centered solutions. They include educating students about child-support enforcement when a woman is being coerced into an abortion, connecting women to pregnancy resource centers off campus and the Nurturing Network, and including maternity coverage in student health care. Child-care services may include a day care, a co-op, or volunteer baby-sitters. Telecommuting options could be as simple as providing tapes of missed classes or offering classes on cable or over the Internet. Their creative solutions help a student stay in school when she faces an unplanned pregnancy and helps nontraditional parenting students complete their education.

She had been involved in pro-choice activism for 15 years and intended never to turn away women seeking abortions. But **after hearing Serrin's talk, she will neither perform nor refer anyone for an abortion.**

FFL breaks through the rhetoric that sets women against their children and works—even with traditional opponents on the abortion issue—to foster creative solutions for women. FFL's unique Pregnancy Resource Forum debunks the all-too-ingrained university stereotype that a woman cannot keep her baby and also go to school.

When Berkeley Students for Life hosted Foster to moderate a Pregnancy Resource Forum in 1999, it was perhaps the first time in history when representatives from different administration departments came together to discuss UC–Berkeley's resource shortcomings for the estimated 1,000 to 1,500 student-parents who attend the premier public institution during any given year.

Although the road to the optimal agreement is long, I see the event as the springboard for beginning our relationship with the Student-Parent Project, an office on campus that coordinates parental exchange of child care and plans student-parent activities for UC–Berkeley parents. We closed the gap in the abortion

debate by working closely with the self-proclaimed pro-choice director of the Student-Parent Project. In one of our more substantial accomplishments, we increased the number of baby-changing tables on the UC–Berkeley campus from two to 22, with money raised from outside donors and rerouted from student-activity fees, which could have otherwise gone to something as trivial as a faux sumo-wrestling contest. While this was a big feat for us and student-parents, in reality, it provided a place, besides the sidewalk or classrooms, for female and male parents to change their child's diaper—something present in almost every California public restroom.

With universities' cooperation, FFL is helping women refuse to choose between sacrificing their education and career plans and their children. What a noble cause!

Elizabeth Maier
Alumna, UC–Berkeley, 2003
Copresident, Berkeley Students for Life, 2001-2003



to n Foster"

Thank you for your story "Against the Grain: A Day in the Life of Serrin Foster," which beautifully highlighted the wonderful work of Foster and Feminists for Life (June 2003).

Having previously heard Foster articulate the pro-life feminist position, I was eager to have her address the medical community at the University of Pittsburgh. As cofounder of Do No Harm, Pitt's graduate and professional-student pro-life club, I helped to bring Foster and her "Feminist Case Against Abortion" to the medical school on April 8, 2003.

At the close of her lecture, an undergraduate approached Foster and asked: "Have you ever changed anybody's mind?" This graduating senior on her way to medical school then proceeded to tell her story: "At lunch today, I swore that I would be an abortion provider as a doctor, because I saw abortion as a right and a necessity." She then told Foster: "In the half-hour that you spoke, I rethought my position completely." She had been involved in pro-choice activism for 15 years and intended never to turn away women seeking abortions. But after hearing the talk, she will neither perform nor refer anyone for an abortion. "You've given me that reason. I'm now pro-life."

As for me, I am one more statistic: I was pro-choice in middle school based on the needs of the woman, antiabortion in high school based on the biology of the fetus, and integrated the two in college when I became a pro-life feminist after hearing Serrin Foster and the message of Feminists for Life.

Angela T. Fortunato
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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Voices

OF WOMEN WHO MOURN

I was 20 years old when I made the choice to have an abortion. My boyfriend and I lived together, and he didn't want our baby. He told me he wasn't ready to have a family and asked if I would have an abortion. It was that moment I knew he didn't really love me. I wasn't strong enough to love or have my baby on my own. I was full of hopes and dreams for my own life, and I didn't want my family to know that I failed. Back then I saw pregnancy and not being married as a failure.

The day of my abortion was one of the darkest days of my life. I was told my baby was just a cluster of cells, tissue, and could not feel pain. I stood on line with other women as though I were standing on line at a concentration camp waiting to enter an infirmary. When I woke up from my abortion, I was given a cup of tea and two Tylenol and told it would help with my pain.

Thirteen years later my pain is greater than anyone will ever know. I have lost my baby, my ovary, my breast, and I may lose my life—all in the name of choice. But I embrace having breast cancer, having battled the disease while pregnant with my third child. Breast cancer, pregnant and bald with one breast, made me define my dignity. It gave me the strength to love a child I never knew I had to love. I miss my baby, and I regret my abortion.

The brightest day of my life was when I could finally admit that I am the mother of three beautiful children.

Charnette Messé has shared her story on the *Oprah Winfrey Show* and in *Rosie* magazine. She is currently writing a book about her battle with breast cancer during pregnancy, *A Brilliant Performance: A Mother's Battle with Breast Cancer and Pregnancy Defined her Dignity in the World*. She is founder of the award-winning greeting card company, *Charnette Messé Embracing Life*, and *The Dare to Dream Dance Company*.

THE FEMINIST CASE

Wellesley College

Wednesday
March 3, 2004
6:00 p.m.

against

ABORTION



SERRIN M. FOSTER

*President
Feminists for Life of America*

Before I begin, I wish to thank the pro-life students for courageously standing up for those who cannot speak for themselves, and pro-choice students for being willing to listen to someone with a different point of view. I know, from FFL's work on Capitol Hill, that we are capable of working together.

