



September 22, 2015

Carla Tweddale Human Trafficking in Charlotte



Stunned silence. Bewildered eyes and dropped jaws. The speaker held our attention to the point of hearing a pin drop. Not in Charlotte. Certainly and most definitely, not in Charlotte. But what we found out today from Carla Tweddale, President of Lily Pad Haven, Inc., is that it is happening in Charlotte and ~ hold your breath ~ we're #6 or #7 in the entire country for this horrible thing. In fact, North Carolina is #8-#10 within the United States and Charlotte is #1 in North Carolina. Two hundred of us sat transfixed as we heard this awful message. At the end of

the day, what can we do about it and how fast can we act to rid our city of these inhuman beasts who've been conducting such dirty business amidst our unsuspecting selves?

Lily Pad Haven sounds like an idyllic venue where beauty, peace and tranquility reign. What it is, however, is a human trafficking escape hatch where victims of modern-day slavery find shelter and safety while their lives are being re-programmed and restored. Because of strong women such as founder Carla Tweddale, women and children (as young as age six!) who have been slave-traded for sex and have been whipped, handcuffed, locked in closets, deprived of human rights and have suffered the utmost indignities while being threatened and drugged, are given a chance to escape.

We listened with bated breath to the horror stories of coercion tactics used by traffickers who take vulnerable middle-school children to sell them to strangers and even transport them from city-to-city exposing them to the seamiest side of life on the street and scare them with threats to kill or maim them or their families. These monster traffickers pounce on adult women who are often without family support or perhaps are new to our country and find themselves deprived of financial or emotional help. The plan is to make these helpless individuals "feel like someone." They fraudulently relate to them --- pay attention to them --- care for them --- for months at a time and then introduce them to hard drugs. The exploitation continues until the victims who, by then, have been physically and psychologically browbeaten and are frozen with fear, become totally dependent and unable to escape.

When cities host major events - as Charlotte often does - the demand for illicit sex goes up and sex traffickers turn to social media to advertise girls and women to perform horrendous acts for 10-14-18 times per day. Then it's "shuffle them off to another large city" to prevent them from escaping or being found by police, FBI or Homeland Security. It's a cycle that's hard to break and a set-up that's hard to keep track.

Lily Pad Haven, founded in Charlotte in 2012, is a shelter for mental, emotional and physical recuperation where hope may be restored, and bodies and souls may be healed. It offers the basic needs to molested and abused females: air to breathe, safety, clothes on their backs, nourishment, support, guidance, freedom from trauma and - perhaps most important of all - anonymity. Each home houses only a few victims and staff members. The addresses of safe houses are kept secret as are the victims' last names. Each home

is fully furnished with everything that victims require, even such basics as towels & wash cloths, soaps & toiletries, etc. There are at present six such “safe homes” in the Charlotte area with no time limit to the length of stay. Plans are on the drawing board for more transitional houses. John Snyder told us a bit about our heroine, Carla Tweddale, during his introductory remarks. “She has served as a flight nurse for MedCenter Air at Carolinas Medical Center for the past twenty-one years. She is the Base Manager for the MedCenter Air Blue Ridge Base in Hickory where she leads and mentors over twenty-five staff.” According to John, “Carla received her BS in Nursing with a minor in Religion from Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.” John continued, “Lily Pad Haven, Inc. quickly became a passion for Carla and occupies a great deal of her ‘off-time.’ ... She and her husband, Mark, chose to relocate to Charlotte where they raised their family.” The Lily Pad Haven staff consists of Kailey Ellis, Director of Operations and Jennifer Rowell, Volunteer Service Coordinator.

How can we help? Other than the obvious - gifts of money, time and talent - look for red flags when dealing with someone whom you feel may be a victim: no I.D., scared-looking, unaware of where she is, begging for money, working but having no money, using cell phones which are clearly not hers, limited conversation and seemingly no idea what's going on, quite alone. If you suspect someone is a victim, speak up. Call the authorities and sound an Alert.

With the need for additional Lily Pad Haven safe houses, partners are needed to support, staff and fund more of them. Volunteers are needed for helping with teaching nutrition, life skills, meal planning, therapy and simple housekeeping tasks as well as preparation for getting a GED.

The \$32 billion industry known as Human Trafficking is overdue for going out of business. We can play a role. If we dare.

Speaker Write Up: Marilyn Bowler

Head Table: Bill Gill, Daryl Lerner, Tom Bartholomy, John Snyder, Chase Saunders Meg McElwain, Invocation: Leland Park; Visitors & Guests: Lynn Wheeler; Song: Tim Newman; Health, Happiness & History: Luke Maybry; AV: John Tabor & Tom Bartholomy; Photos: Steve Eanes

Club News

Rotary Scholarship Golf Classic will be held Tuesday, September 29 – regular Rotary meeting is cancelled – all are invited to join the fun/BBQ dinner following the tournament around 5PM – Golf Club at Ballantyne.

Luther Fincher introduced Sheriff **Irwin Carmichael** as the club's newest member. Irwin is the 44th Sheriff of Mecklenburg County, a former Firefighter and can be contacted at irwin.carmichael@mecklenburgcountync.gov.

Denise Hallett, Catherine Browning and **Terri DeBoo** were working the golf raffle ticket table and have brought in \$2099 over the last two weeks. You will have one last opportunity to buy a ticket at the tournament.

MeckEd will honor its 2015 Education Champion of the Year, **Dr. Tony Zeiss** at their Annual Community Breakfast on October 6, 8AM-9:30AM, Westin Charlotte. The keynote speaker will be Hill Harper and tickets are available at www.mecked.org.

Books are needed to replenish our Free Little Birdhouse Libraries. Your donations may be dropped off at the October 6th Rotary meeting and any (appropriate) book in good shape (children, adult, special interest, etc.) will be appreciated.

Reminder that nominations for the *Excellence in Leadership Award* should be submitted to **Phil Van Hoy** by October 7th; **Luke Maybry** gave an update on the Thaddeus Tate statue that will be unveiled October 8 at 10AM on the Trail of History.

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS (09/29/15 – 10/05/15)

09/29 Henry Batten, J. C. Cousar, Lee Tabor
09/30 Mark Duncan, Jennifer Marshall
10/01 Street Brewer, Denise Hallett, George MacBain
10/02 Frank Deaton
10/03 Karen Price, Jenn Snyder
10/04 Mike Hawley
10/05 Richard Bullard

UPCOMING ANNIVERSARIES (09/29/15 – 10/05/15)

09/29 Jennifer & Bruce Marshall
10/01 Joan & Kim Kelley
10/02 Dianne & Bill Stegelmeyer, Colleen & Scott Brannan
10/02 Karen & Darren Price
10/03 Betsy & Matt Joyner

Visitors & Guests	12
Club Members	171
Total	183
Percentage	59%

MEMBERSHIP

06/30/2015	319
09/22/2015	326
Net Increase:	+7

New Members: Jennifer Marshall, Greg Reagan, Irwin Carmichael
Resignations:

Guests: Mei C. Xie, Eleni Christakor, Anne Ranson, Kelly Embler, Susan Nestor, Saran Almond, Lauri Eberhart, Pete Gorman, Jamie Earp

UPCOMING LUNCHEONS (www.charlotterotary.org and click on the events tab)

09/29 – GOLF TOURNAMENT – MEETING IS CANCELED

10/06 - District Governor Ineke Wilson
10/13 - Anne Matthews, Past Rotary International Vice President

Photos from our luncheons and other events can be found on **Flickr** [Click here](#)



