



# THE AMERICAN FEMINIST®

FEMINISTS FOR LIFE  
OF AMERICA

**FFL Activists Change Campuses,  
*Change the World***

**through innovative woman-centered solutions**



“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*, 2 September 1869



# Contents

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>3 <b>Change the World</b><br/>Serrin M. Foster</p> <p>4 <b>Victory for Pregnant &amp; Parenting Students, Teens, and Victims of Violence</b><br/>Cayce D. Utley</p> <p>7 <b>FFL Remembers Dr. Mildred Jefferson</b><br/>Cat Clark</p> <p>9 <b>FFL Announces Charter Collegiate Groups</b></p> <p>11 <b>Good News or Bad News?</b><br/>Chaunie Brusie</p> <p>14 <b>Praise for Feminists for Life's Remarkable Pro-Woman, Pro-Life Speakers</b></p> | <p>16 <b>Honoring Birthparents' Choices</b><br/>Nicole Callahan</p> <p>20 <b>FFL Equips Student Activists with NEW Woman-Centered Tools</b><br/>Chaunie Brusie</p> <p>22 <b>Rally for Resources</b></p> <p>23 <b>FFL Pregnancy Resource Forums</b><br/>Chaunie Brusie</p> <p>27 <b>FFL Pregnancy Resources Survey</b></p> <p>30 <b>FFL Announces "Coach the Coach" Campaign</b><br/>Cayce D. Utley</p> |
|--|--|

 **refuse to choose**  
**Women Deserve Better than Abortion**  
FEMINISTS FOR LIFE.org

Winter 2010-2011

**THE AMERICAN FEMINIST**<sup>®</sup>

*A publication of Feminists for Life of America*

**Editor-in-Chief/President**

Serrin M. Foster

**Editor**

Nicole Callahan

**Editorial Board**

Chaunie Brusie, Cat Clark, Cayce D. Utley

**Copy Editors**

Donna Hayden Foster, Ruth Gill,  
Melissa Hunter-Kilmer, Coleen MacKay,  
Krista Cornish Scott, Susanna B. Seibert,  
Sharon Serratore

**Art Director, back cover**

Lisa Toscani

**Design/Layout**

Cat Clark

**Board of Directors**

*Chair* Patrick A. O'Kane

*Vice Chair* Cindy P. Brown

*Secretary* Michael A. Sciscenti

*Treasurer* Michael A. McNamara

*Members-at-Large* Susan Zeigler, Nina Jurewicz

*President* Serrin M. Foster

**Feminists for Life of America**

P.O. Box 320667

Alexandria, VA 22320

[www.feministsforlife.org](http://www.feministsforlife.org)

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.

Feminists for Life of America is a 501(c)3 organization. All donations are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

The opinions expressed in *The American Feminist* by individual authors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies, views, or beliefs of FFL's Board of Directors, President, or *The American Feminist* editorial staff.

Copyright 2010. All rights reserved.

ISSN 1532-6861

# Change the World



Serrin in her father's graduation cap

A few years after I started working at FFL, my father and I were out walking my beagle. I was talking about our work at FFL and how we were hoping to address the challenges of pregnant and parenting students from across the country.

He stopped me in my path, looked intently into my eyes, and reminded me that he had experienced many of the same obstacles as a student parent when he was at university.

Few resources had been developed since he was in college—even though *half* of those pursuing secondary degrees were women. And according to the Guttmacher Institute, today *half* of all abortions are performed on college-aged women. Why? When women in college feel forced to choose between their education and children, we fail women—and women must stop settling for less.

*Something must change.* Since we first created and sent pregnancy resource kits to campus health clinics in 1995, Feminists for Life has established itself as the leading force to advocate *real change* and *real progress* on campus—including new and groundbreaking pro-woman, pro-life legislation to support holistic, woman-centered solutions inspired by FFL Pregnancy Resource Forums.

We see the impact of our pioneering work in the eyes of a young mother who cried out of sheer gratitude during a recent Pregnancy Resource Forum because students, staff, and activists rallied to support her—even though they had never met her before that night.

We hear the power of tangible solutions affirmed by the graduate student who publicly thanked FFL after one of my recent lectures for developing “Raising Kids on a Shoestring.”

This issue celebrates 17 years of FFL successfully leading the effort to find meaningful solutions for the most vulnerable in society, and equips the next generation with tools to enable their next victories for pregnant women, birthparents, student mothers, and student fathers like mine.

Our victories provide momentum for the next group of student activists who will work to change one campus at a time. Our success stories remind us of the urgency of our mission as we move on to new and greater challenges.

None of our work is possible without FFL members and supporters, visionaries who refuse to choose between women and children, who refuse to stand by while the rights and needs of women are ignored. With your help, we will accomplish so much more, and today's student leaders will change the world for the better.

Because women—and men and children—deserve better,

Serrin M. Foster  
President and grateful daughter





# VICTORY

FOR PREGNANT & PARENTING STUDENTS, TEENS, AND VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

by Cayce D. Utley  
National Program Director

## PREGNANCY ASSISTANCE FUND FOCUSES ON WOMAN-CENTERED SOLUTIONS

*This groundbreaking victory has been years in the making—17 years, in fact:*

Seventeen years after FFL President Serrin M. Foster began presenting her speech “The Feminist Case Against Abortion” and established FFL’s highly successful College Outreach Program,

1994

Sixteen years after FFL’s ad campaign first asked students to *Question Abortion*,®

1995

Fifteen years after sending kits to 650 college and university health clinics to inform women about “the rest of the choices,”

1996

Fourteen years after Serrin moderated FFL’s first Pregnancy Resource Forum™ at Georgetown University,

1997

Eleven years after Serrin’s speech to women legislators inspired model pregnancy resources legislation in Michigan,

2000

Six years after Michigan’s Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Act was signed into law,

2005

Five years after FFL’s Elizabeth Cady Stanton Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Act was introduced in Congress,

2006

Three years after FFL initiated the first Rally for Resources™ petition and pregnancy fair on campus and released a groundbreaking nationwide study documenting college students’ lack of knowledge about pregnancy and parenting resources on their campuses and where to go for help,

2008

The same year FFL developed our “Raising Kids on a Shoestring” resource guide filled with free, frugal, and creative solutions for pregnant women, expectant fathers, birthparents, and parents,

2010

**Our vision of on-campus resource centers for pregnant and parenting students is about to become reality through the Pregnancy Assistance Fund!**

2011

This summer Feminists for Life celebrated the establishment of the Pregnancy Assistance Fund for Pregnant and Parenting Students, largely inspired by Feminists for Life's work on college campuses to develop resources for this underserved population. The Office of Adolescent Health in the Department of Health and Human Services distributed the awards—the first federal grants of their kind—to 17 states and territories and 13 tribes this September.

The fund includes four components: supporting pregnant and parenting students at institutions of higher education, supporting pregnant and parenting teens, supporting pregnant victims of violence, and increasing public awareness of new or existing pregnancy and parenting support services. FFL's work in each of these areas laid much of the foundation for the Pregnancy Assistance Fund.

“When we think about the history of gaining support for each portion of this new law, we can see that **FFL's long-term focus on meaningful solutions engenders support from people on both sides of political and ideological divides.** We've taken woman-centered solutions to a whole new level—outside the abortion wars. Now everyone—especially educators at our finest universities and colleges—can work together to answer the unmet needs of women,” said FFL President Serrin M. Foster.

The first portion of the fund's legislation is based on FFL's seventeen years of work to address the needs of pregnant women, birthparents, and parents on college campuses. An FFL-inspired bill in Michigan served as the model for the Elizabeth Cady Stanton Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Act, which enjoyed bipartisan support and led to the creation of a core element of the Pregnancy Assistance Fund. Through a matching grant, institutions of higher education will develop resources for the underserved population of pregnant and parenting students.

FFL first worked with Michigan Right to Life at the state level to introduce legislation to establish on-campus resources for pregnant and parenting students enrolled in college. That bill soon became the federal Elizabeth Cady Stanton Pregnant and Parenting Student Services Act (2005, 2007), created to provide grants to colleges and universities across the United States for annual pregnancy and parenting resource forums

and a central office to coordinate, promote, and develop resources and support on and off campus.

In 2008, FFL revealed results from its 2007 national survey of pregnancy resources and support, entitled “Perception Is Reality.” The study clearly showed a widespread perceived lack of basic resources on college campuses. Often help was either unavailable or not well

Life is eager to see grantees working on behalf of this vulnerable population in need,” said Foster, who testified before the U.S. House Judiciary Committee in support of the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, also known as Laci and Connor's Law. “We refuse to choose between these different efforts. Oftentimes these issues overlap, especially when it comes to victims of coercion who are in high school or college, or living in poverty.”



Feminists for Life was the only pro-life group in the National Task Force on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence to work successfully for the Violence Against Women Act, which was passed in 1994.

communicated, leaving pregnant and parenting students to feel unwelcome and unsupported. “The study confirmed everything we feared to be true—and makes the case for the Pregnancy Assistance Fund grants,” Foster said.

The second section of the fund is devoted to teen mothers, and was largely shaped by the first section of the bill creating services for pregnant and parenting students and birthmothers in college. Grantees awarded funds in this area will support pregnant and parenting teenagers through qualifying high schools and community service centers.

The third portion of the fund is devoted to serving pregnant women who are victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and stalking. FFL has a long record of activism for victims of violence. “As the only pro-life group active in the coalition to pass the Violence Against Women Act in 1994, and the only feminist organization to support the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, Feminists for

Foster congratulated the first states to be awarded the grants, adding, “We are eager to help those at the state and federal levels who are working to serve pregnant women and victims of violence, and we are ready to share our unique expertise with university and college administrators.”

