

MAKING THINGS BETTER

Angels of Mercy combats sex trafficking

Each month, the *Democrat and Chronicle's* problem solver, Jon Hand, will profile a group in our community that is dedicated to solving a specific problem.

Starting the series is this month's group, Angels of Mercy.

The group:

Angels of Mercy (angelsofmercyny.org).

What is the problem?

In many countries, especially Third World countries but as close to home as Rochester, sex trafficking of young girls is a major industry.

How is the group solving it?

One of the group's largest initiatives is to sew dresses out of pillowcases, which are delivered to the girls at risk. The new, colorful dresses give sex traffickers the impression that the young girls wearing them have families and are cared for, making them less of

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PROBLEM SOLVER

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a target for trafficking.

What have they done so far?

Started more than five years ago, Angels of Mercy has created and sent more than 130,000 dresses to girls across the globe and locally.

To fit into the group's larger vision — "To reach out to women of all ages who have been affected by life-controlling issues such as violence against women, drug, alcohol and sexual abuse, self-harm and low self-esteem" — they also have started the Stop the Trafficking-End the Cycle campaign, which

includes events to raise awareness about human trafficking, and have created the Butterfly Boutique, which provides business clothing for women seeking employment.

What can you do?

As an individual or a group, you can become a "Change Agent" and volunteer, or donate to support programs and office workers.

Contact:

Mary Jo Colligan, 692 N. Winton Road in Rochester, (585) 730-4556 or visit their website, angelsofmercyny.org.

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If you work with or know a group solving a unique problem in our community, email Hand.



PROVIDED

Mary Jo Colligan started Angels of Mercy to help support struggling women locally and globally.