

# The Hartford Catholic Worker



St. Martin De Porres House  
St. Brigid House

"I really only love God as much as I love the person I love the least." -Dorothy Day



Magdalene

Brian Kavanagh

*They left behind  
only that which they  
thought useless.  
They took away everything  
except the Spirit,  
which they were incapable  
of seeing.  
From it life was reborn,  
a new path was opened up  
and the darkness  
became Light for me.*

*So I have experienced all of it  
from the scandal of the Cross  
to the joyous surprise of  
Mary Magdalene.  
Sometimes weeping,  
sometimes singing.*

*-Julia Esquivel desde el exilio*

## Lent/Easter 2020

## *The Hartford Catholic Worker*

Established November 3, 1993

Volume 28 Number 1

*The Hartford Catholic Worker* is published quarterly by the St. Martin De Porres Catholic Worker community. We are a lay community of Catholics and like minded friends, living in the north end of Hartford, working and praying for an end to violence and poverty. We are a 501c3 tax exempt organization. We do not seek or accept state or federal funding. Our ability to house the homeless, feed the hungry, and work with the children depends on contributions from our readers. We can be reached at: 18 Clark St., Hartford CT 06120; (860) 724-7066, purplehousecw@gmail.com and www.hartfordcatholicworker.org We are: Brian Kavanagh, Baby Beth Donovan, Dwight Teal Jr., Sasean Sanders, Jacqueline, and Christopher Allen-Douçot.

# Why I Like the Green House

*A few weeks back we gave the Green House kids this writing prompt: "I like coming to the Green House because:"*

### **Brittani, age 16**

I like the Green House because they guide me to do my best in life and they are my role models. They teach me not to give up and to follow by dreams in life. I have so much fun in the Green House. We do sports, and arts and crafts, and how to respect others. I met a lot of friends. They help me with my homework and how to shoot hoops. They teach me how to be a leader and not to be a follower. I have a learning disability, but they treat me the same like others and I am happy there. I feel safe there... The Green House makes you think about college. On Earth Day we helped clean up the neighborhood... We also sewed shopping bags, we made pillows, and t-shirts, and tissue holders. When I make something I can give it to my family... I love being at the Green House! Ω

### **Journee, age 10**

What I love about the Green House is how kind people are to me and how caring they are. Also, I feel safe when I come to the Green House. I love working with Dwight and doing art. And I like when I get help on my homework. I love the parties. The best was the Halloween party but I know the Christmas party will be great. When I first came I knew it would be awesome and I remember when I fell- Timothy helped me. I

also love the Green House because they provide us with healthy snacks and they bring happiness... I also like the people here and Baby [Beth] is a sweet and nice person. Its wonderful coming here and I wish I could get the whole world to come here and



**Brittani**

see how I enjoy and I made so many friends and it feels like family here. I love going on the swings and playing. In conclusion this is what I love about the Green House.Ω

### **Chanel, age 12**

All children need a safe place to be after school with caring, responsible adults and engaging activities that fit for children, family, and the community. One of the programs I'm talking about is the Hartford Catholic Worker. this program is helping children and teaching children kindness, caring for each other, and loving each

other. The reason I go to the Green House is because they teach children what they need to know. For an example: life skills, kindness, sharing, and how to control your temper the right way. They help you with homework. they do fun activities like art projects, field trips, and even fun games to play... Also Hartford Catholic Worker is a unique program to go to, they have some things other programs don't have. Another reason that me and other kids go to the Green House is because the staff can improve kids' social skills. they also provide children with snacks, love, kindness, and respect. this program can give your parents time to work and do what they have to do. The Green House is like another home to me. they care about me and respect me. This is why I love the Green House.Ω

### **Haze, age 9**

I have been to the Green House for about 2 1/2 years. I like coming to the green House because there is always a lot of activities. I like going to the Christmas Party because they always have a lot of candy and drinks. I also like playing outside in the snow. I also enjoy the Easter party because we get to run around and find eggs. We exercise a lot. I also like to play in the Green House back yard. when I first used the pogo stick I only hopped 4 times, now I did 1,576. I am really good at it. I love when UConn comes because they always play basketball with me and play freeze tag together. Ω

# Legal Prostitution and Sex Trafficking: <sup>3</sup> One Tourist's Account

Terry T. Steele

I almost didn't click the submit button. As I was reviewing my order – one ticket for a tour of the infamous Red Light District—it occurred to me that purchasing that ticket would be contributing to the sex tourism industry. It didn't feel right. But I had so many questions. And would I ever be in Amsterdam again? I clicked.

