



Free At Last!!!

She told me I would never believe her story.

The fact is I don't want to believe it.

A month after she told it to me, I am still trying to come to grips with it.

And, I especially do not want to believe her story happened to anyone, much less someone I know. But it did. It happened to someone I have loved since she was three. Her name is Lixy.

Since I have known her, Lixy has impressed me. Of course, she always made a point to impress me. Starting when she was very young, Lixy would grab one or two of her friends by the hands and giggling they would run out of view. Emerging with their best stage faces forward, the girls entertained me with song and dance. It was always a new dance and a new song and Lixy was always the ring leader.



I never saw her without a smile on her face. I never heard her complain about a thing. She was grateful, polite, an excellent student, and creative. One day, Lixy disappeared from our center for a long while, as did her friends who were saddled with caring for siblings. Once in a while the friends returned to the center only to disappear again, but Lixy was no longer in Linaca.

From birth, Lixy's father wanted nothing to do with her. At two months, her mother also declared her a complete nuisance, abandoning Lixy to the grandparents - who by the way, also wanted nothing to do with her. Lixy's parents never left town, they simply ignored her. When they did deign to speak to their daughter, they repeatedly informed her she had been nothing but a bother from the day she was born. To this day, no one has ever celebrated her birthday...

One day complete stranger appeared at the door of Lixy's grandparents' home. The woman was not known in Linaca. She asked the grandparents if she could take Lixy away to San Pedro Sula - many hours by car from Linaca. Claiming she would see to Lixy's education, she said only needed a little help around the home in exchange.

At this point, I was so shocked by the story, I never asked if the grandparents were paid anything... But Lixy was sent packing with a complete stranger at the tender age of 11.

Arriving in San Pedro, Lixy was immediately thrust into life worse than a slave. The child, who was already severely malnourished, was never fed. She was placed in charge of all domestic chores in the home. Bedtime was from 1 a.m. to 3 a.m. Her bed was the cold tile floor with a small rag for a cover.

The man of the house took pity on Lixy and

snuck a little food to her and gave her a few cents from time to time so that she could buy food. The *one time* the woman of the house offered to feed her, Lixy said she had a very bad feeling. She gave the food to a dog and the next day the dog was dead.

The family had money. There was a pool in the home. The woman tried to drown Lixy in it, until a neighbor saw and intervened.

Driving Lixy to a remote town far away, the woman told her to get out of the car. She was being abandoned. Lixy had no clothes, no money, no way to find her way back to Linaca. While the woman was away from the vehicle, Lixy climbed into the truck bed and hid. Arriving at home, the woman discovered Lixy and beat her.

Once, when Lixy was alone, the women sent a group of three drunken men into the house. However, they were so inebriated Lixy was able to make her escape.

Little, innocent, 11-year-old Lixy was beaten, starved, burned with an iron, locked in the home with bars on the windows and a deliberate fire set. There is more to all those stories, but honestly, I don't want to remember.

After months on end of abuse and terror, mercifully Lixy learned that a neighbor, who was a doctor from Danli, was returning home for a short visit. Lixy asked the doctor to take her along. Because the doctor agreed, the woman of the house could not deny Lixy, but threatened to harm her and her family if she did not return. Keeping every piece of clothing, possession and identification paper Lixy owned was her means of getting Lixy to return. Or so she thought.

But by the grace of God, she did not return.

Reluctantly, the grandparents allowed Lixy to remain with them in Linaca. At that point, Lixy was behind in school due to the schedule she had to keep in San Pedro. But Lixy was determined. All she ever wanted was to go to school. So she went to night school, worked days, and caught up to her grade.

Lixy then wanted to enter high school but her grandparents refused. She came back to the center and asked for our help. It took everything in their power, but our team convinced the grandparents to let Lixy return to our center and we would pay for all her schooling expenses.

No one at the center had any idea what happened to Lixy. Not one to complain, she never told a soul what happened to her during the time she was gone. Since Lixy always wore a huge smile, did so well in school, and was such an all around delight, no one even thought to ask any questions.

I was thrilled to see Lixy back, but shocked that the tiny little girl I knew had grown into a lanky teen. Not so surprising was that skinny girl still loved to sing! At every talent show and fiesta since she returned, Lixy has been part of a dance team or sang a solo.

Last month she was the star of a drama our teens wrote, directed, and performed. Lixy played a girl



who had it all and became a skid row drunk. I was amazed at her acting ability. She was

tremendous. Little did I know the pain she could access in her soul to turn out such a performance...

While the rest of the teens at our center socialized



after tutoring the children or finishing their own homework, Lixy picked up a mop and helped clean the center. Her work ethic was so strong I thought someone was paying her, until I asked and the team told me, "That's just how she is".

Lixy never stopped smiling or working. She excelled at every assignment we gave her at the center. Recently she beat out every teen in the center on a very difficult test. Kids who have been with us the years she was gone and who have had the benefit of repeated instruction on the topics covered did not fare as well as Lixy.

The day that I asked Lixy to tell me something about her life, she seemed relieved that someone wanted to hear her story. Her demeanor was so mature, the way she told the story was like someone much older and far removed from the trauma. I imagine there is still some healing work to be done.

The words tumbled out so fast, I had to go get Jose because I could not believe what I was hearing. Hoping I had misunderstood, he confirmed my fears. We both sat there in tears, so shocked we could barely form words to ask

questions. My heart hurts and chest tightens as I recall her story and tell it here.

What a miracle it is this malnourished child has a brain at all. What a miracle this "nuisance and bother" has any self-esteem at all, much less a healthy one! What a miracle it is she has escaped repeated assaults and a minimum of four attempts on her life.

Lixy is a living, breathing miracle.

She wants to be a singer and who knows, maybe she will get another miracle. But as a fallback, I asked if she would be interested in a career as a counselor or therapist.

It was something she had never considered but brightened at the idea. Lixy now believes that someday all the tragedy in her own life will be used to heal the wounds of others.



We have learned that what happened to Lixy is not that unusual in Honduras. People from the city come and take young girls from the country every day. While we are very concerned about the ever-increasing drug trafficking problem in Honduras and corruption everywhere you turn, this new revelation of human trafficking has hit very close to home. One of Lixy's young song and dance partners, pictured in this newsletter, is now in the capitol. Lixy wonders if she is meeting the same fate.

When she was in San Pedro Sula, Lixy dreamed of coming back to the center. It was the only place in her life that she felt loved and protected. It was where she learned her life had meaning and value.

Thank you for being there for children like Lixy - children of incredible resilience and potential. We pray that we can educate children how to escape such situations along with every other type of education we provide our children.

ALL NEW \$30,000 MATCHING GRANT!

A very generous partner has offered yet another matching grant! This one is for \$30,000! Our desire is to have this matched before the end of the year to finish well and to have the funding for the children and teens to start 2012. Our most pressing needs are funds to run the center and our teen scholarships \$50 per month, per teen. This covers bus service, uniforms, books, and matriculation fees. In return our teens give 10 hours of service a week, tutoring children in the center, and doing a variety of community projects services. The example of our teens inspire so many in and outside of Honduras.

A NOTE ABOUT DESIGNATED GIVING

World Resources Group is unique among non-profits organizations. All specified donations go 100% to the fund designated and are 100% tax deductible. We do not take percentages for administration. Undesignated giving is used where the Board of Directors deems the need to be greatest.

If you know of friends or corporate sponsors that might help us reach our goals, please send this newsletter along! Our biggest supporters have come from friends passing on our newsletters. PLEASE help us help children like Lixy have a hope and a future!