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To: Soura, ChristianChristianSoura@gov.sc.gov
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Subject: Featured in TIME Magazine

Dear Christian,

Today, AUL's President and CEO Dr. Charmaine Yoest was one of just 16 national leaders featured in a TIME magazine piece on thankfulness, along with First Lady Michelle Obama, Pastor Rick Warren, House Majority Leader John Boehner, and World Series Champion David Ortiz of the Boston Red Sox. I wanted to be sure you had a chance to see it, so Charmaine's Thanksgiving reflections are shared below.

I have a weakness for the time-travel movie genre. So for my birthday recently, we went to see About Time, the movie about a young man who uses his ability to travel in time to fix past mistakes. However, fan though I may be of the fantasy, I'm truly grateful I don't have the ability to travel back in time. I'm thankful that my life has not turned out as I would have planned. I've made a lot of optimistic lists in my life. Yet some of my most precious memories include sorrow and even regret. I wonder, if given the opportunity to fix my mistakes and "perfect" my past, what joys would I have missed?

I'm thankful for the unplanned, the unexpected, the discoveries and the revelations that make up an authentic life, as the road taken reveals rich satisfactions that are unknowable in our youth. I'm thankful for failures that teach us to forgive and to accept forgiveness, ultimately leading us to seek and find redemption.

My life is imperfect, full of chaos and the unexpected. A chance encounter with an old friend on the street led to a job I love. I cried from loneliness on the way home from the event where, unknowingly, I met my husband. Even in that brief moment of despair, my future was unfolding in front of me. Life is like that.

So many plot twists. I could not even have envisioned the adventure of parenting five endlessly fascinating, and frustrating, children. They are, of course, perfect, albeit messy – that I will concede. Five new narratives, each one a page-turning cliffhanger I would give a whole life to read.

I surely wouldn't have chosen cancer for me, or my husband. But through sickness and sorrow, I found healing, unknown friendships and depths of love.

We cannot plan our future completely because, given the choice, we would take the too easy path. The light needs the dark, as do we. Our desire for perfection is a deep yearning, and I'm thankful it draws us to persist, to push onward and upward.

I do not have a map of where that journey may take me. What I do have is a center that holds, anchored in a keen and often raw reality. That's the place where we learn truth and grow to see beauty. I've learned that I need not fear "the unknown morrow." Life is not perfect. But it is lovely. I do not have what I planned. But I have immeasurably more than I could have asked for or imagined. For that, I'm thankful.

-Charmaine Yoest, Americans United for Life

The entire piece is available [here](#).

Our story of thankfulness at AUL is a journey you have shared with us. As we continue to accumulate victories and advance a culture of life in America, we are especially thankful for your friendship, support and dedication.

Thank you for your continued partnership in saving lives and defending women from the destruction of abortion. We hope you enjoy a blessed Thanksgiving with your loved ones.

Until all are welcomed in life and protected in law,

Jeanneane Maxon
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