



A Heart to Change...
THE STACI STEPHENS STORY

JANUARY 15, 1989 – MARCH 13, 2005

www.stacistory.com
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About Staci Stephens

Staci grew up in a Christian home but did not know the extent to which a personal relationship with God could be like. On January 18, 2004, she invited Christ into her heart and wanted Him to be the center of her life.



After January, it was like an explosion occurred within her. She was so hungry to know more about God. She spent any time she could reading her Bible, writing in her journal, and talking to others about her amazing Jesus. Staci was often seen with "I love Jesus" written on her hand or on her school notebooks. She was completely captivated by Him and wanted nothing more than to just know Him. Staci was so excited about spending time with Jesus that during her sophomore year she would joyfully get up every morning at 5:30 AM to spend an hour with Him before getting ready for school. Staci was so amazed at how Jesus died for her and provided her with so many undeserved blessings. She was in awe of his unconditional love and the sacrifice He had made just so she could be with Him.

Staci had a big heart. Ever since accepting Christ, Staci developed a big heart for God and a big heart for people. She said, "Everything I do is for the glory of God and I finally know the life that I've been missing." She overflowed with the love of Christ toward everyone she met. God chose a different path for Staci, one that didn't include marriage and children but instead, included bringing people all over the world to know Jesus Christ.

Staci had discovered a God who was alive and one she could talk to normally. He was not just a painting on the wall. Staci spread her knowledge of Jesus in a way that made people take notice.

It was in the morning of Sunday March 13, 2005 that Staci began her new life with Jesus in Eternity. She passed away from viral myocarditis. Myocarditis, or heart muscle inflammation, is usually caused by a viral infection that attacks the heart. This disease is characterized by

enlargement of the heart and poor function, leading to heart failure. Myocarditis causes death in 30-70% of children, depending on their age (worst in younger children less than 1 year of age). Diagnosis and treatment of Myocarditis has been slow to develop. Using scientific methods, the diagnostic approaches are now being developed and this will allow specific treatments to be invented, leading to better care and survival.

Her death was completely unexpected by everyone. Her parents took her to the hospital Sunday morning expecting the ER to give her fluids for her dehydrated body. Instead, within minutes of arriving at the ER, she had stopped breathing and the ER physicians were performing CPR trying to revive her. However, when Staci passed away that day, no one knew what God had in store for our beloved daughter, sister, granddaughter, cousin, niece, and friend.

When she died, everyone on campus had the opportunity to hear about a saving relationship with Jesus, just as Staci had desired. Months before her death, Staci was interviewed by Venture Media, telling her story of her relationship with God. Here's what she said in that interview about Jesus Christ:

*"I knew that he loved me and I knew that he was there,
but I didn't know that it was to this extent
that it could really impact your life."*

*"I think the most important thing I've learned was how
to really live my life and what I'm living for.*

*A lot of kids know that they are not living the right way
and if they will say something about it,*

you know they have

A Heart to Change."



In a personal journal entry shortly before her passing, Staci described her desire to go beyond herself and help others. She asked God for her own ministry on campus, not a copy of anyone else's. Little did she or any of us know what God had in store.



When word got out at school that Staci had died, hundreds gathered in the Media Center to grieve. Students, teachers, and counselors broke out in song, singing Mercy Me's "I Can Only Imagine" - Staci's favorite song. Others read excerpts from her journal, such as Psalm 73. Teachers and students led times of prayer. A number of friends put their faith in Christ after her death. One friend of Staci's gave his life to Christ stating that it was sad that Staci had to die in order for him to believe the truth.

The evening after her passing, over 800 students, teachers, and members of the community filled the school auditorium as six of her friends spoke about Staci's life and faith in God. One friend said, "Life is short - we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, what is unseen is eternal."

Staci's most attractive quality definitely was and still is that God's love shines through her. In every aspect of her life she was focused on His glory and her heart was that of a true servant. Her true joy came from working for the Lord and serving Him and that is and always will be a total encouragement to everyone. Not to mention how astonishing it is to see how God is using her still and giving her a unique ministry all her own, just like she asked. It's a true inspiration and a challenge to all of us to search our hearts and truly desire God's glory to be supreme over all. She came to us from Heaven and helped us to grow closer to our Father than we could have ever imagined. God has really blessed us with her presence in our life in every way, shape, and form.

In the midst of Staci's death, God brought forth life in other people. One of the last entries Staci wrote in her journal a couple days before she died was from **Psalm 73:25-26**:

*Whom Have I in Heaven but You?
And Earth has nothing I desire but You
My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.*

In her journal for a school class she defined tragedy as someone dying without knowing Christ. She wanted to help all her peers to have a relationship with God. Staci wrote:

A photograph of a spiral-bound notebook with a light-colored cover. The notebook is open, and the page is filled with handwritten text in cursive. The text defines tragedy as someone dying without knowing Christ and expresses a desire to help others have a relationship with God.