Work brought me to Amsterdam. My desire to learn more about sex trafficking within the context of legal prostitution brought me to the Red Light District. Estimates of the number of prostitutes working in the City vary. Writings on the subject suggest that anywhere between 24,000 and 31,000 sex workers operate in the Netherlands.

The rain was steady, and the air was chilled. It was dark—even for a November evening. As I walked to the gathering spot, I could not even imagine who would take a tour like this and on such an inhospitable night. “Who would be guiding us?”, I also wondered.

I breathed a sigh of relief when our tour guide arrived. She looked to be almost 70. This was serious business; I was grateful for a mature guide.

I listened carefully as she described the history of the Red Light District, an area that has been a hub for sex workers since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In addition to the brothels and adult shops, we passed apartment buildings, restaurants, a nursery school, and a church as we moved down the cobbled streets. Then our guide stopped and waited until we were all paying attention. “*There will be no picture-taking,*” she said. “*And please don't stare.*” You see, we were about to walk past the famous windows – doors actually – where the working women

presented themselves to potential clients. The “*girls*” were simply doing their jobs and deserved respect and privacy. We were to glance briefly and walk on by.

We did what we were told. As we moved deeper and deeper into the district, the streets got narrower and narrower. We walked almost single file as we passed a trio of windows.



Young women who, at quick glance, looked like Victoria's Secret-models appeared before us. Eventually, we emerged from the catacomb-like walkways and found ourselves at the entrance to the Blue Light District. Here, transgender women stood behind the doors, waiting like the others, for clients on that cold, dark night.

In a soft tone that underscored her concern for the girls, our guide explained how this legal system of window-prostitution shifted the power away from the buyers and to the working women. It is the woman who decides whether or not to open the door. She can wave away a would-be client if she doesn't like his looks or manner. The woman negotiates the price for the service. “*It is important*”, our guide emphasized, “*that the woman chooses the client and not the other way around.*” What happens in the brothels, sex clubs and private

homes, however, is not so clear.

Almost all women in prostitution experience violence; the dangers of working in the sex trade are well documented. Proponents of legal prostitution list safety concerns as one of their main priorities (i.e., bring the work out into the open and give the women recourse for violence against them.) Detractors cite safety concerns as well (i.e., How can a state sanction an “industry” where murder is an occupational hazard?). Janine Benedict, Director of The Centre for Feminist Legal Studies at the University of British Columbia raises an interesting point. By accepting a “harm reduction” approach (e.g., legalization and regulation), we are acknowledging “that for many women the act of prostitution itself causes grave physical and psychological harm.” We don't settle for a harm reduction strategy for

situations like domestic violence or sexual harassment, which also cause great harm to women; we aim to eliminate them. Is a harm reduction strategy, then, acceptable for prostitution? Or should there be a consensus around eliminating this monetized violence against women?

On our way back to the original meeting spot, I walked along side our guide and asked the main question I came to ask. “*How many of the women working in prostitution here are victims of sex trafficking?*” I braced myself for the answer. Any number greater than zero meant that not only did I very likely just walk by a trafficking victim, but I paid for the privilege: To walk away; To leave her behind; To not acknowledge her suffering; Or her worth; Or her dignity.

“*The local police estimate around 20%,*” she replied, her words a crushing blow.

**(Please see: *Prostitution*, p4)**

## Prostitution, cont.

Do the math. If between 24,000 and 31,000 women work each day in the Netherlands and 20% are trafficking victims, that means over 4800 women are being forced to perform sex acts against their will. As one De Wallen bookshop owner said in a [BBC story](#), “*They are essentially raped every day.*”

According to Polaris, the operators of the [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#) in the US, “*Human trafficking is the business of stealing freedom for profit. It is a multi-billion-dollar criminal industry that denies freedom to 24.9 million people around the world.*” And sex trafficking is “*the crime of using force, fraud or coercion to induce another individual to sell sex.*” It is important to note that whenever a minor is involved in commercial sex, it is sex trafficking. There is no such thing as child prostitute.