Without FFL's work in each of these areas, it is difficult to imagine the establishment of the Pregnancy Assistance Fund. “Pregnancy and parenting should never terminate an education,” Foster said. “No woman, no parent, should be forced to choose between her education and career or her child. Pregnant and parenting students deserve better—which includes birthparents and student dads like mine—and everyone deserves equal access to educational opportunities. Teenaged mothers and their children also need our support. And those who are most vulnerable, including victims of violence, must be supported. These first awards are an important next step in realizing the vision of our feminist foremothers who urged the women's movement to

**A VICTORY 17 YEARS IN THE MAKING: 17 STATES AND 13 TRIBES AWARDED \$24 MILLION THROUGH THE PREGNANCY ASSISTANCE FUND.**

systematically address the reasons that drive women to abortion.”

This summer, Feminists for Life urged state governments to apply for the first federal grants, which range from \$500,000 to \$2 million dollars each for up to three years. Twenty-four million dollars in grants were awarded 17 states and 13 tribes for various programs designed to support pregnant women and parents.

FFL is offering technical assistance to states awarded federal grants through this program. As the creator of the higher education component of the Pregnancy Assistance Fund, FFL will offer direct assistance to universities and colleges who are awarded the matching funds to implement the program.



College Outreach Program Coordinator Chaunie Brusie describes her experience of pregnancy in college at a briefing for staff and interns on Capitol Hill.

“This is what we have been working towards for the past seventeen years,” Foster added. “We want to see this program succeed in its first three years so that other states will be encouraged to develop their own programs when the opportunity arises for states to reapply in 2013. We urge colleges and universities to lay the groundwork for the next wave of grants *now*. FFL is ready to work with them to advance progressive solutions for women who are pregnant.

“While the investment in these programs is modest, the return will be priceless,” Foster said. ●

The list of current awards and details about each funded program can be found at <http://www.hhs.gov/ash>.

*It is not enough to say “no” to abortion, or even to explain that “abortion hurts women,” though we have done both.*

*Feminists for Life says “yes” to life in meaningful ways. FFL looks ahead, working on holistic, woman-centered solutions. We challenge the status quo, helping birthmothers, poor women, victims of domestic violence and sex assault, working women, and college-aged women with the highest rate of abortion.*

*FFL rolls out the red carpet and welcomes all who refuse to choose<sup>®</sup> between women and children.*

*Our invitation to join extends to young women and men who have never known a day without legalized abortion, those who felt forced to choose between their education and career plans and their families, those who have personally experienced abortion, and those who feel that pro-lifers must answer the question, “What about the woman?”*

If you have been wondering where you fit in, please consider this your invitation to

**join**  
**Feminists for Life.**

*Thanks to members like you, we have achieved great victories. Rewarding, joyful work remains ahead of us.*

Become a member, renew your membership, or give the gift of membership today!

Membership is still \$25  
for regular members  
and just \$15 for students.

Sign up now at  
[www.feministsforlife.org/support](http://www.feministsforlife.org/support).

*Feminists for Life is a 501(c)3 organization. All membership contributions and donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.*



by Cat Clark

## FFL Remembers

# Dr. Mildred Jefferson, Remarkable Pro-Life Woman

Feminists for Life honors the life of Dr. Mildred Fay Jefferson, an accomplished surgeon and professor of surgery, a tireless advocate for women and children, who died Friday, October 15, 2010 at the age of 84. Feminists for Life named Dr. Jefferson a Remarkable Pro-Life Woman in 2003.

Among her many achievements, Jefferson was the first African American woman to graduate from Harvard Medical School, the first woman to serve as a surgical intern at Boston City Hospital, and the first woman to be elected to membership in the Boston Surgical Society. Twenty-eight American colleges and universities have awarded Dr. Jefferson honorary degrees in recognition of her efforts in the field of medicine and her pursuit of social justice.

Dr. Jefferson said she “became a physician in order to help save lives.” When reading her words, we cannot help being reminded of Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman to receive a medical degree from an American medical school and first woman on the British medical register, whose career had a similar motive. Blackwell wrote, “The gross perversion and destruction of motherhood by the abortionist filled me with indignation, and awakened active antagonism. That the honorable term ‘female physician’ should be exclusively applied to those women who carried on this shocking trade seemed to me a horror. It was an utter degradation of what might and should become a noble position for women.... I finally determined to do what I could do ‘to redeem the hells,’ and especially the one form of hell thus forced upon my notice.”

Regarding her own career, Jefferson asserted, “I am at once a physician, a citizen, and a woman, and I am not willing to stand aside and allow this concept of expendable human lives to turn this great land of ours into just another exclusive reservation where only the perfect, the privileged, and the planned have the right to live.”

Dr. Jefferson, who called the pro-life movement “second only to the abolitionist movement in the profound change it has brought about in American thinking,” helped to found the National Right to Life Committee, which she served both as president and as a member of the board. She was a founding member, past president, and board member of the Value of Life Committee of Massachusetts and Massachusetts Citizens for Life, and headed the Right to Life Crusade.

Jefferson also encouraged pro-life college and university students to organize. “If I had my way,” she said, “there would be a pro-life group on every college campus here in the United States and in its territories.... I hope that wherever you [students] have a department of women’s studies or black studies that you will have a corresponding pro-life movement.”

It was Dr. Mildred Jefferson who recommended that the Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, part of the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, seek Feminists for Life’s archives for inclusion in their collection. The Schlesinger Library believes “that Feminists for Life [archives] will complement the existing



“We come together from all parts of our land.... We come rich and poor, proud and plain, religious and agnostic, politically committed and independent.... The right-to-life cause is not the concern of only a special few but it should be the cause of all those who care about fairness and justice, love and compassion and liberty with law.”

feminist collections and add a powerful story of strong women and their efforts.”

“It was always an honor when Dr. Jefferson would attend a campus lecture, or share FFL’s message on her television show,” said FFL President Serrin Foster, “And I was so pleased that she was able to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony at the Susan B. Anthony Birthplace Museum in Adams, Massachusetts, on February 14, 2010, the eve of Susan B. Anthony’s 190th birthday. In so many ways Dr. Jefferson truly walked in the footsteps of the abolitionist and suffragist leader.”

The board and staff of Feminists for Life extend their heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of Dr. Mildred Jefferson. “Her legacy will live on in our pro-life feminist work on college campuses and beyond,” Foster said. •

“If I had my way, there would be a pro-life group on every college campus.”  
–Dr. Mildred Jefferson

## You Can Support Student Activists by Sending FFL to Campus!

College-aged women have the highest abortion rate of any age group. Women with some college education have, in recent years, had the highest abortion rate of any educational group. Student activists need *our* help to revolutionize their campuses so that no woman feels forced by a lack of resources and support to choose between her education and her child.

College students are the next generation of healthcare providers, educators, legislators, judges and attorneys, business leaders and human resource specialists, voters, and parents. Student activists empowered to create practical resources and support for student parents and birthmothers on their own campuses now will also be prepared to transform the broader culture in years to come. *Our* investment in challenging the status quo has potential to bring about tremendous change for parents and children everywhere.

*You* make this possible. *Every* contribution to Feminists for Life’s work makes a difference.

Please consider making a donation to support student activists in need. These are just a few of the ways your contribution can be used.

*As you read the articles in this issue, please remember that it is your generosity that makes all our achievements and plans possible. Please contribute to this revolutionary work at*  
**[www.feministsforlife.org/support](http://www.feministsforlife.org/support)**

Your gift of \$25-50 can help provide basic tools and materials to a student leader who wants to establish a campus group or increase its size, keep in touch with our College Outreach Program Coordinator through FFL’s Facebook group and email list for student leaders, and educate fellow students about pro-life feminist history.

Your gift of \$50-100 can provide a student leader with a year-round activism kit with personalized guidance from FFL’s College Outreach Program Coordinator.

Your gift of \$100-200 can provide a student leader with sufficient materials and personalized guidance to plan a powerful FFL Rally for Resources, bringing education about the need for woman-centered solutions directly to the campus public square (see page 22).

Your gift of \$1000-3000 can send an FFL speaker to campus (with materials) to lecture (see pages 14-15) or moderate an FFL Pregnancy Resource Forum (see pages 23-26). Personalized guidance at every step.

Your gift of *frequent flier miles, Amtrak rewards miles, and hotel reward points* can also help send a speaker to campus! Email [coordinator@ffloncampus.org](mailto:coordinator@ffloncampus.org).



The Campus Revolution Marches Forward:

# FFL ANNOUNCES CHARTER COLLEGIATE GROUPS!

Since Feminists for Life launched its highly successful College Outreach Program in 1996 to educate students about our pro-life feminist history and our focus on resources for women, they have received requests every year from enthusiastic student leaders who want to know if they can start their own FFL collegiate group. This year, Feminists for Life's Board of Directors decided the time has come to establish FFL on Campus groups.

People may know that "it's a baby." But the question remains, "What about the woman?" Pro-woman, pro-life student activists recognize that FFL has the answer: Women deserve better than abortion. "FFL student members know it's not enough to say 'no' to abortion. We say 'yes' to life," says FFL President Serrin Foster.

With the support of donors and members, FFL will continue to provide speakers and materials for 650 other pro-life student groups. FFL on Campus groups, meanwhile, will focus on woman-centered solutions.

"When the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced grant opportunities through the newly created Pregnancy Assistance Fund, we knew our decision to establish FFL on Campus groups were the right one," Foster continues. "FFL student leaders can help us advocate for women at the grassroots level. And FFL's program components are so comprehensive, there is plenty to keep a student organization busy all year round. Students can choose to partner with pro-life groups and women's organizations in their effort to systematically eliminate the root causes of abortion by promoting practical resources and support. Thanks to our devoted supporters, FFL's new young leaders will have the tools they need to make great strides on behalf of pregnant women and parents."

This is not the first time FFL groups have been organized on campus. In the late '90s, student members started groups at campuses including the University of Wisconsin at Madison and Notre Dame. "The leaders were strategic, smart, and made an impact," said Foster.

At that time, however, FFL was more focused on supporting a fledgling pro-life student movement, and the early activists were instrumental in helping FFL test and roll out woman-centered, solution-oriented program materials.

