



#GIVINGTUESDAY 2018

Tuesday November 27

#GivingTuesday is an annual global day of giving that gathers the collective power of individuals, communities and organizations to encourage philanthropy and to celebrate generosity worldwide.

In November 2017, Baptist Women took part for the first time ever in this global movement, inviting women to raise funds to support the SKILD Centre for Smart Kids With Learning Differences in Lebanon.

This year Baptist Women invites you to join staff and board on this #GivingTuesday and raise funds to support the rescue work of International Justice Mission Canada in the Dominican Republic.

Why this project for #GivingTuesday?

WE WILL BUILD ON OUR HISTORY of effective work in the area of ending human trafficking and broaden our advocacy efforts as we learn about and get involved in rescue and structural change in the Dominican Republic. Most of all we will grow in prayer.

You'll find the full story behind this project in the September/October issue of this magazine and on our website at baptistwomen.com/causes/advocacy

We already have a matching donor who will match your gifts up to \$4,000.

To get us ready for #GivingTuesday, here's the story of one woman, rescued and being restored through IJM Canada's work in the Dominican Republic.

HOW DO YOU TAKE PART?

1. **READ** the full story behind this project. You'll find information in your September/October issue and on our website.
2. **DECIDE** how you want to give: online or via credit card/cheque
 - a. If you give via credit card/cheque, mail in your support before Tuesday, November 27 so that we can record your gift and have it matched.
 - b. Don't forget to specify #GivingTuesday on your cheque.
3. **SPREAD THE WORD.** Share about this project with your church, women's groups, youth, family and friends. They may want to join.
4. **GIVE.** On #GIVINGTUESDAY go to our website. Donate. For those who give online, there will also be an opportunity to give on Wednesday, November 28. We want as many people as possible to take part in this amazing project.
5. **FOLLOW US.** On #GivingTuesday check our Facebook group regularly as we'll be posting updates on the campaign throughout the day.

Liana's Story

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic—Liana's mother left when she was too young to remember. Her father died in an accident when she was eight. As a result, Liana was raised by her grandparents, poor farmers who live at a curve in the road where motorcycles race by and rattle the walls. In our home, they promised, you will never suffer.

When Liana was still a child, her mother would visit her. "Everything went well for a time," Liana remembers. "She treated us well, with lots of love."

But her mother grew angry over time, drinking heavily and using drugs. "I didn't want to talk to her anymore," Liana says. Her grandfather tried to keep the woman away.

Years passed. The summer of her 14th birthday, Liana travelled to her mother's town to reconnect with her. They had fun, and her mother pressured her to move in with her. Liana did, even enrolling in the local school.

Almost overnight, the house became a prison. In one of the most disturbing cases of sex trafficking IJM has encountered in the Dominican Republic, Liana's own mother enslaved her and began selling her to men for sex.

Day after day—often multiple times a day—Liana was forced to

meet men young and old at hotels, in her home, and in local orange groves. Her mother stood by and supervised while they raped her. When Liana refused, her mom threatened to kill her, hitting her and even once grabbing a knife.

"I obeyed," Liana remembers. "I didn't want her to hurt me."

A turning point

Liana's mother took her cell phone. She was cut off from her grandparents, who couldn't find the house where Liana was trapped. "When my grandfather would call," Liana recalls, "I would begin to cry. [My mom] would take the phone from me and hang it up."

Liana's stepfather also helped run their lucrative sex business. A truck driver, he hauled Liana to men around the country. One of them was his boss, Tito.* After abusing Liana multiple nights, Tito smuggled Liana home as his child bride.

Trafficking is so common in the Dominican Republic that such behaviours often do not even raise eyebrows. IJM's teams are training Dominican police to proactively investigate trafficking and teaching churches to spot and report suspicious activity.

Fortunately, Tito's mother met Liana and began asking questions. When she learned what Liana had been through, the woman

ordered him to return the girl to her grandparents.

Making justice possible

Liana stepped back into her grandparents' house after nearly five months of constant sexual and physical abuse. She told her grandparents everything.

Liana's grandfather reported the crime to the authorities, even as her dangerous mother began threatening to kill him. Within weeks, officials found and arrested the woman.

Government prosecutors told Liana's family the case was too big for them to handle alone. They referred the case to IJM. IJM's legal team took Liana's case and worked with local prosecutors to put her captors on trial.

IJM's investigators helped police search for the fugitive stepfather, who remained at large for more than a year before he was arrested.

Liana was brought to a safe house run by IJM partners. IJM's aftercare team provided Liana with counselling and trauma-focused therapy, beginning a long journey of healing that will continue for years. And after the longest two years of her life, Liana is finally graduating from the seventh grade.

"With therapy, I've been able to overcome what happened to me,"



Photo credit: IJM

Liana and her grandmother, Lupina, make coffee after she has returned to their home.

Liana says confidently. "I think I have a big future ahead of me. Now, I can see myself caring for children, like a pediatrician."

On August 24, 2016 Liana's mother was convicted and sentenced to 15 years in prison for trafficking her daughter. And in November, 2016 Liana graduated from IJM's aftercare program, deemed "restored."

On September 18, 2017 after advocating for more than a year, Liana's stepfather was brought to court, found guilty and sentenced to 15 years in prison for the crime of sex trafficking. With this ruling, both of Liana's abusers have been convicted.

Through the years, IJM's aftercare team has walked with Liana to help her heal from trauma and regain self-confidence, providing her with tools that will help

develop her full potential. In fact, IJM's team has been supporting her in any way possible to ensure she can live a life in freedom.

Today, she is living safely back in her community, enjoying the support of her grandparents and working to earn her high school degree in an alternative education program (equivalent to a GED in the United States). Liana is intelligent, sensitive and tenacious. Her long-term goal is to become a lawyer or a doctor.

We have posted a link to a video showing the impact of IJM Canada's rescue work in the Dominican Republic. Visit baptistwomen.com/causes.

with files from IJM Canada ■

**A pseudonym*