

Joanne Ferster

Client Advocate

I was born and raised in Upstate New York, just three hours north of New York City. My dad and mom were educators and there were five children in our home. We lived modestly and regularly attended the Dutch Reformed Church where my parents were both involved in various ministries. Each summer from the age of 9 until 15, I attended a church camp for a week in the beautiful Adirondack mountains. It was there that I began to sense a desire to know God. I can still recall as a teenager, listening to one of our male counselors talk about Jesus as if he knew Him and I was fascinated. But I don't remember being asked if I wanted that same kind of relationship. Going home each year, I'd want to be a "good girl" and follow Jesus, but I didn't know how.

At age 16, I lost my virginity, and married the young man at age 19, yet a year later we were divorced. Making a fresh start, I completed my Associate's and Bachelor's degrees in speech pathology, and began practicing as a speech therapist in another area of NYS. All those years I was a good student and a dedicated professional, but I continued to make unhealthy choices with men. It became an addictive behavior as I seemed to be looking for validation and love in all the wrong places.

While on the job, I met and married my second husband. A few years later our family grew as we had two children just 2 years apart. We tightened our belts financially so that I could be a stay-at-home mom which I loved. But just a couple of years later, with a move and a new home, my husband left the three of us for another woman and moved to Florida.

Brokenhearted, I was forced to go back to work, and having to put my children in daycare just about crushed my spirit. Things were financially challenging to say the least. It was then that I examined my life and thought, "God must be punishing me for all of the years I made such terrible choices." Little did I know then that God had been using Christians He'd brought into my life, and then this painful experience, to draw me to Himself so that He could begin to work out healing and blessings, and to demonstrate to me the great love that only He can give to each of us.

At the suggestion of a Christian aunt and uncle, I visited a local Baptist church where I read of a divorce recovery class being offered. I knew I needed that and began attending, not realizing that God had much bigger plans

in mind. He was wooing me into a relationship with Him. A visitation team came to my home where they shared the gospel with me, and I readily accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord. I was 33 years old. Jumping right into church, I attended a new believers' class, the divorce recovery class, and even joined the choir. It was there where I met my husband, Ken, now of 38 years.

I am so grateful for the way the Lord has worked in my life, molding and shaping me into a vessel He can use for His service and for His honor and glory. He knew that my own experiences would help me to relate to many of the women who come through the doors of Daybreak LifeCare Center. Just as I thought I needed to attend church for the divorce recovery class, they may often believe that they are coming just for a pregnancy test and an ultrasound appointment, Yet God is drawing them in to hear the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ. Many, like me in the past, are making unhealthy decisions with men that have put them into difficult positions with their pregnancy.

As I share the gospel, I most often share my own testimony, being sure to tell them of the great love and forgiveness available through Christ. They, like me, need to realize that nothing in our past will prevent them from being accepted into God's family because Christ already took all our sins on the cross and removed them as far as the east is from the west. He wants to give us all new lives in Him, away from the old worldly ways, and into His family with a new nature and an eternal relationship with Him. This is all because of His love and grace. Daybreak provides for women much more than for their temporal and immediate needs. We offer comfort and hope through Jesus Christ, who alone gives healing, peace, joy, and a future that brings blessings and life abundantly.



If He did it for me, He is able to do it for them. **For nothing is impossible with God.** Luke 1:37

Daybreak Volunteer Client Advocate Application is here: daybreakcola.org/volunteer/volunteer-application/