



COLLABORATING TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

FALL 2015 NEWSLETTER

Stepping Up to Meet the Needs of More Survivors

LifeWay Network is having an incredibly busy and productive year!

Earlier this year, our partnership with Covenant House New York resulted in the opening of Aspire Home for women survivors of human trafficking, ages 18-24. Focused on an empowerment-based framework, we work with the young women to be a consistent, compassionate, supportive presence in their lives, offering hope so that they can become young women who are strong, connected and free.

By the late fall of 2015, we expect to open the doors of our second long term safe home, LifeWay House 2, which will provide housing and services to a further eight women survivors. This will step-up the number of beds available in the housing program to twenty five.

Together with the amazing support of our donors and partners, we are stepping up to the next level to serve more survivors, and to impact more of our community by expanding our education program. We are continuing to make a difference.

Sr. Joan S. Dawber, SC
Executive Director

Staff Comings and Goings

During the past year, LifeWay has experienced staff changes, particularly as we add new staff and expand our programs.

Staff members Barbara McMurray (Programs) and Joanne Antun (Development) have moved on to other pursuits. We have welcomed new, talented staff: Lima James (Education & Training), Jennifer Bailey (Safe Housing Program), and Emily Waters (Operations). We welcome them to the LifeWay team!



Sr. Joan Dawber presenting the Freedom Award to Sheryl WuDunn at LifeWay's 'Event Towards New Life' May 2015

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(As of September 1, 2015)

Education Program

Our Education Program consists of educational events, presentations, and volunteer engagement to spread the word about the crime of human trafficking. Labor trafficking, sex trafficking, and child trafficking are happening globally, nationally, and right here in New York State.

Our goal is to raise awareness, deepen understanding, create change in mindsets, and educate the public. We deliver educational workshops to middle schools, high schools, colleges and universities, parishes, community organizations, service providers, and more. To date, the education program has reached over 7,300 people.

We want to share with you some of our recent activities:

Educational Workshops & Events

During the Spring, LifeWay, in conjunction with Cabrini Action & Advocacy Coalition, undertook an Education & Service Learning Project with St. Raymond's Boys High School in the Bronx. Over the course of six sessions, 84 boys were educated about human trafficking and its realities in NYS. The boys received education from LifeWay, and had the opportunity to do hands on work assisting with the Cabrini Closet for survivors of trafficking.



April was a busy month for LifeWay! LifeWay co-sponsored two conferences to raise awareness about human trafficking. "Slavery No More – Breaking the Supply Chains of Human Slavery", co-sponsored with CRC-STOP (Coalition of Religious Congregations to Stop Trafficking of Persons) at Manhattan College, and "Migration, Trafficking, & Freedom", with the College of Mount Saint Vincent. LifeWay also participated in an educational session for students and faculty of Fordham University's Peace & Justice Studies.

In July, LifeWay educated Catholic Charities' staff and youth from their Summer Youth Employment Program about human trafficking. Over 150 youth and several staff members working with the youth were provided information about the various forms of human trafficking, including labor trafficking.

Our Strength = Our Volunteers

- A LifeWay volunteer organized an event to premiere the movie 'SOLD' (based on the book by Patricia McCormick), and invited us to participate in a panel discussion which included its Academy Award-winning director, Jeffrey Brown. The theater in Connecticut where it was held was sold out, and 170 persons left educated about human trafficking.
- Five students from the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Manhattan spent some of their summer vacation time helping to create an educational table top display for our events.

Be sure to visit LifeWayNetwork.org, and follow us on social media to learn about upcoming education events!

Safe Housing Program

We are having an amazing year in our Safe House Programming, which includes the additions of *Aspire Home* and the preparations to open *LifeWay House 2*! We are consistently amazed by the generosity of our supporters who give to LifeWay Network so that we may continue to change lives!

Some of our *LifeWay House* highlights so far this year:

- One resident is working full time, while beginning the search for housing upon her discharge from the program.
- One resident has also secured full time employment and though she has significant challenges in literacy, our volunteers have been providing her with as much remediation as scheduling permits.
- One resident is working part time and was granted her T-Visa. She has completed remedial preparatory classes and has been accepted into college.
- We have celebrated many birthdays, and a variety of holidays specific to the religions and countries from where our women originate. We have also enjoyed the milestone of several women leaving us and going to live independently. Although we miss them, we are thrilled with these healthy transitions!



LifeWay House Women Celebrating Their Cultural Holidays and Traditions

We have established a small college fund, made possible by our generous donors, and are thrilled to be able to fund college courses for some of our women. We see their hopes and dreams come to fruition every day, which is especially impactful when remembering the horrors they have suffered.

We are also working on making *LifeWay House 1* more of a home! A beautiful garden has been planted in the backyard for the summer. We continue to have weekly house meetings and enjoy movie nights together. Some of our women attended a benefit concert at St. Ignatius Loyola this spring for LifeWay Network.

And in our partnership with Covenant House New York, *Aspire Home* welcomed its first residents in the Spring of 2015. When filled to capacity, *Aspire Home* will provide housing for seven to ten women survivors.



Latest News: LifeWay House 2

We're close to opening the doors of our second long-term transitional safe house for women survivors in the next few months. The lease was signed, keys are in hand, and we have started working to create the warm and welcoming home for the women who will reside with us there!

The generous parishioners at St. Gabriel's Parish in the Bronx have gotten us off to a great start by donating beautiful linens that will be much appreciated by all.

If you would like to help us set up this new home, please check out the wish list on our website at LifeWayNetwork.org. We are looking for gently used furniture (bureaus, desks, chairs), along with other household items.

A Survivor's Story: Carmen

Carmen is a trafficking survivor who lived with us at *LifeWay House*. While there, she was a leader among the women, always supporting and encouraging their efforts. She successfully worked towards her goals and obtained a job and education, and reclaimed a life of independence.

Carmen's courage and testimonials are an inspiration to all who hear her, both the other safe house residents as well as the public with whom she has shared her experiences.

When Carmen joined the ranks of *New York's New Abolitionists* in 2014, she stated:

"When I was forced into prostitution, I did not know what 'trafficking' was. My trafficker stole my childhood. I want to make sure that no girl ever again suffers what I went through. I hope someday that I can show my face without fear for my safety or my family's, but until then I will speak out until I have no voice left."



*New York's New Abolitionists Portrait
Photo: Lynn Savarese*

How You Can Help

As LifeWay Network's programs grow and expand, so do our needs. We are thankful to all our donors and supporters, and ask that you consider other ways you might be able to help:

- Host a gathering of your friends, colleagues, or community group to raise their awareness about human trafficking and introduce them to LifeWay Network and our efforts in confronting human trafficking.
- Help us make connections with corporations, civic or community groups, foundations, or other contacts you may have that might be interested in supporting the work of LifeWay Network.
- Help us create a welcoming and warm home at LifeWay House 2. Check out our "Wish List" on our website 'Donate' page and see how you might be able to help: LifeWayNetwork.org/donate.

Please email us at Contact@LifeWayNetwork.org with your ideas and suggestions.

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