"The fact that there are now 650 pro-life student groups is an indication that we can support groups that specifically help us educate others on campus about our rich pro-life feminist history and focus on woman-centered solutions," Foster said. "When we created our calendar of activities, we could plainly see that there was so much to be done. Every month there is something students can do to reach our goal of making abortion unthinkable."

Students choosing to establish an FFL on Campus group will have exclusive access to year-round student activism, with a menu of activities to suit the group's size and abilities: FFL events, including remarkable pro-life speakers, free resources to revolutionize their campus with woman-centered solutions, and individualized support and consultation from FFL's College Outreach Program Coordinator. "As evidenced by FFL's long list of accomplishments, we know that these revolutionaries can have a tremendous impact on campus—and leave a legacy for generations to come," Foster added. •

Groups seeking to become a charter FFL on Campus group must agree with FFL's mission and be an officially recognized school organization. Student groups interested in registering as an "FFL on Campus" group should contact [coordinator@ffloncampus.org](mailto:coordinator@ffloncampus.org) for an application. Applications are due by February 15th, Susan B. Anthony's birthday.



# Year-Round Activism for New Feminists for Life Campus Groups!

## **Level 1: *Plan & Grow Your Group***

- Join Feminists for Life as a student member—and recruit your officers who are committed to our mission
- Complete an FFL Pregnancy Resources Survey<sup>SM</sup> to evaluate existing pregnancy and parenting resources on your campus
- Complete FFL's feminist "Herstory" e-tutorial
- Equip the group with "Pro-Woman Answers to Pro-Choice Questions" by FFL President Serrin M. Foster
- Use FFL's "Grow Your Group" kit to boost membership
- Access FFL's free online student activism kit
- Join FFL's College Outreach Program Facebook group
- Become a fan of FFL's official Facebook page
- Become a member of FFL's e-list
- Host a free FFL video night
- Consider applying for a summer internship with Feminists for Life

## **Level 2: *Change the Culture on Campus***

- Host an FFL speaker to spark debate and create awareness of and support for pregnancy resource development
- Host an FFL Pregnancy Resource Forum<sup>SM</sup>
- Use FFL's sample website to create your group's own Pregnant & Parenting Student Services website
- Complete an FFL ad campaign
- Hold an FFL Rally for Resources<sup>SM</sup>

## **Level 3: *Develop Real Solutions on Campus***

- Distribute FFL's resource guide "Raising Kids on a Shoestring" to key advisors and counselors both on and off campus
- Work with university officials to adopt the FFL sample Student Handbook/School Policies and Orientation Guide models
- Work with the school to publish and distribute your own version of a Pregnancy and Parenting Resources Brochure, using FFL's free template as an example
- Offer volunteer babysitting for student parents with the help of FFL's Babysitting Services Group materials

*Members and donors are strongly urged to support our new initiative with a tax-deductible gift to Feminists for Life!*

# Good News or Bad News?

## *Pregnancy and Parenting Resources Make the Difference*

by Chaunie Brusie  
College Outreach  
Program Coordinator

As founder and president of my school's pro-life group, I thought I was doing my best to support the cause. I flyered, I tabled, I marched. I even interned at Feminists for Life. But through it all, I never truly understood the reality for a woman facing an unplanned pregnancy—until I stood in my apartment and looked down at the two tiny blue lines on my home pregnancy test.

At that moment, I realized how easily a woman could turn to abortion. And as I searched my college campus for the help and guidance I needed, I also recognized the impact that a lack of resources and support for pregnant and parenting students can have on a young woman's decision. The stress and emotions of an unplanned pregnancy—which my fellow student parent Elly Levesque of Massachusetts describes as “the panic taking over”—coupled with the oftentimes overwhelming search for basic needs such as healthcare and housing, can lead a woman to feel that she has no choice.

Student parents on campuses across the country often find that practical resources and emotional support are missing. For women like Athena Sykes of Illinois, the message is clear: **“I was told repeatedly that I would never be able to be both a mother and a student; I would have to choose.”**

Levesque also knows that pressure. Her father's family thought if she continued her pregnancy she would be “throwing it all away.” “They said I would end up as trailer trash and on welfare,” Levesque recalled, “because I couldn't possibly do it all.” It was difficult to resist the pressure from others combined with her own panic. “I wanted to get an abortion,” Levesque said, “and my family wanted me to [get an

abortion] too. I even had an appointment, but my boyfriend spent hours on the phone trying to talk me out of it. If he had encouraged me to get an abortion, too, I would have done it.”

It is especially difficult for pregnant women to continue their pregnancies if they lack the insurance coverage they need to receive proper prenatal and maternal healthcare. While many schools do offer students the option of paying for student insurance coverage, most of these plans do not offer maternity coverage. Christina Dunigan, a married student with a planned pregnancy, discovered the challenges of finding adequate maternity care without the proper coverage. After being informed of her positive pregnancy test at a local Planned Parenthood, the counselor there asked her, “Is this good news, or bad news?” Dunigan recounts: “My hackles went up. If I answered ‘Bad news,’ I was sure she'd probably just pick up the phone and arrange an abortion for me without giving it another thought. I answered that it was good news... but I didn't have medical insurance.”

Without insurance, Dunigan was treated poorly and turned away from a local midwives' clinic. “They never flat out *tell* you to have an abortion,” she sobbed to her husband, “but they make it very clear that they expect you to!” Eventually a kind midwife sought out the couple and worked with them to arrange a payment plan. Dunigan and her husband searched for catastrophic insurance coverage, but were denied because of Christina's pregnancy. “We were told that we should have thought of this before I became pregnant,” she recalled.

FFL President Serrin Foster winces when she hears stories like these. “Too often

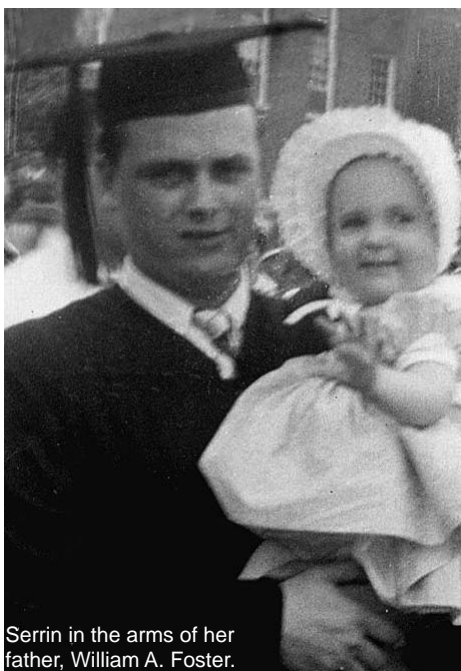
women are told they should have planned their unplanned pregnancies. Pregnancy and parenting should not terminate an education, but it can and often does when those who talk about ‘choice’ don't take steps to support the *rest* of the choices, or when pro-lifers don't focus on practical resources and nurture life.”

Student parents often require creative educational options that take into account their health needs and scheduling challenges. Flexible, online, weekend, or evening classes may better accommodate pregnant students who miss class due to morning sickness, as I did, or who require leave in the middle of the semester to give birth. As Sykes noted, “Online college courses make an advanced education a possibility for everyone.” Dunigan found the help she needed through her advisor's willingness to be flexible. “With my



Elly Levesque proves naysayers wrong.





Serrin in the arms of her father, William A. Foster.

advisor's help, I arranged to take two required classes by independent study and was able to schedule classes so that either my husband or I could be with the baby—which meant no childcare expenses, no separation anxiety, and we graduated on schedule,” she said. While Dunigan was recovering from childbirth, her writing seminar even agreed to meet in her living room in order to accommodate her.

Housing is another pressing issue for student parents and families. Many college students are required to live on campus; others cannot find safe, affordable off-campus housing. Stacey Hamilton of Allendale, Michigan, who serves as the Secretary of Grand Valley State University's Students for Life group, knows how difficult it can be for student parents to secure appropriate housing: “I was really struggling with trying to get through school as a single mom and seriously contemplated dropping out of college yet again. I didn't have any fight left in me. I didn't hear all that much about [family housing] until I was ending my junior year and... at the point of dropping out. Even though GVSU does offer family housing, it is pretty obsolete, as there are very few kids here. When I first heard about it, I didn't understand how it worked

and no one seemed willing to explain it to me.”

Childcare presents one of the greatest challenges for student parents. As many parents have discovered, childcare on or near campus is either lacking altogether or too expensive and restrictive (for instance, many school daycare facilities accept children of faculty only, have long waiting lists, or restrict their care to older children). Levesque found this to be the case at her school; as she noted, “There was a small care center for children on campus, but they had to be at least 2 years and 9 months old and potty-trained.” Leah Outten of North Carolina often “wished [my school] had an on-campus daycare available.” She emphasized the possible benefits for parents as well as for students who need jobs or experience in caring for and educating children: “I've seen other colleges have this option and it's not only a great place for students—including education majors—to work to gain experience, it also helps out staff and student parents tremendously to have their children so close.”

Nicole Raterink of Michigan, whose daughter requires treatment for two chronic illnesses, suggests that on-campus health clinics should also make their services available to the children of students. “Oftentimes, my daughter has to be taken into the emergency room just to get an antibiotic which could have easily been given to her on campus at Health Services in a much shorter time period,” she said.

Breastfeeding resources are often deficient as well, as student parent Alicia Gwizdala, a recent graduate of Saginaw Valley State University in Michigan, discovered. “I soon realized that I had to find a different way to pump because my school did not have any resources available or a place where I could pump. I had to find another way somehow. Breastfeeding is encouraged by all of the experts; however, at my school there were breastfeeding barriers.” Breastfeeding mothers on campus, staff and students alike, would benefit from the establishment of school-designated nursing rooms to promote

comfortable and private pumping or nursing.

Emotional support is of the utmost importance, and may be supplied by seeking out a community of other student parents. “After having my daughter I lost most of my college friends due to the inability to drop everything and go out,” Raterink noted. “A play group on campus would be a great support system for parents like me, a safe place to bring our kids to play while we parents are able to meet, share stories and share experiences.” Outten echoes the need for student parents to connect: “It would have been great to connect people my age whose life priorities were more than parties and sororities, [whose lives] revolved around another little being.”

