



Spring Has Sprung at Dawn's Place!



A Glimpse into Life at Dawn's Place at a Time of Health Crisis

Spring is here! After the winter, especially the gloomy month of February, all of us at Dawn's Place are happy to welcome milder and brighter days. Spring is a time of hope and new life. One of our cherished hopes is that the worst of the pandemic is behind us, but we know we still have to be vigilant. Nevertheless, with signs of new life all around us, we are enjoying buds on the trees, watching crocuses pop up and daffodils push up their green heads.

Signs of Hope: At Dawn's Place we are experiencing both hope and new life. When I look at the women who are residents and recall their beginning days with us, I am amazed to see how they are healing from their horrendous experiences. The woman who finished 12 months in Dawn's Place and now a little more than four months at Teresita House (the transition house), has found housing and transitioned recently. She is a wonderful example of hope and new life. When she came to Dawn's Place she was broken; to see her as a strong and mature woman is a wonderful sign of hope.

Residents: There are three women in residence at Dawn's Place. One of them, a woman from Kenya, is taking classes at Community College of Philadelphia and hopes to be a radiologist. Three other women are being assessed as potential residents.

Our Program: Dawn's Place's year-long program works to heal the effects of exploitation through individual and group trauma-informed counseling. In addition, the resident coordinator works with each resident in developing and evaluating her goals for each of the five phases of the program. After care is offered to graduates of Dawn's Place by our therapist who meets with them weekly to continue individual trauma counseling.

Life Skills are taught or retaught through sharing household chores, making grocery lists and taking turns food shopping, cooking, and learning to make a weekly schedule. A class in Money Management, an essential life skill, provides monthly stipends to the women. It teaches the residents to accept responsibility for important bills and learn the difference between wants and needs. This class is provided through a grant. We also celebrate special occasions such as birthdays and years "clean." These are fun times. (see picture below)

Volunteers were suspended last spring because of COVID-19. We look forward to their return when the situation with the virus improves. However, Sister Barbara, a Mercy Sister who was a nurse, volunteers on Mondays to coordinate the residents' medications. We are incredibly grateful for her service.

Buildings: Last November we received a grant to renovate the third floor of Teresita House to make it accessible for two more residents. Since both houses are on the list of historic homes, their status complicates the process. We have been working with Ballard Spahr, our pro-bono lawyers, to address legal issues involved with our plans to renovate.

Bad news/good news - Dawn's Place house lost heat for three days during a very cold spell last month. The electricity also went out and we had plumbing problems at the same time. Thanks to a Facebook fundraiser, more than \$3,000 was raised in 24 hours. Thank you for your outpouring of concern.

We are deeply grateful for our many supporters and all who join us in our mission of hope and healing. Without you we could not provide the services that are so critical for the healing process. Thank you.

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

A word from Shevaun Brannigan, Development Director

It was one of the coldest February days on record, and I was on my way to work when Sister Kathleen Coll called me and said, "You'll have to step over the air mattresses when you get here." What? Turns out, the heat had gone out for several days at Dawn's Place, and the residents were sleeping in the nearby offices. Not only had the boiler broken, but the electricity had gone out when staff tried plugging in space heaters.

When I got to the offices, the residents were going about their day, but the air mattresses (bought solely for the heat going out) were still out. I thought about each resident an air mattress represented, all the women had already been through, and felt so powerless. That's when Sister Kathleen popped in, dismayed the boiler bill would be at least \$3,000, an unanticipated, budget-breaking sum for our small nonprofit.

As the Director of Development, I started a modest Facebook fundraiser for Dawn's Place. *In less than 24 hours we reached our stretch goal, ultimately raising \$3,210.* Without our community, this would have been impossible. We are so grateful to the many individuals who teamed together to keep Dawn's Place residents warm. Your gifts to Dawn's Place provide more comfort than you even know. Thank you.



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

DAWN'S PALETTE SHOWCASE



Wait for it... wait for it!

The Dawn's Palette Virtual Art Auction is coming.

Yes, that's right!

BUT, you will have to wait until May 16 to start your bidding. Bidding will last until May 30.

Take part and bid on line on over two dozen original works of art from exceptional local artists, who are selling their works through our auction. A portion of the profits will go to Dawn's Place to help us continue our rehabilitation and educational programs for survivors.

Bidding will begin from just over \$100 (plus shipping).

Choose from a variety of styles and media at our first ever virtual art auction!

We are so excited about the works that we will be presenting.