I tossed and turned that night struggling to process the events of the day. Are the women in the windows really in charge because they can choose their clients? Do they have a “right” to do this work? Would things be worse for them if prostitution were illegal here? Would there be more sex trafficking? Would there be less? What about the objectification of women and the danger it poses to *all* women? Do others know better than the women who work in the windows? Is it arrogant to judge their choice? A thousand questions collided in my brain until I slipped off to a troubled sleep.

I set out to learn about the intersection of legal prostitution and sex trafficking when I signed up for the tour. I learned that night that within the brutal world of prostitution—even legal prostitution—sex traffick-

ing thrives.

A 2012 [study by the London School of Economics](#) demonstrated that countries with legal prostitution had higher inflows of sex trafficking. The authors explain the economic theory that demand for and supply of prostitutes increase when prostitution is legal because the cost (i.e., risk) of participation decreases. They set out to determine if the increased demand is filled by local, legal prostitutes or if trafficking victims from outside of the area are brought in to meet the demand. Their research, using data



from over 150 countries, shows that the increase in demand is not met by an increase in supply of legal prostitutes. Instead, the increased demand is overwhelmingly met with trafficked people.

According to [Time](#), “*National figures show a striking increase in Dutch authorities’ counts of the number of victims in the Netherlands since the legalization of brothels, from 228 in 1998, to a peak*

*of 1,711 in 2012, and 742 in 2018; the national rapporteur on trafficking estimates that the actual number of victims in the Netherlands is around five times the reported figures.*”

Another group meeting the demand for prostitutes are young refugees. In Germany, where prostitution is legal, there is a rise in prostitution among young asylum seekers from countries such as Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria and Iraq. These refugees are typically between 16 to 25 years old and often arrive alone. According to [Diana Hennigis](#), a German refugee aid worker, “*How prone these young refugees are to entering the sex trade relies on a variety of factors such as asylum status and level of education. Drug addiction or homelessness can also play a role.*”

According to Amsterdam’s mayor, Femke Halsema, “*the surge in women from poorer Eastern European countries, such as Romania and Bulgaria, as well as other less economically developed regions like Latin America and Africa, increases the risk of exploitation. You can question their free will, because there is a huge need for them to feed families elsewhere.*”

Taking into account the factors that drive people into legal prostitution, can their actions truly be considered voluntary? Is legalizing prostitution the best we, as a society, can do for vulnerable people?

Just last Fall, a bill to decriminalize prostitution in Washington, D.C. was stalled by activists who tes-

tified that sex trafficking and sexual exploitation increase exponentially when the sex trade is normalized. In a statement on that failed legislative effort, Polaris wrote, “*It is problematic and deeply alarming that this bill proposes to move DC towards the laws and market conditions that pimps, traffickers, and sex buyers prefer. The notion that we can pass*

**(Please see: Prostitution, p6)**

# Want to Fight Human Trafficking? Address Youth Poverty

Laura T. Murphy Ph.D.

(This essay originally appeared in the Fall 2019 issue of [JustSouth Quarterly](#), a publication of the Jesuit Social Research Institute at Loyola University New Orleans. Dr. Murphy is Professor of Human Rights and Contemporary Slavery, Helena Kennedy Centre for International Justice, Sheffield Hallam University)

In this time of increasing partisanship and discord in the United States, there is one thing that people on the left and right seem to agree on, and that is the need to reduce human trafficking. The crime of trafficking is committed when someone compels a person to work through force, fraud, or coercion, or when someone engages a minor in a commercial sex act. Both sex and labor trafficking happen in every single state in the union, and it happens in a wide swath of industries—not only in the illicit sex and drug trades, but also in agriculture, door-to-door sales, construction, restaurants, and even teaching.

As attention to this issue increases, so does the desire to find a way to address it. Many states have significantly increased penalties imposed on convicted traffickers in the hopes that it would deter future predators. Legislators in the state of Utah, where the use of firing squad was legalized in 2015, have gone so far as to attempt to make the death penalty available as a punishment for child sex traffickers.

