



July 1, 2013

Dear Friends,

Erika, one of the beautiful young ladies God has brought to Our Father's Farm, writes the following story. Erika's dream is to work in The Refuge (a home for girls rescued from human trafficking and/or sexual abuse).

Erika's Story:

There is a bird's nest inside the horse feed/tack room. I've listened to the baby birds singing long before I saw them. One day, after my horse encounter, I noticed that one of the baby birds had flown out of the nest. He had flown toward the window, but was stopped by the screen. He was trying with everything in him to get out. He flew between the glass and screen. His mama was on the other side of the window and was a bit panicked as she called to him and danced around. I tried to help the little guy out by cupping my hand gently around his wings and pulling him down. The more I tried to help the more he panicked. Sheila, my encounter facilitator, helped me and we were able to finally get him out of the window. He ran around the tack room passing the door several times. After a few passes, he finally went out the door running, flying and tumbling. He landed, exhausted, in the mulch and we could see he was breathing really hard. We were concerned he might have been hurt. We said a quick prayer and blessed him and told him to just rest. After a few moments, that little bird took off flying.

I didn't think much of it until I was telling the story to one of my roommates. It is such a picture of what Jesus has done for me. The past few months, I've escaped from my nest and I'm learning to fly, trust and to be free—just like that little bird.

There is something that comes from a season of the darkest of dark. Something that is undeniable when you really stop to look for it. And that something is the fingerprint of God. For the past two months, I've been on a journey that all I can do is hold tight to those moments where I know, without a doubt, that God is moving in my life. I first escaped the abuse 3 years ago, but never truly got freedom. I ended up right back in the middle of it. But recently I was truly set free from my past and shown a future I never could have dreamed of.

I grew up always feeling like someone's property. I was sexually abused as far back as I can remember. The abuse continued until I was 19. From age 12 to 19, I was sold. The man who claimed me as his property was the one man I should have been able to trust. He was family. I felt strongly about being there for the rest of my family and continuously put myself between him and others. I never went to school; I was kept at home to do chores in the day and sold at night. I could say more about my past, but it's really not the past that I want to share about. It is what God is doing for me that I want to proclaim.

This past year I've walked through some of my darkest days. I had been in touch with the farm off and on for a few years but could never find enough trust to stay very long. I was constantly anxious and would try to fake it to make it. I ran away many times and kept most people at a distance. I didn't want to tell anyone about my past and couldn't move forward without doing so. I was stuck. I came and went several times, always being welcomed back with love, mercy and grace. But this past year brought me to the place where I had to make a choice. I couldn't keep living in the abuse. I had become pregnant by this family member in July. And at the end of September, I lost the baby. I was losing all ground that I had gained in healing. I was worse off than I had ever been. I had kept what happened a secret from everyone and hadn't been in contact with anyone from the farm. I was scared, alone and hopeless. I finally told them what was happening and Rhonda (mom) invited me back. I told them no. I felt so unworthy. I felt like I had wasted their time and was a disappointment.

I stayed away for a few more months and then started to visit again. It was the best and worse feeling in the world. I was happy to be in safety and yet so disconnected from everyone because I chose to hide everything. The baby's due date came around and I had told one of the girls on the farm that I couldn't make it through the day alone. So I spent that week on the farm. During that time, I got the news that my only sister had suddenly passed away. I was so angry that God didn't set her free like He was doing for me. (I realized later that God had actually set her free...in ways that I don't even know).

I haven't left the farm; I've been here ever since that day. One month after my sister passed, my mom suddenly passed away. I felt like it wasn't fair. My whole family was gone except for the person who had abused me. Why would God leave only him and me? The night of my mom's funeral the police called to tell me that he had been arrested for his crimes against me. Not long after, another family member who had also been involved was arrested.

My entire family had been taken from me and the pain was unbearable. But this small voice said, "You're free." I asked God why He didn't take the people who had hurt me. He responded, "Your mom and sister knew Me. I don't want anyone to spend eternity in hell and this is his chance to change and follow Me."

