

Ending Trafficking of Young Girls



BY L. NADINE HILL

what one PW is doing

May God defend the cause of the Mchildren of the world “and crush the oppressors” (Ps. 72:4).

I have been fighting human trafficking since 2004, but it was after I retired in early 2009 from a 30-year career as a legal administrative assistant that I felt the Lord easing me into a repurposed retirement life. That prompting came in August 2011 when I was volunteering at a small after-school ministry in a neighborhood just east of downtown Indianapolis. In that neighborhood, more children live at or below the U.S. poverty level than in any other Indiana neighborhood.

Another volunteer and I were assigned playground duty, caring for about 12 children. One day, I was particularly interested in a group of three girls playing with their Barbie dolls under a large, flowering bush. They reminded me so much of my two young granddaughters. Suddenly, there was a ruckus on the other side of the playground and my colleague and I glanced away for just a moment; when we turned back, one of the little girls was missing. We looked everywhere, asked everyone, to no avail. She was missing. Several months later, we learned that her 14-year-old cousin had taken her and sold her to a pimp for \$1,200. Tamika was nine years old. She has never been found. We believe she was trafficked out of state.

Remembering Tamika, Restoring Girls

After praying, meditating, discerning and asking a lot of questions, I decided I had to do something about this very real horror in our society. The problem of human trafficking



Photos courtesy of Nadine Hill

Top: Nadine Hill (center) and two ChristCare sisters, Jo Ann Trancik (left) and Laura Menchhofer (right), host trunk shows to raise funds for Ecumenical Women’s Coalition against Human Trafficking. Bottom: Trunk shows feature sale items from the Center for Global Impact and Partners for Just Trade, a fair trade marketplace supported by many PW groups and PC(USA) congregations.

continues to grow at a rapid pace. In February 2012, I founded the Ecumenical Women’s Coalition against Human Trafficking, which focuses on the issue of sex trafficking and the rescue of young girls. My goal is to build safe houses where trafficked girls can

come to be renewed, restored and one day reintegrated into society as healthy, contributing adults.

Many have said this is a guilt trip for me, but I am way past guilt. This work is an effort on my part to keep the memory of Tamika alive and to

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help restore trafficked children to a healthy life. There are very few safe places for children to go when rescued from trafficking. In Indianapolis, where I reside, children are taken to a shelter for abused children, processed and put in the foster care system. They need much more than foster care. Everything has been taken from them—their dignity, their identity, their sense of self-worth and, many times, their desire to live. Many return to prostitution; many do not survive. There are few beds in the United States for rescued, sex-trafficked children—boys and girls. I want to give these children the opportunity to live the life God intended for them.

I am grateful to an ever-loving God for giving me this opportunity, and I praise God every day for the blessings bestowed on me for this journey. We must work together as God's hands and feet in the world to overcome the oppression of human trafficking.

Nadine Hill is founder and board president of Ecumenical Women's Coalition against Human Trafficking, a group based in Indianapolis, Indiana. She is available to speak to your



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Editor's note: Safe Harbor laws seek a shift from treating prostituted children as criminals to treating them as victims of abuse and exploitation at the hands of their traffickers. Some

Safe Harbor laws establish that minors under the age of 16 will not be prosecuted or criminalized for prostitution. Learn more at www.polarisproject.org.



Here's What You Can Do



Go to the PC(USA) Human Trafficking Roundtable's website to learn more about human trafficking and download a toolkit for education and action: www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/human-trafficking. Support the work of On Eagle's Wing Ministries, a North Carolina shelter for young women who have escaped trafficking. This project was one that USA Mission Experience participants learned about during their trip and identified as a project for ongoing support. Send your donation to On Eagle's Wings Ministries, PO Box 9737, Asheville, NC 28815. Learn more on the insert of September/October 2013 issue of *Horizons* or by visiting www.oewm.net.