

Adoption Begins Pro-life Journey for Teen A Shared Passion for the Cause of Life

BY Joleigh Little

I came upon a treasure in my first year of teaching at a Christian school in northern Wisconsin. At first she seemed like any other teenager, trying to find her place in the world, more interested in friends than the grammar lessons I was trying to teach, and giving her parents the usual amount of grief.

Somehow in the midst of her grumbling over how much she didn't appreciate the tests I gave, I discovered that we had a shared passion for the cause of life. In fact, I soon learned, she wanted to dedicate her life to saving the vulnerable.

Her parents tattled during a parent-teacher conference and I somehow managed to drag the details out of her a few days later. Turns out the grumpy little cherub halfway back in the third row of my 9th and 10th grade English class would end up teaching me some important life lessons.

Tatiana's story begins in Honduras where she was born in August 1987. Her parents, Bill and Veronica Elowson, had tried to adopt previously, but their twins died before they could travel to Central America to pick them up.

That was pretty much the end of it for them, or so they thought. Friends back home adopted a little girl from Honduras. When they met her they melted and decided to try one more time. Tatiana, or as her friends call her, "Tot," came into their lives.

In many ways, her history has fueled Tot's pro-life beliefs.

"It has made it far more personal for me," she says. "I'm not usually inspired to do something on the emotional level, so I believe this was God's way of letting the issue really hit home for me, making it a heart issue and giving me a passion to fight for life."

Her parents have been very supportive of Tot's pro-life advocacy. Before she could drive, they served as her chauffeurs to Teens for Life meetings, rallies, and other events.

She laughs when asked about it. "At first they thought this was a phase I would outgrow after a year or so, but when they saw my involvement grow along with my passion, they were there every step of the way to support me. My dad has been so impacted by my stand that he has even spoken to groups about the pro-life issue. It's a great father-daughter duo we have started.

"Maybe we'll take it on the road."

Sadly, Tot's mom, Veronica, lost a battle with cancer a year ago. This too had a huge impact on Tot's view of the life issues.

"I learned to respect the beginning of life, and the end of life as well," she told me. "Euthanasia and assisted suicide are growing rapidly in America and it is our job to stop them! Because of the loss of my mom, I have seen the life issue from all angles and I plan to keep fighting for life at all stages."

Ironically, NRL News played a crucial role in one of Tot's best memories of her mom. Tot's picture had appeared in NRL News. Her parents, who are subscribers, kept the issue by Veronica's bedside in the hospital.

"She was so proud," Tot says of her mom. "In fact, I don't think she had ever been prouder of me than she was of that photo. She kept it by her side and showed it to every person that came in the room. 'This is my beautiful daughter,' she would say, and then she would tell them about how I am so actively involved in the pro-life movement."

"One night I was in her room and she had just gotten done talking with a nurse about the photo. She turned to me and said, 'Never stop fighting. You are fighting for all of us who can't fight for ourselves.' That statement changed my life. Because of my mom, I will never stop fighting for this issue."

Those of us who know Tot know this is true. She has advocated for the unborn and vulnerable for over five years now, a pretty serious chunk of her 19 years on the planet. And she has a few things to say on the role of youth in the Movement.

"As young people, we have the power to change hearts and minds and I think we need to realize that," she said. "People will listen to what we have to say. It's important that we speak for those who can't because if we don't, who will? We are the future of America, and as that future this is our full responsibility."

Her advice to young people, "Don't be afraid to get involved! Get educated on the issues and take a stand. Let it start in your home, then your church, then your community. Start a pro-life group and go around to churches telling people what you are doing for the cause. Every group you speak to will have someone who is touched by what you say, and if you can change even one person's heart you have done what you are called to do!"

Her advice to adults, "We are ready and willing to fight alongside you. We are here to carry on the work that you started. The greatest thing you can do for pro-life teens is to help them start a group in their area. Never underestimate the ability of a young person. You are shaping us to follow in your footsteps so let us learn from you. None of your efforts will go to waste!"

And finally, on the issue of how the pro-life movement has changed her, Tot had this to say:

"It has meant more than I can say! Every single state and national convention I have been to has changed my life and made me 10 times more passionate about the issue than I was before. (I never think that's possible until it happens again and again.) The people I have met are amazing. I know I CAN change the world because they do. The friends I have made through this movement are friends I will have for life. These are the people I will be fighting alongside for years to come, and this is the place I want to be for as long as I have a breath in me."

Veronica would be so proud!