While there is no doubt that trafficking in any form is a heinous crime, we cannot punish our way out of the fact that people are made vulnerable to forced labor because they are impoverished, lack a social support network, and are cut off from the services they need to access well-being and independence. While activists and legislators focus on intensely penalizing those caught for trafficking, they

are doing little to provide potential, current, and former victims of trafficking what they need—a route out of poverty.

Researchers with Loyola University New Orleans' Modern Slavery Research Project interviewed over 640 homeless youth in Covenant House shelters around the United States and Canada, including Ft. Lauderdale, St. Louis, and our own



*Keep your coins. I want change.*

hometown of New Orleans. We found that, of the homeless youth we interviewed, nearly 1 in 5 had been trafficked either for sex or some other form of labor. Many people in those communities were surprised to learn that 8 percent of the youth we interviewed had been trafficked for labor in the drug trade, factories, domestic service, or agriculture. Because we tend to think of trafficking simply in terms of young women forced into the sex trade, it was also notable that we found that 11% of the young men we interviewed had been trafficked for sex in their lifetimes as well. What

we learned is that regardless of sex, gender, race, religion, or nationality, homeless youth were extremely vulnerable to trafficking precisely because they were homeless.

Youth reported that their fear of sleeping on the streets left them vulnerable to sex and labor traffickers and to survival sex. Eighty-four percent of youth who reported engaging in the sex trade without a third-party controller (colloquially called a “pimp”) did so because of economic need. Securing housing was a primary concern for the vast majority of the youth we interviewed. Sixty-eight percent of the youth who had either been trafficked or engaged in survival sex or commercial sex had done so while homeless. Nineteen percent of all youth interviewed had engaged in survival sex solely so that they could access housing or food. This problem is even starker among those who were not sheltered. The incidence of trafficking among drop-in youth—sometimes called “street youth”—was high relative to the sheltered cohort: 24 percent were trafficked for sex, 13 percent for labor.

We asked the young people who had been trafficked what could have been done to prevent them from being trafficked and what young people with similar experiences need in order to escape their traffickers. The young people we talked to were surprised that we asked them their opinions at all. Indeed, few people had ever asked them for their own thoughts on what they needed or what programs might work to help other youth who had been trafficked. As far as we know, few if any of the legislators deciding the fates of trafficked people and their exploiters have interacted extensively with survivors of trafficking to learn what we as a

**(Please see: Trafficking, p7)**

## Prostitution, cont.

*this bill and still effectively combat sex trafficking in DC misunderstands the nature of trafficking and what it takes to stop it.”* They go on to explain, “*Pimping is often indistinguishable from sex trafficking, and both will be harder to stop if pimping is no longer a crime. The volume of sex buying will increase in DC when buyers no longer fear arrest, which will attract more traffickers due to the more lucrative market where demand far outpaces supply. Pimps, traffickers, and sex buyers will celebrate if this bill becomes law. That should be a warning to all of us about who really stands to gain the most by the effects of this bill – yet again, those with more privilege, wealth, and power.*”

While studies and statistics help to paint a picture, it is the voices of the survivors that call out to us most profoundly. In a letter to presidential candidates, 250 survivors of sex trafficking made a plea to stand against decriminalizing the sex trade:

*“Dear Presidential Candidates,*

*We, the undersigned survivors of prostitution and sex trafficking, have experienced years of abuse, violence, objectification, and dehumanization in the sex trade. We know first-hand the devastating harm and long-term trauma that happens as a result of being exploited in an industry predicated on racial, gender, and income inequality.*

*To be clear, we support decriminalizing people sold in prostitution, as we care deeply about their safety and well-being.. But [fully] decriminalizing the sex trade... means allowing pimps, sex buyers, and brothel owners to operate with impunity. Sex trafficking (including that of children) and organized crime increases when pimping and sex buying are legalized.”*

After I returned home, I read that tours of the Red Light District were being banned in 2020. This decision was part of an effort to scale back tourism in De Wallen - especially visits from misbehaving tourists who ignore the rules. Plus, the crush of “budget tourists” (those who look but do not pay) is bad for business. It seems, too, that there is a growing

discomfort with treating the sex workers as a tourist attraction. They are people, after all.

Yes, they are. People who deserve safe options and full potential.

People from whom we should not walk away or leave behind.

