

# THE FEMINISTS FOR LIFE OF AMERICA

# AMERICAN FEMINIST





With so many schools reopening after almost a year and a half, many pro-life student groups did not survive. Others are not thriving. FFL aims to help them with your support.

**FFL's College Outreach Program is more important than ever before:**

- **1 out of 4** undergraduates has children.
- **3 out of 4** students who have children are women.
- **Half** of traditional colleges don't have child care (and many are unaffordable or inflexible).
- **4 out of 10** women in community colleges are mothers.
- **1 out of 3** men attending community colleges is a father.

**The Guttmacher Institute, the former research arm of Planned Parenthood, revealed who is at highest risk of abortion:**

- **75%** of the women having abortions are the poor and working poor (including those in college who have little or no income).
- **66%** are pursuing postsecondary degrees.
- **61%** are women of color.
- **59%** are already mothers (including those who had children in high school and during college).
- **Half** of all abortions are repeat abortions.

Girls Deserve Better™.

are

Priceless.<sup>SM</sup>

FOR LIFE  
OF AMERICA



We also need to reach teens earlier, before they reach college, to provide them with a foundation of pro-life philosophy, first wave feminist history, powerful messages, and pro-woman solutions. We have developed a new kit for pro-life high school groups, a Feminist History Course and Quiz for parents and teens alike, videos for assemblies and club meetings and homeschoolers, and messages to build their story on Instagram: You are Forever Priceless: Girls Deserve Better!

As we look forward to our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2022... as FFL was founded a year before Roe... we ask you to please...

## GIVE TO OUR YEAR-END MATCHING CAMPAIGN:

1. Please make a tax-deductible donation by December 31 that will qualify for our year-end match led by the FFL Board and Friends (including former Board members). Gifts of stock are also appreciated.
2. Make a new or increased monthly gift, and your first gift will be double-matched!
3. If your employer matches donations, please include a corporate matching form to double your gift yet again!

The matching gift campaign ends December 31, 2021, so please go online now to [www.feministsforlife.org/support](http://www.feministsforlife.org/support), or use the enclosed envelope. On behalf of those we serve—future leaders and women at high risk of abortion—we thank you!

Feminists for Life is a 501(c)(3) organization. All contributions and donations to Feminists for Life of America and [WomenDeserveBetter.com](http://WomenDeserveBetter.com) are much needed, deeply appreciated, and tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

# THE AMERICAN FEMINIST®

A publication of Feminists for Life of America

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Established in 1972, Feminists for Life of America is a nonsectarian, nonpartisan, grassroots organization that seeks real solutions to the challenges women face. Our efforts are shaped by the core feminist values of justice, nondiscrimination, and nonviolence. Feminists for Life of America continues the tradition of early American feminists such as Susan B. Anthony, who opposed abortion.

Feminists for Life of America recognizes that abortion is a reflection that our society has failed to meet the needs of women. We are dedicated to systematically eliminating the root causes that drive women to abortion—primarily lack of practical resources and support—through holistic, woman-centered solutions. Women deserve better than abortion.

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

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Fall/Winter 2021

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## SHEER JOY

WHEN A MAN STEALS TO SATISFY HUNGER, WE MAY SAFELY CONCLUDE THAT THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG IN SOCIETY—SO WHEN A WOMAN DESTROYS THE LIFE OF HER UNBORN CHILD, IT IS AN EVIDENCE THAT EITHER BY EDUCATION OR CIRCUMSTANCES SHE HAS BEEN GREATLY WRONGED.

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

## CONTENTS

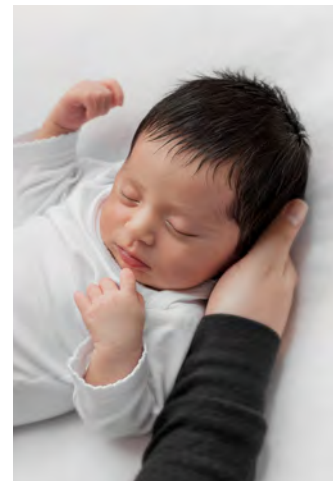
- 5 Our Stories
- 39 Advocacy in Action
- 40 Menu of Opportunity
- 42 The Latest from [WomenDeserveBetter.com](http://WomenDeserveBetter.com)

Alice Paul Group Designer Roberto Chumbimuni - Lima, Perú

## Passing the Test, with Flying Colors

After four months of trying to get pregnant, my wife, Johanna, took a pregnancy test in secret so she could give me a surprise, but she was still shocked with the result. She showed me the test, and after some seconds looking at it, I told her: "I don't know what that means."

We double-checked the box to confirm it was positive indeed. We were really excited, hugged, and almost cried and then started calling laboratories to program a blood test, but it was a holiday, so we had to wait for a whole day. Seven months later, Baby Rebeca was born, and we couldn't be happier.



 **FEMINISTS FOR LIFE  
OF AMERICA**

## Our Stories:

# A Collection of the Sheer Joy Children Bring

*Krista Cornish Scott*

### A Very Special Namesake

We have always talked frankly about how life begins with all of our kids. From a young age, our daughter Serrin (yes, we named her after Serrin Foster, an amazing, strong role model!) has always liked to retell the story of how she came into our family, complete with her favorite part where her two hands are the sperm and the egg. “Hello, sperm!” says one hand. “Hello, egg!” says the other hand. And then, the egg hand goes CHOMP onto the sperm hand “and that’s how a new baby was made.... and it was ME!” she will squeal happily. I never tire of hearing this story, especially the end, which goes “...and after a LOT of hard pushing, I was born, and Daddy said Kenna is going to be SO HAPPY! And then you knew I was a girl, because Kenna had a sister. The end!”



*Serrin Joy*



*Krista Cornish Scott with her daughters, Kenna (left) and Serrin Joy (right), meet FFL President Serrin M. Foster at the Hay Adams Hotel.*

### *FFL President Serrin M. Foster*

It is the honor of a lifetime to have a namesake. After getting precious photos from their mom, Krista, for years, I was finally able to meet Serrin, her older sister Kenna, and their mother, a former copy editor for *The American Feminist*. We were all so excited to finally be able to meet in person late in 2019. As a surprise, I planned a “fancy lunch” in the Hay Adams Hotel, across the street from the White House. It was built by my great-grandfather, Franklin Edward Serrin, who was the general contractor. We traded favors and couldn’t stop smiling.

I bonded immediately with Kenna over our love of books and with Serrin, who plans to become a paleontologist (and knows the scientific name of every dinosaur). She is a BIG personality and cuddles right into you. I love them both. Most appropriate, they both share a middle name: And yes, of course, it is “Joy.”

## Our Stories

*Florence Scarinci*

### Never Poor in Spirit

My grandmother, Maria Barone Petillo, was brought over from her little fishing village in Italy to marry Nicholas Petillo once he became a citizen. He was a longshoreman, and they lived on the top floor of a six floor apartment in Greenwich Village, New York, and shared a bathroom with the other families on that floor. They were poor, but every time she found herself pregnant, she did not worry how they would manage. She had great faith in God and would say, "Every child brings his own loaf of bread."



*Maria Barone Petillo, grandmother of Florence Scarinci, and one of her 10 children, of whom only six lived to adulthood.*



*Rebecca pictured with her husband and four children, ages 14, 12, 10, and 8.*

*Rebecca Filipek*

### Caring for Others Starts Young

The sweetest and most tender memory I have of my children is the relationship between my 10-year-old son and my 8-year-old daughter. He is such a good big brother, carrying her on his back when we are out walking and she's a little tired, or holding hands while walking across the street. He shows that same care with his little 2-year-old cousin, pushing her on the swings at the playground, or making sure she is safe crossing the street or on the sidewalk. The greatest joy in being a mother is seeing how my children love and care for their siblings and other people.

Dr. Karole Kuslak

## Actions Speak (and Love) Louder Than Words

Prior to having any children of my own, I worked as a psychiatrist in a perinatal clinic for mothers who struggled with depression during and after pregnancy, so I was quite aware of the reality that pregnancy and new motherhood are not always easy. As my first pregnancy progressed, I felt apprehensive based on the stories I had heard of how overwhelming and exhausting motherhood can be. As soon as I saw my newborn son, Julian, for the first time in the delivery room, however, the fears and doubts I had carried during my pregnancy melted away. Rather than taking away from the life I had built, motherhood enriched my life and gave me new meaning. Instead of losing my identity to motherhood, I felt that motherhood made me a stronger and better version of who I had been.

Yes, there were challenges, but they were overshadowed by the rewards of watching Julian's personality emerge. He brought a lot of laughter into my life that I never knew I was missing. As a toddler, Julian decided on his own that he would refer to both his father and me by the catch-all term, "Dammmy" (a combination of "daddy" and "mommy"). As his curiosity about the world grew, he began to ask me questions that I had never thought about such as, "Do vampires have to brush their teeth?" and "Do cars poop?" After a girl at his day care developed a crush on him, he solemnly explained to me that he never wants to get married "because then I'd have to kiss, and I don't like kisses."

Shortly before Julian turned 3, I gave birth to his sister, Iris. He was initially taken aback by the arrival of this new "small guy" (as he described Iris during their first meeting at the hospital), but he quickly embraced the role of big brother. Iris fit easily into our family with her calm, cheerful disposition. However, it soon became apparent that Iris was significantly delayed in her motor and speech development. The medical investigation into her delays ultimately revealed news that I never expected: Iris has a 4q21 chromosome deletion, a very rare genetic disorder that causes significant developmental delays.

