



Happy New Year from Dawn's Place



A Glimpse into Life at Dawn's Place

A story from a graduate of Dawn's Place - "Laura" (not her real name) completed the residential program at Dawn's Place in the spring, found employment, and lived in our transitional After-Care Housing while she searched for long-term housing. While still in Dawn's Place residential program, she pursued career training and made significant progress in strengthening relationships with her family. In June, she attended her daughter's high school graduation. She made plans to relocate to the area her family lives in and began the transition by securing a job there. After many weeks of a long commute to her job from Dawn's Place transitional house, she found long-term housing near her job and family. She continues to have healthy relationships with her family and remains employed at the same job where she is valued by her employer for her friendly disposition and work ethic. The staff at Dawn's Place are hopeful that "Laura" will continue to make progress as she travels along her path of healthful living

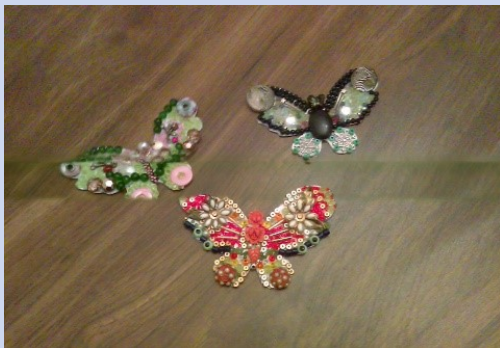
All the women in our residential or After-Care programs receive individual and group trauma informed counseling, case management, peer recovery support and ongoing mindfulness classes. We track the outcomes of our program. An area we measure is the women's learning and using new coping skills while at Dawn's Place. They have indicated using a broad spectrum of coping skills that include: seeking support from staff instead of isolating, the ability to identify feelings and anxious thinking, using grounding techniques to help them orient, the practice of deep breathing and guided meditations, contacting a supportive person (friend/family/sponsor), practicing affirmations, gardening outdoors, knitting, sewing, going for walks, listening to music, painting, and cooking. The effects of the learned coping skills are significant. They included an improved ability to process emotions, increased self-awareness and insight, improved sleep and a greater capacity to process grief.

At the present time, there are seven women in the residential program and one woman in the transition After-Care program. In addition to the services they receive at Dawn's Place, they go three days a week to Interim House for addiction counseling and group meetings. One of the seven women will complete her stay at Dawn's Place during this month. She is currently looking for affordable housing but will have the option of moving into the transition house.

Volunteers Needed! Would you like to contribute to the successful transition for another woman like "Laura"? If so, join us as a volunteer. If you have a few hours once or twice a month to help at Dawn's Place, we would be very grateful for your service. Volunteers are needed Monday thru Friday from 5:00 pm – 8:30 pm and Sunday from 9am – noon. Basically, it involves joining the women for a meal which they have prepared and spending time playing scrabble or watching TV with them. No major skills are necessary—just a desire to accompany the women in their journey to healing and independence. If interested, contact me, dawnsplacekc@gmail.com

Thank you. That we are deeply grateful for your financial support is an understatement. Through your generous donations, you are joining us in our mission of assisting our residents in their journey of hope and healing. Without you we couldn't provide our women with the services that are critical for their healing process. Thank you.

-Sister Kathleen Coll SSJ, Executive Director of Dawn's Place



[Visit our website to learn more about Dawn's Place](#)

Finding Her Voice

A huge "thank you" to all of our friends who made our Tenth Anniversary Gala - Finding Her Voice - an outstanding success. So many of you showed up, and it was delightful to meet you and to put faces to the names of our donors. Many of you could not attend, but so generously sent donations. And our sponsors! We have never had so many and at such high levels. Bless you all.

Oh, what a night it was! The Sheet Metal Workers Union Hall was beautifully decorated. Lights twinkled off the gold, silver and rose colored walls of the ballroom. The aroma of the delicious food prepared by The Penn's Landing Caterers tempted our 260 guests. The music of DJ Russ Ferrante was a wonderful background to the dinner and kept many dancing long after the auction and 50/50 were called. Our keynote speaker, Tammy MacDonnell, a former resident and graduate of Dawn's Place, brought people to their feet and tears to many eyes. Jennifer Childs of 1812 Productions, brought her iconic character, Patsy from South Philadelphia. Patsy humorously made the case for women finding their voice and speaking up for their rights.

Certainly from all the feedback the staff, graduates and volunteers have been getting, it seems a good time was had by all. But more importantly, more people became aware of the

work of Dawn's Place, and what they can do to fight sex trafficking.

We could not have done this without the generous support of all of you. You support us, not just during our big events, but throughout the year. You support us during our fall appeal and our spring appeal. You support us through monthly donations. You support us to honor family members at weddings, birthdays and even at memorials. We are moved by your generosity.

