

HIGHLIGHTS

- Dean and Matt completed their research for Matts book along the BR-116.



- There was an inauguration for The Pink House in Medina. Special invitations were hand delivered to 50 of the most vulnerable girls and their families...



- Christmas Party at the Pink House! The girls were treated to games, food and fun. They were also told how special they are and how committed we are to helping them change their lives and making their hopes and dreams come true. There was also a visit from Santa (aka Sam)!



The Pink House!



December 4, 2012

Dear all,

Two years ago next month Dean Brody and I arrived, entirely unplanned, in a small, remote Brazilian town called Medina. There we happened to meet a woman called Rita, and through her we heard and saw for ourselves the tragic lives of countless young girls caught up in a nightmare of child prostitution.

Two years ago we began to dream, of a house just for girls, a place of safety and love, where those young girls could find hope, healing and justice - a beacon of light in the darkness. We never dared believe it then, but yesterday that dream came true! During an emotional night decked out in pink, candles and lights in a ranch just outside Medina, 50 of the town's most vulnerable girls and their families walked down a red carpet and heard us declare the project open, heard that they were special and that we were there to help them achieve their dreams. We showed a video with a photo of each of the girls, along with a song which said "Never let anyone say that you aren't wanted, even before you were born, God dreamed of you. You are so beautiful, perfect in the Father's eyes, a princess." Rita, Warlei and I spoke, Dean Brody sang and then they tucked into a banquet.

The girls, and especially their families, left with so much hope, visibly touched, knowing they were no longer alone, that there were people who wanted to see their lives transformed.

-Matt Roper



From Matt and Dean's journey up the BR-116



12-year-old Jessica from the remote town of Brejo Santo, on the BR-116 in Brazil's northeast state of Ceará, was duped by a woman pimp, drugged and taken in a truck to Fortaleza, where she was sold to tourists. It was a terrifying experience, but she told us: "What hurts the most is that the woman who did it wasn't even arrested. She still passes me in the street as if nothing happened."

Stories like Jessica's are alarmingly common in towns like hers, and so is the impunity of those who exploit them. Their lives are apparently too insignificant, too unimportant, for Brazil's selective justice system to bother standing up for. Meeting her and many other girls this week, and hearing them talk so matter-of-factly about how they have been traded and trafficked has been unbearable, especially in the face of so much injustice.

But we have also realized that their stories had never been told before. So much of what goes on along this vast motorway is never discovered, and no-one ever hears. We want to try to change that. More news soon of a new initiative to help ensure the stories of girls like Jessica are heard.

Salgueiro

From the stirrings of hope in Medina, to a reminder of the lives yet to be reached... Dean and I met these two girls, aged 10 and 12, in Salgueiro, 1000 miles north of Medina in Brazil's state of Pernambuco. Both are involved in prostitution, selling their bodies for the price of a plate of food. The stories we have heard here have been heartbreaking. The average age of girls caught up in prostitution here is just 11/12, and there are at least 200 involved. We met eight of them today, children who should be living a happy, carefree life but who have had their childhoods and futures stolen from



Candido Sales

'We haven't had a single case of child prostitution for the last ten years' - that's what council authorities in Candido Sales, a remote town on the BR-116 in Bahia state, told us when we arrived there. Half an hour later we found a 12-year-old girl selling her body to truckers at a local petrol station. Later we visited the home of a 15-year-old girl who had started prostituting at the age of ten and now averages 7-8 men a night. And this sweet girl, aged 11, who had been put up for sale by her own mother. Last week a 45-year-old man bought her.



'Changing Minds' program



We believe that, alongside the work with the girls and their families, an equally important work needs to be done in towns like Medina to change the culture which accepts sexual exploitation of children as normal. We are pleased to welcome, Warlei Torezani, who will be heading up our program targeting schools, churches, communities and other groups aiming to change the way people view child prostitution.

Pedraviva Centre



*** 2013 Update:** Nilce has worked hard to successfully acquire funding from sources within Brazil to cover the running costs of the Pedraviva Centre, and will complete this transition over the next couple months. This fulfills our vision of self-sustainability and is a great model for future projects. We will continue to give support where we are needed. Nilce is a tremendous example of what can happen when someone fearlessly pursues Hope, Healing, and Justice for at risk girls in a culture generally indifferent to their existence.

Daniela



For those who have followed Daniela's story, some great news: she passed her school year! She had missed so much school before leaving Medina that teachers had told her that passing the year and final exams was almost impossible, and she would have to repeat the whole year this year. But once again she proved everyone wrong and passed! Now she's determined to go to university. Well done Daniela, you are the proof of real transformation, an inspiration to all our Pink House girls - and we're so proud of you.



Happy Birthday Daniela!