Some people have had a knee-jerk reaction to say, "I'm sorry," or try to empathize with how "difficult" our lives must be when they become aware of Iris' special needs. However, I do not see her life or her disability as a tragedy. Iris is still the same happy girl she was before we knew about her diagnosis. She enjoys life and is not suffering. Likewise, the rest of us in the family are not suffering because of her condition. On the contrary, I believe that Julian will be a better man later in life because of what he has learned from growing up with her. Most important, he accepts Iris for who she is. It warms my heart to see them play together and laugh together. Yes, there is still plenty of laughter in our home! She also reminds me to stay focused on what truly matters in life: the relationships we have with the people who are important to us.





Carolina Tamayo

## Is There a Vet in the House?

My daughter Sabrina, then 7, was petting the cat one day when she said, “Dogs and cats are different species.” So I asked her, “What is Bella?”

“She is a cat.”

“What is Mitzi?” I asked, referring to our dog.

Sabrina replied, “A canine. Dude, why are you asking me all these questions?”

The “dude” part caught me off guard and made me laugh, but my mom probably would’ve corrected her.

Sabrina hasn’t changed: She is 26 and now a counselor who works for a psychiatrist. She said we need help!



# \$100

“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.”

**GIVE NOW:** [feministsforlife.org/support](https://feministsforlife.org/support)



Theresa Kramer-Burgess

## The Prankster

For months, I had been staring at the orphanage photos of an unsmiling baby. I was warned about attachment issues, grieving for caretakers, and why not to expect a “Hallmark” moment when we first met our daughter in China. The first day, she was silent.

The second day though, she gurgled, cooed, and started to explore her new toys. She specifically was intrigued by a set of toy plastic keys.

Once she grabbed hold of them, she held on tight and wouldn’t easily let them go. On the third day, I decided to play a game with the keys.

“Would you like the keys?” I would ask while handing the keys to her. She would grasp them and hold on tight.

“May I have the keys back?” I would reach for the keys, saying, “Thank you.”

Pausing, I would again ask, “Would you like the keys?”

After 10 of these exchanges, I again asked, “May I have the keys back?” She extended the keys to me. As I reached for them, she started laughing and quickly pulled them back before I could take them. I had been ready for practically anything, but a wicked sense of humor from a not quite 1-year-old was completely unexpected!

“Oh, God, what have you given me?” I asked out loud. Over the next 18 years, my amazing daughter, Katharine, has continued to surprise, delight, and challenge me.

**Editor’s Note:** Katharine interned at FFL the summer of 2021.

## Our Stories

Yaki Cahoon

### A Natural Birth Story

After a failed pregnancy in a past relationship, seven years passed before I conceived again in 2013. I hadn't had any medical insurance for those years and am glad Medicaid covered pregnant women. I immediately started fighting the push for appointments for this test and that screening. Prenatal vitamins were included, but I saw no reason to alter my healthy state or question my baby's ability to grow within me. Yes, the baby is small, because both biological sides are small. No, I don't want to sign that form that I don't understand. I became very protective over her and over myself. I wanted no change to my lifestyle or any risk of compromise for a natural development for Baby.

I used homeopathic remedies for morning sickness, which is a misnomer, because I felt sick all day and every day for the first trimester. During that time, I was overextended as the only caregiver for my two adopted boys and a foster sibling group of three. After begging for extra services to help those foster children, I finally succumbed to asking they be placed in another home. It was a difficult transition to not include foster children, but it was necessary to establish a safe environment for my boys and for the pregnancy, which I did not enjoy.

The two ultrasounds were fun, but otherwise, I didn't enjoy pregnancy. No one ever commented on my glow, so I assume I never did. The extending of my body and the hormonal changes hit me hard. I was lethargic, dealt with a lot of mood swings, and leaned heavily on my neighbor and best friend during that season. I recall trying to keep up with fitness as my body grew heavier and more cumbersome. Having been slim all of my life, the psychological effect of pregnancy developed an aversion to all things maternal. In one case, I could feel my hips spreading as I was walking on a treadmill. I had to stop for fear that Baby would come tumbling out too early. My arms bulked up, as sitting and using arm machines was the only part of fitness that I could maintain somewhat comfortably.



My daughter was due on a Saturday, and I spent that day with my boys at the park. We played rugby. We ran. We lifted heavy logs that didn't need to be moved from their natural location. I was ready to get this birthing process started. My boys and I still laugh about strangers commenting on my swollen womb and asking, "When are you due?" I would shout, "Today! Gotta go!" and keep on speed-walking without any pause or hesitation. The reaction on their faces still amuses us. I ate watermelon and pineapple per suggestion of some Latina friends. I meditated and bounced on an exercise ball per advice from yoga contacts. I got to 10 p.m. without any signs of labor and while looking up what those signs might be, I started drinking castor oil.

My birth plan was to dig a hole in the backyard, add some hay or soft grass and pop a squat with my friends and mother attending. I had read somewhere that the child being connected to Earth was a natural beginning, a ritual observed by many Native American/First Nations tribes. Everyone said no. I declared that I would not enter a hospital if I was conscious. I later realized so much of the scenario stemmed from reproductive manipulation and abuse, and I know that plus my intent not to be coerced into a C-section is why I fought so hard to control the birth plan so adamantly. Friends helped me find a birthing center with a doula and midwife, all covered by Medicaid. While I had to drive nearly two hours to get there for a few appointments, none was as humorous as the night when the castor oil took effect and the midwife declared contractions close enough to come in. With a driver covering the distance and my lower half-nude body in the backseat, bucket nearby, I arrived at the birthing center in the wee hours of the morning. Shortly thereafter, I was joined by my best friend and her partner—my mother was already with me—and another friend who lived only a few miles from the center.

For about four hours, I started feeling all of the physical and emotional experiences of the previous nine months. I used humor to offset the discomfort, and at one point I cursed Eve for eating the fruit that led to the painful childbirth. (Referring to the Genesis account of Man's fall leading to painful childbirth as consequence for disobedience to GOD, an account from the Hebrew Bible.) While someone ran around looking for an apple, thinking I was asking for one to eat, the midwife checked me and announced that my cervix was ready. I moved to the shower room to enjoy hot water while the bath was drawn in the birthing tub. My friend—a musical cohort—began singing, which calmed me and gave me something to help focus my mind as the pains began growing in severity and closeness. It was at the point that I was balled up on the shower floor when my mom called out to the midwife saying, "*She's pushing!*" I didn't realize I was pushing, but moms know more than daughters when it comes to birthing. Everyone began to get excited and assisted me to the tub while the songs kept sounding.

I was in heavy labor for less than two hours. I had no drugs, per my request, and at the point that I thought some might be necessary, my daughter was crowning. The castor oil had cleaned me out to the point that every stage of my daughter's entrance into the world was captured on cellphone cameras without any obstructions or interference. The best picture of my daughter's face out into the water is something akin to a National Geographic image. Her dark hair, thick eyebrows, and full lips were evident even then. The ripples in the water increased as I pushed and she pulled her arms out. The room fell silent when she used her arms in perfect breaststroke form to swim her way out of me at 9:45 a.m. on a Sunday morning in March. I remember in slow motion as one onlooker began reading Psalm 139, which were the first words my daughter heard as the midwife lifted her out of the water and placed her into my arms. I saw her take her first breath. She seemed content to cuddle, and the prearranged, delayed umbilical cord cut waited another 10 minutes until the pumping ceased and the now silent room took in the fleeting moment of this new life's entry.



Once in the bed, we cuddled some more. The next few hours were full of comments, tears, more photography, phone calls, and stitching—because I tore from pushing so hard. Baby had her tongue tie clipped. I passed out in the bathroom after announcing that I might. I had a dream of my brother and I riding motorcycles together. I never did figure out any significance to that except that I was relaxed and remembering all the happinesses I had experienced in my lifetime. That led to a time of horrible reminiscing about people who had died and abuses I had suffered; some were yet to play out. The entire time, my daughter was skin-to-skin with me as people fed me, patted her, and carried on as only the best birthing attendants do. I would learn about breastfeeding and how my inverted nipples would create humorous exchanges with other mothers and babies. I would begin to regulate my hormones, and my body would slowly, SLOWLY return to normal human size. So much would play out in the years to come, but in that moment, all that mattered was the naked girl child laying on my chest. We would later observe an earth-ceremony with just the two of us. She was worth all the manipulation, the fears, the fights to avoid “normal” birthing scenarios, the happy and sad memories, the physical changes and discomforts.

In that moment, nothing else mattered. Only she and I existed, and we did, we existed to plan a lifetime together.

**Editor’s Note:** *Yaki interned at FFL the summer of 2019. Her story originally appeared at WomenDeserveBetter.com, along with “A Cesarean Section Birth Story” and “An Epidural Birth Story.”*

Cheryl Blake

## Real Feminism

In the 1970s and 1980s, when I was having children, one boy and one girl were considered the ideal, if marriage and children were even in the plans. When I was pregnant with my third child, a neighbor asked me why I would do that again since I already had the perfect one daughter and one son. During my fourth pregnancy, some acquaintances wondered out loud about so many children and my remaining a full-time mom for much of their early years. After all, I was college-educated, and women were coming into their own in the workplace. That people felt justified in commenting on our family size did not bother me. But some questioned how I could possibly claim any feminist inclinations. My answer to such queries? What could possibly be more feminist than rearing three strong women and an open-minded man?