On a cold, rainy November night or any other night of the year. Ω



## Faith and Justice Summit on Human Trafficking

A movement has emerged in Connecticut that is addressing human trafficking at every level, and many Christian leaders and organizations have stepped into strategic roles. In this one-day event, join together with other learners, leaders and organizations to learn about the critical role you and your church can have in preventing human trafficking and helping our trafficked brothers and sisters find freedom and restoration. The event will include how to address labor trafficking and the demand side of labor and sex trafficking. Lunch will be provided!

**Saturday March 14th, 2020**

**The Pastoral Center of the Archdiocese of Hartford**

**476 Bloomfield Avenue**

**Bloomfield, CT 06002**

**Saturday, March 14th, 2020, 9:30 am-3:30 pm**

**\$30 per participant (group rates also available)**

### Featured Speakers

**Peter Buck**, of the Interfaith Program at Equal Exchange, will speak on the use of forced child labor and human trafficking in the cacao (chocolate) industry in West Africa, and the alternative to buying “slave chocolate.”

**Lisa Lungren**, Outreach Coordinator for Immigration and Anti-Trafficking, will discuss the forces of demand that enable labor trafficking to flourish, as well as the most common industries where this particular manifestation of modern-day slavery plays out.

**Tomas Perez**, President and Founder of the Epik Project, will discuss his insights and achievements in disrupting the online sex-trafficking business by bringing men into the fight against this exploitation.

In addition, a panel discussion will be held concerning how faith communities are working together with state and nonprofit organizations in CT. **Anmarie Boulay**, The Underground CT, Founder and President, and **Yvette Young**, Connecticut’s Human Anti-trafficking Response Team will be presenting.

[Office for Catholic Social Justice Ministry](#) - Archdiocese of Hartford

467 Bloomfield Ave, Bloomfield, CT 06002, (860) 242-5573, [info.ocsjm@aohct.org](mailto:info.ocsjm@aohct.org)

## Trafficking, cont.

society should prioritize in our efforts to address this problem.

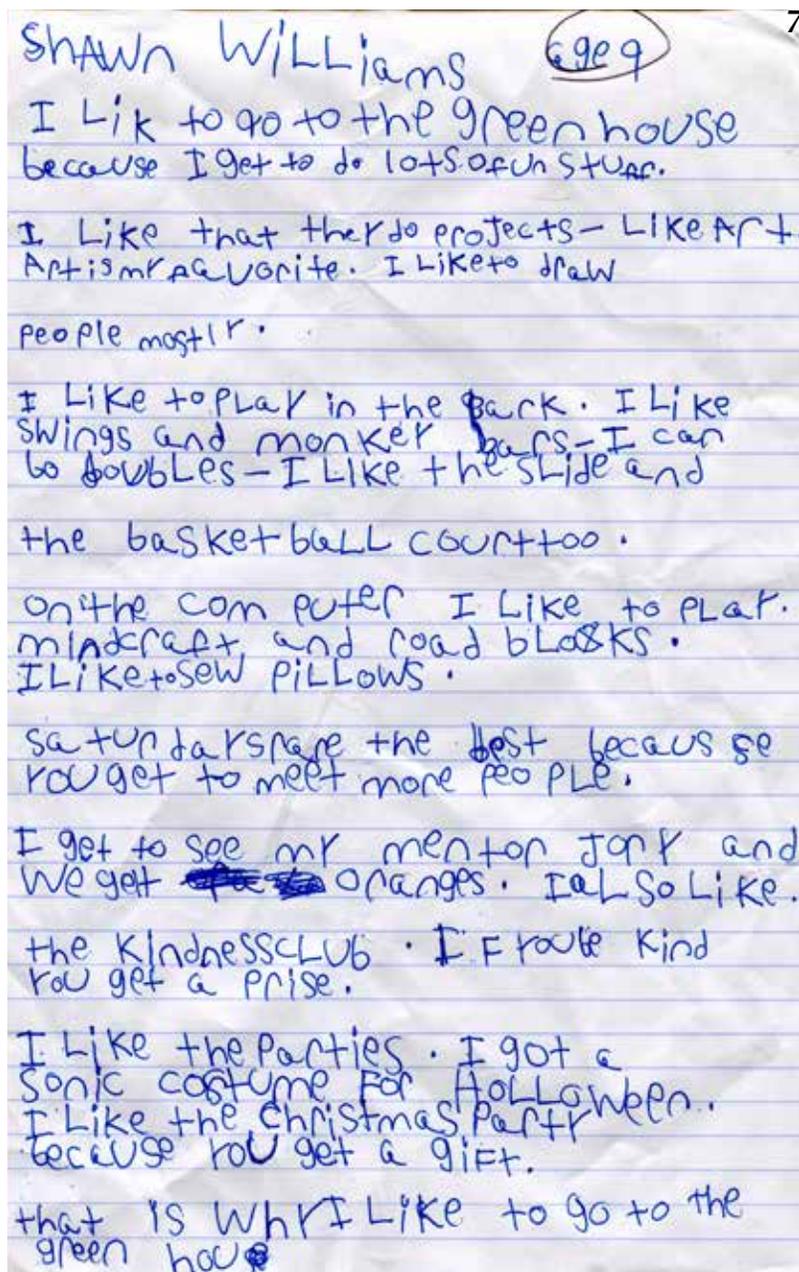
When asked what exploited and trafficked youth need, not one respondent in our study said they needed to see their traffickers punished—and certainly none of them mentioned increasing sentencing. While certainly justice is critical to some survivors' recovery processes, the sort of prevention through punishment plan that legislators focus on was not at the front of the minds of the survivors with whom we spoke.