Tragedy: something that happens that is really bad. I feel that a tragedy is someone who dies and is not saved (no relationship with God). That is an eternal consequence. It is a tragedy to me that they do not get to spend eternity in Heaven. It is a tragedy that they got too wrapped up in the world to recognize their need for Christ. It is a tragedy the way they have to be like that forever.

In a letter to friends and family sent out for Christmas 2004, Staci recapped her past year: *"This has been the most life-changing year I have ever experienced. On January 18, 2004, I was reborn and found my Savior Jesus Christ at a conference put on by Student Venture . . . in Cocoa Beach. Since then, I have dropped my old ways of living and have completely given myself to Christ. My life has been changed for eternity and now everything that I live for makes sense and I don't have to fill my heart with worldly things anymore. I am completely satisfied and Christ has filled every little void in my life. Through Him, I have learned so much about myself and have been able to let go of so many things. Everything I do is*



for the glory of God and I finally know the life I have been missing. There was a hole in my soul and I was trying to fill it with every little thing but the very one who can heal it. Jesus Christ is my best friend, my helper and teacher, and most importantly, my loving God."



Staci's favorite Bible verse was Romans 8:38-39:

And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from His love. Death can't, and life can't. The angels can't, and the demons can't. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, and even the powers of hell can't keep God's love away. Whether we are high above the sky or in the deepest ocean, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The video that you are about to see further describes the life of Staci Stephens and all God has done through her life. We hope and pray that the Lord continues to use this special girl's radiant passion for Jesus in the lives of all who hear her story.

Student Venture

Student Venture is the high school outreach of Campus Crusade for Christ International. Student Venture's passion is teenagers, and their vision is to give every student the chance to know Christ and send them to reach their world and help build a relationship with God. This is done through Student Venture Field Teams living in the community and building campus movements of evangelism and discipleship on a local campus (High Schools). Field Workers connect with the students, perform outreaches, win students to Christ, build and equip them in their faith, and send them to share Christ with others. Students have the opportunity to be involved and led through weekly meetings, small group discipleship, training, annual conferences, and overseas mission trips. To learn more about visit— www.studentventure.com.

For those campuses without direct field workers, we provide the Student Venture Coaching Center. **The Coaching Center** utilizes the Internet and phone coaching to help local leaders do the same things a field team would do if they were at your school. This allows for even more local communities to be impacted through the strategies and resources of Campus Crusade for Christ. You can contact the Coaching Center via the Web at: www.gocampus.org.

Campus Crusade for Christ is responsible for capturing Staci's Story on film. This video has been and will continue to be shown nationally and internationally to many individuals and organizations. This story depicts Staci's life as a Christian, shows clips of her short life, and the benefits of living with Jesus Christ as Your Savior. Additionally, the video is available for viewing on her website— www.stacistory.com.



The Staci Stephens Fund, Inc.

A NON-PROFIT 501(c) 3 ORGANIZATION

- ▶ Staci became active in Student Venture after attending an outreach to upcoming freshman cheerleaders and football players. She was 14 years old and a freshman at Timber Creek High School located in Orlando, Florida, a public school of over 3300 students.
- ▶ Staci accepted Christ on January 18, 2004, at the Student Venture Fastbreak Conference in Cocoa Beach and Staci was rebaptized on January 15, 2005 (her sixteenth birthday) at the Fast Break Conference in Cocoa Beach.
- ▶ Staci was very active with Student Venture and was known on campus as a Christian leader. She was a member of Student Venture's Servant Team, and helped plan meetings, outreaches, and activities.
- ▶ As of February 2006, the Staci Stephens Scholarship Fund has given out twenty-eight scholarships.

To honor her memory and Staci's passion for the Student Venture program, her parents, Barry and Kristen Stephens have established *The Staci Stephens Fund, Inc.*, a tax-deductible 501(c) 3 non-profit organization. A portion of the contributions made to this fund will go towards camps and conferences such as the life-changing conference Staci attended. The fund will help those who may not be able to cover conference costs, for those who are not yet Christians, but are willing to attend, or have a unique need to attend the conference.



Additionally, a portion of the donations received will help support the laboratory of Jeffrey Towbin, MD who is a leader in research on viral myocarditis. Other than flu-like symptoms immediately preceding Staci's death, there were no outward signs that anything serious was wrong. One thing that we learned after Staci's death was that viral myocarditis has a remarkably high mortality rate. However,

we are confident that further research will lead to better treatment and prevention of this group of diseases, thereby decreasing the number of families who will experience a devastating loss like ours. To learn more about Dr. Towbin, visit—<http://www.texaschildrenshospital.org/>

STATISTICS OF WWW.STACISTORY.COM AND
A HEART TO CHANGE —THE STACI STEPHENS STORY DVD

A Heart to Change DVD

- ▶ As of January 2006, over 2800 DVDs have been passed out to high school students at Timber Creek High School, University High School, and other local area schools. One father said, "Thank you for the video, our whole family watched it. That video has changed my daughter's life." Another Muslim boy and his father watched the video and wept through it.
- ▶ The DVD is being shown worldwide in countries where Campus Crusade Staff are stationed as missionaries and is used in numerous speeches and outreaches throughout the world.
- ▶ Over 7000 Youth leaders around the country will receive copies of her DVD.