More information will be posted on our Facebook page and website.

If we have your email, you will also receive one detailing all you need to know.

(See how important it is that we have your email!)

Mark your calendar for Dawn's Palette Virtual Art Auction, May 16 through May 30.

You won't want to miss these fabulous works of art. Here's your chance to add something beautiful and unique to your home while helping Dawn's Place fight something ugly in ministering to survivors of commercial sex trafficking.

More Details to come! Stay tuned!

Dawn's Place Needs Your Help!

**Dawn's Place is Committed to Serving Our
Residents During the COVID-19 Pandemic.**



Dawn's Place has had to replace volunteers with paid staffing during the COVID-19 crisis. Any amount that you are able to donate would be so appreciated to help us keep our doors open during these unprecedented times.

Dawn's Place Pays it Forward

Dawn's Place is excited to be working with a local homeless shelter, or organization for those in housing transition. [For every \\$10 donated to the Pay it Forward option, we will send a Dawn's Place mask to the shelter](#), helping spread awareness of Dawn's Place's important mission, as well as keep other vulnerable populations safer from COVID-19.

So if you've wanted to help Dawn's Place, but are up to your ears in masks, this is a great way to Pay it Forward and support those who call Dawn's Place home, and those who are currently homeless, with one purchase!

We share our thanks to model Brendale, who began as a resident but has become a vital part of the Dawn's Place staff! There's a big smile on under that mask, thanks to you and the rest of the Dawn's Place support system!



Legislative and Advocacy Updates

March is National Women's History Month. As advocates working to end violence against women, this month holds particular importance. Those of us who support and partner with Dawn's Place have the privilege to be a small part of the journey to justice and healing. This month, take a moment to celebrate and acknowledge the women who have made a difference in your life. Take a moment to consider the strength and resilience of the women in Dawn's Place, who have dedicated themselves to overcoming their trauma and to focusing on their recovery. Celebrate their successes.

But we must also acknowledge how much work is left to accomplish. We must not forget that our society continues to downplay systemic racism and misogyny. The recent shootings in Atlanta demonstrate the oversexualization of Asian women in the United States. Law enforcement's response was an active minimization of a hate crime against women. Mourn the loss of the eight individuals senselessly murdered for one man's "bad day."

Stand with women. Celebrate their success and use it to fuel the work that remains.

*-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

Flowers. Lit candles. Another shooting – this time in Atlanta. The shooter claims sex addiction. Others point out the racism and sexism. What I see is victims being victimized once again.

Prostitution, or CSE (Commercial Sexual Exploitation) is a crime of the strong against the powerless. But it is even more twisted than that. Because, as many of my clients have explained to me, frequently the “satisfied” sex buyer turns violent *after* the act. I used to puzzle about that and wonder why.

I have had the benefit of learning from my friend, Dr. Mary Anne Layden, who is a psychotherapist, and also the Director of Education at the Center for Cognitive Therapy at the University of Pennsylvania. As Mary Anne explained it to me, prostitution is a toxic version of what should be an intimate and caring act. Therefore, even the buyer, who sought it out, feels disgusted afterward. Unfortunately, instead of channeling his disgust into changing his behavior, some sex buyers will treat their victims as the source of the problem and turn their disgust against them, in the form of violence. As long as those in power continue to insist that the victims of prostitution are criminals, the buyers will continue to feel entitled, not just to use the victims sexually, but to also blame the victims for their own abuse.

One of my former clients, Rhonda*, has been shot, raped, stabbed, and dumped by the side of the road, left for dead. All of these acts were committed at different times by different buyers. Fortunately, she survived, and, with the help of sexual trauma recovery therapy, she has triumphed over CSE. Rhonda is a hero of mine because, despite everything she has been through, she remains a loving and caring person. But CSE is dangerous because of the behavior of buyers, as well as the more highly publicized behavior of pimps. That’s why Dawn’s Place favors the so-called “Equality Model” of dealing with CSE. The Equality Model realizes the very real harm that buyers can do and seeks to eliminate demand for the sex trade.

Finally, it must be noted that there are both gender and racial disparities in the commercial sex trade. Because of their subjection to combined forces of gendered and racialized oppression, women of color are overrepresented as victims and survivors of CSE.

But all of these facts can’t help those victims in Atlanta. We need to change.

*Not her real name.

*-Mary DeFusco, Esquire
Dawn's Place President of the Board
Director of Training, Defender Association of Philadelphia*



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