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# #GIVING TUESDAY

Baptist Women aids in the rescue of victims of sex trafficking

▲ *At a beach in the Dominican Republic*

*Photo courtesy IJM Canada*

*On Tuesday, November 27, 2018 join Baptist Women and raise funds for International Justice Mission Canada's (IJM) rescue operations in the Dominican Republic.*

*It takes an average of \$8,200 CDN to fund a rescue, which includes investigations, day-of support and logistics, and immediate short-term aftercare for survivors.*

*This year, an anonymous donor has offered up to \$4,000 to match your donations.*

*In October, you'll find resources and a video on our website at [baptistwomen.com/causes](http://baptistwomen.com/causes).*

*In our November/December 2018 issue we'll feature the story of one woman from the Dominican Republic who was rescued and supported by IJM.*

*"He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners . . . to set the oppressed free." Luke 4:18 (NIV)*

## Why this particular project for #GivingTuesday?

### 1. We saw trafficking while on short-term mission

On the last Saturday of Baptist Women's mission trip to Haiti last year, our hosts took us to Port Salut, a popular destination for local Haitians as well as tourists, due to its beaches. As we ate lunch, we saw two young Haitian women—girls really—having lunch with two older white men, possibly from Quebec. One woman barely looked up as she hunched over her plate, disengaged from the conversation of the men and nodding when spoken to. When she tried to get up, another Haitian woman standing nearby reminded her to stay sitting . . . and eating.

We looked on . . . uncomfortable, caught between wanting to confront the men and not wanting to provoke a beating later for the girl. We had a whispered conversation about what we might do. There was no on-the-ground support . . . funds, food. With heavy hearts we climbed into the truck, leaving her there defenseless.

That girl remains on our minds. One of the lessons we learned that day was to travel with the international hotline number for victims of human trafficking. After we returned to Canada, we searched to find a ministry doing rescue work in Haiti that would help women like those at the beach. Although we found that Haiti does not yet have infrastructure to rescue and protect victims of violence like that teen, its neighbour, the Dominican Republic does. In 2013, International Justice Mission Canada opened an office in the Dominican Republic to support and enhance that infrastructure.

### 2. We will build on our history of effective work in the area of ending human trafficking

Baptist Women has effectively supported anti-human trafficking efforts globally and in Canada for decades. Since 2011, we've done awareness and advocacy/abolitionist campaigns including letter writing to MPs, hosting events and forums, and taking part in silent stand-ins during the Pan Am Games in 2015. We've published award-winning series on pornography and

abuse in *live* magazine. We joined to efforts to bring Bill C-36 to fruition and mobilized our churches to begin the conversation about ending the demand for paid sex.

### 3. This project allows us to move to the next steps: rescue and structural change

Our funds will pay for IJM staff to work with local police to uncover sex trafficking cases and fund one rescue and bring survivors to a safe place (the number of victims rescued in one operation varies).

#### *It will work toward a stronger justice system*

Our funds will also support the Dominican IJM staff as they work to improve the overall justice system—police, courts and social service providers—so that it protects all victims of trafficking, not just those who are helped through individual cases.

This approach has proven effective. For example:

- After just four years of IJM work in Cebu, Philippines, there has been a 79 percent drop in the number of minors available for commercial sex.
- After 12 years of work in Cambodia, the prevalence of children under 15 in the sex trade dropped from a range of 15-30 percent to less than one-tenth of one percent (0.1%)

#### *It will help restore survivors*

IJM works with each survivor to create a holistic treatment plan for physical health, trauma-focused counselling, personal security, economic self-sufficiency, and ultimately, reintegration back into a community where they can thrive.

#### *It will bring criminals to justice*

Crimes are reported to the Public Ministry fiscales (public prosecutors) and Dominican police. IJM lawyers help collect evidence to build a strong case. They also help prepare survivors who choose to share the truth in court.

### 4. This project is immersed in prayer

Petra Kooman, director of marketing and public

## CONNECT TO MISSION

relations for IJM Canada says, “It is possible to change the world. We’ve seen amazing transformation in countries where no one believed it was possible. But sometimes it can take a really long time. That’s why prayer is so crucial to the rhythm of our day. We start every day with 30 minutes of stillness, where our staff take time to pray and seek God about what He wants to do through them that day. Then, two hours later, we meet as an entire team to pray for the work around the world. If we believe that God can move, we have to ask Him and so we take time out of our day to do just that. I truly believe that we have seen miraculous breakthroughs because we have committed our work to prayer.” ■

► *Deisy is a survivor of commercial sexual exploitation. She was exploited for approximately eight months before she was rescued.*

