

THE LIBERATOR

The Free Project Newsletter

Fighting Trafficking by Fighting Poverty

By Ajay Dave

We tend to perceive Congress as unproductive, especially in the realm of human rights and poverty. However, just this year, Congress has passed three bills that directly address these issues. The Electrify Africa, Global Food Security, and Foreign Aid Transparency and Accountability Acts create a better economic environment for legitimate careers and means for personal subsistence. Thus, they attack the root cause of human-trafficking: poverty. Poverty is a systemic symptom of poor economic markets and infrastructure. The aforementioned bills fight this by promoting technological and agricultural foundations and

by forming markets in which legal profits can be earned. Therefore, these three bills will help establish strong foundations for economic and labor growth in hotspots of human trafficking. Establishing legitimate markets will decrease the demand for human enslavement in impoverished areas around the world. It will be easier for people to access the resources needed to sustain higher-quality lifestyles without having to resort to the profits of trafficking. Thus, fighting poverty decreases the incentives for trafficking.



This article is summarized from The Free Project website. To read the article, visit <http://www.thefreeproject.org/2016/11/22/legislating-against-human-trafficking/>

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What Can You Do?

Tweet @Wendys to join @FairFoodProgram! If @McDonalds fights human trafficking, why won't Wendy's?

For more information, visit fairfoodprogram.org

It's Safe to Stay

By Ruth Varghese

The UT Dallas International Justice Mission club spent an afternoon volunteering at the Mosaic House, a shelter for trafficked women.

I'm not sure why, but it reminded me of a Spanish cathedral, or some kind of nunnery. It makes sense because "safe shelter," makes me imagine the woman from The Hunchback of Notre Dame yelling "sanctuary" as she tried to get in the church or something from The Sound of Music, where the Trapp family hid from the German soldiers. That's exactly what Mosaic House is, a place of safety and protection. Mosaic House is a shelter for women and children, specifically immigrants, who have suffered from domestic violence or human trafficking. They provide services to help the women and children get back on their feet and back at their lives. It's a beautiful place, surrounded by trees with a

small playground in the backyard for the kids to play in. It's ironic that such a place that looks so pretty on the outside could hold so much hurt and fear on the inside.

My visit to Mosaic House was spent coloring with the kids. One of the boys was a little older. I was sure that he would think coloring paper plate pumpkins would be lame, but it seriously surprised me when he got the most into it. Adam* and one of the other volunteers in our group got into a paper plate pumpkin war that exceeded my imagination. They were each creating their own armies and designing pumpkins to fight each other. It ended with Adam creating something along the lines of "ghost shields" that were impenetrable-the physical appearance of the ghost shield was nothing more than a single red circle surrounding the drawing on the plate. Since you can't beat a ghost shield, Adam won the war.

I saw some of the moms with their kids in the hallway and everything looked fine. Nothing during my entire visit to Mosaic House seemed out of the ordinary. The kids were happy, the moms were smiling. Had I not remembered we were at a safe shelter, I would've thought I was volunteering at a day care or babysitting. I

won't ever know what those particular women and children have gone through, but there are stories everywhere of people who have experienced what might be similar. I've noticed that I don't question anything that looks normal. It's easy to think of victims as characters on Law and Order or headlines in the news. Victims are so much more diverse than that. Mosaic House shelters women who were subject to domestic violence and trafficking, and those women look just like all of us. There's nothing physically different about them. Victims come in all shapes, sizes, ages, genders, and races. They could be all around us, and we just never notice.



*Name has been changed

**All Mosaic House information comes from www.mosaicservices.org

This is the beginning of an article on The Free Project website. To read the full article, visit

<http://www.thefreeproject.org/2016/11/26/mosaic-house-a-place-of-safety-for-immigrant-women-children/>

Their story

Vannak Prum

Prum's story began in his native Cambodian village where he supported his pregnant wife and searched for a job that would cover the expected medical bill of her delivery. One day, a man on a motorbike taxi approached him and informed him that the only available jobs were across the border in Thailand. The man claimed he could get Prum a job drying fish. Naturally, Prum was suspicious and even initially refused the offer, but unable to find any work, he changed his mind and soon traveled with the man to Malai. Prum joined 30 other men and women in Malai, and together they traveled across the border into Thailand where a truck waited to pick them up. Prum and his companions crammed into the bed of the truck, stacked side by side and one on top of the other. They were covered with a tarp. Unbeknownst to them, the group's destination was a small, windowless, cement

room that remained locked from the outside. After arriving at the room, Prum, using a small hole in the wall, saw the ocean and several fishing boats. At that moment he realized he had been sold to work on a boat. In the morning Prum and the other captives were given clothing and taken to the boat where they were held below deck until the ship traveled far out to sea.



Vannak Prum

Prum spent three years trapped on that fishing boat, enduring dangerous and grueling work for up to 20 hours a day with little to no sleep. In addition to difficult working conditions, Prum and the other workers were subjected to beatings and torture from their traffickers for slacking off or acting out. Prum endured a vicious beating with the tail of a stingray. Others suffered even harsher punishments; one man was beheaded by

the captain right in front of Prum.

Prum made his daring escape one night when the boat was on its way to acquire a Malaysian fishing license. It was the first time in three years that Prum saw land, and he knew that he must take advantage of the opportunity.

This is the beginning of an article posted by [endslaverynow.org](http://www.endslaverynow.org). All content was found on the End Slavery Now website. To continue reading Vannak's story, go to <http://www.endslaverynow.org/blog/articles/vannak-prum>

The Free Project is a part of Historians Against Slavery, a group of scholars who bring historical context and scholarship to the modern-day antislavery movement.

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<http://www.thefreeproject.org>

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