I also want to speak to women who have had an abortion and others who have participated in abortion. What I am about to say is not to condemn you. Hopefully we will come to a better understanding of what drives women to abortion, and what we can do to better help women in need.

THE EARLY FEMINISTS

You know by the fact that I am here today that all feminists do not support abortion.

Properly defined, feminism is a philosophy that embraces basic rights for all human beings *without* exception—without regard to one's race, religion, sex, size, age or location, disability or parentage.

Feminism rejects the use of force to dominate, control, or destroy one another.

Feminists for Life continues a 200-year-old tradition begun by Mary Wollstonecraft in 1792. After decrying the sexual exploitation of women—in scathing 18th-century terms in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*—she condemned those who would “either destroy the embryo in the womb or cast it off when born,” saying, “Nature in

The early feminists—facing conditions similar to those faced by women in developing countries today—were strongly opposed to abortion, because of their belief in the value of all humans.

The same women who fought for the rights of slaves to be free and women to vote also fought for our right to life.

Abortion was common in the 1800s. Sarah Norton, the first woman to successfully argue admission to Cornell University, wrote in 1870, “Child murderers practice their profession without let or hindrance, and open infant butcheries unquestioned.... Is there no remedy for this ante-natal murder? ...Perhaps there will come a day when... an unmarried mother will not be despised because of her motherhood... and when the right of the unborn to be born will not be denied or interfered with.”

In 1868, Eleanor Kirk linked the need for women's rights to the safety of their unborn children.

When a woman told Kirk that suffrage was unnecessary, because she and her husband were one, Kirk responded by asking her—what would become of her babies if her husband weren't around to provide for her and her children?

Kirk went on to say, “Why doesn't somebody ask, what *has* become of the babies? Ask thousands of physicians, male and female, who have been engaged in their work of destruction for years. Physicians who have graduated from our first medical colleges, physicians with high sounding diplomas, whose elegant equipage

“What will become of the babies—did you ask—and you? Can you not see that the idea is to educate women that they may be self-reliant, self-sustaining, self-respected?... **The first Revolution must be female suffrage....** God speed the time for the sake of the babies. **Little ones will then be welcome.**”

Eleanor Kirk, *The Revolution*, 1868

everything deserves respect, and those who violate her laws seldom violate them with impunity.”

She died giving birth to her second baby girl. The girl was named Mary, after her mother. And, like her mother, she became a great writer. Using her mother's philosophy, she wrote what has become the greatest novel about what happens when the laws of nature are violated. The book is entitled *Frankenstein* by Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.

Fifty years after Mary Wollstonecraft began the feminist movement, Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton went to England to fight for the abolition of slavery.

At that time, women could not vote, hold property, inherit if they were married, control their own money, sit on a jury, testify on their own behalf, assemble or speak freely, keep their children if divorced—sometimes even when widowed. There was no such thing as marital rape, and no woman had ever graduated from college.

stand in front of Fifth Avenue mansions, who pocket a big fee and a little bundle of flesh at the same time, and nobody's the wiser! Not even the husband in the host of instances.”

“What will become of the babies—did you ask—and you? Can you not see that the idea is to educate women that they may be self-reliant, self-sustaining, self-respected?...The first Revolution must be female suffrage.... God speed the time for the sake of the babies. Little ones will then be welcome.”

Without known exception, the early feminists condemned abortion in the strongest terms.

Susan B. Anthony's and Elizabeth Cady Stanton's radical feminist newspaper, *The Revolution*, called abortion “child murder.”

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who in 1848 organized the first women's convention in Seneca Falls, New York, classified abortion as a form of “infanticide” and said, “When we consider that women have been

treated as property, it is degrading to women that we should treat our children as property to be disposed of as we see fit.”

Since there were no American laws to protect women and children from abortion, the early feminists worked to outlaw abortion. (This is the dirty little secret of women’s studies departments across the United States.) Feminists, doctors, and the media worked together in an uneasy alliance for anti-abortion laws.

The feminists agreed with doctors and the media about providing legal protection for the unborn, but they disagreed sharply on the reasons that women had abortions—and on their proposed remedies.

Male physicians blamed the woman, saying that if she just did what men said, she wouldn’t have gotten herself into “trouble.”

Feminists argued that women who had abortions were responsible for their actions, but women resorted to abortion primarily because of their lack of autonomy within the family and society and their lack of financial resources and emotional support.

Yet like today’s pro-life feminists, early feminists recognized that women do not have to bear children to share in this celebration of womanhood.

Susan B. Anthony was once complimented by a friend who thought that she would have made a wonderful mother. Anthony responded, “Sweeter even than to have had the joy of caring for children of my own has it been to me to help bring about a better state of things for mothers generally, so their unborn little ones could not be willed away from them.”

THE ‘70s WOMEN’S MOVEMENT

Ironically, when the U.S. Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision destroyed the consumer protection laws established 100 years before through the advocacy of early feminists, the National Organization for Women cheered the *Roe* decision as the “emancipation of women.” What Elizabeth Cady Stanton called a “disgusting and degrading crime” was translated into what Eleanor Smeal called the “most fundamental right.”



A passage in Susan B. Anthony’s and Elizabeth Cady Stanton’s newspaper, *The Revolution*, states:

Guilty? Yes, no matter what the motive, love of ease, or a desire to save from suffering the unborn innocent, the woman is awfully guilty who commits the deed. It will burden her conscience in life, it will burden her soul in death; but oh, thrice guilty is he who drove her to the desperation which impelled her to the crime!