Instead, what young adult survivors of human trafficking told us was that they needed jobs and a living wage. The majority of those who were trafficked were seeking work opportunities when they were approached by their traffickers. In fact, 91 percent of the youth we interviewed had been approached by someone offering them a job opportunity that sounded (or turned out to be) too good to be true. Some of the young people were resilient against such offers. But too many others were so desperate for a reasonable wage or a place to stay that they were willing to take the risk of accepting a job, even when the offer seemed suspicious, dangerous, or even illegal. Others felt forced to turn to trading sex because they could not find legitimate work.

Indeed, the vast majority of the youth we interviewed indicated that they encountered people who took advantage of them when they were searching for work and housing. A

lack of job opportunities converged with a lack of computer literacy and job skills and a lack of affordable housing to lead to vulnerability.

What did young trafficked people need to avoid and escape traffickers? They needed jobs and job skills. They sought training on how to identify a safe job and additional job skills training programs to help them avoid labor traffickers, sex traffickers, and other exploitative labor situations. They needed a living wage, so that when they did find work, they were able to afford rent



and food. They needed a support system that could help them identify fraudulent offers and places to stay when they ran into trouble.Ω

## Good Friday Stations of the Cross for Peace

✠ Please join us on **Good Friday, April 10** in praying the Stations of the Cross at the Naval Submarine Base in Groton. **We will gather at 10:00** at the corner of Rte 12 and Crystal Lake Rd.

✠ Please join Brian every Friday from 11:30- 12:30 to vigil for peace outside the Federal Building, 450 Main St. Hartford.

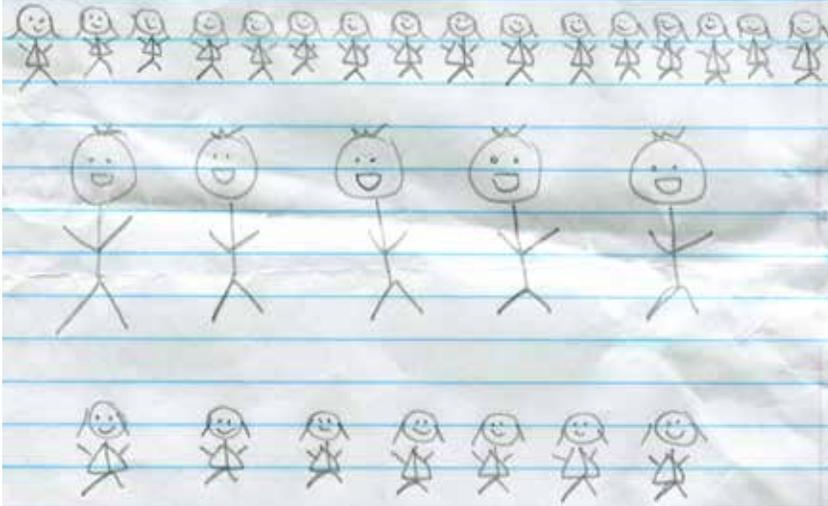
If someone walks into a church and destroys the altar and statues, etc., it is called a sacrilege. A sacrilege is the desecration of what is considered holy. But for the Christian, the ultimate place of the holy is the human person. We are the "temples of the Holy Spirit." Therefore, every act of violence toward a human being is an act of desecration of the temple of God in this world. War for the Christian is always sacrilege. There is no such absurdity as a Christian ethic of justified sacrilege.

