

'Charisma' Article Inspires 'Safe House' for Girls

Carl Keyes has been working tirelessly to change the lives of individuals and communities around the world for decades. Now the founder of Aid for the World, an international  humanitarian-aid organization, is spearheading a project of a different kind in his own backyard: a safe house for young girls rescued from the sex-slave industry.

"I get hundreds of emails every week from people that need help," Keyes says. "Of course, I can't help everybody, but when I read an email about a woman who was trying to rescue girls from forced prostitution and needed help renovating a historic home to house them, it felt right," he adds, noting that the woman, Debbie Colton, had read about his organization in *Charisma* and decided to pursue his help.

"What has happened to these girls is not even human. Family members or boyfriends get young girls hooked on drugs, they are chained to a bed, and 25 to 30 times a day a man comes into their room for sex," Keyes says. "When Debbie told me about this, I hit the ground crying and praying. I had to do something."

Keyes rallied volunteer construction troops to the north central Pennsylvania site where the old home sits. When completed this month, the safe house will be home to eight girls, ages 12 to 15, who the FBI rescued during raids on sex-slave operations. The state classifies the safe house as a group home, which means the girls will remain there until they are able to function in society.

The need is great. According to the FBI, a California human-trafficking organization that was discovered in 2008 physically threatened and beat girls as young as 12 to make

them work as prostitutes—and also threatened them with witchcraft. Estimates for the number of children and teens forced into the sex-slave industry range from 1 million to 5 million.

Colton isn't standing for it. During their 28-year marriage, she and her husband, Danny, have raised more than 70 kids. The former youth pastors have even welcomed into their home girls who have been trafficked by their parents for drug money. Until they did this, she had no idea the sex-slave industry had crept into U.S. borders.

✖ “My husband and I received a prophetic word about five years ago,” Colton says. “The Lord said there was a new ministry on the horizon and not to fear what I would see on the other side, but just to go, and He would go before us and come behind us, and doors would just open. That’s what happened with Carl.”

Although it’s a dangerous ministry—the pimps could seek out the girls and try to drag them back into sex slavery during their stay at the safe house—Colton has no fear. She is following the Spirit of God into this new ministry with a heart of love for these hurting girls.

“We want to build more homes on this land. There’s a huge need for young girls that have been rescued from sex slavery and need a safe place to recover,” Colton says. “They need a place where they can be homeschooled, where they can be counseled and where they can receive God’s love.”