Lack of training among university officials, faculty, and staff can also pose a challenge for pregnant and parenting students, which is why Feminists for Life supports the training of health clinic and counseling staff, residential advisors,



Chaunie Brusie advocated resources on her campus.

professors, athletic coaches, and all those who might be in a position to help. As Stacey Hamilton said, “I understand that [student parents] are a minority, but colleges and universities should be more understanding of parents who are attending college and gear part of their orientations to addressing these issues.” Financial aid offices should also be aware of policies, grants, and frugal solutions such as FFL’s resource guide “Raising Kids on a Shoestring” that may help pregnant women, birthparents, and parents complete their education.

Feminists for Life advocates a central place on campus to have access to the full scope of resources available. For a woman facing an unplanned pregnancy, the availability of complete and accurate information could make all the difference. Without proper resources and support, the stress of facing an unplanned pregnancy can cause a woman to consider dropping out of school completely or turning to abortion. As Gwizdala recalled, “Education was the furthest thing from my mind. I wanted to quit school. I was so overwhelmed. When I first found out I was expecting, I had no information on what to do or where to go from there.” Sadly, many resources that *are* available are poorly advertised to students, who may have no idea such resources even exist. A central office, website, or staff member on campus can facilitate awareness between departments and provide crucial support.

“The first step of a campus revolution starts with awareness,” says Serrin Foster, who has moderated FFL Pregnancy Resource Forums on campuses across the country. “The next step must be policy development. Identifying and providing resources and connecting students to off-campus resources come next. We also need to look at our attitudes towards pregnant women, birthparents, and parents. The real shame is when a pregnant woman is driven to abortion by unsupportive family and friends, and when parents quit school.”

While there are many struggles faced by pregnant and parenting students, and there is still a lot of work to be done transforming the culture of college

campuses, Feminists for Life recognizes the joys and rewards that refusing to choose can bring. After early pressure to abort her son, Levesque made the choice to parent instead, and shared her pride in her academic successes: “My family, immediate and extended, save for only a few individuals, heavily pushed abortion, telling me that I was a disappointment and I had so much potential that I was wasting. I graduated this past May at age 23 with a B.A. in Sociology, *magna cum laude*, and the highest GPA in the department. I am now the first individual on that pro-abortion side of the family to graduate from college.”

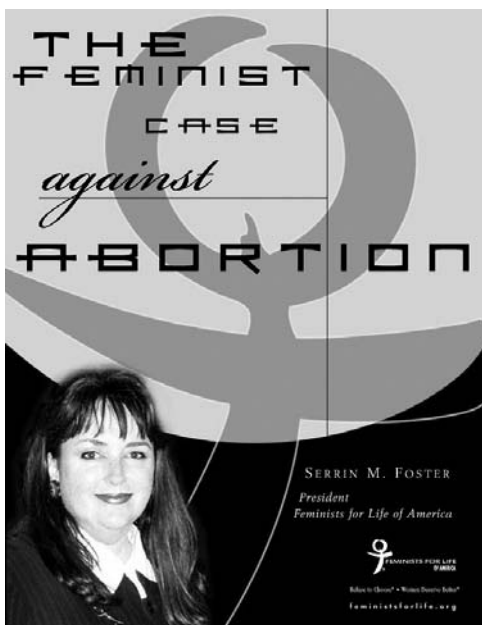
For student fathers, too, there are great rewards that come with parenting. As Ben from Mott Community College in Michigan said simply, “It is hard to work, parent, and be a student full-time, but all I can say is that it was all worth it.”

According to Sykes, parenting can provide additional motivation for parents to succeed in the classroom as well. “Classmates, certain acquaintances, and even some perfect strangers told me that I would regret having my son because he would ruin my life. They were wrong,” she said. “My son, and now my child due in February, have made me more motivated than ever to be a success in all things.” •



David Utley embraces his son.

# Praise for Feminists for Life's Remar



**Every year, FFL's dynamic speakers challenge the status quo at campuses across the country.**

[Ms. Foster's] talk was encouraging and powerful. Her angle on approaching the matter of abortion is one that is necessary, though it is often forgotten. Many people who would not normally agree with us on our position concerning abortion were pleased to hear the talk, and moreover, are willing to work with us to expand resources. I am glad that we have been able to renew the call for cooperative work while continuing our advocacy of human dignity and the inestimable value of human life. The vast majority of our audience left the lecture with a positive impression. Many commented positively on the fact that Serrin's talk did not get so involved in the controversy over abortion, but rather advocated that through promoting resources that benefit parents and children, it is possible to convince society at large that abortion is neither good nor necessary. It has encouraged BSL to work toward making the many resources already available on our campus better known, and on expanding them. This will necessarily entail cooperation with other groups and with University personnel, and we are excited by the prospects. Many students expressed interest in getting involved in such projects, with particular interest from members of the law school."

*—Alberto González, President of Berkeley Students for Life,  
University of California at Berkeley, March 9, 2010*

## **FFL President Serrin M. Foster**

"We had a fantastic event thanks to Serrin. This was our 32nd annual pro-life breakfast, and many people are saying it was the best ever! Serrin's message enlightened, inspired, and also challenged the audience to carry forward the feminist ideals of true equality and respect for every person. We loved working with Serrin and feel very fortunate to have had some time to visit with her before and after the event."

*—Tim Broderick, Executive Director, People for Life, Erie, OH,  
January 16, 2010*

"I just got back from our campus-wide Fall Activities Fair, and I want to send a HUGE thank you to Chaunie, FFL, and Serrin! We had huge numbers sign up [for] Respect for Life and got to pass out a lot of 'Pro-Woman Answers to Pro-Choice Questions.' We had a student ask if we were the group who brought [Serrin] to campus last year—she was pro-choice, but just wanted to say that she thought Serrin was great, loved the talk and the message, and was interested in doing more with our group; I was able to give her the 'Pro-Woman Answers' magazine as well as 'Perception is Reality.' We had another student...wanting to know what I had to say about a woman who gets pregnant as a result of rape—because of Serrin's talk last semester, I had an answer ready that I could see really made him stop and think a little more about the situation. So again, THANK YOU!"

*—Alex Roth, Drake Respect for Life, Drake University,  
September 1, 2010*





# Unkable Pro-Woman, Pro-Life Speakers

**Read some of the comments from audience members who attended FFL College Outreach events.**

“Serrin was amazing! How she handled the conflicting hand raisers was masterful.”

—Ann English, audience member, Fordham University,  
April 15, 2010

## **Sally Winn, former FFL Vice-President**

“I think the impact of the lecture is that we have begun to have conversations about how to support pregnant and parenting students on campus. It was a refreshing change from our usual pro-life events. Sally Winn is bright, witty and a very engaging speaker. We enjoyed her presence immensely.”

—Sister Susan Glabb, Christ the King's College, January 28, 2010

“Sally provided a logical, passionate, woman-centered approach to the argument for life. I was thankful to have the unique input of a feminist for life on our campus. Sally's support of on-site daycare is continuing to fuel discussion.”

—Daniel Rhoads, vice president of Health Sciences Center for Life, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center,  
October 16, 2009

## **Joyce McCauley-Benner**

“For me, the most poignant part was when she shared her personal story about being raped and the struggle she underwent during her pregnancy. The strongest point of her talk, however, was her insistence on... focusing our energy on eradicating all instances where a woman would find herself violently thrust into an unwanted pregnancy (i.e., rape, incest, etc.).”

—Christina, who does not identify herself with either side of the abortion debate, Rhodes College, January 27, 2010

“We thought the speaker was a great success. She helped accomplish our goal for the semester by starting to build a bridge between opposing groups on campus.”

—Catherine Simms, Rhodes College, January 27, 2010



## **FFL College Outreach Program Coordinator Chaunie Brusie**

“I wish I could have seen [Chaunie's] video before I had an abortion. It is devastating to live with the truth of an abortion, if it is not really necessary... But if I had the support of some people like myself, my panic state wouldn't have won.”

—Anonymous, 2009

“Chaunie—brave one—I wish I had made the choice to give birth—it is 40 years later and I miss my only child, the beautiful daughter I aborted.”

—Anonymous, 2009

“Dear Chaunie, I just wanted to say thank you for sharing your story. Stand tall and proud. More than that, I wanted to let you know that I have been coming to these dinners for years. You are the most refreshing speaker I've listened to because your voice spoke to all people, all women—pro-choice and pro-life—powerful words that call for us to work together, not against, each other.”

—Terry Vear, Hillsdale Right to Life Banquet, April 20, 2010

To schedule your own FFL lecture for the 2010-11 academic year, contact College Outreach Coordinator Chaunie Brusie at [coordinator@ffloncampus.org](mailto:coordinator@ffloncampus.org).



Amy Hutton

# Honoring Birthparents' Choices

## Support Needed for Birthparents on Campus

by Nicole Callahan  
Editor

Deanna Cox found out she was pregnant at what seemed like the worst possible time. Kansas State University had just placed her on academic probation for low grades, she had discovered that her boyfriend was cheating on her, and she “really had no idea what to do or where to go.” After discussing her options with a staff member at the free clinic where she had gone for her pregnancy test, Deanna decided to explore adoption. Her school had no resources she knew of for those considering adoption—“no programs directly linked to birthmothers at all.”

As her pregnancy progressed, Deanna found the help she needed off campus, from the adoption counselors who helped her make her adoption plan and ultimately place her son with the family she chose for him. But she still wishes that her university could have provided her with more support, and perhaps connected her with a support group for birthparents and prospective birthparents: “It would have been nice to be able to talk with someone else that had to make the same decision I was trying to make.... As much as other people try to sympathize with you and listen to what you have to say, they do not understand completely what you have gone through, and the emotions that you have.”

