



KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

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COLUMBIA





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JALEEN AND I MET in high school. After we got our associates degrees, we both came to the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Last March, a positive pregnancy test interrupted our life and plans. Our minds were racing with conflicting thoughts. How will we finish school? How could we afford a baby? We were afraid and did not know where to turn. I was also in denial, so I Googled the nearest place to get a test and ultrasound, so we would know for sure. The first place that came up was Her Choice.

When the day of our appointment arrived, we were emotional wrecks. We met with a nurse, Jan, and shared our story. The first thing we thought about was abortion. We feared judgment, but received grace, and Jan educated us

about the facts of abortion.

Then an ultrasound was done. He was too small to see, but we could hear a tiny heartbeat. I was like, “Wow!” It moved us in a different direction.

Jan prayed for us and gave us time to think. We asked God to lead our hearts and minds in his direction, and then called to schedule a second appointment — this time confirming our decision to choose life. Jan celebrated with us, and we discussed our plans to get married and raise our precious child. She also helped us to get the courage to tell our families, who were supportive and said they would be there for us while we finished school.

Zaden was born Nov. 19, and he brings so much joy to the family. They’re in love with him, and everyone

wants to hold him. Being a mom is such a blessing.

If not for Her Choice, our story may have had a much different ending. We are thankful to our friends there and to the Knights of Columbus who gave them the ultrasound machine. Actually hearing and seeing your unborn child makes such a big impact. It changes your perspective. Today, we smile at the future before us.

Zelia
Birmingham, Ala.

The ultrasound machine was placed at Her Choice Birmingham Women’s Center thanks to an October 2010 donation from the Alabama State Council.



TWO YEARS AGO, I found out I was pregnant, and I had a choice to make that was going to affect the rest of my life. I did not want to talk to anyone about my situation before I made a decision. I had heard about Women's Care Center from a friend, and I knew someone there could help me.

When it came time for an ultrasound, I did not know what to expect. I knew what an ultrasound looked like from media and pictures on the Internet, but it is something that you have to experience for yourself.

The only way I can describe it is that it changed me in the blink of an eye. The moment I saw my child on the big screen in front of me, I knew I was going to be a mom. It did not matter what I had thought before — all that mattered was loving my child and caring about her safety. I saw her little feet and little arms. I heard her heartbeat as I watched her in front of me. I still have

the pictures of the ultrasound that were given to me that day — the day that changed my life forever.

I am still attending college and will keep striving to make a great life for my daughter. Women's Care Center has been wonderful, and I have an amazing counselor. She gives me the best emotional support a person could ask for. I have learned so much and can pass that knowledge to women who may need to be informed. To women facing circumstances similar to mine, I would like to say: *Do not be afraid to ask for help. You are never alone.*

Lauren
South Bend, Ind.

The ultrasound machine was placed at Women's Care Center in South Bend thanks to a May 2012 donation from Notre Dame Council 1477.

“It changed me in the blink of an eye. It did not matter what I had thought before — all that mattered was loving my child and caring about her safety.”



I GREW UP in a conservative home — no premarital sex, no babies until marriage, and I believed in all of it. But at age 17, I found myself in an abusive relationship. The night he hit me, I left and went to the house of a friend, a man a few years older than me. I drank the pain away, so much that I blacked out. Fast forward six weeks. I missed my period and knew I had been raped.

When the pregnancy test was positive, all I could ask was how much an abortion pill cost. I was only 17 and was terrified of what my parents would think of me. My family would disown me and the police wouldn't believe me. But the counselor at A Better Choice reassured me that life is beautiful and my baby is a part of me. She helped me believe things were OK and that I wasn't alone.

When it came time for my first sonogram, it was an emotional moment, and I cried because I was terrified. Then the sonographer showed me the

baby's heartbeat, and I cried happy tears. The beating of the heart is what changed my mind completely. At that moment, I knew I needed this little human in my life. That first sonogram was an amazing experience — something I would never have expected in my entire life.

During my pregnancy, I struggled with depression. I got sick and lost 40 pounds. I didn't understand life anymore. After I gave birth, my baby also got sick and had to go back to the hospital. I realized then that her life depended on me, and she became my best friend. I'd do it all again for her.

Talya
Wichita, Kan.

The ultrasound machine was placed at A Better Choice, Wichita, thanks to a May 2012 donation from the Kansas State Council.

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“This big smile appeared on the screen, and I knew she was my Destiny. The Lord spoke to me that day through my unborn child’s smile, and for that I am forever grateful.”

I WAS A 28-YEAR-OLD MOTHER of two young girls when I suffered a miscarriage on Mother’s Day in 2016. I soon became pregnant again, but I feared another miscarriage and waited until I was 10 weeks to see my OB-GYN.

At my first trimester screening, the tech kept scanning and measuring the same area over and over. Because I work in the medical field, I instantly knew something wasn’t right. I was scheduled for an amniocentesis to rule out any genetic disorders. The results came back negative, and I was ecstatic to hear my baby girl was healthy.

Two weeks later, I received a call to go in for an emergency ultrasound with no explanation. The tech scanned me and then quickly left to get the geneticists on the line. The computer screen read:

“Positive for Noonan syndrome. Mother doesn’t know.” My world stopped. Then, as I walked out of the clinic the receptionist handed me an appointment card for an abortion.

As I decided what to do, my sister, Joann, arranged for me to have a 3D ultrasound done at Heartbeat of Miami. I remember praying to God on the ride there: “If you want me to bring this child into the world, just let me see her smile on that screen.”

After meeting the wonderful staff, I was taken to the ultrasound room. The moment the tech switched to the 3D setting and zoomed in, this big smile appeared on the screen and I knew she was my Destiny.

My mother and sister were by my side, and we all had tears of joy. The

Lord spoke to me that day through my unborn child’s smile, and for that I am forever grateful.

When Destiny was born, her lungs collapsed and she was whisked away to the NICU. I never even heard her first cries. But by the grace of God, she came home after 27 days and is now a healthy 2-year-old. She is such a blessing to our family.

Melissa
Miami

The ultrasound machine was placed at Heartbeat of Miami Pregnancy Help Medical Clinics thanks to an August 2015 donation from Juan Pablo II Council 14215 in Miami.