The first woman to run for president, Victoria Woodhull, said: “Every woman knows that if she were free, she would never bear an unwished-for child, or think of murdering one before its birth.”

Some—who begrudgingly admit the early American feminists were anti-abortion—have suggested that the reason was the Victorian attitude about sex. That’s not true either.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton shocked Victorian society by parading around in public visibly pregnant. She raised a flag to celebrate the birth of a child in a time when children were not seen in society until the age of two. She celebrated womanhood. She was “in your face” about her ability to have children.

By this time the birth rate was down. That happened long before legal abortion or even the Pill. It happened when women went to work.

There was no outcry from women to have abortions.

Even when Betty Friedan reawakened feminism in 1963 with her landmark book, *The Feminine Mystique*, the first edition did not even mention abortion.

It was the two men who founded NARAL—then the National Association to Repeal the Abortion Laws—who advocated the repeal of feminist anti-abortion laws.

One of these men, Larry Lader, wanted to repeal abortion laws because of population concerns. He thought there were too many people in this world. The other man, Dr. Bernard Nathanson, had seen a botched abortion in Chicago. He reasoned—like some who promote legalizing prostitution—that legal would mean safer. These two men traveled around the country advocating the repeal of what they believed to be antiquated abortion laws.

Nathanson later told FFL’s immediate past president, Rosemary Bottcher, how, after failing to convince legislators that anti-abortion

laws were archaic, Larry Lader saw another opportunity. Lader approached the leaders of the women's movement. He offered women the keys to the executive washroom. If women wanted to be educated like men, hired like men, and promoted like men, then women couldn't expect the poor little employer to accommodate *women*! Why should it be the *boss'* problem? Why should it be *his* responsibility to give women maternity benefits and leave, a living wage? Why should it be his problem when a woman wants time off to have the kid, when the child has the mumps, parent/teacher meetings? Children are a disruption to the workplace!

If women want to be treated like men, Lader argued, then women shouldn't bother employers with women's fertility problems. If women could only control their fertility and fit into a man's world on men's terms, then women might be successful.

Betty Friedan was not convinced. After all, she had felt her children in her womb. She knew they weren't aliens or parasites.

Will our votes not count? Will our right to free speech suddenly disappear?

It is time to challenge these assumptions made about women's capacity. Even more important, it's time to reconsider the many promises made to women by abortion advocates.

The abortion proponents of the 1970s promised women a world of equality and reduced poverty—a world where every child would be “a wanted child.”

Instead, child abuse has escalated in every developed country where abortion has been legalized. And rather than shared responsibility for children, even more of the burden has shifted to women.

To some extent, women must accept responsibility for this. When women marched up and down Pennsylvania Avenue and chanted, “It's our body! It's our choice!” men agreed, “Yeah, it's your problem.”



So Lader went back to the drawing board and came up with a big—and effective—lie. According to Nathanson, Lader *simply made up* the number of women who died from illegal abortions. Nathanson went along with it, and these NARAL founders told the horrible story that 10,000 women a year were dying.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton celebrated—flaunted—her motherhood. She did not capitulate to societal expectations, but pressured society to accept her as she was. We should have told Lader and Nathanson, “Women have children. Get over it!”

Instead, NOW made legalized abortion their #1 priority.

They say that access to abortion is “the most fundamental right of women, without which all other rights are meaningless.”

Really?

Will our property be seized?

Will women be tossed out of college? Sarah Weddington thought so. She argued in *Roe v. Wade* that a woman couldn't possibly complete her education if she were pregnant. Why not? Is she suddenly stupid?

Fatherhood has been diminished. More than \$90 billion is owed women in child support. Even worse, children are disconnected from their fathers. Fatherless teens are at highest risk for becoming parents too soon.

More than three decades after *Roe*, we mourn the loss of more than 40 million American children that we will never meet. We will never know what they might have contributed to this world.

We also remember the women and teens who have lost their lives to legal but lethal abortion. Every 38 seconds a woman lays her body down, driven to abortion because of a lack of resources and support.

These losses are unacceptable.

Abortion is a reflection that we have not met the needs of women—and women have settled for less.

Today we stand in solidarity with women who are coerced into abortion because they felt they had no choice.

An FFL intern from Howard chose grandparenting to complete her education. She went to her parents' home every weekend to see her two little ones and afterwards landed a job at a Boston ad agency.

Some colleges find that many services already exist. What is needed are ways to inform students about the resources and support—bookmarks, web sites, orientation materials, student handbooks, brochures, articles in the paper, etc.

Feminists for Life has worked for enhanced child support legislation. We also distribute brochures that include information about child support—both the responsibilities and rights of the father. If he is unwilling to parent, our "You Have Choices" brochure (<http://www.feministsforlife.org/cop/kits/yhc.pdf>) contains basic information that women should know to establish paternity.

We need to systematically eliminate the root causes of abortion, because women deserve better than abortion.

FFL's Honorary Chair and two-time Emmy-winning actor Patricia Heaton has said, "Women who experience an unplanned pregnancy also have a right to experience unplanned joy." Honorary Co-Chair Margaret Colin asked that we "remember the woman."

More than a century ago, the same women who fought for women's rights and for the rights of slaves to be free also fought for our right to life. Mattie Brinkerhoff wrote in an 1869 edition of the radical feminist paper, *The Revolution*: "When a man steals to satisfy hunger, we can safely assume that there is something wrong in society—so when a woman destroys the life of her unborn child, it is an evidence that either by education or circumstances she has been greatly wronged."

