

To Cheryl Pagano and the St. Paul Parish Social Action Ministry
- from The Underground New England

Dearest Cheryl,

I received this email today and it was an incredible blessing to me. This is exactly why the gifts St. Paul gave matters - you and the church really are the hands and feet of Jesus, and I appreciate all you did to make this Easter a very special experience for vulnerable children and youth in Connecticut.

Many Blessings,
Annmarie

Forwarded message...

Hello Annmarie

I wanted to reach out and share our thanks to you and the Underground NE for your kind donation of Easter Baskets for survivors involved with the RHTRT (Regionalized Human Trafficking Recovery Taskforce). It was wonderful to be able to share something fun and special with these kids and see how happy and excited they were.

There are two stories in particular that I want to share with you.

The first is about a client who is an older teen. She's been exploited for most of her life and did not have the chance to participate in childhood milestones that most of us take for granted. We met for lunch and when I sat down across from her, she saw that I had an Easter Bag. She asked if someone had given me an Easter present. I told her that it was for her. She asked me two times if the bag was really for her. She sorted through the contents of the bag and was so happy and excited to see what it contained. I've been working with this girl for approximately six months, and I've never seen her smile like that. She told me she couldn't remember the last time someone had given her a present without asking for anything in return. It was such a special moment to be able to witness and thank you to you and the staff at the Underground for making that happen.

The second is about a client who is preteen and comes from a family with a lot of children. Money is often tight for the family so things like an Easter Bag for all the children are outside what the parents have the ability to provide. The sheer joy in this house when I showed up with something for all the children was infectious. The children examined what was in their bags and immediately began making plans with when to play with the new toys and swapping candy with each other. Each child received a pair of bunny ears and they all wore them from the remainder of my visit. One of the kids received a bingo game and insisted we all try it out immediately. It was definitely the loudest game of bingo I have ever played, but also the most fun. One of the younger kids asked if I had brought an Easter Bag for their mom and when the children learned I had not, they each picked out something from their basket to share with her. It was such a wonderful and sweet moment. The next time I visited the house, the youngest of the siblings, who are preschool aged, shouted EASTER GIRL when they saw me. The kids all told me about which games they'd played with and which ones they liked the most. I asked them if they had any candy left and they all told me they'd eaten all the candy on the first day!

I hope these stories demonstrate how important and how special the donations you share with us are. Thank you so much for your kindness and support.