**PROJECT RACHEL TESTIMONY**

By Jennifer C.

I carried a heavy burden on my heart for almost 10 years. No one tells you the shame, guilt, and self-hatred you will feel after having an abortion. No one tells you how you’ll feel like you’re keeping a horrible secret from the world. Most of all the inability to forgive yourself for the choice that you have made is devastating. I never knew just how bad those decisions would hurt.

During my 20’s I had 2 abortions. The time wasn’t right, the boyfriend wasn’t quite right, the circumstances weren’t right, nothing was right to bring a baby into this world. Or so I thought. It was legal, my friends supported me, and I truly thought that I would get the abortion and go right back to my life. Every year the date would come around on the day I had my abortion and I would weep with such sorrow. Not to mention the day the baby would have been born, I constantly would figure out how old they would be by now and compare them to other babies or children I would see. What color hair and eyes would they had? What kind of personality? What would their laugh sound like? All of these questions would cause deeply hurt emotions. What right did I have to not give an innocent unborn life a chance?

After I got married and had children of my own, the guilt grew stronger. How could God give me a healthy baby after what I had done? You would think the hurt would go away instead it just grew stronger. The shame consumed me and the un-forgiveness I felt toward myself was unbearable. That is about the time I found Rachel’s Vineyard. It saved my life. Rachel’s Vineyard gave me the opportunity to grieve for my lost children. It gave me the chance to share my story, to tell my innocent unborn babies how sorry I was that I chose not to keep them, and most importantly it gave me the ability to forgive myself. The relationship that surfaces with our Lord when you put such hurting individuals together is so profound. You’re with others who harbor the same feelings as you and want to find forgiveness. The love and support given to you at these retreats is remarkable. I thank God every day that I found Rachel’s Vineyard. It was an absolute necessity for me and my healing. I would encourage men and women who suffer from this devastating secret to surrender and attend Rachel’s Vineyard Retreats. Give yourself the chance to grieve for your unborn child and seek God’s help to face the pain. It changed my life.