Feminists for Life was founded in 1972 by Cathy Callahan and Pat Goltz—two women who thought that abortion advocates were hijacking the women's movement. Pat Goltz was later ejected from a NOW meeting in Ohio for distributing pro-life literature.

FFL proudly carries on the 200-year legacy of feminism, whose core principles rightly include nonviolence, nondiscrimination and justice for all.

Since Sarah Weddington argued in *Roe v. Wade* that a woman could not complete her college education if she were pregnant, and Larry Lader and Dr. Bernard Nathanson told NOW leadership that women need to control their fertility to achieve equality in the workplace, women have spent 31 years proving that we can make it in a man's world. Now it is time for women to concentrate on the right to be ourselves.

I challenge those on both sides of the abortion debate to come together and address the root causes that drive women to abortion.

Those who refuse to choose between women and children, and work to systematically eliminate the root causes that drive women to abortion, already walk in the shoes of Susan B. Anthony and the other feminist foremothers.

I invite you to join and support Feminists for Life, because women deserve better, and every child deserves a chance at life.

Thank you. ○

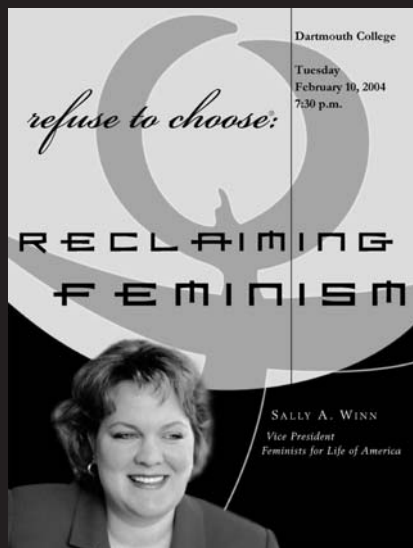
Editor's note: Serrin Foster's 1999 speech, "The Feminist Case Against Abortion" has been included in an anthology on "Women's Rights," one in a series entitled, "Great Speeches in History" by Greenhaven Press. Foster's speech is constantly evolving. This version was delivered in the spring of 2004.



Excerpts from FFL Vice President Sally Winn's speech

REFUSE TO CHOOSE

Statistics show that 1 in 10 college-aged women will become pregnant this year—but how many pregnant students do you see on campus?



Where do they all go? They either drop out or have an abortion. Why?

I was a junior in college when I became pregnant, and I can tell you why you don't see pregnant women on campuses. For a pregnant student, there is often no housing, no daycare, no maternity coverage in the student health care plan. Some schools, like Yale, offer free abortions in their standard student health care—but not a dime for prenatal care or delivery. Where was my free choice? What choices did I have?

I was not pro-life when I became pregnant—and I have to tell you that the decision I made was embarrassingly flippant. I didn't weigh the morality of the issue; I didn't think about slogans or political stances. I looked at what kind of financial resources and emotional support I had. I lived off campus in an apartment; my tuition and books as well as room and board were 100% paid for (thank you, Grandma). The father and I both had very supportive families, and basically I decided that I didn't have a compelling reason to have an abortion. Well, that lack of a compelling reason has a name. She's Emily, and she just turned 10 in January.

I was fortunate to be in a situation where I didn't have to rely on the school's programs, health insurance, or scholarships—but there are so many other students who aren't as fortunate. With 1 in 5 abortions being performed on a college student, we know that something needs to be done.

It's time for people on both sides of the issue to come together and be a catalyst for change. FFL can help you do that by hosting a Pregnancy Resource Forum on your campus...

RECLAIMING FEMINISM

Truth is, pro-life feminism is not an oxymoron. It is entirely congruent with the ideas of the pioneers of feminism and is built on a 200-year history. The early suffragists who were fighting for women's rights were also pro-life, without known exception. In fact, they were pro-life activists. They felt that abortion was a sign that society had failed women, and they pushed for laws to keep women and children safe from abortion.

In a time when the male-dominated medical field and the media put the blame for abortion on women, the early feminists recognized that women who had abortions often felt they had no other choice. Women lacked the emotional and financial support they needed to have children on their own—just as women do today. The suffragists believed that the enfranchisement and empowerment of women were the true solutions to the circumstances pressuring them to turn to abortion.

The '70s women's movement abandoned this original vision of the early feminists. While the suffragists worked to change society to accept women, second wave feminists worked to change women so they could be accepted by society. And we've been paying for it ever since. Today there are 1.3 million surgical abortions each year in the United States. Every 38 seconds a sister, mother, daughter, friend is laying down her body for an abortion.

It's time for friends, families, employers, and universities to wake up and smell the coffee. Women are not men; we have children, so deal with it! Accommodate us for who we are instead of making us fit into a male model. Why should we have to sacrifice our children and violate our bodies to achieve our academic and career goals?

It is time to reclaim feminism—the authentic, pro-life feminism of our suffragist foremothers. It is time to focus on empowering women by offering holistic, women-centered solutions. It is time to come together with one voice and say: "We refuse to choose between women and their unborn children! Women deserve better." ○

Bring an FFL speaker to your campus! Check out FFL's website (www.feministsforlife.org) or contact the national office (202-737-3352) for more details.