**“I love being a birthmom. But as a birthparent, you often feel as if you are an outsider, that you are different from your peers. The most difficult thing about being a birthmom and a student is the feeling of being alone.” —Deanna Cox, birthmother**

Amberly Hollingshead, a birthmother who became pregnant while attending North Dakota State University, recalled, “Being pregnant on campus was so hard! My morning sickness was awful. It was so stressful to worry about college *and* my baby. Until I started showing, no one at my school even knew that I was pregnant.”

“It sometimes seems as though birthmothers are invisible,” noted Leah Outten, a recent graduate of UNC-Charlotte. Leah placed her first daughter for adoption while in high school, and later became a student parent to a second daughter while attending college. “I *know* there must be other birthparents among our thousands of students on campus!”

Starting college as a birthmother was difficult for Leah in part because she didn’t know how to share her experiences with new friends. “When I went to live in the dorm my freshman year, I was scared to put up my daughter’s pictures at first because I knew people would ask, ‘Who is that?’ Even though I was confident in my choice and proud of her and our open adoption, I

worried about people judging me for my choice. I wanted people to know *me* first before judging me, and I still feel like that. Most people I do tell about the adoption are supportive and think our open relationship is great, but of course there are some who just say, ‘I could *never* do that!’ I often felt hesitant to speak up about my adoption experience for fear of what others might think.”

Like Leah, Amy Hutton was already a birthmother when she began her freshman year at Meredith College in Raleigh, North Carolina, in August 2005. She had given birth just a few weeks prior to the start of classes, and chose Meredith because the family with whom she had decided to place her daughter lived in Raleigh. “I really didn’t care where I went to school, as long as I was close enough to see my daughter,” she explained.

Amy was glad to be so close to her daughter, but as a birthmother on campus she often felt different and very lonely. “When you go through an experience like placing a child for adoption, you are forever changed. I had a very hard time relating to my college peers because of what I had gone through,” she recalled. “School seemed *so* unimportant compared to what I was still dealing with.

At an age when the biggest concern for my friends might have been which classes to take or what to wear to the party that night, I had very different concerns: ‘Will my daughter forgive me one day for placing her for adoption?’ ‘Did I make the right decision?’ ‘Could I have raised her on my own?’ ... I felt like a 40-year-old trapped in an 18-year-old’s body.”

Moving to a new state, attending a college where she knew no one, and coping with the emotional aftermath of placing her daughter for adoption was “almost too much to handle.” Amy battled depression and guilt during her first year of college, “but the hardest part was the feeling of being alone, like I was the only birthmother in the entire world.” At the time, she didn’t know any other birthmothers, on or off campus. She often wished that her school had a support group for birthparents, as well as counselors with more knowledge about adoption.

In 2006 Amy transferred to North Carolina State University, where she served as president of Real Choices, a student organization established to provide support and services to



pregnant and parenting students. “After I transferred to NC State and started helping student moms, I began to heal and to finally be at peace with my decision to place my daughter for adoption,” she said. Through her work with Real Choices, Amy also educated her peers on the unique needs of birthparents, helping them become better advocates for this important yet often overlooked group of parents.

Making an adoption plan for one’s child and placing the child with an adoptive family is a difficult journey, according to Amberly, who admitted that at first she “never considered adoption...in fact, I was offended and upset when someone mentioned it as an option.” Later, she said, she began to research it, all the while thinking about what her life and her baby’s life would be like if she decided to parent at that time. “Finally I knew that [adoption] was the right thing for me,” she said. “I just knew that I had to give my son and myself a chance at a better life. It was the hardest and best thing that I could have done.”

While not all infant adoptions are or need be open ones, with ongoing contact between birthparents and adoptive families, Amberly, Deanna, Leah, and Amy all chose open adoptions. All say they are happy with and grateful for the contact they have maintained with their children and their children’s adoptive families. Amberly, who at one time lived just miles from her son’s adoptive parents, was able to be a part of his life from the very beginning. Deanna’s first extended visit with her son was in June of 2010, a few months before his first birthday, and she hopes to see him again soon. Leah commemorated her

daughter’s birth by having special necklaces made for herself, her daughter, and her daughter’s adoptive mother. After having a joint baby shower with her child’s adoptive parents, Amy spent a great deal of time with the family while attending school in Raleigh, and now visits them frequently at their new home in South Carolina.



Leah Outten (right)



Deanna Cox

All of the birthmothers cherish the photographs and letters sent by the adoptive parents, and look forward to talking with them on the phone. They feel fortunate to be a part of their children’s lives. At the same time, their own lives have continued—different than before, filled with new challenges as well as new triumphs. After Deanna Cox made the decision to place her child for adoption, she returned to school, where she earned her first perfect 4.0 semester report card—while giving birth in the middle of the term. This academic success was significant to her, she explained, “because I knew that having a baby and [placing him] for adoption helped me grow into a mature woman and a better student. It made me realize which things in my life were high priorities and which were not.”

While Deanna has never wavered in her decision to place her son for adoption, it was not an easy choice for her to make, and she knows that she still has “a lot of processing and healing to do.” Her advice for other students who are birthparents: “Don’t be afraid of the feelings you have. Some days you will be completely fine with life and your decision, and other days you will feel upset and overwhelmed. Not only have you made the biggest decision of your life, but you also did it while you were getting your education! Do what you need to do to celebrate and to vent. Don’t *ever* be afraid to ask for help. Even the strongest people in the world need support at times.”

This advice is echoed by Leah: “As a birthmom, find support where you can. Locally, it can seem hard to find, but online

there are so many great communities where you can connect with others. I also really encourage counseling because it helps you sort out and deal with emotions as they come up. Having counseling during the first year or two after the adoption really helped me hold on to the peace I have in my decision and get through any issues we've come across in our adoption relationship."

Amy, who has made an effort to connect with birthmothers across the country to form a long-distance support network, believes it is important for birthparents to seek each other out and help one another. "Share your story, help others who are going through what you've already been through, and make a difference in someone else's life," she said. "As a birthmother myself, I can say that helping other birthmothers has been the ultimate healing tool for me." •

*Nicole Callahan was FFL's first College Outreach Coordinator, and later served as Assistant Communications Director for the National Council for Adoption. Adopted as an infant via confidential adoption, she was reunited with her birth family in 2008.*

# LIVE THE LEGACY.. LEAVE A LEGACY.

**W**e who refuse to choose between women and children live the legacy of Alice Paul and 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.

THANK YOU!



Alice Paul, author of the original Equal Rights Amendment, with British suffragist Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence.

# FFL EQUIPS STUDENT ACTIVISTS • with NEW • WOMAN-CENTERED TOOLS

by Chaunie Brusie

Feminists for Life's tools for student leaders work. Not only did they help me during my own unplanned pregnancy in college, I was also able to utilize the incredible resources and experience FFL has to offer in order to help transform my campus to help other women like me.

Feminists for Life is proud to unveil our newest tools for dedicated pro-woman, pro-life student activists. We've also updated existing resources that have proven time and time again to reach college-aged women with the highest rate of abortion, grow your group, and help students *Say NO to the Status Quo*.™ (And did I mention that many of them are free?)

**Smart, strategic activists keep their eyes on the prize: holistic solutions that answer the unmet needs of women.**

- **FFL Pregnancy Resources Survey™:** Start by evaluating your campus with FFL's two-page survey to identify existing pregnancy and parenting resources, as well as areas that need improvement. Send your completed survey to FFL's College Outreach Program Coordinator to get started on building a unique plan to transform your campus.
- **Online Student Activism Kit with NEW year-round calendar:** Every year, Feminists for Life provides student leaders with a free online student activism kit, complete with month-by-month activism ideas and materials. This year, we've updated our activism kit with fresh ideas and new tools to help you make this year the best yet!
- **Personalized year-round planning and technical assistance:** Feminists for Life is dedicated to your success, and will provide your group with a custom-made plan to help you revolutionize your campus and advocate for the resources pregnant and parenting students need and deserve. (And if you run into opposition, we will support you with strategies to advance the needs of women!)
- **Free "Grow Your Group" Kit:** FFL will mail you an entire kit for free, filled with brochures, College Outreach ads, and more, guaranteed to jump-start your new group or revitalize your existing group. Great for back-to-school tabling, the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, and Women's History Month. Request yours today by emailing [coordinator@ffloncampus.org](mailto:coordinator@ffloncampus.org).
- **Facebook page and group for student leaders:** Join FFL's unique College Outreach Program Facebook group to stay connected with our College Outreach Coordinator and other pro-life student leaders just like you who remember the woman, respect fathers, and cherish every child. Become a fan of FFL on Facebook and spread the word!
- **Dynamic speakers:** There is nothing like bringing an FFL speaker to help students *Question Abortion*® and redirect debate towards meaningful solutions. Book your pro-woman, pro-life speaker—many with powerful personal stories—for fall or spring semester to start the revolution on your campus. No funds? Start by applying for funds from your school. FFL also offers a customizable fundraising letter, and when you piggy-back your event with others in the region, travel expenses are reduced. We provide step-by-step instructions to publicize your event and make it the talk of campus. No wonder so many of our events are "standing room only!" Create a groundswell of support for an FFL Pregnancy Resource Forum and woman-centered solutions when you host your FFL lecture!
- **NEW FFL Video Night:** Looking for a low-cost, high-impact event? Invite students to watch FFL's remarkable pro-life speakers on YouTube. Pass the popcorn and let everyone on your campus hear the message that *Women Deserve Better*® than Abortion.
- **NEW sample opinion editorial/letter to the editor:** Raise awareness and invite others to join the cause with FFL's customizable sample op-ed.
- **FFL Pregnancy Resource Forums<sup>SM</sup>:** Once you've already hosted an FFL lecture, continue to build on the momentum you've worked so hard to create. Host an FFL Pregnancy Resource Forum to bring key stakeholders together to create a blueprint for change, so that no woman on your campus will feel she has to choose between her education and her unborn child. We provide step-by-step instructions so that your Forum truly helps transform your campus.