-Fr. George Zabelka, penitent for blessing the "Little Boy" nuclear bomb that killed 146,000 people.

# Why I Like the Green House

## Tylesha, age 7

I love going to the Green House because I can do my homework and be a helper. I say what I am thankful for and say the rules to the Green House in circle. I can have a fun day. I have lots of friends and I make new friends and they keep us safe when we are crossing the street... We get to do Halloween parties, Christmas parties, Thanksgiving. We love each other as a ginormous family. I love everyone in the Green House. Ω



Tylesha (right) and her “ginormous family” (above).



## Jamaria, age 12

I like to come to you because it is very easy to meet new and friendly people. Everyone is helpful and supportive, which I am grateful for. I also like to come here to play with my friends on the playground or go to the art room to do new activities on different days. Another reason why I love the Green House is that they are generous with giving away food and clothes. they also help with school supplies. When it's getting close to holidays, like Christmas and Easter, we celebrate together. Also, I like the summer camp because there are many things you can do like going fishing, getting ice-cream, playing man-hunt, going to the movie theater, going swimming, and playing volleyball. thanks for giving me the opportunity to have fun. Ω

## Passion, age 8

What I like about the Green House is playing outside on the playground and swinging, and playing in the play room. Also, going upstairs and doing art. Also, upstairs we play on the computer. One day I was at the Christmas party and it was fun. I was going into

the woods and I ate pizza. And they also gave us Christmas presents. And we had a snowball fight and we got to play with our friends and cousins (ed note: spelled “cousants” :) and brothers and sisters. Then after all the cleaned up and we dust all the tables and picked up the trash on the ground . Also, when we were done they gave us hot chocolate with whipped cream and marshmallows and cookies. And then we packed up and said

good bye to everybody and went home. We had pleasant dreams all night long! Ω

## alternate names for black boys

1. *smoke above the burning bush*
2. *archnemesiis of summer night*
3. *first son of soil*
4. *coal awaiting spark & wind*
5. *guilty until proven dead*
6. *oil heavy starlight*
7. *monster until proven ghost*
8. *gone*
9. *phoenix who forgets to un-ash*
10. *going, going, gone*
11. *gods of shovels & black veils*
12. *what once passed for kindling*
13. *fireworks at dawn*
14. *brilliant, shadow hued coral*
15. *(I thought to leave this blank but who am I to name us nothing?)*
16. *prayer who learned to bite & sprint*
17. *a mother's joy & clutched breath*

[Danez Smith](#)

## Notes, cont.

was made of when she spent an hour helping one of our most challenged littles read a short book so she could check off the 20 minutes her homework worksheet required. She repeatedly helped our friend refocus despite the distractions of bacteria growing science projects and quesadillas for snack.

Maria Karas, my niece that has pretty much grown up at the Worker, has also been doing an internship for her senior project as a nutrition student at UConn. I have to laugh because her cooking project started out resembling the Mama chick "who will help me cook my bread" story from Aesop's fables. There were not many takers to help cook the food... BUT everyone wanted to eat it! As the weeks went on the carrot cookies and rice and beans lured the helpers into the activity!!

Dwight and I are slowly polyurethaning the new murals our teens have been working on. Everyone loves to see their art making the backyard more beautiful! We are also in the midst of creating paintings for an art show at the graduation party! There may be a few available for sale!

Sasean has begun to meet with a crew of young adults that are hosting teen night. A wonderful mentoring / support opportunity for our older kids.

We are grateful for all the folks who gave support to our guest "H." (especially Mallory from UConn law school and Chris Patee). H has been able to win her asylum case and earn an almost impossible to get Green Card, and find work. She will be moving into her own space soon. We are putting together some things for her and hoping someone might have a small table, pans, and 2 chairs to share. We will help her with a bed, bedding, and some dishware. H is a wonderful living example of what lies we are told about refugees and immigrants.