2001 American University **2002** Georgetown University • American University • University of Notre Dame • Duke University • University of Michigan at Ann Arbor • Michigan State University • University of Western Michigan • Oberlin College • Ohio State University • Oregon State University • St. John's University • University of Illinois **2003** Johns Hopkins University **2004** Georgetown University • University of New Hampshire • Dartmouth College • Saint Michael's College • University of Michigan at Dearborn • University of Kentucky • University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill • Furman University • George Fox University • Gonzaga University • Oberlin College • Medical College of Ohio • George Washington University

the OTHER SIDE OTHER SIDE

In 1997 Planned Parenthood's *INSIDER* newsletter called Feminists for Life's College Outreach Program the "most challenging concept in anti-choice student organizing.... a campaign that could have profound impact on the anti-choice student movement as well as Planned Parenthood's public education and advocacy efforts." In 2002, the Feminist Majority Foundation placed Feminists for Life high on its campus "watch list."

and action manual, *Choices*, educates FMLA students about strategy and opposition and offers tips for researching papers and assistance in résumé development. National conferences and regional leadership institutes sponsor workshops on public speaking, fundraising, event planning, and member recruitment and retention. Members receive action alerts and news, and member groups receive resource mailings, including reproducible fact sheets, action ideas, videos, brochures, give-away promotional products, and newsletters.

Other abortion advocacy groups are also organizing student groups on campuses across the country. Planned Parenthood creates a presence through VOX on Campus (www.plannedparenthood.org/vox), and NARAL through Generation Pro-Choice (www.naral.org/generation). The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice is coordinating Spiritual Youth for Reproductive Freedom (www.syrf.org), which partners with Feminist Majority's Feminist Campus. ChoiceUSA and Law Students for

"[T]he anti-choice group Feminists for Life has launched an ad campaign targeting the young, progressive market on college campuses—the group that most strongly supports a woman's right to choose abortion and identifies most strongly as feminist. This campaign, 'Question Abortion,' illustrates the deceptive and costly techniques employed by the Right Wing."

Excerpt from Feminist Majority's *Choices: the Study and Action Manual*

FFL's College Outreach Program remains a challenge to abortion advocacy. In March 2004 an abortion activist begged sympathizers in an online discussion forum, "The anti-choice group at my school has been putting up Feminists for Life flyers. Any ideas on how to counter this?"

Though no brilliant counter-protest ideas were forthcoming, it is important to know what abortion advocates are doing on college and university campuses so we can remain a step ahead.

The Feminist Campus program of the Feminist Majority Foundation (feministcampus.org) claims to be the "world's largest pro-choice student network." Though the Feminist Majority Foundation has done excellent work in other areas concerning feminists, such as equal educational opportunities for women in Afghanistan, their campus activism centers on abortion. Students are invited to start or join Feminist Majority Leadership Alliances and Affiliates (FMLAs) on their campuses. This network of student-run activist organizations seeks to motivate young women to oppose "very real threats to abortion access." Abortion "rights" were the cornerstone of the 2003-2004 campus campaigns, including the March for Women's Lives in Washington, the Get Out Her Vote drive, and Prescribe Choice.

Feminist Campus is a true network. In addition to an online directory of participating schools and contacts, Feminist Campus provides directories of participating faculty and staff and alumnae networking opportunities. Online chat groups are also available.

Resources are extensive. A downloadable study

Choice are also infiltrating campuses. Because so few medical students want to perform abortions, Medical Students for Choice is an aggressive recruiter. Like Feminist Majority, these groups provide resources, including online discussion forums, training manuals, workshops, conferences, fact sheets, promotional materials, newsletters and action alerts.

The biggest campaign of 2003-2004, in which nearly all these groups participated, was the April 25 March for Women's Lives in Washington, D.C. (Pictured below.) Despite the march's inviting name, the event focused on promoting abortion access rather than bettering the lives of women. Student attendance was largely dependent on proximity. An estimated 300 American University students, already in Washington, attended. Penn State sent approximately 100 students, but even



faraway schools like the University of Southern California, University of California-Santa Barbara, and the University of Arizona sent as many as 30 students each to the march. University of Georgia and UCSB students spent four to six months raising funds to attend the march, and many, like University of Missouri-St. Louis students, slept on their buses to save money. Student groups received some financial assistance from abortion advocacy groups, which also sponsored workshops, distributed t-shirts, and hosted other events like speak-outs. It is a tragedy that the enormous individual and team efforts of thousands of students from across the United States were wasted by marching in the wrong direction.

The march was not the first major collaborative campaign for abortion advocates. The Pro-Choice Public Education Project (PEP; www.protectchoice.org) is a combined effort of national organizations, including NARAL, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Feminist Majority Foundation, the Ms. Foundation, and the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. This project conducts public opinion research on women 16 to 25 years old and then uses the information to design, shape and disseminate advertising that targets young women. PEP places ads on subways and buses, on television, and in college newspapers. Student activists are encouraged to post PEP flyers on campuses.

Since 2001, PEP has been using posters and flyers "designed to look like City Ordinances" in outdoor campaigns. Students are encouraged to post similar flyers, designed to look like school policy notices, on campuses. One says men will be given first choice of business classes, another that women "believed to be promiscuous or intoxicated" will be deemed "at fault" if they are raped. The fine print explains, "If a woman loses her reproductive rights, who knows what rights she could lose next." Subway and bus ads depict a rusted-out car, a filthy bathroom and a dead-end alley as the abortion clinics of the future should abortion become illegal. PEP also produced posters for the 2004 March for Women's Lives.

"Abortion advocates continue to try to use fear to motivate girls and women," says Serrin Foster. "It just doesn't work. Healthy young women today don't see themselves as helpless and stupid. Why should they?" Regarding the "City Ordinance" posters, Foster adds, "They're trying to scare women instead of meeting real needs. Women can see through these scare tactics and decades of empty promises."