- **NEW sample FFL pregnant and parenting services website:** Ensure that pregnant and parenting students have all the information they need to succeed by creating your own pregnancy and parenting services website. From healthcare and insurance, to counseling and legal aid, FFL's example website covers the comprehensive services and support that pregnant women and student parents need to know about. Take the information you learned by taking FFL's Pregnancy Resources Survey and/or during your FFL Pregnancy Resource Forum. Use FFL's website as a guide or download FFL's free HTML coding for the site.
- **NEW sample FFL pregnancy and parenting resource guide:** As a supplement to your group's website, or as a stand-alone tool, create your own guide to pregnancy and parenting resources. FFL's sample brochure will help your club provide women with tangible proof that they are not alone.
- **NEW free babysitting service startup materials:** Show that you care about moms and children *after* they are born, too! Let FFL provide you with materials to help you start a volunteer babysitting service to support the student parents on your campus. You can use our sample brochure and forms to start your group, and FFL's College Outreach Program Coordinator will provide you with individualized support and advice for training your volunteer caregivers.
- **Rally for Resources<sup>SM</sup>:** Keep your campus focused on solutions with FFL's Rally for Resources. Take the discussion to a public space on campus and ask students and administration to join you in creating more support for pregnant and parenting students. FFL will send you a free planning guide and materials to host your Rally.

To order any of these materials or schedule an FFL event, send an email to [coordinator@ffloncampus.org](mailto:coordinator@ffloncampus.org).

## Monthly Donors Provide Essential Support

Help FFL help women and children! Your monthly donations provide core support as FFL works to bring about positive, holistic change. To begin your monthly contributions, visit [www.feministsforlife.org/support](http://www.feministsforlife.org/support) or fill out the electronic transfer form below and send it (along with a voided check) to FFL. 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 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 my bank in writing that I wish to end this agreement and FFLA or my bank has had a reasonable amount of time to act on my request. 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) Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Name\_\_\_\_\_ Address\_\_\_\_\_

City\_\_\_\_\_ State\_\_\_\_\_ Zip\_\_\_\_\_ Phone (Day)\_\_\_\_\_ (Eve)\_\_\_\_\_

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

Send to: Feminists for Life of America  
PO Box 320667, Alexandria, VA 22320

*Electronic fund transfers will begin immediately upon receipt.*

*Thank you!*

TAF11-10

# Rally for Resources<sup>SM</sup>

“Learning about the lack of resources was eye-opening. It is amazing what a difference proper resources can make in a woman’s life.”

—Kelly Perkins, member of  
XU Students for Life,  
Xavier University, OH



Student groups looking for a low-cost, high-impact event to host this year need look no further—hosting a Feminists for Life Rally for Resources is a great and affordable way to promote real support for pregnant and parenting students on campus!

Feminists for Life created this unique event to draw attention to the lack of practical resources and support that often drives young women to seek abortion or drop out of school. At an FFL Rally for Resources, students gather in a central place on campus, talk with students about the need for pregnant and parenting resources, and gain their support in petitioning the school to improve upon existing resources.

If the school’s state is awarded a grant from the newly created Pregnancy Assistance Fund (see page 4), FFL can also help students create a petition urging their school to utilize grant money to implement services and programs for pregnant and parenting students. Even students whose states who have not been awarded grant money or have not yet applied for funding can use Feminists for Life’s Rally for Resources to promote awareness on campus about the need for resources and support.

“Our rally went well; we got many signatures, put the issue out there for discussion, and educated people through pamphlets and conversation. Our group spent the day making students aware of the issue we were petitioning for, and actively seeking out students to sign our petition for more resources for pregnant and parenting students on campus,” said Kaitlin Dery, a student at Grand Valley State University in Michigan. “While it was not the typical rally where people get up and speak, I think it was extremely effective.... We gathered much support, and gave out information to all who would give us a minute. The pro-life and pro-choice groups on campus... have arranged to co-host a forum on something we both agree upon: getting more resources on campus for pregnant and parenting students.”

FFL’s Rally for Resources can be customized to suit student organizations of all sizes. For smaller groups just starting out, a rally is a simple yet effective way to raise awareness and attract new members, all while encouraging actual change on campus. More established groups may take the opportunity to turn their rally into a larger event such as a petition drive, pregnancy resources fair, or even a spa and relaxation day for student parents—FFL encourages student groups to get creative!

Feminists for Life College Outreach Program Coordinator Chaunie Brusie, who hosted FFL’s first-ever Rally for Resources, will help student groups every step of the way in planning their event—from providing ideas to get started and shipping free materials to help host the rally, to granting access to online support with FFL’s web-based Rally for Resources planning guide. All student groups can feel confident that their rallies will make a real difference for pregnant and parenting students on their campus.

“The Feminists for Life rally kit was an awesome supplement for Life Week,” said another member of Xavier University Students for Life. “It was both disappointing and motivating to hear so many students say, ‘I have a friend that was forced to choose between her education and her child.’ The FFL materials and brochures helped to identify areas in which our university and its resources need change.” •

Student activists are encouraged to email [coordinator@ffloncampus.org](mailto:coordinator@ffloncampus.org) to plan a Rally for Resources today.

Donors are needed to sponsor materials, ads, and technical assistance. Please see page 8 for more information. Thank you.

# FFL Pregnancy Resource Forums<sup>SM</sup>

*Changing College Campuses Since 1997*

by Chaunie Brusie  
College Outreach Program Coordinator

Feminists for Life's pro-woman, pro-life lectures create a groundswell of support for FFL Pregnancy Resource Forums by raising awareness about the needs of pregnant students and student parents, sparking a discussion about pregnancy resources available on campus, and emphasizing needed improvements. FFL's Pregnancy Resource Forums then move the discussion beyond the often polarizing abortion debate to a working dialogue, inviting key campus policymakers and students to work together to find solutions for pregnant and parenting students.

FFL Pregnancy Resource Forums began when FFL President Serrin M. Foster realized that in all her time spent visiting and lecturing at college campuses, she had rarely seen a visibly pregnant woman. "Where have all the pregnant students gone?" she asked. Former FFL board member Jeanne Pryor illuminated the reality of the situation for women on campus by sharing her story as a young pregnant student during a board meeting: "Without housing, daycare, and maternity coverage, it didn't seem like much of a choice."

"That powerful statement took Feminists for Life's philosophy to the next level: Real solutions for those with the highest risk of abortion, and focus on future leaders. At the end of the meeting, we knew that we could actually change the direction of the debate. Rather than simply arguing over one of the worst things that could happen to women—abortion—we would focus on transforming society by advocating for solutions so that abortion would become *unthinkable*," Foster said.

The first-ever FFL Pregnancy Resource Forum was held in 1997 at Georgetown University. Representatives from Health Education Services, Residential Life, Campus Ministry, and the nearby Northwest Pregnancy Center participated. As a result of this first forum, which became a model for the nation, Georgetown University employed a full-time Pregnancy Services Counselor at Health Education Services, offering pregnancy and sexual assault services. Hoya Kids Learning Center, a daycare facility, opened that same year. A year later, the office of Health Education Services implemented free home pregnancy testing kits and a 24-hour pregnancy hotline. Georgetown University's pro-life student group, GU Right to Life, started a volunteer babysitting co-op and organized diaper drives for the local Northwest Pregnancy Center. In 1998, Georgetown University's Board of Trustees set aside endowed housing for parenting students.

Since that first groundbreaking forum at Georgetown, Feminists for Life has held Pregnancy Resource Forums at many schools, including Boston College, University of



Serrin Foster moderating an FFL Pregnancy Resource Forum at Northwestern University.

Maryland, Northwestern, University of Illinois, Pepperdine, George Washington, Fordham, University of Virginia, Stanford, Harvard, Notre Dame, Berkeley, Swarthmore, University of Chicago, Tulane, Oberlin, Gonzaga, and Johns Hopkins. Georgetown University continues to host a Pregnancy Resource Forum each year to reevaluate and improve upon resources.

Aside from creating and strengthening on-campus resources for pregnant and parenting students, FFL's Pregnancy Resource Forums serve to bring the issue of student parenting out of the shadows and into the forefront of student life on campus. As Director of Health Education Services at Georgetown University and annual Georgetown University panelist Carol Day has stated, the forum is "an 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.'"

Feminists for Life's events has led to crucial resource development on campuses across the nation:

- In 2003, Cindy Brown (now Vice Chair of FFL's Board) served as executive director of Room at the Inn (RATI), a pregnancy resource center and maternity home based in Charlotte, North Carolina. When one of the Room at the Inn board members, Abbot Placid Solari, offered a donation of land, its



Board of Directors envisioned a new pregnancy care center located adjacent to the campus of Belmont Abbey College. As Cindy was researching in preparation for a board strategic planning meeting, trying to determine who most needed help and identify gaps in services, she found Feminists for Life's website. "FFL's was the most complete, helpful, and strategically focused website aimed at identifying and assisting the highest risk group," Cindy said. "Major light bulbs went off for me, and subsequently for the Board of Directors. The Abbot insisted on an FFL lecture at Belmont Abbey College *immediately* after seeing FFL's materials." With the help of Serrin Foster and FFL's College Outreach Coordinator, Cindy organized Feminists for Life lectures at Belmont Abbey College, UNC-Charlotte, and Davidson. Cindy then invited Serrin Foster to meet and talk with the Room at the Inn's Board and strategic planning committee. Since 2003, Room at the Inn has raised half of the \$3 million needed to build and staff its new facility at Belmont Abbey College.

- After FFL Honorary Co-Chair Patricia Heaton spoke at a packed hall at Pepperdine University in California, Dean Mark Davis invited Serrin Foster to moderate a Pregnancy Resource Forum. Before the Forum, Heaton and Foster met with members of the task force dedicated to examining campus resources and developing proposals for improvement. Realizing that some women who had just learned of their pregnancies were not aware of all the resources available on and off campus, a new handout was created for women who had just learned they were pregnant from health center staff. Pregnant women learned they wouldn't be thrown out of school and given practical resources. Family housing was also created, and the Student Handbook was modified to include pregnancy resources and information.

