

November
2019



The Guadalupe Workers



As I stood recently on the sidewalk outside of the Summit abortion clinic, this little drama was going on a few feet away on McNichols. When the traffic was clear, the birds flew to some sort of food source on the street; when a car was close, they flew back to the sidewalk; and back and forth, and back and forth. They were good at the game, but on a couple of occasions, as a bird had to fly out literally from beneath a car's bumper, they

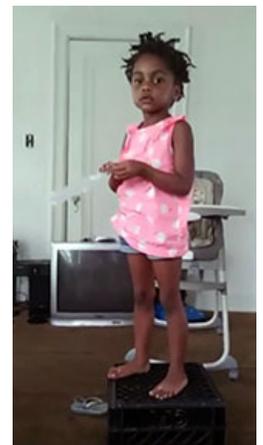


cut it almost too close. It was a cold day, it was a gray day; and I found this food game of the birds to be a little depressing. It's the Detroit way of life, I cynically thought. Make a dash for it. Risk everything to get to a food source. Many of the mothers we meet on the sidewalk live this way—like Patricia, to whom Alicia spoke on this same gray day. She's a very young mother with two children, and she totally depends on her father for her food source, which in this case is her housing and transportation. Her father, who had said that he wasn't going to take care of anyone else, dropped her off at Summit around 9:00 so that she could make an appointment to kill her unborn child. She did make the appointment; on her way out, though, she talked to Alicia and gave her her phone number. We don't know yet if Patricia and her child will get hit by the suction machine.



One mother did not escape. Her name was Kayla. Her food source was drugs and probably prostitution. We met her

years ago, when she was a pregnant teenager, living with her boyfriend. Back then it seemed that they both wanted something better in life. He was working at Happy's Pizza, she wanted to go to school. There were signs, though, that this young couple was living on the edge. I remember we stopped once at a very decrepit apartment building in which they were living. Not wanting us to go in, they came out and sat in the van to talk. But then a man holding a bottle by the neck, like a club, came out of the building and walked towards the van. Kayla called out to him, assuring him everything was ok. Reluctantly, it seemed, he turned around. Their daughter was born—but then he, the boyfriend, was killed in a drug transaction about a year afterwards. Kayla floated after that, being a good mama, but not taking any significant steps out of the usual Detroit survival cycle. When her mother died, Kayla inherited some money. She talked about using the money to get her degree, or to repair her mother's house and at least have some stable housing. None of that happened, though. She ended up living in a small apartment without electricity. She would fade in and out of contact with us, calling only when she needed something. The last real contact we had with her was when she got a temporary job at a water bottling company. We rented a room for her at a hotel near the bottling plant; she walked to the plant every day, hoping that the job would become permanent. When it didn't, we told her we couldn't renew the room. We gave her a little car, though, with which she could look for more work. So she went back to the 'hood.



Kayla's daughter, who was rescued from abortion.

Spotty communication continued for a few more months—then nothing. She was last seen, in October of 2018, being shoved into a car by someone identified as her "boyfriend." Her daughter then was five, and

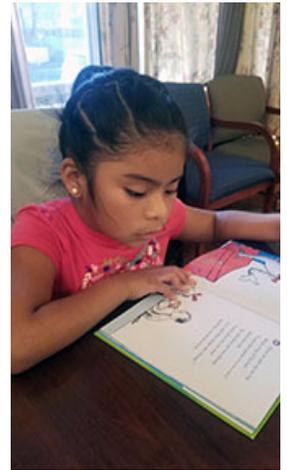
there was also a two year-old son. Not long after she was seen getting into that car, a body was discovered off of Homer street on the west side. The body was badly burnt, though; for some reason, it took a year for DNA results to return. It was Kayla.

For years we, the Guadalupe Workers, have walked on the edge of shootings, beatings and fires. Kayla's story, certainly, has been the most tragic; and obviously it creates a sort of despair.... The fact remains, however, that the child was born; and that the child after her, Kayla's son, was also born. We tend to think of Kayla's story as over; in another sense, though, the story begins with her act of love for her first child; and how far that act will resonate, is beyond our knowing.



Two of these siblings were saved from abortion.

Our trust in the simple act of faith, our humility before the scope of time and eternity, keeps us going. Today the abortuary was bursting at the seams. After ten years there, I've never seen a busier abortion day—at least 30 appointments. Whenever the door opened, we could see the overflow of bodies into the entrance foyer, and we could hear the laughter and cynical comments from inside. There was at least one woman inside, though, who couldn't forget Patrick's words, and who couldn't stop crying. That's the woman who left, who called the number on the pamphlet, and who has an appointment with us on Monday.



Practicing reading at the office.

After the clinic, and after our communal lunch at La Rosita, we went to the office, where Alicia told us about some of the mothers who had come there in the past week. Patrick, who loves to see ultrasound images, was



And Jeanisha's baby.

shown two that had been done that week. Certainly, the ultrasound machine and the images it produces are very effective in revealing the beautiful truth of the life at risk in the abortion culture. With one image, we can take all the empty rhetoric of "choice" and toss it in the garbage. As effective as it is, however, the ultrasound image is not foolproof. We have known women who have seen very clear images of their children, but who have used those images only to calculate the price for having their children killed. If that seems to you incredibly callous and calculating, then understand that it is the end-point for a heart which has never seen and no longer believes in the reality of love.



Which is why YOU need to start joining us at the clinic on Fridays or Saturdays; or volunteering in several different capacities at the office on the weekdays. Thank you.

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