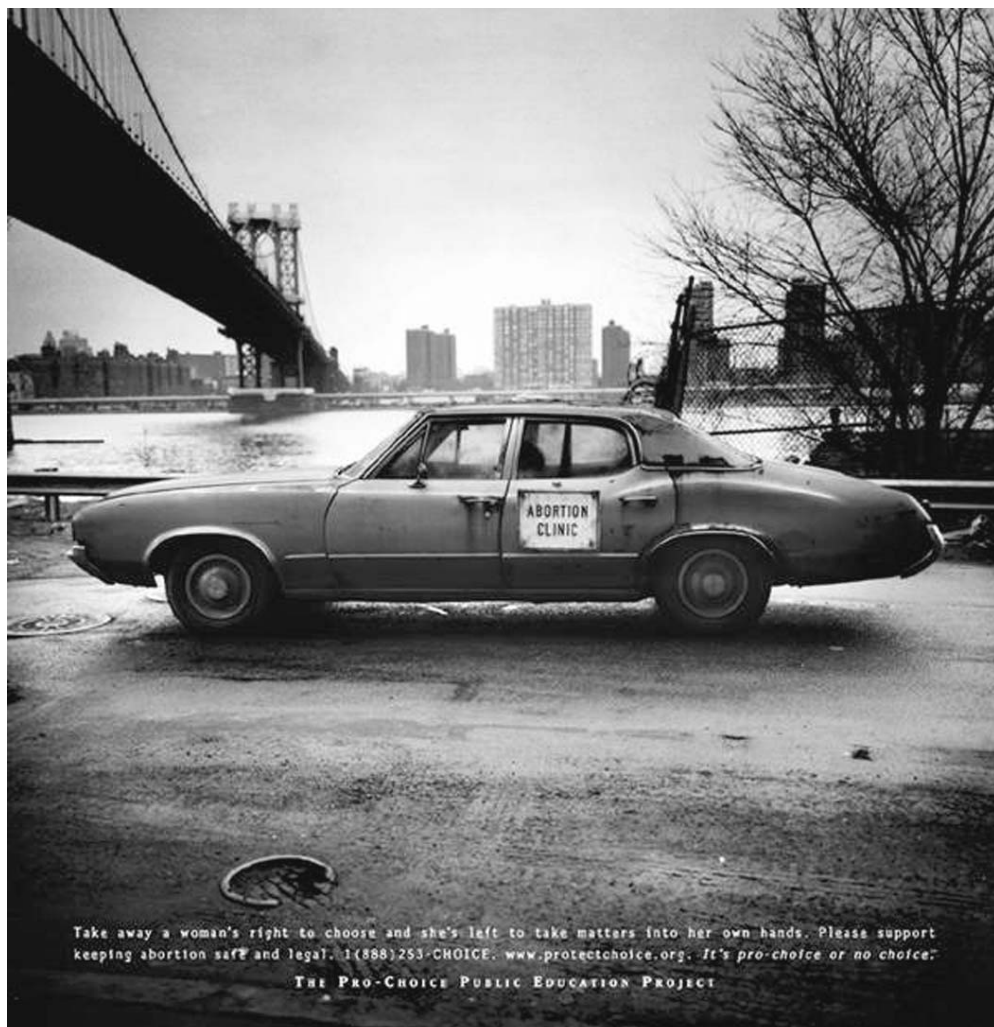
Student groups affiliated with one or more abortion advocacy groups are given many ideas for hosting effective events on campus. They attempt to mix fun with education, recruitment and fundraising. Old standbys, like information tables, are being improved. In addition to offering literature, free promotional handouts and member sign-up lists, students are encouraged to feature petitions and letter-writing campaigns, supply voter registration information, show off related web sites with a laptop, show ads and related videos on a TV with a VCR, or challenge fellow students to educational games. FMLAs might turn fundraising bake sales into "pay equity bake sales," charging women 72¢ and men \$1 to raise funds and consciousness at the same time. VOX members are encouraged to recruit clinic escorts.

New varieties of events are planned. FMLAs at the University of California at San Diego and at Berkeley invited students to screenings of HBO's *Iron Jawed Angels*, a movie about the suffragist efforts of Alice Paul and Lucy Burns that fails to mention Paul's committed pro-life stance. Other campus film festivals have featured and discussed movies like *Cider House Rules*, *If These Walls Could Talk*, and *Jane: An Abortion Service*. Groups at schools like George Washington

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Public Education Project while you still can.

(888)253-CHOICE

University have raised money and recruited members through productions of *The Vagina Monologues*. Minnesota students affiliated with NARAL invited people to a "pro-choice" comedy show, and students at the University of Denver hosted a house party. Concerts, garage sales, auctions, cook-outs, pumpkin carving nights, candle-light vigils, book clubs, clinic tours, coffeehouse events and cocktail parties are all turned into opportunities to convert more students to abortion advocacy. Speakers are brought to campus, and panels address topics like "Pro-Choice Religious Perspectives." Online newsletters and discussion forums allow students at different schools to share strategies and tips for coordinating successful events. At every event, students affiliated with abortion advocacy groups

are encouraged to present themselves as cool, confident, lively, progressive and playful.

Abortion advocacy campaigns, like Feminist Majority's Get Out Her Vote, are often endorsed by celebrities—like Sheryl Crow and Nia Vardalos—who appeal to college audiences. Feminist Majority's annual Rock for Choice concerts are also marketed to college students, featuring musicians like Crow, Ben Harper, Melissa Etheridge and Lisa Loeb, and hosts like Vardalos, Kathy Najimy, Camryn Manheim and Ricki Lake. These campaigns specifically target people aged 18 to 25 and reinforce the idea that it's "cool" to be pro-choice.