*The Blake family at the Grand Canyon, 1986. Pictured clockwise from left are Ian, 8; Bridgett, 12; husband Terry holding Colleen, 1; and Bevin, 3.*



## Our Stories

FFL Speaker Joyce McCauley-Benner

### Finding Joy After Being Lost

When I found myself facing an unplanned pregnancy, especially after being sexually assaulted, I felt every emotion I think a human could go through—sadness, fear, surprise, anxiety, depression, and joy. Yes, joy.

My best friend had told me that no one feeling lasts forever—but an abortion will. It was this grounded, rational thinking that allowed me to take a moment and breathe. Moments make up minutes, then hours, then days, then weeks and months. And then years. And I learned my friend was right. Not every moment was filled with fear or sadness or depression. There were moments I laughed, smiled, and was in awe.

I was 21 weeks along when I felt my son move inside of me for the first time. I had never been pregnant before, so the first feeling was jarring and, admittedly, a bit weird. But then, I was amazed. I could see this tiny human moving within me. Suddenly, he was my son—not an abstract concept to fear—a pregnancy that derails your dreams—but *a child* to get to know.

I started calling him Roo (as in Kanga and Roo from *Winnie the Pooh*, a favorite story of mine). I started thinking about the things I wanted to share with him, my favorite stories and movies, and all the places I wanted to take him.



My family celebrated my pregnancy with a baby shower. It wasn't a traditional one (this was far from a traditional pregnancy), but we made it our own. We had an international theme, a scrumptious taco bar, and found the joy in Roo. This was such an important step in destigmatizing the trauma and "crisis" of the pregnancy. It is indeed, even in an unplanned pregnancy, OK to celebrate!

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**It is indeed, even in an unplanned pregnancy, OK to celebrate!**

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Yes, fear and anxiety ebbed and flowed. As the birth neared, and I still had no idea who the father was, it was time to make a birth plan. I had returned home to be closer to my family, and my boyfriend did join me.

His journey of feelings was just as varied as mine. Our relationship was strained, as we each were responding to the unknowns and what-ifs in our own ways. We were young, and these were uncharted waters. While he agreed to be present in the room, I knew I was going to need more support.

I asked my mom and dad to join me. My dad had been present for my birth and was honored to be at his grandson's. And my mom was thrilled to be a supporter and birthing partner. She would later say that her connection to her grandson was so powerful because she saw his birth firsthand!

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**She would later say that her connection to her grandson was so powerful because she saw his birth firsthand!**

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Roo was tiny but mighty. We grew up together, me learning how to be his mother, and him growing into himself. He has brought endless joy to me and my family. And just like any other kid, a few shenanigans along the way, too! My second son was born a few years later, and together, the three of us tackled life—some very hard times but with so much love along the way.

It turns out, I did share all of my favorite stories and movies and places with my sons. Any parent will tell you that your kids will introduce you to new passions, too! Both of my sons are athletes—who knew I would grow to be a baseball and soccer fan?! (And yes, even football as Roo’s senior year led him to the state championships!)

When my mom passed away in 2014, my sons were present in the room—she was surrounded by her whole family. There was something very healing about the circle of life that Roo and my mom were demonstrating. We know she continues to watch over him and all of us.

Even at our worst, darkest times, when life gives us damage, collateral beauty can still fall out. Little pieces of joy are everywhere, hidden in moments that you were sure were going to destroy you. And yet... we go on. Feelings ebb and flow. With support, healing resources, and love, we start to find beauty.

Joy, like Roo, can be tiny but mighty.

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“

**Joy, like Roo, can be tiny  
but mighty.**

”

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**\$250**

“If mothers only knew the natural consequences of abortion... they would stop awe-struck before committing the awful act.”

**GIVE NOW:** [feministsforlife.org/support](https://feministsforlife.org/support)

## Our Stories

Cecile Bamer

### Persistent Love Brings Forth Life

Last year, the pastor at my parish reached out to me regarding the daughter of another parishioner. He asked, based on my abortion experiences 30 years ago, if I would be willing to talk to him. What I heard was the pain of a father and grandfather, watching his pregnant daughter struggling with her unplanned pregnancy. I listened for a time, eventually asking if she might be receptive to contact from me.

It took several weeks of short conversations, but she kept coming back to me. She was still in her first trimester and was threatening abortion almost daily to her parents. Several times, she actually went to a clinic, but didn't follow through. I offered to walk her journey with her daily, and for the rest of her pregnancy and four months beyond, we talked and prayed Monday through Friday, our dialogue stretching from 10 to 45 minutes.

In talking with her, I understood that she underwent at least two chemical abortions prior to this pregnancy, which her family was not aware of. As we met each day, she was often at very low points, but she showed up, and that was what was necessary for her to carry her son until birth. I am so proud of her.

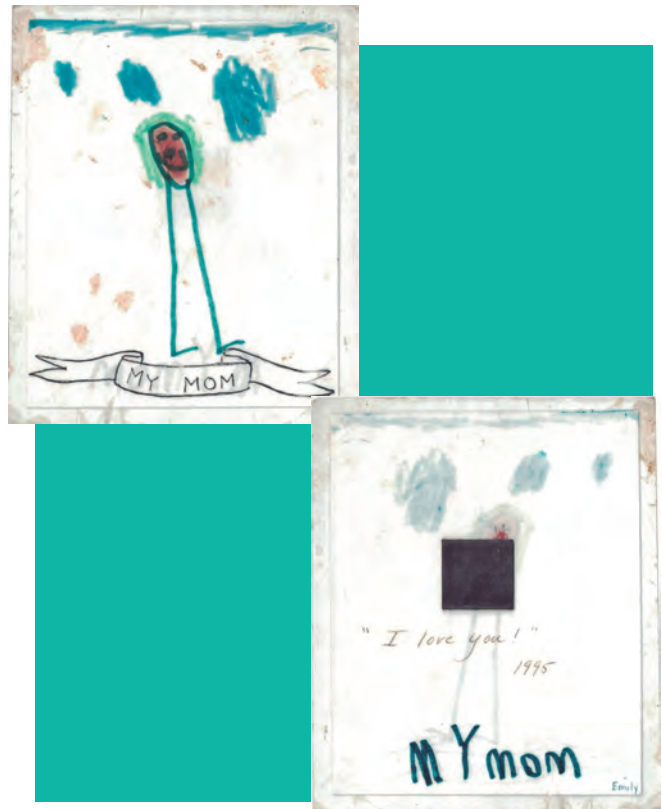
The days after she gave birth, she was amazed and in love with that child. It was powerful to be part of her transformation.

She had her baby a year ago in July and lovingly placed him for adoption. This September, I attended her wedding.

Marilyn Kopp

### What's in That Drink?

Our daughter Emily was a toddler, probably around 3 years old. We were at a Mexican restaurant at one end of an indoor shopping mall that had a large fountain in the middle of it. We ate dinner, and my husband and I were finishing up our margaritas. My daughter was waiting patiently, and she suddenly blurted out very loudly to the server "As soon as Mommy and Daddy are done with their diarrhea, we're going to go look at the fountain!"



The front and back of a picture Marilyn's daughter Emily drew in school at age 5.

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Our daughter Brittany was about 4 years old. Outside of our dining room window, she saw a neighbor walking their Great Dane. She shouted out excitedly "Look, Mom. Someone's walking their horse!"

FFL Speaker Cynthia J. Wood, J.D.

## Every Child Is a Gift

The nurses were amused as I waddled into the delivery room with an armload of how-to books. This was my first baby, and I wanted everything to go by the book. The only problem was that nothing about my delivery went by the book. Two weeks past my due date, my water broke, and the doctor had to induce labor via a Pitocin drip. After 16 long, painful hours, I gave up my “happy place” and deep breathing exercises learned in my natural birth Lamaze classes. I not only agreed to an epidural—I *screamed* for an epidural.

Finally, by mid-forceps delivery and a fourth-degree episiotomy, my son was born. Seconds after they let me see my baby, doors flew open, and a team of doctors and nurses took over. I was carted to a recovery room where my husband, Jim, and I waited. A doctor came into our room, introduced herself as a neonatologist, and told us of our son’s possible heart complications and that our son needed to be taken to another hospital. At that moment, my mind went blank, and I was filled with one thought: *I might lose my baby.*



The nurse asked if we wanted to see our son off. I told my husband to go without me. I didn’t think I could bear saying goodbye—what could be a final goodbye—but Jim motioned to the nurse to cart me down with him. Before I knew it, I was within arm’s reach of my son. He was so tiny lying in that portable incubator looking thing. The tears I had bottled up were finally released as I said my goodbye.

My husband followed the ambulance to the children’s hospital while I was taken back to my room. Once there, I could hear the continual cries of newborn babies from adjacent rooms. I was just thankful that the bed next to mine was empty. The sight of a mother holding her baby would have been too much for my heart to bear.



# \$500

“Can you not see that the idea is to educate women that they may be self-reliant, self-sustaining, self-respected?... God speed the time, for the sake of the babies. Little ones will then be welcome...”

