DEEP DOWN I WANTED SOMETHING MORE FOR MY LIFE.

GOD DIDN’T PUT ME ON THIS EARTH TO BE SOLD.

― KEISHA, 17

What did you want to be in Kindergarten? A teacher. Doctor. Firefighter? The sky’s the limit when you’re six.

Keisha wanted to be a basketball player. She practiced everyday, until the day her mom never picked her up. Instead, she was offered a ride from a guy in a nice car. It’s a quick descent. Nice dinners, new clothes, forever-after promises. Soon she’s posted on Backpage.com. In the escort section. It’s as easy to buy a girl as it is to shop on Amazon.

This is not the life Keisha chose.

Child sex trafficking is the product of things gone wrong. Poverty, violence, abuse, unemployment; a pop culture that glorifies pimps. There’s more than one way that kids end up on the street. But it’s not random. Or without solutions.

We’re helping Keisha get off the street. Back to the life she imagined. It takes time. Patience. Being there, when no one else is. We help her find a safe place to live. Get back into school. See new possibilities. Reach her potential.

Keisha is not alone. The girl trade has replaced the drug trade, according to Rights4girls. Over 100 girls are sold for sex each night on the streets of Oakland.

WestCoast Children’s Clinic helps 100 children each year to get out. That’s not enough.

We need your help. Your donation and involvement. We’re up against an industry that’s outpacing drug and arms dealing. Spread the word. Talk to your friends. Demand Village Voice Media stop selling girls on Backpage.com. Ask the Board of Supervisors to create a safe house. Let policymakers know that girls need protection not prosecution.

This isn’t just about Keisha. It’s about all of us. This is happening here. In our city. We can stop our children from being bought and sold. It’s a matter of public will.

There will be a day when our children are not for sale. And you’ll have done your part.

Stacey Katz, Executive Director
What We’re Up Against:

Annual revenues from the human trafficking industry in the U.S.: $9.8 billion

Amount the U.S. spends each year to combat human trafficking: $109 million

Number of children at risk for sex trafficking each year in the U.S.: 300,000

Annual revenue generated by Backpage.com from prostitution advertising: $37 million

Amount a pimp earns per year with 3 girls: $500,000

Percentage of buyers that said a letter sent to their family would deter them from buying girls: 79%

Average age at which youth are first trafficked: 13

Percentage of child sex trafficking victims that experienced physical or sexual abuse prior to exploitation: 70%

Percentage of exploited youth that have been arrested for prostitution and related charges: 56%

Against these odds, we see change happening.
After six months of therapy at WestCoast...

80% of youth are doing better in school

62% stop harming themselves

38% are able to form healthier relationships

Sources:
"Online prostitution-ad revenue crosses Craigslist benchmark," AIM Group, July 2013.
FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin: "Human Sex Trafficking."


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