Despite all these efforts, recent polls have shown that support for abortion is waning among college and university students. Abortion advocates believe young people are taking "choice" for granted. But in reality, young people increasingly *question abortion* and find it an unsatisfying "solution" to the difficulties that pregnant women and parents face. FFL's call to "challenge the status quo" by addressing the root causes of abortion is resonating with college and university students. Even abortion advocates find the speeches of FFL President Serrin Foster and Vice President Sally Winn to be reasonable and disarming, and many have offered to help bring Pregnancy Resource Forums to their campuses.

The tide is turning, and this is why students need FFL's College Outreach Program now more than ever. We have accomplished amazing change in a short time with short funds, but the struggle for the hearts and minds of college students is only beginning. In the words of Serrin Foster, "It is not enough to say 'no' to abortion. We must say 'yes' to life." ○

Live the legacy.

Leave a legacy.



We who refuse to choose between women and children live the legacy of Susan B. Anthony and the other early American feminists.

Please consider leaving a legacy by including Feminists for Life of America as a beneficiary of your estate so that our work may continue. Let us know so that we may properly acknowledge your gift.

Electronic Fund Transfer Form

Help FFL Help Women and Children! Your monthly electronic donations provide essential support as FFL works to bring about positive change for women and children. Electronic donors receive quarterly president's reports, detailing FFL's progress. To begin your monthly contributions, simply fill out the electronic transfer form and send it (along with a voided check) to FFL. It's that easy! Donations will be debited on the first business day of each month and will be put to work immediately by FFL. Your participation helps FFL continue the tradition of the early feminists—pro-woman and pro-life!

I want my bank to transfer monthly donations to Feminists for Life of America. My authorization to charge my account at my bank shall be the same as if I had personally signed a check to FFLA. This authorization shall remain in effect until I notify FFLA, or notify my bank in writing that I wish to end this agreement, and my bank or FFLA has had a reasonable time to act on it. A record of each charge will be included in my regular bank statements and will serve as my receipt.

\$_____ Amount of monthly pledge (\$5 minimum).

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: Day (____) _____ Eve. (____) _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Please enclose a voided check from your account to show the bank's address and your account number.

Send to: Feminists for Life,
733 15th Street, N.W., Suite 1100, Washington, D.C. 20005.
Electronic fund transfers will begin immediately upon receipt.
Thank you!

herstory

Worth Repeating

The nightmare again: everyone in the world was dead except herself, and upon her rested the responsibility of making a wagon wheel. She did not know how to do so, but she felt that the affairs of the world could not be resumed until at least one wheel was made, and it depended on her, an overwhelmed and incapable child...

Jane Addams recalled this dream recurring at the age of six. Convinced it would come true, she proceeded to the blacksmith's shop in her hometown of Cedarville, Illinois, to store in her mind the details of the process she believed she would need in the future. As it turned out, she never did "smith" a wheel, but in 1889, at the age of 29, she began a 46-year role as the hub of a great community outreach venture called Hull House in the inner city of Chicago.

How was Jane Addams prepared for this lifelong commitment to Hull House? Her beloved father, a wealthy and politically active man, raised her with the virtues of tolerance and philanthropy and a strong work ethic. He fed her mind on heroes and visions of the heroic, sharing with her his letters from Abraham Lincoln, which began "My dear Double-D'ed Addams." Jane came to aspire to Lincoln's belief that people are the country's greatest resource. Years later, in 1894, during a trying time when Chicago was filled with the federal troops that had been called in against the Pullman railway workers' strike, a tired Jane Addams walked in Lincoln Park and took heart from his words "with charity towards all."

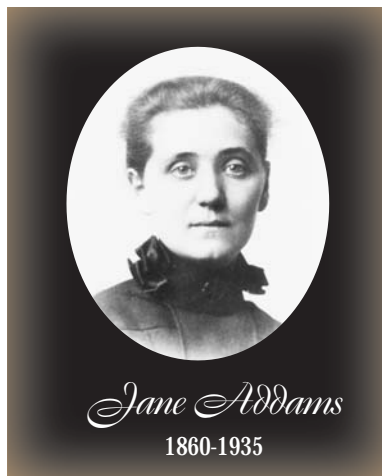
Jane Addams' father did not hide the despair of poverty from her, nor let her think her actions were without consequences. When Jane was eight years old, her new cloak was so much prettier than those of the others in her Sunday school class that her father advised her to wear the old one instead, which would keep her warm without making the other girls feel badly. She notes in *Forty Years at Hull House* that she did wear the old one, but "without the joy of self-sacrifice." Yet it did make her think, even then, of the inequalities of human life.

Addams also credited Rockford Female Seminary, which

focused on moral, cultural and social responsibility and had a strong missionary tradition. The female students felt compelled to prove themselves in what was still a man's world. Refusing pressure to join one of the established missions, Addams set her sights on becoming a doctor. Ill health prevented her from achieving that goal. Undaunted, she reasoned that there were other ways in which she could help the poor. While traveling in Europe, she was inspired to open a settlement house in America, but one that would not be religious nor appear as a gesture of "noblesse oblige." Believing practical skills must be taught along with ideas and principles, she planned to structure it along the lines of a typical missionary school. She and her co-workers would live at the house, in the midst of poverty, to help the poor.

