

Kelly
Banquet Testimonial
March 6, 2007

Good evening.

I am honored to be here where I can share my story, a story that began in July of 2000. I immediately knew the choices I had made the night before - to have sex with a man I had known for less than a month - would change my life forever. I didn't need a pregnancy test or another month of waiting in distress. I just knew I was pregnant - right then.

It's hard to explain the emotions I went through the weeks following, but I can only say that I had one conclusion - - - and that was to abort my unborn child. I knew that my parents would be shocked and unsupportive. The father of my unborn child fled as though the responsibility was unbearable and denied any association with me.

Only two years earlier I was an athletic standout, participating in volleyball, basketball & track. It was me with a huge heart, motivation and the desire to achieve anything I set my mind to. I was active in Student Senate, National Honor Society & Future Leaders of America. I was also honored as homecoming queen in 1998.

My parents were very proud of me, as I proved time and time again that I was responsible and headed in the right direction.

Suddenly I was twenty years old and a sophomore in college. Now one of numerous HS standouts, I continued to offer that same competitive spirit and energy on the college court. I loved sports!

As a typical college student I had no steady income - & definitely, no education on pregnancy. I was afraid...afraid of what others would think of me.

During the fifth week of my pregnancy I went to the phonebook. I was looking up abortion agencies in the area and came along the ad for First Choice Clinic (AAA Pregnancy Center) at the time. I hadn't told anyone that I was pregnant nor did I plan to, until I saw their ad. I decided that hearing another's opinion might be the best thing for me. I was scared and just hoped that I didn't know anyone that worked at the clinic...because when your young image is everything - right??

I met Kay that day; she comforted me, let me cry, offered her advice and understood what I was going through. I decided to go back to the clinic with hopes of speaking to Kay again but she was busy that day. I was not willing to discuss my story again and risk tears, so I waited until she was available. Kay and the ladies at First Choice made the situation a little more manageable. With each moment I felt like my decision to terminate my pregnancy was changing.

The clinic offered services such as ultrasounds, health and nutrition education and most importantly the Earn While You Learn Program. In a matter of only a few visits I had made my mind up that this life living inside me is special. I decided that all my goals and dreams would be put on hold and reevaluated.

Today, I am twenty-six years old. I am currently employed by the Department of Homeland Security. In July of this year I will be taking my civil service entrance exam to pursue being a Federal Air Marshall. I also never gave up on my love for athletics. Over the past five years I have coached eight different volleyball programs, several acceleration camps and I am currently an assistant volleyball coach for Minnesota State University Moorhead. I was the first in my family to earn a Bachelor's Degree, which was only accomplished by the loving support of my family.

I truly believe that Jacina Marie is the best gift that God has ever given me. Jacina will be six on May 12th and she is the most personable child I have ever known. It is obvious that God has already blessed her in a special way.

As for Kay, she was the right person, in the right place, at the right time, a true answer to a prayer. I'll always be grateful for the gentleness of those at First Choice as they softened the world for me. If I ever need validation of God's love, proof was found through the people at FirstChoice Clinic.

In conclusion, if I could offer advice to women in a similar situation, it would be to give life. The happiness that comes along with a child is irreplaceable. Also, don't give up on your dreams. Find a support system and push through the tough times.

Lastly, form a relationship with God. Every time you have a choice to make, consult Him and ask Him what is the wise thing to do? From experience, I find that He gives me the right answer, time and time again.