

# Heartwings Verein

CHANGE IS POSSIBLE - NEWSLETTER 1/2021



## „I no longer want to be silent!“

Lara goes to the police. It was a long and painful process until she dared to take this step. But now Lara is sure about her decision: „I no longer want to be silent. These perpetrators continue to push young women into forced prostitution. I want to raise my voice to stop this misery!“

Lara makes a criminal complaint. A specialized victim counseling center is called in. A number of times Lara tells her story. But instead of supporting her, the victim support organization tells her that sexual violence is part of her occupational risk, that she is not a typical victim of human trafficking and due to lack of evidence anyway would lose in court against her tormentors.

Lara was abused as a child and taken to Europe as a young woman by human traffickers. For years she worked in brothels in various countries in Europe. Her will has been broken by Loverboy pimps. She experienced massive sexual violence and was pressured by manipulative Loverboys. The consequences: A severe trauma and broken dreams. Several times Lara tried to get out. She never made it. She therefore also became part of this criminal system and put other prostitutes under pressure. Lara had panic attacks and felt deep hopelessness. Repeatedly she tried to escape prostitution. Without success! Until she finally reached out to Heartwings in Switzerland. The first time in her life Lara got support. In the meantime, she has found a good job. We can literally see how she blooms. Lara is now also starting to deal with her past, demanding more justice for herself, so that other women do not have to experience the same things.



After the first crushing rejection by the specialized counselling center, she turns to other victim counselling centers. But they are not willing to help her, for fear of the dark networks in the red-light district.

We ask ourselves: Why is it that victims who stand up and demand justice are discouraged and silenced by the very agencies that should be supporting them? Does our law rather protect perpetrators and punters instead of victims?

We need courageous advocates who will stand beside these women with us, who will not be intimidated and who will not give up until the perpetrators receive their deserved verdict. We need judges and politicians who stand up for justice. And we need a society that believes women who find the courage to tell what they have experienced in prostitution.

God provides justice for the oppressed, liberates the captives, and protects the defenseless.

# EMERGENCY

Most of the women work illegally on Langstrasse and the surrounding area. Citizens from EU/EFTA countries are actually granted an L permit in Switzerland if they can present a valid work and tenancy contract. As a result, the respective person becomes liable to pay taxes in Switzerland and must, among other obligations, be covered by health insurance. However, the laws of the red-light district work differently.

The women's needs are ruthlessly exploited, forcing them from their home countries to Switzerland: Without the hurdles of a deposit or an extract from the debt collection register, they get a place to work and sleep in the flats at Langstrasse. They do not receive a rental contract for the overpriced and dirty rooms they share with others. The women do not speak the language, do not know their rights, and are not registered in Switzerland.



Over and over again, these women have to pay horrendous fines of over 1200 Swiss francs for unlawful prostitution and for their illegal stay in Switzerland. Thus, all prostitution newcomers enter directly into a vicious circle from which there is no escape: Without work - no housing, without housing - no permit and without permit it hails fines that cannot be paid.

All hope is destroyed. In addition, there is violence, inferiority, psychological problems, drugs, and the permanent feeling of being the scum of society, which increasingly becomes the sad identity of these women.

**I have been a prostitute since I turned 15. I don't have a high school diploma, I can't do anything else - this is my life, it will always be like this. I am stupid. Everyone says I'm stupid. For 10 years I've been working as a prostitute in a room at Langstrasse. I don't dare to go out and meet normal people and look at the city.**

**I was stupid that I ended up in this job as a prostitute. I have a master's degree, speak many languages, I am more intelligent than all my customers. I didn't choose this job, life forced me into it. I tried to find other jobs. Did not work out. Should I write in my resume "seven years at Langstrasse"?!**

Since a long time, we at Heartwings are dreaming to offer women more than just exit assistance. The current hardship has led to a change in thinking among these women. They all want to get out, now! We know that it is the time for us to act boldly and turn our dreams into reality. No employers are willing to hire these women. Therefore, we will create jobs. There are no apartments where these women can live. So we will be their landlords. We may only have a small office on Langstrasse and are not millionaires. But we have a strong team of staff and volunteers, we have a dream in our hearts and we have a great God to whom nothing is impossible.

**Do not think too often about what you lack,  
but about what you have. - Marc Aurel**



Twice a week a group of women visit our office to learn German. They are taught by a German teacher and receive help from one of our employees.

**Now I understand when customer say: «Take off trousers», «back» or «you me too». Now I no longer feel stupid – I can say what I want. Is important to learn German.**

Three women from the red-light district are now under contract with Heartwings. At the signing of the contract, every single one of these women burst into tears of joy. With a workload of up to 40%, they work as housekeepers. After the cleaning training given by a specialist, the women passionately cleaned the apartments of our first clients. We are especially pleased that men are our first customers to have their homes cleaned.



Are you looking for a one-time or regular cleaning help?

We offer for 30 CHF per hour/p.p. cleaning services in Zurich and the surrounding areas.

The entire amount will directly benefit the women. The women are accompanied and instructed by a Heartwings team member. For a smooth cleaning service, we ask you to be out of your home.



**On street man pay me dirty money for sex. Now I receive real money for normal work. I have salary and contract. Is my first employment contract. Even now have real vacations with money.**



To enable women to leave illegality, they need respectable housing with rents that do not drive them into poverty. Heartwings provides the property owner with the necessary finances, references and collateral as the primary tenant.

Are you a property owner and want to use your real estate to bring change to the lives of these women? We are looking for affordable apartments in the area of Zurich.

**I already feel very comfortable and this is for once a real home. It's super nice here and gives me security. This is the place where I will be restored. Now everything will be fine.**



If you want to help other people, it's like swimming out into the open sea. With the best intentions, we try to help, give advice and solve problems. But the waves are crashing over us. We see so much hardship and pain that we are overwhelmed by it. We experience that the help we offer is rejected. On top of that we have our own limitations. Resignation grips us - we swim back to the shore. And then we stand there: Knocked down and discouraged. We gaze at the sea, see the waves. Wondering how we ever ventured out into the open sea. We see the sexual violence, the traumas, the pimps and in the midst of it these women. But after all we have experienced, we do not dare to go out a second time. Some then throw life jackets to the women. They say: „Prostitution is the way it is. Violence and trauma are occupational risks.“



But even though they give women life jackets in the form of free condoms and free medical checkups - they leave them in the storm and uncertainty.

We as Heartwings team are convinced that we need to go into the sea. To that place outside our comfort zone. To reach out to any woman who wants solid ground under her feet. But at the same time we know, that we can only do this if we cling tightly to the hand of God. Knowing that he holds us.

Only when we are close to him we can help the women who stretch out their hands to us. We know: It will not drag us down, our joy for life will remain and he will tell us what the support for each of these women is to be. He knows what they need because they are His daughters. He loves them as He loves us. He knows their wishes and dreams. He wants to heal them and give them a future, just like every other human being. On the long way back to the shore, we will experience painful moments and setbacks together with the women. Yet we know: Our heart is safe. God gives us the strength so that we do not let go of the woman's hand until she stands secure - in all her beauty. Until she can see the land and a golden, powerful wave carries her to a safe life.



**In financial terms we are courageously taking a step onto the water with the projects presented here. Thank you for supporting us financially and promoting our projects. Every single bit contributes to the creation of great big things.**

#### Account details for donations

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