What conditions of poverty did she seek to address? In Chicago's inner city, she saw extreme economic disparity; immigrants crowded into slums; unemployment; workdays of 12 or 14 hours; children as young as five unprotected by workforce legislation; disease, crime, and vice in the slums; strikes smashed by employers; unions broken up; critics of business or politics silenced; and agitators jailed. Addams wrote: "The Settlement, then, is an experimental effort to aid in the solution of the social and industrial problems which are engendered by the modern conditions of life in a great city."

She started by solving immediate practical problems and then promoted legislation or created programs to serve more people in a better way. In 1889, Hull House opened with a kindergarten. The founders thought of it as a simple matter of neighborliness to the community. "It is natural to feed the hungry and care for the sick," wrote Addams. "It is certainly natural to give pleasure to the young, and to comfort the aged." Soon men, women and children of all ages thronged to the old mansion, whose doors were never locked. Before long, 2,000 people a day found comfort or services within. Addams and her co-workers raised money from well-to-do families. The diversity of services was astounding: daycare facilities, elder care, art and music classes, an art gallery, a public kitchen, a gymnasium, citizenship preparation classes, public baths and swimming pool, a men's club, a labor museum, a cooperative residence for working



women, a drama group and the first Little Theater in America, a meeting place for trade union groups, a circulating library, and an employment bureau. By 1907, the settlement had grown into a 13-building complex that enveloped the original building.

During those years, Jane Addams worked on political causes, later recalling her efforts “to ameliorate untoward conditions and to abolish unfair restrictions because we believed that each human being had a right to develop to his utmost capacity.” Accomplishments included passing a factory inspection law; establishing a juvenile court (the first in the nation); and lobbying for workman’s compensation, prohibition, laws forbidding children under the age of 14 to work, compulsory education, and a woman’s right to vote. She also served as a labor arbitrator.

Among the Hull House reform projects were the Immigrants’ Protective League, the Juvenile Protective Association, and a Juvenile Psychopathic Clinic, later called the Institute for Juvenile Research. In 1911, six young men committed a brutal murder, and four were sentenced to hang. Learning of their upbringing in Chicago’s worst slum and of their parents who had said, “I don’t care what they do with them; it is nothing to me,” Addams wrote: “Who that has ever studied such sordid conditions, can believe that what the situation needs is more brutality? To present to a mind already preoccupied with brutal and violent images, the picture of an execution, is to brutalize it still further.” She had earlier defined a criminal as one who is “either apathetic or defiant to society’s notion of property, of commercial honor or of the sacredness of human life.” When the Federal Children’s Bureau was created in 1912 and a federal child labor law was enacted in 1916, Addams could see her efforts affecting children for the better nationwide.

Jane Addams believed that women could shape their own destinies. She worked for suffrage, becoming the first vice president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in 1911. She believed that “political action should concern itself with genuine human needs. It makes possible the age-long effort of women to bring the world nearer to their heart’s desire—a better world for their children to live in.”

Throughout 46 years at Hull House, she made time to write 11 books. She wrote hundreds of articles on a vast array of subjects that were originally published in both scholarly journals and popular magazines to reach the widest audience.

Her close contact with the immigrant community around Hull House gave Addams a unique perspective on the larger world, causing her to object strongly to World War I. She organized the International Congress of Women, which met at The Hague in the Netherlands in 1915 with an agenda to avoid war. Though this effort failed, it sowed the seeds of an international peace movement. Addams worked for years to organize women in several countries, for which she received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931. When she died of cancer four years later, thousands came to the funeral service in the courtyard of Hull House.

President Franklin Roosevelt once called Jane Addams “Chicago’s most useful citizen.” The hub of Hull House had committed her life to a holistic approach to problem solving in the modern city, so that those she served might “grow in a sense of relationship and mutual interest.” ○

WE REMEMBER



Tamia Russell

1989 – 2004

Fifteen-year-old Tamia Russell of Detroit died as a result of an abortion performed in the sixth month of her pregnancy.

Her cause of death was listed as “uterine infarction with sepsis, due to status post second trimester abortion.” Some tissue received insufficient blood, because a uterine blood vessel was blocked, and the damaged tissue became infected.

(Sepsis infection also caused the death of Holly Patterson, a 19-year-old California teen who died in 2003. Patterson died after taking an RU-486 pill she was given by Planned Parenthood in September.)

The sister of Russell’s 24-year-old boyfriend drove her around to abortion clinics to obtain an abortion, for which the boyfriend paid. Five facilities turned them away until they arrived at WomanCare of Southfield. Neither parent nor guardian consented to the abortion; Russell’s mother was not even notified until after the abortion process had begun.

When Russell’s mother called WomanCare to ask about the procedure, she was told, despite medical evidence to the contrary, that once laminaria had been inserted to begin dilating the cervix, the abortion had to be completed.

Returning home after the completed abortion on January 8, Russell suffered heavy bleeding. WomanCare employees told Russell’s family that such bleeding was “normal” after an abortion, and that she need not go to the hospital. Russell died as paramedics rushed her to the hospital.

Russell’s relatives are demanding investigation of WomanCare’s activities. “People need to take a first hand look at what happens here,” said Nicole Redden, Russell’s cousin, at an April press conference in front of the abortion facility. “I don’t want this to happen to anyone else.”

It is illegal in Michigan to perform an abortion on a minor without either parental consent or a judicial waiver. Russell’s family is unable to file a complaint of statutory rape against their daughter’s adult boyfriend because she is deceased.

Source: LifeNews.com