**GIVE NOW:** [feministsforlife.org/support](https://feministsforlife.org/support)



The next day, I got permission to visit my son on a temporary discharge pass. Jim came by and picked me up, and before I knew it, I was once again within arm's reach of my son. There were tubes and wires covering his entire little body. I could not believe it when the nurse asked if I wanted to hold him. She was able to temporarily disconnect him from some of the machines and gently placed him in my arms. The minute I felt his little head close to my heart and was able to kiss him, all of my worries and fears seemed to vanish. It was in that instance I knew that God had answered my prayers and that he would be OK.

Jim was a little reluctant to hold him at first, I could tell, but once our son was placed in his arms, he too felt a sense of assurance that only love and faith can provide. Time flew by, and before I was ready, I was told it was time for me to return to my hospital. When I arrived, I had a roommate. The curtains had been pulled, and I could hear a woman crying. At first, I thought something had happened to her baby, but then I heard the sound of her baby being brought in to her and her telling the nurse that she wasn't ready for the baby. I felt a surge of tears welling up as I made my way to the nurse's station asking to be released immediately. There was just no way I could or would endure a sad mother holding a perfectly healthy baby. My doctor was called and provided the necessary approval for release.

I don't recall the drive home, but once inside our small, two-bedroom apartment, I remember feeling my heart tighten as I passed the nursery. A force seemed to drag me in. I sat in a rocker for a long time squeezing a silly little teddy bear. *How I longed to be rocking my baby!* I missed him and felt so empty inside. As I placed the teddy bear in the crib, I fell to my knees holding the bars of the crib. My tears turned once again to prayer. It was amazing how quickly I felt a renewed hope strengthening me.

Without a doubt, it was my faith that sustained me, and it was faith that got me through the next five weeks. I would arrive at the hospital at 8 a.m., staying all day with my son who was eventually moved from intensive care to intermediate care. Jim would come after work at 5 p.m., and we would stay until 10 p.m. Then, it would start all over the next day.

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“

**I was there when the doctor told them that their son would most likely be permanently blind.**

”

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Looking back to that experience and the other lives I intersected with, I realized now that I was given a front row seat into the soul of humanity. It is amazing how lives that cross your path for such a brief time can leave such a lasting mark on your soul. I remember a young mother no more than 18 years old who would make a three-hour drive every weekend to see her baby girl. She was a single mom who had to work during the week. Her daughter had been born with Down syndrome and other complications. I'd watch her as she arrived. It was as if she saved all of her love all week long and just opened a faucet, and out it would pour into that little baby the minute she got there. I remember when her daughter was released. I can still see the little outfit she was wearing as they said their goodbyes. I had no doubt that little baby girl would be loved.

There was another family I got to know. Their son was born prematurely, what some call a “palm baby”: only 3 pounds at birth. He was 4 months old when we arrived and had already undergone 10 surgeries. The mother and father, always well-dressed, came every day after work. What they endured was incredible, but more incredible was their devoted love for their child, whom they called their “Gift from God.” I was there when the doctor told them that their son would most likely be permanently blind. They had prepared themselves for that news and seemed to accept it. I marveled at their strength.

I found myself gaining strength from them and others. I would never wish my experience on another person, but what that experience taught me, I would never trade. The day my son was released was such a joy-filled day. We were told we may face lots of unknowns, but we knew we could handle it, and we have. Our son is now in his 30s. He has had two heart valve transplants, one at 13 years old and one this past January.

An X-ray even today will show that he still has an enlarged heart. Doctors explained it is due to his medical condition, but I’d like to think that it is from all the love we poured into him those early weeks. That little boy taught me so much about love and what a true gift a child is. I have always been pro-life, but it has been through my seven pregnancies, starting with my firstborn, my three other children, and three miscarriages, that I have a need to remind people of how precious a gift life is. It pains me beyond words to hear a baby be referred to as an accident, unplanned, and in a campaign speech, even a punishment. I only wish they could have been with me 30 some years ago when I learned that every child is a gift.

FFL Speaker Cynthia J. Wood, J.D.

## A Lighthearted Moment in the Life of a Pro-Life Mom

I have always known based on science, faith, logic, and the law that life begins at conception, and I have tried my best to educate others, including my own children. I remember years ago, when I decided to ask my three oldest children that basic question, “*When does life begin?*” To my relief, the two older ones answered correctly.

“

**Danny, I want to know when you think life begins.**

”

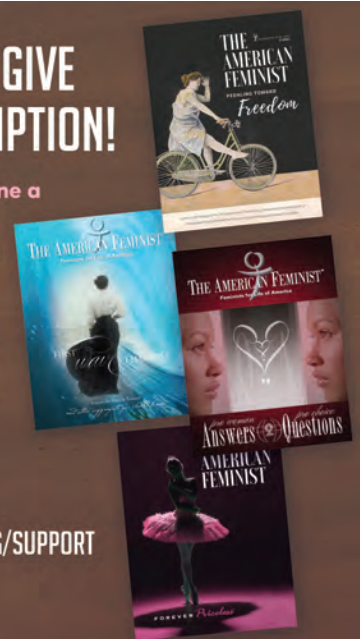
When my 15-year-old came into the room, I repeated the question to him asking, “Danny, I want to know when you think life begins.” Without a second thought, he confidently answered, “When I get my driver’s license.”

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Carla Walsh

### **Dog is Man's (and Boy's) Best Friend**

Our dog, Sadie, was a rescue. At the age of 2, she had been unceremoniously dropped off at the rescue event by her previous owners, and she was trembling with fear and confusion. After Jack and Matt, ages 10 and 7, decided she was “the one,” they sat and cuddled with her while we bought all the equipment we would need to bring her home. As I watched them tune in to her feelings and forget themselves in trying to bring her comfort, I remember the joy I felt watching them grow into compassionate and loving young men. One of the great joys of parenthood.



Camille Hardt

### **Home for the Holidays (and Beyond!)**

Elizabeth was the best Christmas present we ever received. My husband completed her adoption and brought her home from Romania on December 22, 2000, when she was 8 months old. From the beginning, she always loved being read to. During the day, before naptime, while playing in the sandbox, listening to audiobooks while in the car, and certainly before bedtime at night: She always enjoyed snuggling up to my husband, Michael, or me and getting lost in a story and our quiet time together. A delightful moment that stands out from the many hours spent reading together was when she “read” *Disney's Cinderella* to me when she was only 3. I had read this 44-page book to her so many times that she memorized the text from the pictures on each page. She was absolutely triumphant in her “reading” to Mommy. It was a sweet moment from countless sweet moments at home with her that I won't forget. So grateful for the blessing she is to me and our family!

**Editor's Note:** Elizabeth interned at FFL the summer of 2021.

Jim Freund

### **Something Doesn't Add Up**

When our son Josh was maybe 5 or 6, he told us, wide-eyed, that he had made an amazing discovery: We were in a grocery store and let him check out for us; we were right behind him. In exchange for the \$20 bill we'd given him, he received three bills and some change. Three for one! You could just continue the process: three for one, nine for three, and so on!! Endless money!! (On a related note: He had the hardest time understanding why “11” didn't equal “2” at about the same age.)

Thankfully, Josh didn't grow up to be an accountant; today, he's an IT guy.

## To My Second-Born

*There were days  
I wasn't sure  
I wanted  
you.*

*Through the sleepless haze  
your sister's tears  
I thought:  
My God,  
(a prayer, a question)  
Can I possibly handle  
two?*

*But then I heard your voice.  
Felt the joy  
of your presence  
exploding through my veins.*

*Saw your sister  
enchanted  
by your tiny fingers.*

*Fell in love*

*And knew  
(a calm certainty)  
Our lives were incomplete  
without you.*

*You, my second baby  
were not my plan  
You were  
God's.*

*And the sweet surprise of  
You  
(even on the hardest nights)  
is beyond  
my wildest dreams.*

*Your Mama*



Rebecca Webb

## Time Is Short and Precious

My godson lived only seven weeks, but he taught me lessons to last a lifetime. Although his heart was imperfectly formed, he taught me the meaning of unconditional love. The moments I spent with him snuggled in my arms were all too short, but also some of the most precious I have ever known. He showed me the infinite joy in a sleepy baby smile, a little hand clasp my finger; what a gift it is to sing a lullaby; tell a story; listen to the sweet whisper of tiny breaths. My godson brought my heart to life—and when he died, he broke it.

But because he lived, I am forever changed. Because he lived, I know that life is *more* precious—not less precious—when time is short. Even knowing now the pain of losing him, I would choose to love him all over again. I will carry him in my heart as long as I live.

His name was Michael.



# \$1,000

“The rights of children as individuals begin while yet they remain the foetus.”

“Childbearing is not a disease, but a beautiful office of nature.”

**GIVE NOW:** [feministsforlife.org/support](https://feministsforlife.org/support)

## Our Stories

Dr. Angela Lanfranchi

### The Wait

I was waiting for the “right time.” I wanted to be married with children and not have a nanny. Two days after medical school graduation, I married but didn’t want to have a child during internship, residency, or fellowship. After seven years of postgraduate training, my husband agreed to be a stay-at-home dad. Starting solo practice, I wanted to wait until my career was established and secure.