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- ▶ Number of rededications (with email): 260
- ▶ Total emails received : 924
- ▶ First Time Acceptance of Christ (with email): 148
- ▶ People who have indicated decisions for Christ: 1346
- ▶ Total visitors: 26053
- ▶ Number of countries that have visited www.stacistory.com: 114
- ▶ Top Countries that have visited www.stacistory.com: United States, India, Australia, Sweden, UK, Canada, Malaysia, South Africa, and Singapore.

TO DONATE TO THE THE STACI STEPHENS FUND

PLEASE SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

The Staci Stephens Fund, Inc.
PO BOX 130
Christmas, Florida 32709-0130

or online at:

www.stacistephens.com

For more information on Campus Crusade for Christ, Student Venture, how to attend the conference, and other ways to be involved, check out these websites:

www.stacistory.com

www.stacistephens.com

www.studentventure.com

www.svorlando.com

www.gocampus.org

www.meant4more.com



Inspiration Emails

► This story has touched my life. I know really God has a purpose for everything and I desire that everyone who reads this story will get the message to spend eternity in heaven by giving and living for God.

► I cry every time I view Staci's video. I held this beautiful child in my arms when she was only a baby. Staci's love for Our Lord was no surprise! Her death opened the eyes of so many young people and continues to do so. Thank you Jesus for giving us 16 years.

► I just wanted you to know that I had tears welling in my eyes watching the video of Staci and friends. I live in Australia and want you also to know that she is impacting, not only her immediate surroundings, but the entire globe!!! As I discovered, from the Global Media Outreach email that I received (or rather, God showed me) earlier and disregarded - this Web site for Staci!!! At first I wasn't going to enter into it, but something drew me in??? Even though I am a Christian, I still had my doubts about the whole thing, but continued on knowing that something was different about this! I don't know Staci and never did, but I do know that God wanted me to see and read this...so I did! I have never been so moved in all my life!!! I want to thank you for this opportunity, because it has allowed me to express my gratitude for this life-changing event! I just want you to know that although Staci is gone physically, she is still working miracles!



► I just want to say that I think what you're doing is incredible; Staci's Story had me trembling with tears rolling down my cheeks. What an amazing person she was. It made me realize I want to leave my mark, I want people to realize whom I stand for and that's Jesus Christ, our savior.

► I always have believed in Christ. I just have never felt close to him...like how Staci felt before Christ became her main priority. I want him to fill that empty space in my heart. It grows bigger and bigger each day. I am ready to let him control my life. I put my trust in Christ now.

► Sometimes life is just overwhelming and I just want you to know that Staci's story and her testimony have encouraged me today in so many ways! We serve an AWESOME GOD! Who will always provide and will always be there...just thought I would say "Thanks!" for sharing the story, because it encouraged me in my walk with Christ! Thank You.



► I just want to say that Staci has touched me and I now want to put all my earthly things behind me and focus my whole life on GOD and live my life the way GOD intends me to live it as now I know life is too short to muck around and store up earthly things which we don't need and don't count in Heaven. I hope that by her story many more hearts will be touched and more lives will be brought to GOD.

► Thank You for the *Heart to Change* video. Our local high school in Gainesville, Florida showed it during our Fellowship of Christian Athletes/Student Venture meeting. The students were so amazed at what a life

surrendered really looked like, and how much God can use it. Most schools in the Gainesville area do not have ministries penetrating their campuses.

► I saw the *Heart to Change* video earlier this year and was so compelled by it. I was on my way home after watching the video and I had to pull over because I was so moved. I had never experienced God so personally and intimately in my life. I made a decision that night to completely surrender every part of my life, and to yield it to whatever God called me to do. I desperately want to be used by Him in such a powerful way.

PLEASE EMAIL YOUR COMMENTS OF THIS DVD AND BOOKLET TO:

stacistormom@yahoo.com
stacis_story@yahoo.com

Donations or comments can be mailed to:

The Staci Stephens Fund, Inc.
P.O. Box 130
Christmas, Florida 32709-0130

or can be made online at:
www.stacistephens.com

*Thank You so much for your interest in our daughter, Staci. She is forever in our hearts and we hope she has touched yours and created within you **A Heart to Change...***

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