God is moving with justice. He is comforting the hurt and holding me through this darkness and I can truly see how God is setting me free. I can see how it was truly His great love and mercy that He called my mother and sister home. It was His great love that He is having mercy on those who abused me. He is giving them a second chance just like He gave me.

My story is just beginning. The old chapters have been purged with flame and truth and the new ones are waiting to be written. I am like that little bird. The bird had to trust his wings when he first left the nest. He hit the screen and was trapped between the glass and the screen. It wasn't the bird's fault that he got trapped. He was taken outside of his natural environment. He worked so hard to break through his cage. He found that his journey wasn't easy. Without help, he was held captive.

That's what has happened to me and so many other girls. We are born into it—a family member, friend or complete stranger makes the choice for us. We didn't choose to be held captive. I was born into and held there until Jesus came in and gently pulled me out and set me free. I am resting now, just like the little baby bird did when he found the door. He ran in circles before he had the chance to truly be free. He then had to trust his wings to fly. This is such a picture of me and every other girl held captive. I had no idea where to go or who would help. I didn't trust myself or anyone else. I ran in circles in my mind and in life; just like that baby bird. I debated if I could make it or if I was better off a slave. Freedom is terrifying. And then we find the door—the world is big and doesn't take much notice of a girl on the street. It pays no attention to the weak. But Jesus does. He always sees and cares.

Jesus brought me here. And, like the little bird, I had to trust the hands that offered to help. I had to lay it all on the line in order to have a chance to live. I was born to fly. And now, every day, I go to bed in safety and wake up in safety. Every day, I never fear being beaten or raped. I don't fear death or life. I have been made into a new creation and can now learn to fly—not just for survival, but to soar into the plans God has for my life.

There are so many girls, who right now, are being used. So many that are still held captive, many are being abused and sold. But those girls hold value beyond comprehension. They are beautiful and their time of freedom is coming. Please join others and me in praying for the funds so God can finish His Refuge building so many more girls like me can have a home filled with love and safety. No one told me to ask this—it's my cry—because time is running out for these girls. I know what it's like. They are running out of hope. And this is what I want to ask. Please pray for the girls that will be coming to be able to hold on. But also please pray about helping us complete the Refuge building. So they can come home...this year. It's a big dream, but we have a big God, who has big plans for us all.

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*Rhonda will teach Tree of Life seminar Aug 9-10! Liberty Christian Life Center 572 E. Park St in Olathe 913-764-4359*

#### **2013 CALENDAR:**

*ENCOUNTERING GOD TRAINING SEMINARS* (men & women) Friday & Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Learn how to encounter God in ways that not only bring healing and deliverance, but also produces an intimate relationship with Him. Register online at [www.harvesthome.org](http://www.harvesthome.org) (registration closes when we reach our seating capacity of 75)

- July 12 & 13 Encountering God Seminar
- Sept. 6 & 7 Encountering God Seminar

*ADVANCED FACILITATOR TRAINING* (for men & women)

Room and board are provided on Our Father's Farm while you go through intense training, which equips you to facilitate Encountering God sessions. You must have attended an Encountering God Training Seminar in order to attend. Registration is limited to 20. For more information or to request an application email: [sheila.mullinax@harvesthome.org](mailto:sheila.mullinax@harvesthome.org)

- Aug. 17-23 Advanced Facilitator Training
- Oct. 5-11 Advanced Facilitator Training

*HEALING INTENSIVES:* (an intense immersion into the heart of God) For women only...sorry guys.

Room and board is provided while you go through classes and various inner healing ministries on Our Father's Farm. Registration is limited. For more information or to receive an application, please email: [sheila.mullinax@harvesthome.org](mailto:sheila.mullinax@harvesthome.org) This will be our last intensive for 2013.

- Sept. 5-26 Healing Intensive

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