Two years later, I waited again. It wouldn’t be good to join a group of surgeons and need maternity leave right away. At 41, 10 happy years later with career and travels, my good friend became pregnant. Only then did it occur to me the time might be now. Thankfully, I hadn’t gone through an early menopause in my 30s and knew my chance of becoming pregnant wasn’t only 5% per month. I was lucky. I remember driving home from the hospital and thinking about my child being deep inside me and feeling peace and God’s embrace. My OB wanted to do amniocentesis. I told him he already knew that I wouldn’t kill it if it was going to be stupid or ugly. He said it was so “I could prepare.”

Morning sickness lasted until 5 p.m. After 20 weeks, I became hypertensive with the development of preeclampsia. I continued working and blew off neurological changes as migraines, even when my vision made the left half page of typing disappear. My due date was December 7, the “Day of Infamy,” but I was induced early for medical reasons. I had lost weight during pregnancy. She was a skinny baby.

---

“  
**I just want to  
be happy.**  
”

---



A few weeks later, while watching her sleep in her cradle, I unexpectedly and suddenly became enveloped in an overwhelming deep love for her. I thought it was a glimpse of God’s Love for us, and maybe that was why He designed us to have children: so we could understand and feel that transcendent Love. A few months later, I told my husband that Maria wanted a sibling. He was doubtful he could survive another pregnancy.

Maria always thought outside of the box. Only a few years old, I was trying to get her to stop hanging on the treadmill. I said it was a bad thing to do and asked, “Don’t you want to be good?” Instead of making a choice between good and bad, she answered, “I just want to be happy.”

Her favorite book was about prenatal development. She would always ask me to read it to her. Inside of the cover were small pictures, starting in the upper left hand corner with the faces of a man and woman and the lower right hand corner the same faces with the addition of a smiling baby between them. The pictures in between reading from left to right, top to bottom showed a sperm and egg followed by embryos and phases of fetal development. I'd say, "The mommy and daddy kiss, and then the baby grows and grows and grows..." while pointing at each picture. She asked how someone gets pregnant. I told her a boy kisses a girl on the lips. Her preschool teacher told me she had to stop Maria from playing "doctor." She would have other little girls put dolls under their dresses and then tell them to "push."



In kindergarten, a friend told me that she had heard Maria tell someone that she might be pregnant. When I came home from work, I told Maria that I had heard that she might be pregnant. She asked me how I knew. I told her, "Mothers know everything." She explained how Stephen had kissed her when they were playing. I told her that would have had to happen over two years ago, so she wasn't pregnant, or she was having the world's longest gestation. I said she was lucky, because she wasn't ready to get a job and support a baby.

---

“

**When I came home from work, I told Maria that I had heard that she might be pregnant. She asked me how I knew. I told her, ‘Mothers know everything.’**

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”

A few days after her seventh birthday, Maria asked to be excused from the dinner table to play with a stick she had named Andy. My husband and I stayed and talked. He asked if I would ever stop telling women what to do with their own bodies. There was neither rancor nor loud voices, just conversation. After a while, Maria came back to the dining room and asked if she could explain it to him. "Daddy, if I was inside Mommy, and she didn't want me, and you really did, but she got rid of me anyway, wouldn't you be sad? (pause) Got it?" Then, she left.

Sometime during middle school, I came home, and she looked at me and said, "I know."

"What do you mean, 'I know?'"

"I know," she repeated sternly.

## Our Stories

There had been “the talk,” where boys and girls are separated before it starts. After telling me a little about what was said, I asked if any of the teachers were doctors. I told her the source had to be considered.

There were times in her tweens when she would ask me about other things. Once she said, “It’s always so good to talk to you because you always have the right answers.” I told her to remember the moment, because in a short while, I would become the biggest idiot on the planet. I asked if she knew what I meant by that. She nodded.

I did become an idiot anyway. Tired, angry, and storming about the house getting ready to go to the ER late one evening, Maria said, “Mommy, isn’t it wonderful that you know how to make people better?”

If I was only to have one child, she was the best, most fun child. What I’ve learned is that there is no “right time.” There are always reasons to wait for a better time: when I’m more financially secure; when my career is more established; etc. etc. My life is richer, more fun, and more interesting. As has been said, unplanned pregnancy can bring unplanned joy. Look for the joy, and put off long waits.



**Live the Legacy.  
Leave a Legacy.**

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

**Thank you!**



*“What did you think when you first learned you were*  
**PREGNANT?”**

*“You’ve got to be kidding me!” We are pro-life 100%, of course, and my little genius turned out fine. Just goes to show that unplanned is not always unwanted!*

*Margaret Rankin Hoersch*

**When I found out I was expecting my now 23-year-old, I thought, “I’ve been waiting my whole life for this.”**

*Amy Hackett Domencic*



Colette Moran

## Love and Support on Campus—and Beyond

In September of 1986, I began my senior year in college. Not too long after, I discovered I was pregnant. I knew I would make it to graduation, but I was going to have to spend the rest of that school year visibly pregnant at a conservative Christian school.

The love and support I received from my family and college community was amazing. I walked across that stage in May and received my diploma... and four days later, my beautiful daughter arrived two weeks early!

Today, I can look back on all of the wonderful memories with my daughter as I met my husband, we got married, and our family grew with five more girls and their little brother.

I believe that any young woman who finds herself pregnant on campus deserves to have that same love and support so she, too, can have the happily ever after that I've had—with her child by her side!



*Here is daughter No. 5 graduating from Northwestern University this past May, with all of her siblings joining in the celebration.*



*Colette's six oldest children—all girls—captured during their sonograms. Their brother, Chris, the youngest, is pictured below.*



The first of my six sonograms for my seven children (yes, the twins were a big surprise at that third one) was back in 1987, and I remember it being a little grainier in appearance. But there was no mistaking the image of my daughter literally spinning circles like a ballet dancer doing pirouettes. The technician laughed with me and said they'd never seen anything like it. She has made me smile just as brightly ever since.

**Editor's Note:** Colette serves as FFL's Twitter Coordinator.

## Our Stories

Barb Driehaus

### Three Generations of JOY

My children have brought untold JOY to my life! From the almost stereotypical, yet real, sweet and sticky toddler kisses, to the shared excitement of playing on sports teams, to the pride felt in academic accomplishments, there is much happiness and satisfaction wrapped around being a parent and grandparent. And let's not forget the joy of being a sibling! Some of my best memories are of interaction among my own five children and also among my own six siblings as well.

When my youngest daughter, Mia, was very young, she liked, I'll say, to be around me. A lot. Once, she followed me into the bathroom, and I turned on her, frustrated, and said, "I just want to have some privacy!" She turned around, locked the door, and happily informed me that "There: Now we have some privacy."

When our oldest son, Jordan, was maybe 4 years old, he could not wait for the first snow. Every day, we would tell him that it would come, that one morning he would wake up, and it would look like a wonderland outside. The morning that this happened is seared in memory: He bounded into our bedroom shouting, "This is the day! This is the day!" And sure enough, 6 inches of snow had fallen overnight, transforming the world into a magical one. Such joy is infectious!



Our oldest daughter, Jaime, was a seriously good soccer player in high school. The final tournament game her senior year ended in a "shootout" after the score remained tied through regulation and two overtime periods. My girl buried her shot (Yay!), but when it was all over, her team lost. During the postgame huddle, the coaches invited the parents into the circle and among many wise words reiterated that this sport, this team, these girls, had brought much joy to many people's lives. I have never forgotten the feeling of truth of those words. The press chose my daughter to interview, walking to the bus when feelings were raw, and she rose to the occasion like the champion she is. I will not recount the uplifting, good sportsmanship delivered in her words, but she made her dad and me proud on many levels that night.

Joel was born with an abundance of energy and all-around exuberance for life. It caused us to nickname him "Zest" for a while. To watch him figure out how to swing a golf club, shoot an archery arrow, or pick up a lacrosse ball, was truly inspirational as his tenacity was fierce. He is significantly younger than his siblings and once, he went around to everyone's bedroom and put a green thumbprint on a wall in each room using an ink pad from a rubber stamp kit. I think it was his way of "making his mark" as people were leaving the house, getting jobs, and going to college. Now, I look back and realize that and think it is sweet—although I was not as generous in the moment.



Joel is loosely named after his dad, Joseph, who almost always goes by “Joe.” I’ll never forget the day Joel found out Joe’s formal name and asked, astounded, “Wait. Is my name really *Joelseph*?”

Now a well-respected employee at one of the Big Four accounting firms, our middle daughter, Brigid, is a lifelong competitor. She graduated fourth in her high school class, was a multi-sport athlete, and was the only girl on a boys’ baseball team when she was 9 and 10. She was the kid who stood in front of the washer-dryer waiting for her favorite jersey to be finished because it was the only shirt she would wear. This child was a welcome addition into an already busy family; she attended countless meetings with me with great aplomb. I think she learned to be patient and to interact with adults from this position.

As a group, our children excel at family fun in the way of board and card games and, most recently, made-up family *Jeopardy*!

Whoever makes the categories inevitably creates one “All About Me,” and then we need to think, think, think: *What is her or his favorite color? teacher? sports team?*

From a parental perspective, I love to look back on the car ride to the hospital to have our first baby when my husband mused, “All these people out here think this is just a regular day.” To us, it was going to be a very special, joyous day... and, of course, it was!

Our high school has, instead of a Mom Prom, a Mother-Son Shindig. A square dance is perfect for this pairing as few know how to do it, but most can follow the directions of the caller. Tremendous fun for both moms and boys, real memory makers!