- Following an FFL lecture on campus in 2009, student parents at Loyola University in Chicago were inspired to establish an informal childcare co-op to help meet the needs of student parents and their families.
- The pro-life student group at University of Maryland created a Pregnancy Resources Committee, as well as a new Pregnant and Parenting Services website.
- Saginaw Valley State University in Michigan created a Pregnancy and Parenting Services school website, streamlined and improved the Health & Counseling Services offices' ability to help pregnant students, and trained Financial Aid staff in assisting student parents.
- A student parent support group was established at Xavier University, offering educational materials and emotional support.
- An entire network of student-parent support was strengthened at Grand Valley State University in Michigan, emphasizing collaboration between the on-campus Women's Center, the Children's Center, and the Health Center. Improvements included the installation of diaper decks in restrooms, lactation stations and nursing rooms for student mothers, and an online database to advertise resources and connect student parents.
- After Serrin's speech, Wellesley pro-life and pro-choice students held a back-to-school rummage sale with items students left at the end of the previous school year. They raised over \$4000 to help student mothers on campus.
- Students at the University of Virginia established free babysitting services for student parents.

- North Carolina State University held a potluck dinner to help connect parenting students to one another, encouraging them to form their own network of support.

As you can see, once you begin making a list of ways student activists can help pregnant students and parents on your campus, the possibilities are endless! When you create small steps for change and work to revolutionize your entire campus, you help make the crucial difference for women and children on campus.

Share your creative solutions and keep the revolution alive! We want to know about your efforts—so be sure to keep us updated on what you are doing on your campus to support pregnant and parenting students. Send your ideas to [coordinator@ffloncampus.org](mailto:coordinator@ffloncampus.org) so we can share your progress with other pro-life student leaders! •



University of California, Berkeley

Photo by brainchildvn

## Praise for FFL Pregnancy Resource Forums

*“As the national coordinator of Medical Students for Life, I owe a debt of gratitude to Ms. Serrin Foster and her pioneer work with Feminists for Life of America. She has given college pro-life activists the tools and language to engage society with woman-centered solutions to abortion, effectively bringing the end to abortion that much closer.”*

*—Dominique Monlezun, National Coordinator, Medical Students for Life, Creative Scholar, Tulane School of Medicine, New Orleans, LA, 2010*

*“I met Serrin Foster when she moderated a Pregnancy Resource Forum at the University of Virginia a few years ago. At that time I was very active in NOW and pro-choice. I’d like to thank her for laying a small seed at that time. It has taken a few years of soul searching to come to a pro-life stance and it has come at a personal cost with former political allies.... There can be no denying that since Roe vs. Wade the promise of economic equality has not been delivered. Women who have made the ‘choice’ to have children and chose to stay in the workforce suffer because of it. Why is that? Does the pro-abortion movement want to answer that question? No. Because it opens a dialogue that they do not want to have.”*

*—Lela Graham, Charlottesville, Virginia, 2010*

*“My husband and I welcomed our daughter, Corinne, into the world on February 22. During my pregnancy I did not find that resources were readily available on Tulane’s campus to assist me with this enormous change in my life. Fortunately in my case I had my husband and family to support me, but I would imagine that many other women do not have that level of support, and would feel very much alone under similar circumstances. Resources that would assist an expectant mother in the challenges she faces on campus would allow our female students to be able to make truly meaningful choices in this area of their lives. After all, Tulane should be a place where the coming of a new life is celebrated and met with as much encouragement and support as any other life experience. Thank you [Joyce McCauley-Benner for moderating FFL’s Pregnancy Resource Forum]. This is a wonderful opportunity to offer meaningful support to meet the varied needs of women on our campus.”*

*—Tasha Grant Dennis, Tulane University, 2010*

# Praise for FFL Pregnancy Resource Forums

"I had some concerns about hosting the forum at Pepperdine. But these were quickly allayed after talking to Serrin Foster. Her main purpose was to get people together on campus so that she could share information about how different colleges assist students who are pregnant and help us brainstorm how we could work together. She never raised controversial policy issues such as abortion or contraception. We focused on hearing the concerns of our students, and the resources we have to assist pregnant students. Before the actual forum was hosted, one of my staff members contacted the different departments involved (e.g., financial assistance, health center), and they met to review what we are doing and how we could better coordinate. Then on the day of the forum, we all met for dinner with Serrin Foster and [two-time Emmy winner and FFL's Honorary Chair] Patricia Heaton to discuss our plans. The forum consisted of Serrin asking panel members questions about how their department responded to pregnancies; then the floor was opened up for students to ask questions. The dialogue was constructive, and in the end, we left with several good ideas. Ultimately, we added a statement to our Student Handbook on how the University responds to pregnancies and who to contact for support."

—Mark Davis, Dean of Student Affairs, Pepperdine University, 2008

"This event was co-sponsored between the QVSU Women's Center and the Pro-Life student organization.... I do think the students who came to the presentation were receptive and engaged in positive debate. We had students who were both pro-choice and pro-life. Each party felt comfortable to share their opinions and statistics—I thought that was wonderful! I do think it's important to talk about unplanned pregnancy and resources with our students. Even though our students were split on life vs. choice they were all aware and educated on options and resources available to them if they ever found themselves facing an unplanned pregnancy. Hopefully they will remember and share that information with their friends. Personally, I would recommend it to other schools. Being willing to facilitate a discussion in a safe environment to talk about pregnancy in college, for all students, is important. Students need to know what their options are—no matter their choice is."

—Vicky Powers, M.Ed., Program Advisor, Educational Support Program,  
Grand Valley State University, Grand Rapids, Michigan, after  
Joyce McCauley-Benner moderated a FFL Pregnancy Resource Forum, 2008

"I believe it's important that pregnant women and mothers understand that there are financial aid options to help them reach their educational goals. Although it may not come easy or immediately, if they are willing to educate themselves, plan, and prepare, they can be successful. I think the panel helps promote awareness, which is a good start."

—Lisa L. Tran, Financial Aid Counselor/Federal Work Study Coordinator,  
University of Maryland Office of Student Financial Aid  
during a forum moderated by Serrin Foster, 2010

"I thought the forum was informative...I did learn about some resources that I wasn't aware of before... I thought that it was well laid out and gave a lot of information. It reaffirmed what I already knew that there is no centralized place to get information about resources available on campus or in the community but that we have more resources available here than in some other communities. Something that was strengthened was my interest in working with the Women's Center to centralize information about resources available. I think that this would be a good forum to have at other schools as long as it was carried out as professionally... I like the diverse number of panelists and all the information provided."

—Angela R. Clark, Assistant Program Director, African American Cultural Center,  
University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, 2008

"I enjoyed the forum very much. I admire Serrin Foster's thoughtfulness, sense of humor, and commitment to practical community interventions to support pregnant students. She motivates others to examine their commitment to standing with pregnant students!"

—Sheila McMahon, M.Div., Director, Boston College Women's Resource Center, 2010



# FEMINISTS FOR LIFE'S PREGNANCY RESOURCES SURVEY™

Please provide the following contact information (please print clearly)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City/Town \_\_\_\_\_  
State/Province \_\_\_\_\_ Zip/Postal Code & Country \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
Anticipated date of graduation \_\_\_\_\_ Organization Title (if an officer) \_\_\_\_\_

**Please choose one of the following options to describe your standing at your college/university:**

- ☐ Undergraduate student  
☐ Graduate student  
☐ Alumna/alumnus ☐ Professor  
☐ Other staff  
☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Please choose one of the following options to describe your school:**

- ☐ State school  
☐ Private college/university  
☐ Religiously affiliated school

## Education

**Does your college/university offer flexible class times (evenings, weekends, etc.)?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

**Does your college/university offer telecommuting or distance learning opportunities? (classes online, on TV, etc.)**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

**Please include any additional comments you have about the educational accommodations on your campus.**

---

---

---

---

## Housing

**Is on-campus housing available for parents and children?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

**If your school DOES have on campus housing for students with children, is it available to any or all of the following students? (you may choose multiple answers)**

- ☐ Undergraduate student  
☐ Graduate student  
☐ Foreign students on an education visa  
☐ Do not know

**Is affordable off-campus housing located nearby?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

**Please add any additional comments you have about the housing situation for pregnant and parenting students on your campus.**

---

---

---

---

## Childcare

**Does your college offer on-campus childcare?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

**If your campus DOES have childcare available, is it available to the following groups? (you may choose multiple answers)**

- ☐ Undergraduate students  
☐ Graduate students  
☐ Faculty  
☐ Administration and staff  
☐ Foreign students on an education visa  
☐ Do not know

**If your campus DOES offer childcare, what is the weekly cost?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**If your campus DOES offer childcare, does the childcare center offer care for infants?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

**Does your college list/connect parents to volunteer or paid babysitters?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

**Does your college/university offer referrals to off-campus childcare?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

**Please provide any additional comments you may have about childcare on your campus.**

---

---

---

---

## Healthcare

**Is there maternity coverage in the student healthcare plan?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

**Are additional insurance riders available to cover children of students?**

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

Please provide any additional comments you have about healthcare for pregnant and parenting students on your campus.

---

---

---

---

## Child-Friendly Campus

Is your campus accessible to accommodate parents using strollers as well as those in wheelchairs? (ramps, elevators, etc.)

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

Are there diaper-changing stations available in restrooms?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

Is there a private place designated for women who are nursing or pumping breast milk?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

Are students generally aware of paternity establishment and child support enforcement laws that give fathers rights as well as responsibilities?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

Are women aware of the information they need (paternal full name, social security number, mother's maiden name, school and home address, employer, etc.) in order to establish paternity should the father resist his responsibilities?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

Is there designated parking on campus for pregnant women or parents with infants?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

Please provide any additional comments you have about the child-friendliness of your campus.

