



Celebrating Women: *Stories of Survival, Stories of Perseverance*

More than just a "Beauty School"

The Beauty School Women's Group was designed as part of IICONN's Survivor Services program to provide educational workshops for survivors of torture and to assist them in meeting their basic needs. The Beauty School provides free health and hygiene products that are not eligible for purchase with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

benefits. The "Beauty" component has evolved to become a safe community for women refugees, asylees, and asylum seekers to make connections and relationships - and fight the social isolation often felt by newcomers to the United States- through pampering and beauty rituals.

A case manager leads the group as clients braid each other's hair, apply makeup, and paint each other's nails. The environment created through social gathering and beauty rituals provides a space for women to feel empowered, learn and heal.



Community friends help celebrate the success of Beauty School.

"Beauty school has been so good to all of these ladies. We get a lot from the beauty school. I am proud of myself for working hard." - Anonymous

Further, the School aspect offers educational workshops on topics selected by the women who attend the Beauty School. Volunteers and IICONN staff present the workshops. Previously, clients have selected and attended these popular lectures:

- Habitat for Humanity: Women Build Day
- Do's and Don'ts of Filing your Taxes
- Healthy Lifestyle: Eating Habits

The Beauty School meets at least bi-weekly. IICONN is looking for guest speakers and donated beauty and hygiene items to distribute to participants. If you would like more information, please contact Program Manager Amanuel Tefferi at ATefferi@iiconn.org.

A Survivor's Story

"I am a survivor of domestic violence, which a lot of women go through in their homes and a lot of them stay quiet and many of them have even lost their lives." Alice is a victim of domestic violence, and also a victim of human trafficking. She wants to share her story; she wants you to know: "it is very important to speak up because there are people out there that defend our women's rights."

Although domestic violence and human trafficking are different forms of victimization, there are similarities and intersections between these types of violence. Foremost is that women comprise the majority of victims of both domestic violence and human trafficking incidents. Often, victims experience violence throughout their entire lifetime.

Working with victims of human trafficking is particularly complex in that it requires a



multidisciplinary approach to meet their needs: housing, medical, trauma, legal,

The most wonderful thing is that [IICONN] gave their support with love and satisfaction.

immigration, education, employment and literacy. Every year, an estimated 14,500 to 17,500 people- primarily women and children- are trafficked in the United States. Human trafficking is a profound problem in Connecticut's cities and town. For more about human trafficking issues in Connecticut read our recent [blog post](#).

"Thanks to the support from [IICONN] I have been able to move on with my life. I feel sure of myself and strong: I have been attending English classes and I have a job. The staff has worked for me to have a work permit and a driver's license so I am able to drive without fear. The most beautiful thing from 2015 to 2016, was that I was able to reunite with my three daughters that came to the United States thanks to the great work from the staff at the International Institute of Connecticut. Today, I am very happy and my daughters are very happy here with me."

If you or someone you know needs help, please contact us at (203)336-0141, the National Trafficking Hotline (888)373-7888 or email projrescue@iiconn.org.

Note: The victim's name and details of her story have been altered to protect her identity.



IICONN counts on donations it receives from generous members of our community to continue our important work. To learn more, and to volunteer, please visit www.iiconn.org. Secure contributions can be made directly to IICONN through our [donation page](#).



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