Also, Marita was in a pre-professional dance school from ages 5 to 13. To watch her dance in high-level recitals and perform in *The Nutcracker* each year was awesome in the true sense of the word. I was always amazed at how good these young people were at dancing and it filled my heart with love, joy, and admiration.



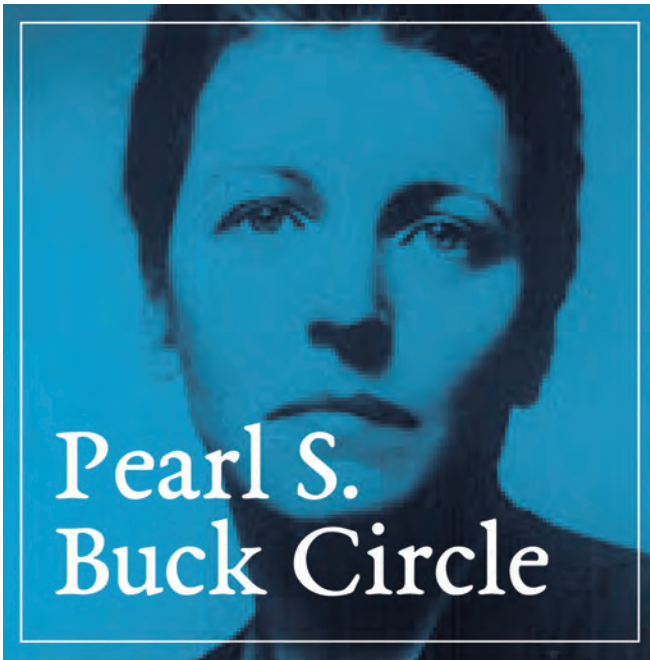
*Nineteen years total in our high school (2002-2021) prompted the principal to give me a bouquet of flowers when our youngest graduated this past May.*



“How did you feel when  
you first saw your child on a  
**SONOGRAM?**”

I never had one, but my grandson’s  
3D sonogram blew me away! And he  
looked just like his 5-month fetal  
self until he was about 4 (postnatal)  
years old.

*Pam Cira*



**\$2,500**

“...in this world, where cruelty prevails in so many  
aspects of our life, I would not add the weight of  
choice to kill rather than to let live.”

**GIVE NOW:** [feministsforlife.org/support](http://feministsforlife.org/support)

*Susan Schoppa*

**Adorable Beyond Definition**

**Velcro® baby (noun):**

(1) an infant who especially likes to be:

- (a) held
- (b) carried
- (c) hugged

(2) a niece or nephew whose aunt/uncle can:

- (a) hold her/him nonstop without anyone saying, “You will spoil that baby.”
- (b) enjoy the warm fuzzy feeling that comes from holding her/him close
- (c) see all of the love created by the precious new life

**Synonyms:**

snuggle bunny, cuddle bug, koala kid

**Example sentence:**

*“I don’t need a stroller or carrier –my niece is a Velcro® baby.”*



*Susan’s Velcro® babies, 2006*

## Joyful Memories from a Big Sister

My life has been blessed with two beautiful children, Zoë, 16, and Ziggy, 12. They are the center of my universe and fill my heart with love and pride every day. My personal history with pregnancy and motherhood, however, predates them both, to the arrival of my younger brother—14 years my junior!

Raised as an only child, and always drawn to young children, I had longed for a sibling since my earliest memory. With high school on my horizon, that dream was fading... until in the surprise moment of a lifetime, my mom announced her pregnancy to me one summer afternoon in our upstairs hallway, fresh off a call from her OB-GYN (back when doctors knew how to operate a telephone). I remember sharing in my parents' overwhelming joy and anticipation of this extraordinary little being, soon to join our quiet little family. They included me in all those fun and exciting baby preparations, like decorating the nursery and shopping for my mom's maternity clothes at TSS, a now-defunct Long Island department store chain. When sonography revealed his gender, I guarded that precious secret along with my parents. My mom seated me right beside her at her ENORMOUS baby shower, graciously sharing her spotlight with this beaming sister-to-be. I was so proud of her brave and selfless decision to bring forth a miraculous new life into our world, especially to start over with a newborn so many years after my own infancy. I marveled as my mom met this challenge with steadfast poise, enthusiasm, and gratitude.

At my small parochial school, my brother's pending arrival was the talk of my classroom—which erupted with cheers and well-wishes when the main office called me down for an early dismissal on that long-awaited day. Upon my brother's safe and healthy arrival, the fruition of our family's prenatal journey together, we felt more than mere happiness or excitement; we felt complete.

Leaving the hospital with my dad, sun setting over us in the quiet parking lot, he gently but emotionally proclaimed, "God has blessed me with a son... I have a son!"

It was not until my brother came home that I could hold him, as archaic hospital rules excluded anyone under 16 from the maternity ward. Our connection was immediate, our hearts beating in sibling unison. My role only increased throughout my brother's infancy and childhood, as I eagerly assumed the honorary status of "third parent." I would become my brother's godmother, and treasured my opportunity to care for and nurture him. His toddlerhood was an integral part of my adolescence, and taught me profound responsibility, patience, and appreciation for what truly matters in life.

Before long, my brother grew into a kind, intelligent, principled, compassionate young man, who holds fast the sanctity and dignity of all human life. He has dedicated his life to educating the public about these critical issues, as well as protecting the unborn and women who are at risk. My brother is FFL's own Damian Jon Geminder.



Counterclockwise from left: Jessica Geminder Train, daughter Zoë, son Sebastian, and brother Damian.

## Our Stories

The Rev. Randolph and Donna Geminder

### Uncharted Joy

For some reason which always escaped us, our son Damian had a fascination with maps and geography. He particularly found dead ends captivating, and we would take Sunday drives with him strapped in his car seat, reading the local map of our village. He would shout navigational commands, advising us to turn left here and right there, leading us to the ends of various streets. Friends in the highway department actually presented him with his own regulation, diamond-shaped yellow “DEAD END” sign, which we hung in his room.

His cartological prowess, we believe, reached its acme in kindergarten when the teacher assigned the children to “draw a picture of God’s creativity.” Produced were crayoned portrayals of deformed birds, stick-figured people, stumpy trees, etc. Imagine the teacher’s surprise when he checked out Damian’s accurate map of the world. As he praised Damian for such an unbelievable achievement for a 5-year-old, our boy apologized, offering, “I’m sorry I couldn’t fit in Madagascar... It’s on the back!”



**Editor’s Note:** *I learned about FFL in junior high school from my big sister (see page 29), became an intern the summer of 2013, and now serve as FFL’s Director of Public Education and Editor.*

Patrick and Lois O’Kane

### Sowing Love by Sewing Love



In the days before our local pregnancy resource center had a dedicated room containing donated items for needy clients, my wife, Lois, “rearranged” the downstairs room in our house to store the direct aid items which had been donated to the center. These items included baby and maternity clothing, and items such as car seats, cribs, and baby blankets. Counselors would occasionally bring clients who had chosen to carry their babies to term to the house to browse the direct aid items and take whatever they could use.

On one of these visits the client mentioned that she had no maternity clothing at all, and nothing in the donated collection was the right size. Lois, who has sewn nearly all of her own dresses and slips, immediately went for her seamstress’s tape measure, took a few minutes to get an accurate set of the client’s measurements, and told her she could come back in a week or so for a fitting.

When the counselor and client returned the following week for the completed maternity dress, the client tried on the dress and was so overcome with gratitude that she began to cry. “No one has ever given me *anything* like this,” she said, in a joy-filled, teary expression of real gratitude. God only knows how this simple act of kindness toward a courageous woman worked along with other such acts on the part of caring counselors and staff to encourage and confirm her wise choice to be a mother to her unborn child.

### Joy Across Oceans

Our personal experience with adoption wasn't directly related to a “crisis pregnancy.” Our daughter, Phoebe, was born during the era of the one-child policy in China, when baby girls were considered “expendable.” We can only imagine the heart-wrenching decision on the part of her birthparents to abandon her in a crowded railway station in hopes that she would be found by authorities and taken to an orphanage.

It was the culmination of a nearly two-year process which brought us to that orphanage in Fuzhou, in Fujian Province, in the spring of 1996 to adopt a 5-year-old daughter of the Middle Kingdom and begin the process of watching her grow into the woman she is today, some 25 years later.

We spent 10 days in Fuzhou getting her Chinese passport produced (a process which was greatly facilitated by the adoption agency we worked with, and which takes the normal Chinese citizen two months to complete), then flew to Guangzhou to obtain the papers from the U.S. consulate, which would allow her to leave China and return with us to the U.S. Below is an excerpt from the diary I kept during our trip which relates our experience at the U.S. customs and immigration in-processing station after we returned to San Francisco:



Phoebe, age 5.

*When our turn to be processed through the line arrives, I place Phoebe up on the desk so she can watch the man putting images using inked rubber stamps into her Chinese passport as he looks through the packet of documents sealed at the American Consulate in Guangzhou. As he works, this tall man in his early thirties with a completely shaved head speaks to her in Chinese. I see her smile as she turns and points to me in response to his first question, smile again as she turns and points to wife, Lois, and smile a third time and turn as she points to our 8-year-old son (her new older brother, who accompanied us to China).*

*“Where did you learn Chinese?” I query. “In school,” he says.*

*“What did you just ask her?” I can’t believe that he’s gotten a much more visible response from her than from anyone I saw in China who attempted to engage her in conversation.*

*“I asked her where her daddy was, where her mommy was, and where her brother was. Welcome home.”*

## Our Stories



*Phoebe, present day.*

**Editor's Note:** Phoebe's father Pat has served in every official capacity on the FFL Board and remains an active Board member.