Legislative and Advocacy Updates

In honor of Human Trafficking Awareness Month, the Pennsylvania General Assembly has introduced several important pieces of legislation to reform and improve our Commonwealth's anti-trafficking laws. Here is a brief summary of the introduced legislation:

House Bill 2170: Amends several sections of our anti-trafficking laws to (1) add "patronizes" to the list of conduct that makes up trafficking to bring Pennsylvania in line with federal law; (2) move and rename crimes like "Patronizing a Prostitute," "Living Off Prostitutes," and "Promoting Prostitution," which are trafficking crimes, into the trafficking statute.

Senate Bill 60: Amends several sections of our anti-trafficking laws to (1) add "advertises" to the list of conduct that makes up trafficking and (2) increases penalties for those convicted of trafficking. Awaiting the governor's signature.

House Bill 2174: Proposes amendments to Pennsylvania's rape shield statute that protect victims of trafficking from having to testify regarding their sexual history. Victims and survivors of trafficking experience intense emotional, sexual, and physical trauma as part of their exploitation extending these protections to them is an important step toward protecting survivors. Passed the House, moving through the Senate.

House Bill 2175: Proposes amendments to the list of offenses where an expert may testify during certain criminal proceedings involving allegations of sexual violence. Allowing such experts to testify will assist juries in understanding the complex trauma that underlays, and results from, trafficking. Passed the House, moving through the Senate.

House Bill 2176: Proposes to expand the list of crimes included in Unlawful Contact with a Minor to include trafficking minors, an additional tool for law enforcement and prosecutors. Passed the House, moving through the Senate.

House Bill 2177: Requires anyone convicted of trafficking minors undergo treatment for violent sexual behaviors. This bill demonstrates the commitment to rehabilitation and reformation over punishment in our criminal justice system.

House Bill 2178: Requires convictions for trafficking to be considered during custody cases in family court. This extends protections for victims and potential victims of trafficking in a non-criminal context. Passed the House, moving through the Senate.

House Resolution 618: Acknowledges January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month throughout the Commonwealth.

Sex trafficking is a horrendous crime that affects thousands of people, mostly women and girls, each year. Any effort our legislature can make toward combatting this crime should be commended, but we should strive to take the most comprehensive and effective steps. In all, House Bills 2170, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177 and Senate Bill 60 are critical steps toward re-establishing the Commonwealth's position as a leading jurisdiction in the fight against

human trafficking.

-Shea M. Rhodes, Esquire

Dawn's Place Board Member

Director and Co-Founder of Villanova Law Institute to Address Commercial and Sexual Exploitation



Healing Stories

February. It conjures images of icy roads and well wrapped hurrying passersby. In my office, it's snug for the most part, but there is one small corner that I avoid. Today, I face that corner squarely.

I love to write about Dawn's Place, about its homey atmosphere, about its women, and, about its successes. But now, I need to talk about what can happen to those women who never make it to Dawn's Place. In my office corner, I set up a small memorial to them. It helps keep me fighting.

When I look at that corner, I see a picture of Maria (not her real name). The picture is on a card. At the top of the card it says, "En Memoria De". At the bottom of the card it lists dates. It's the kind of card that they give out at funerals. Maria was my client and a victim of Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE) since she was a young girl. The court system tried to help Maria. It gave her drug treatment for her addiction and out-patient sexual trauma recovery therapy for her trauma. But, for Maria, it was too little, too late. Maria's card is just one of several in that corner.

Below Maria's card, lie two yellow files joined together with a rubber band. In the final disposition box of each file, it reads, "Abated" and the date. "Abated" is the word the court system gives to cases that are dropped because the defendant died while the case was still pending. While I have had a number of cases abated, these two are the only files in that corner. They are there because of a letter written by my client, Patricia (not her real name). The letter was written from Riverside Correctional Facility where Patricia was incarcerated following her arrests for prostitution. In the letter, Patricia begs for help for her addiction and sexual trauma. She says, "I do not want to repeat that lifestyle of drugs and prostitution. I write to you with hope... I...have no one else to turn to." Patricia included a PS to her letter: "One day maybe you can write a story of my success...please pray for me...".

We were not fast enough. By the time I could arrange for her drug treatment, Patricia died of an overdose. I keep her files to remind me of the limited resources, the need for urgency, and the high stakes involved.

These are just two of the many stories familiar to those who work with women victims of CSE. The need is great. Too many women fall through the cracks as it is. Without the generosity of our donors and the dedication of our staff and volunteers, there would be little hope.

But there is hope. Next to the painful corner, I keep a framed drawing of red-tipped white rosebuds from a woman graduate of Dawn's Place. The roses were a thank you to Dawn's Place for a life restored, and a statement of hope for the future. It's cold now. But, Spring will come.

*-Mary DeFusco, Esquire
Dawn's Place President of the Board
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