---

---

---

---

## Financial Aid

Are there loans and scholarships available specifically to parenting students?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

Does the athletic department have policies that would allow a pregnant athlete to retain her scholarship as if she were an injured player (also known as "red-shirting")?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

Are student loans or scholarships available for:

Family housing (on or off campus)?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

Child care?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

Please provide any additional comments you may have about financial aid for pregnant and parenting students on your campus.

---

---

---

---

## Pregnancy Support Services

Is there a person or a central office responsible for helping pregnant and parenting students obtain all available on- and off-campus services?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

Are school policies and services regarding pregnancy resources and support for parenting students found through:

Web site?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

First-year students' orientation?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

Student handbook?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

Other educational materials (bookmarks, brochures, etc.)?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

Advertisements on posters, ads, or other signage?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

Are the Residential Advisors aware of the scope of pregnancy resources available on and off campus?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

Has an FFL Pregnancy Resource Forum<sup>SM</sup> been hosted on your campus?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No  
☐ Do not know ☐ Plans are under way

Please provide any additional comments you have about pregnancy resources on your campus.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Would you be interested in hosting an FFL Pregnancy Resource Forum<sup>SM</sup> on your campus?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Email:

---

Phone:

---

**Please return completed survey to:**

College Outreach Program Coordinator  
Feminists for Life of America  
PO Box 320667  
Alexandria, VA 22320  
coordinator@ffloncampus.org

Please enclose copies of relevant information from student handbooks, school websites, and other materials. Thank you!



## Fuel Our Work Three Easy Ways to Increase Your Contribution!

1. Make a donation that will qualify for our year-end match, and your donation will be doubled!

*November 1- December 31*

2. Make a new or increased monthly gift, and the first month will be double-matched!

*(If you give \$10, FFL will receive another \$20 right away. If you give \$50 FFL will receive an additional \$100 for our work!)*

3. If your employer matches donations, please include your corporate matching gift form with your contribution!

# Covetable Stuff™

Show the world your support for women and children!

Treat your family members, friends, or yourself to a little something from Feminists for Life's unique line of Covetable Stuff.

[www.feministsforlife.org/covetable\\_stuff](http://www.feministsforlife.org/covetable_stuff)



Feminist foremother mugs featuring historical photos and unforgettable quotes, elegant FFL logo pins in silver and gold, thought-provoking bumper stickers, educational and practical brochures, activist packs of *The American Feminist* magazine, greeting cards, and more!



PEACE begins  
in the WOMB®



FEMINISTS FOR LIFE

[www.feministsforlife.org](http://www.feministsforlife.org)



by Cayce D. Utley  
National Program Director

# FFL ANNOUNCES “COACH THE COACH” CAMPAIGN TO END PREGNANCY DISCRIMINATION IN SPORTS

***NCAA takes first steps toward ending bad practices.  
More training is needed!***

For seventeen years, Feminists for Life has asked colleges and universities to examine their campuses through the eyes of a pregnant or parenting student. FFL found one place in particular where the lack of policies and resources for pregnant students could potentially devastate a woman's education: the athletic department.

When FFL began its initial outreach to college students, President Serrin Foster asked school administrators to apply a policy called “red shirting” to pregnant athletes. Red shirting, a common practice in college athletics, allows a student athlete to take a medical leave of absence from participating in a sport while retaining both her scholarship and athletic eligibility. “Administrators or coaches weren't resistant. They just hadn't thought of this solution before,” Foster recalls. “But we were going to one school at a time. There is coach turnover in the athletic department. Women were learning the hard way that *ad hoc* decisions weren't a real solution. We needed the policies to come from a higher authority.”

In late Spring 2007, ESPN aired a special program entitled *Outside the Lines: Pregnant Pause*, featuring the stories of several women who were compelled to have abortions because their athletic departments' policies on pregnancy were misleading or, in some cases, nonexistent. A student athlete from Clemson University who asked not to be identified told ESPN that she was asked to sign a team document prior to the 2005 season stating that “Pregnancy resulting in the inability to compete and positively contribute to

the program's success will result in the modification of your grant-in-aid money.” Said this student, “There was actually a policy about loss of scholarship, loss of privileges due to pregnancy.” She added that her fear of losing her scholarship played a large role in her decision to have a second abortion.

Fortunately, Clemson University responded to public pressure and not only changed their pregnancy policy, but also began educating student athletes on the new policy, assuring them that their scholarships would not be jeopardized if they became pregnant.

The summer after ESPN aired its documentary, the NCAA convened and discussed creating a path for a conference-wide model policy. Elizabeth Sorenson, at that time a professor of nursing at Wright State University (WSU) who had written the school's pregnancy policy, began working with the NCAA on its new policy. Sorenson expressed the prevalence of the problem to ESPN: “If we talk to athletics administrators, directors of athletics, some of them say they don't need a policy because they don't have this problem, so there's sort of a head-in-the-sand philosophy.”

Sorenson, who now works at Ohio Northern University, agitated for the policy change at the NCAA: “I showed them the federal law, the health arguments, and why it was unsafe for both the athletes and the baby. I was as visual and verbal as possible.” Sorenson became one of the co-authors of the NCAA's model policy that was rolled out in 2008. She told WSU's



campus newspaper, *The Guardian*, “The [NCAA] policy creates a healthy, safer situation for the athlete and the child.”

As these events unfolded, Feminists for Life presented its 2008 study *Perception is Reality* on Capitol Hill, calling attention to the issue of athletic policies for pregnant women and parents. **In *Perception is Reality*, FFL found that most of its survey respondents were unable to find any written policy that would protect student athletes in the event of a pregnancy.** Foster added, “*Perception* confirmed to us what we already knew—no one on campus was addressing this issue and making a policy that would be clear and beneficial to the students. We are encouraged that the NCAA has taken the lead, but school administrators, athletic departments, and students still need to be educated about these policies if we’re going to avoid more tragedies like those ESPN exposed.”

### No Policy is Bad Practice

*In a training slideshow educating its member schools, the NCAA paints a grim picture:*

Survey of Pregnancy Policies in Athletics Departments (n = 85)

No policy	
Division I	85%
Division II	94%
Division III	98%

*Existing policies vary widely, and many are not in compliance with federal pregnancy discrimination laws.*

While the NCAA policy is a step forward, more work remains. The current policy addresses the issue of pregnancy, but not parenting students. Nor does the pregnancy policy mention the role of fathers or the impact pregnancy can have on their participation in athletics. “In my opinion it’s discriminatory. **Federal law says that any institution cannot discriminate due to pregnancy or parenting,**” said Sorensen.

The NCAA website says that students have to maintain good “academic standing” in order to retain their scholarship during pregnancy, but that language is ambiguous and does not clearly define “academic standing” in a way that would include

a potential adjustment in course load, something many pregnant students choose to do in order to accommodate pregnancy, delivery, or postpartum recovery.

The NCAA site also includes a decision-making flow chart to help athletic departments walk pregnant students through their choices about pregnancy. Yet this chart makes no mention of adoption options, and does not account for complications during or after pregnancy or abortion. There is no discussion of postpartum or post-abortion care.

“We’re optimistic that there is a movement towards ending bad practices, but FFL advocacy and educational efforts to ‘coach coaches’ about woman-centered, family-friendly policies must remain a priority,” said Foster. “Feminists for Life is calling on student groups to help educate administrators and members of athletic departments, and urges parents and alumnae to check policies are in place at their universities and colleges.” •

*Editor’s note: Anyone who would like to express encouragement to the NCAA for the support of pregnant and parenting students should write to Karen Morrison, Director, Gender Inclusion Initiative at the NCAA. Please copy Feminists for Life if you correspond with the NCAA on this issue.*

*Pro-woman, pro-life student groups are also encouraged to participate in educating administrators and members of their university athletic departments. Contact [coordinator@ffloncampus.org](mailto:coordinator@ffloncampus.org) for more information about FFL’s “Coach the Coach” Campaign to end discriminatory practices against pregnant women, birthparents, and student parents.*

Karen Morrison  
Director  
Gender Inclusion Initiative  
National Collegiate Athletic Association  
700 W. Washington Street  
P.O. Box 6222  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206-6222

Dear Ms. Morrison:

For the past seventeen years Feminists for Life of America has focused on addressing the unmet needs of pregnant and parenting students, faculty, and staff—including women athletes. In addition to basic support services (housing, childcare, maternity coverage and healthcare for children, etc.) FFL has promoted the use of “red shirting” to allow pregnant student athletes the time they need—both during pregnancy and after giving birth—without threatening their scholarships or athletic standing.

On behalf of our board, staff, and the millions of students that we serve, we applaud the NCAA for taking important steps in developing policies in support of pregnant athletes, in particular developing a website that provides model policies and links to resources for students, coaches, and administrators. We are pleased that the NCAA’s response to the needs of its athletes has thus far been so comprehensive.

We encourage the NCAA to adopt inclusive policies that would also support parenting students—including fathers—and birthparents. FFL also recommends clarifying the definition of “good academic standing” to recognize the need in some cases to temporarily decrease or cease coursework for a short time due to medical needs during pregnancy, delivery, or postpartum recovery.

Your leadership and your work to educate institutions of higher education on the illegality of discriminating against anyone due to pregnancy or the choice to parent could help end years of wrongdoing against women and their families.

Because women deserve better,



Serrin M. Foster  
President



refuse to choose  
**Women Deserve Better  
than Abortion**  
FEMINISTS FOR LIFE.org

P.O. Box 320667  
Alexandria, VA 22320

Address Service Requested

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Feminists for Life

# What about *my* choice?



**Where's the support?**

I challenged the system when I discovered the lack of resources available on campus to parents like me.

Education shouldn't have to end because a new life begins.

**Don't let pregnancy or parenting terminate an education.**

*Chaunie Brusie*  
*FFL College Outreach Coordinator and Ada's mom*

Say **NO** to the status quo.<sup>TM</sup> Rally for resources.<sup>SM</sup> Contact FFL to support your revolution on campus.  
[coordinator@ffloncampus.org](mailto:coordinator@ffloncampus.org)