# \$5,000

"There must be a remedy for such a crying evil as this. But where shall it be found, at least where begin, if not in the complete enfranchisement and elevation of woman?"

**GIVE NOW:** [feministsforlife.org/support](https://feministsforlife.org/support)

*Karen Campbell*

## **From Broke, to Baby, to Bounty**

I had just graduated from college and was doing my student teaching when I found out I was pregnant. My boyfriend and I were jobless and broke, but we were determined to make a family from our "surprise." Forty-six years later, we have the most amazing daughter imaginable. She is a gifted pianist and cellist, homeschools her four children, teaches piano and art, and is kind and compassionate. After all these years, we still cannot believe she is ours! We also have five sons and 15 grandchildren! We are blessed beyond what we ever dreamed possible!



*Karen pictured with her daughter, Mollie, as an infant and today.*



Mary Jost

## Changing a Heart, Saving a Life

Volunteering at a pregnancy help center, you meet all types of people, many of whom are scared and not sure what to do about their unwanted/unplanned pregnancies. One such story comes to the mind of Martha Malone, our Assistant Director at Focus Pregnancy Help Center, located at 135 University Avenue, in Rochester, New York. We are located across the street from our local Planned Parenthood.

One time, Martha was approached by a client. This woman recognized Martha from an episode a couple of years before when Martha was praying out in front of Planned Parenthood. This client was running down the street late for her abortion. When she said this, Martha told her, “*Not today.*” Needless to say, these words, which the woman remembered, changed her life and the life of her child forever. Martha took her back to Focus and explained the other life-saving options for her and her unborn child. She would explain that we are there to help with the things that are needed to help with raising these children, because we have so many generous donors who give us money for formula, diapers, and many other items needed for these children. We also get used and new clothing and items from donors for children and the whole family. Most important, she would also set up an appointment for her to have an ultrasound, which shows the moms and sometimes the dads (when they are involved) that their child is indeed alive within the mom.

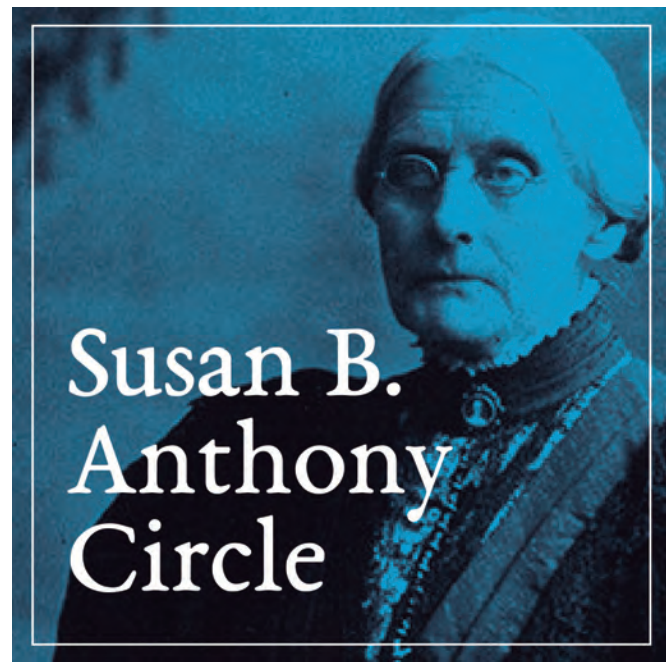
Whatever it was that did it, this mom changed her mind and went on to have this child, thank God.



*Martha Malone, at the Focus Pregnancy Help Center, in Rochester, New York—home of Susan B. Anthony.*

So on this day that Martha met this woman for a second time, she had this little boy, who was about 2 years old, with her. The client declared, “His life was saved that day!” Thanks to Martha’s insistence, the life of this child—and possibly his 1-year-old brother, who was also with them on this day—was saved. This is something that we as volunteers at the pregnancy help center thrive on.

We are so thankful to be able to get people to realize that this fetus is indeed a child, and to change their minds about aborting them. We know that, at this time, not only are we not able to save every child due to people not wanting to know that these fetuses are indeed alive, but also because there are many who know this but don’t care. We are here for them and will continue for the sake of these children, their moms, and their families. God bless all involved in this endeavor.



# \$10,000

“...sweeter even than to have had the joy of caring for children of my own has it been to me to help bring about a better state of things for mothers generally, so that their unborn little ones could not be willed away from them.”

**GIVE NOW:** [feministsforlife.org/support](https://feministsforlife.org/support)

## Our Stories

Melissa Ohden

### From Abortion Survivor to Thriver

The first time I spoke publicly about my experience as an abortion survivor was with Feminists for Life. Little could I have known that all of the stomach upset I thought I had from public speaking, was actually Olivia, developing in the womb. I'm so grateful this is part of her life story and mine. She's grown up now in the pro-life movement, fallen asleep at my feet at podiums, cradled fetal models from her youngest age, marched at marches, and is a fervent fighter for women and children, born and unborn.



*Survivor of a saline infusion abortion at approximately 31 weeks gestation, Melissa Ohden (left), with her daughter, Olivia, at the March for Life 2020.*

*FFL Board Chair & Speaker Kara Sorenson*

### Unexpected Aunt, Unexpected Joy!

When I was a freshman in high school, my two older sisters became pregnant six months apart from each other. One was 17 and a senior in high school; the other was 19 and a freshman in college. It was two unexpected discoveries one right after the other, and a huge shock to my family. They were met with support and love from their parents, as well as resources to get them the help they needed to finish school.



When my two nieces were born, I was overwhelmed with joy. I was even more grateful for the gift of their lives, because I knew how easily it could have been a different outcome. My vibrant, beautiful, smart, and loving nieces are now 10. Their mothers are both college graduates and very successful in their careers. One sister is now married and added another baby girl to the family three years ago. The journey down the road of single parenthood is not an easy one, but it's always worth it. I wouldn't trade those years for anything, and I'm looking forward to being a part of my nieces' future graduations, accomplishments, and the families they will build one day.

*Editor's Note: Kara interned at FFL the summer of 2016 and now serves as Chair of the Board.*

*Dr. Ingrid Skop*

### Thousands of Memories

In the past 29 years, I have delivered about 5,000 babies! I have the best job ever. And I have given birth to my own three children. I am so blessed!



Donna Lou Shickel

## Charity Means Love

When our older son, Daniel, was only 5, we decided to “adopt” a needy family for Christmas. We chose a family with a little boy his own age who only wanted one Ertl farm toy—a tractor—and Daniel was excited because he had nearly the entire collection of miniature replicas. We asked him to contribute an amount from his piggy bank, and he ran back to his room, came to us, and emptied his entire savings of allowance, birthday, and report card money. We said, “Sweetheart, you don’t have to give it all! Just give something, and we will add to it.” Daniel said, “Oh no, I have all ’dese tractors and that lit-tle boy doesn’t have any! I want him to have all the ones I have!” In tears, we accepted his gift and bought every one we could find.

His little brother, Derek, then 3, followed his big brother’s example. They were filled with the true joy of Christmas as they shopped for this little boy they never met. Neither boy ever thought another thing of it. It was just the right thing to do in their minds. But we will never forget it. It was a lesson to all of us that “leftovers” are not what we are to give, but rather abundance, with the heart of a child.



Katherine Beck Johnson

## Strong Women Raise Strong Women

I found out I was pregnant on Halloween. My husband knew the results of the test based on the swiftness of my run up the stairs. We were both thrilled and so thankful. I saw my daughter’s heartbeat a few weeks later, and it was so surreal to see the heartbeat of my child. I proudly showed everyone pictures of my eight-week sonogram. While my pregnancy was difficult, my husband and I eagerly awaited our daughter’s birth and spent our quarantine building her nursery. We met our daughter on July 9, 2020, and my world continued to change for the very best. We named her for two of the strongest women I know: my mother, Carol, and St. Lucy. My daughter’s personality is the exact same one year later as she was in the womb: incredibly active, pushing the boundaries, never sleeping, and so very sweet. Caroline Lucy has more personality than just about anyone I have ever met. She is perpetually smiling, and her deep belly laugh is my favorite sound in the world. My daughter showed me that I’m stronger than I ever believed and love more selflessly than I thought I could. She is without a doubt our world.



**Editor’s Note:** Katherine interned at FFL the summer of 2013.



*Becky in the hospital just after giving birth to her son Blake in October 1999.*



*Blake at 6 months old.*



*Blake and Becky when he was around 2 years old.*



*Blake's senior picture.*



*Blake in his dress blues after graduating from Marine boot camp in September 2019.*



*Family picture of Becky with her husband, Obie, and their eight children in August 2020.*



*Blake in August 2020.*



## Love Them Both, and Love Them All!

I'm a mother of eight (five by birth, three by adoption). For most of my children, their impending arrival filled me with joy and anticipation, but that was not the case with my first.

I was in high school, and I hadn't even set the test down when those two lines immediately appeared—an undeniably positive pregnancy test. My initial reaction was anger, followed by resolve. I was so mad at myself for letting this happen, but I knew exactly what I needed to do. I completely bought into the belief (lie) that children are a burden, hindering us from achieving anything, so I quickly scheduled an abortion to eliminate this “problem.”