She has worked so hard and taken every single opportunity for learning and training she could find. Her courage and spirit are an inspiration to all of us at HCW.

In these days of politicians who propagate hate, racism, and fear mongering we at the Worker plant a different kind of seed. The work we do is small scale, but we are growing the beloved community. We are empowering each other with hope, joy and laughter. We are stand-

(and already are) from the effects of immoral budgets based on profits for the politicians. A congressional study has shown that since 9-11 this nations spends [nine thousand dollars a second on wars](#). From the vantage point of the apartheid of the North End we know a military budget like that is why Hartford has underfunded schools and a low literacy rate. It's why an addict has to wait 6 moths in jail for a treatment bed in a facility. Its why jail is where we

put our mentally ill. It keeps our doorbell ringing with people desperate for help with security deposits, electric bills, college loans, and prescription meds. We must choose: God or mammon. Choosing God means caring for the Body of Christ- God's people. Faith in God means a life of putting our energy into our brothers and sisters, not locking them in cages and building bombs to kill them. I leave you a second with a quote from [Walter Bruggemann](#).

*"The truth is that frightened people will never turn the world, because they use too much energy on protection of self. It is the vocation of the baptized, the known and named and unafraid, to make the world whole: The unafraid are open to the neighbor, while the frightened are defending themselves from the neighbor. The unafraid are generous in the community, while the frightened, in their anxiety, must keep and store and accumulate, to make themselves safe. The unafraid commit acts of compassion and mercy, while the frightened do not notice those in need. The unafraid are committed to justice for*

*the weak and the poor, while the frightened see them only as threats. The unafraid pray in the morning, care through the day, and rejoice at night in thanks and praise, while the frightened are endlessly restless and dissatisfied. So dear people, each of you: Do not fear! I have called you by name; you are mine!"*Ω



**Maria and Samiah making healthy snacks after school.**

ing together and practicing resurrection in the face of grinding poverty in a nation that has abandoned the poor and marginalized. We are calling out to our brothers and sisters to work for an economy that is not based on maximized profits but mutual care, as Christ called his first disciples to do. We are trying to connect with each other to save those who will suffer most

18 Clark St.  
Hartford, CT 06120  
(860) 724-7066

NONPROFIT ORG  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
HARTFORD, CT  
PERMIT NO. 1275

Return Service Requested

## Notes From De Porres House

*Jackie Allen-Douçot*

I am writing this as Lent quickly approaches. I seem to feel the heaviness of the world as I listen to the swirl of the news. Racism and anti-Semitism are on the rise. It is hard not to feel like the earth is being crucified when one watches the footage of fires ravaging Australia or hears news of the assassinations of indigenous people who are struggling to save their land from corporate pillagers. I have been finding comfort in the Lenten reflections of Walter Brueggemann. Here is a wonderful quote...

*"I imagine Lent for you and for me as a great departure from the greedy, anxious anti-neighborliness of our economy, a great departure from our exclusionary politics that fears the other, a great departure from self-indulgent consumerism that devours creation. And then an arrival in a new neighborhood, because it is a gift to be simple, it is a gift to be free; it is a gift to come down where we ought to be."*

Here at the Worker I try to find those moments of grace that keep my heart in that blessed space. Easter is about building that new neighborhood! One of my favorite things to do is art with the kids. We have two new little girls that are 5 and 8 years old and



they LOVE to paint. Last week one of the girls told me that she tried to tell a few kids in their building about the Green House but none of them would believe her! I asked her what she had told them. She said "I told them they could come to a house that you walk in the door and everyone says hello to you. Then they give you fruit and snacks and go to a room filled with books and toys!! Upstairs you can paint and do art every day!!" She looked sad and said "but they could not believe it." I smiled for days.

January was a tough month because our college volunteers had not yet returned. We also lost about 10 of the kids in our program to the CRT program across the street. It is tough to compete with the sugar snacks and unlimited computer time they allow. Not to be outdone, we started a weekly rewards program that involves movies and ice cream for participation. We are starting a poetry/rap contest on March 1st. It will be exciting to see what they write and perform.

I wish Ammon was here to do [spoken word](#) with

them!

We have a new intern from U of H joining us until May. She let us know right away what she **(Please see: Notes, p9)**