I was probably one of the worst types of pro-choicers because I wasn't ignorant: I knew abortion killed an innocent human, but I didn't care. My life was more important.

During the mandatory “counseling,” the woman speed-read through a required script, never once asking about my situation, offering parenting resources, or bringing up adoption. It was clear that she wanted to get through it as quickly as possible, get paid, and move on to the next woman.

But I didn't end up going through with it.

After considering adoption, I decided to parent. Thankfully, someone shared parenting resources with me, and for that, I'll always be grateful. These helped me stay in school, and I ultimately achieved every single one of my goals.

Despite choosing life, I remained steadfastly pro-choice for nearly 10 years. It took a long time to realize how harmful my belief that life is a hierarchy was. But slowly, thanks to maturity, humility, and a pro-life movement that became one of compassion rather than condemnation, my heart and mind changed, and I became a passionate defender of life.

Fast forward to today...

After earning my bachelor's in math and teaching math for a decade, I became a stay-at-home mom. My husband adopted my son, and we went on to welcome four biological children and three adopted children. Our oldest, whom I nearly aborted, is currently a Marine and a college student in his 20s. I pray none of my children is fooled by society's lies like I was.

Now, I try to help dispel the many myths that surround abortion. I spread the truth that abortion is not empowering, and we don't need it to be equal.

I share the many parenting resources and post-abortion healing organizations available. And I encourage women to make nonviolent decisions when facing an unplanned pregnancy.

I've been told that I can't be a feminist and pro-life, that these are contradictory ideas, but I believe the opposite is true. I can't claim to be a feminist, while supporting the killing of women in the womb. I can't fight for women's rights, while ignoring their right to life. Feminism is about equality, but equality is the antithesis of abortion. Abortion pits mother against child, clearly stripping rights away from the unborn child. Pro-life ideology values both and works to meet the needs of both.



## Our Stories

Caroline Jarboe

### They Grow Up Way Too Fast!!

Today, on the hot D.C. day I'm writing, I had to get up extra early to take my son down to Union Station. He was catching an early Amtrak train to New York, for a long-promised trip with summer camp friends, and my husband was already at work. Not a morning person, I managed to throw on a wrinkled dress and bolt a cup of coffee on the way out the door. But I did not have to drive, because my son, who is 17, took on the task of doing it for me.

That's been one of the unexpected joys of motherhood for me—in a pop culture that drones on and on about mothers who are always exhausted by doing “everything,” and how they deserve “wine time” in recompense, I've been amazed to see how independent and resilient my son has become.

Just this summer, he's started a business, and more than once, I've heard him sorting out his weekly schedule on the phone with his clients. He's perfected making his own grilled dinners with a best friend back home from college, and he's come around to the practice of keeping his bed made daily.

I wish he enjoyed reading more, but his occasional pithy allusions to *The Great Gatsby* and Thomas Aquinas make me happy he hasn't totally disregarded all the piles of secondary school reading.

We switched places in the car when he got out, and, with little traffic outside at that hour of the morning, I watched him disappear through the great brass doors of the terminal as though it were something he'd done daily. He was trustworthy, and while his father and I would miss him, I knew that he was ready. □

**Editor's Note:** Caroline serves as both Content Editor and Copy Editor for The American Feminist.



## Feminists for Life Giving Circles

Honor the  
legacy of our  
foremothers.

In the tradition of our feminist foremothers, Feminists for Life continues to work toward justice and equal rights for all people.

We seek to fulfill the unrealized vision of Susan B. Anthony and other first wave feminists who envisioned a better day for women through better circumstances.

Help us address a poverty of spirit, reclaim feminism, and raise expectations in schools and in the workplace, along with paternal support.

Imagine what your support can accomplish, because Women Deserve Better®.

# Advocacy in Action

February 17, 2021: FFL President Serrin M. Foster renewed work with Rep. Jeff Fortenberry's office about **Care for Her** (H.R. 5163), a comprehensive bill focused on resources and support for pregnant and parenting women. Contact your member of Congress, and tell her or him to co-sponsor Care for Her today!



April 27, 2021: FFL contacted our New York supporters to inform them about **A5499/S470, an anti-choice, anti-woman bill that would have crippled pregnancy resource centers** with unnecessary paperwork, and we urged them to tell their legislators to vote against it. Although the bill made it as far as the Assembly floor, it did not receive any votes by the end of the legislative session, a **VICTORY for pro-woman, pro-life advocates.**

June 29, 2021: FFL endorsed Rep. Chris Smith's effort to **codify the Hyde Amendment into law as the Smith Amendment.** Pro-life members of the U.S. House continued "Eighteen Days for H.R. 18," an initiative to permanently retain the Hyde Amendment. The Smith bill would make permanent and government-wide the Hyde Amendment, which prevents federal taxpayer dollars from being used to fund most abortions.

July 24, 2021: FFL urged supporters to tell their members of Congress to support the **Candidates Afforded Dignity, Equality, and Training, or CADET, Act of 2021** (S.2376), a bipartisan bill put forward by Sens. Ted Cruz and Kirsten Gillibrand, which would ensure that students at military universities have the option to continue their education while also maintaining their parental rights.

July 27, 2021: FFL alerted supporters to **contact their members of Congress to vote to retain the Hyde Amendment.** Although the House voted to repeal the amendment, the Senate narrowly retained it, a **VICTORY for pro-woman, pro-life advocates.**

August 17, 2021: FFL asked supporters to tell their members of Congress to support the **Pregnant Workers Fairness Act** (S.1486), which is closely modeled on the ADA and would require employers to make reasonable accommodations to allow pregnant workers to continue working safely. It will ensure that employers with 15 or more employees provide reasonable accommodations that are often low-cost or no cost, unless it would pose an undue hardship to the employer.

September 23, 2021: FFL put out an alert to our supporters to tell their representatives **to vote against the so-called "Women's Health Protection Act"** (H.R. 3755), an extreme piece of legislation that would effectively strike down all federal and state anti-abortion laws, including conscience protections for medical professionals.

**Read FFL President Serrin M. Foster's op-ed, "Don't Underestimate Women," a strong message to the Supreme Court of the United States to focus on the ability of women, as it relates to the upcoming *Dobbs v. Jackson* case—a case that could possibly overturn *Roe v. Wade*.** Originally published by the *Washington Examiner*, you can also find it on our website: [feministsforlife.org/news](https://feministsforlife.org/news)

## Anthony and Stanton Cafe



## Menu of Opportunity

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Monthly donations **provide core support**

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**Send a kit to campus or (NEW!) a high school group**

MAIN COURSE - \$500-\$3,000\*

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FFL President Serrin M. Foster's landmark speech

One in a series recognized as a "Great Speech in History"  
in *Women's Rights*

### **"Victory Over Violence" or "Slaves Among Us: Sex Trafficking in the U.S."**

presented by FFL Speaker and rape survivor Joyce McCauley-Benner

### **"Find Your Assertive Voice" to recognize and prevent sexual harassment**

or **"Know Your Worth"**

trained by FFL National Operations Coordinator

Cynthia J. Wood, J.D.

or

### **FFL Pregnancy and Parenting Resource Forum<sup>SM</sup>**

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With your help, we can bring our message and solutions to more schools and communities.

With your support, Feminists for Life of America will accelerate our efforts to lead the renaissance of the first wave feminist movement to realize the unfulfilled vision of Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and others who envisioned better circumstances for mothers.

Uniquely qualified as *the* authority on pro-life feminist history and building on our accomplishments to educate and advocate for women, FFL provides a light in the darkness and a source of unity in a deeply divided era.

This school year, we need your help to get our materials, messages, and solutions out there—because women deserve better, and every child deserves a chance at life.

*\*Please contact [info@feministsforlife.org](mailto:info@feministsforlife.org) to donate travel.*

**Thank you for your patronage!**

\*Price of events depends on many variables for travel, such as booking date and size of the college. Includes materials for all attendees, step-by-step instructions, and promotional materials. Please allow us to work with the student group and campus to choose the event.

# Check out the latest from our helpsite, **WomenDeserveBetter.com!**



The Business Case for Breastfeeding  
Employed Mom Tips and Tricks: Moms to Moms  
How to Find a Job Despite Crisis, Chaos, and COVID!  
How to Ask About Compensation  
Find Help When You Can't Find a Job



Talking to Your College Counselors About Being Pregnant  
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6 Ways to Get Wi-Fi When You Don't Have Internet  
What Are Pandemic Pods, and How Could They Help Your Child's Education?  
6 Ways to Get a Free Car Seat

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How to Find Legal Help for Evictions and Foreclosures  
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11 Fun Feminist Halloween Costume Ideas  
6 Ways to Stay Safe While Celebrating the Holidays  
What to Do in a Power Outage in Winter  
7 Steps to Keep Your Home Winterproof  
How to Obtain Fuel Assistance Before Hot or Cold Weather  
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10 Tips to Stay Safe When Playing Outside in Winter



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*On the eve of Feminists for Life of America's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
we honor our co-founders: the late Cathy Callaghan (left) and Pat Goltz  
—and you.*

*Learn their story  
and what we were  
able to accomplish  
in the last half-century  
in the next special  
commemorative issue of  
The American Feminist.*

*We look forward to building on our success  
thanks to your continued support.*

