

Project Proposal



Title: *Survivors Voice Travel Fund*

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Project Overview

Introduction

One of the most moving and empowering experiences that we have ever had was when in Rome on October 31st 2010 a group of international survivors came together for the first International day of survivors of catholic clergy abuse. We had never met, but we immediately knew each other, we recognised our shared experiences without even saying a word. For those of us who have always felt like isolated disparate people, it was a revelation, a homecoming, that none of us thought possible.

We came from several countries, in ones and twos, some with supporters, some alone, not knowing what to expect, and some having never spoken of their abuses before. Among us was a group of deaf and speech impaired survivors, all of whom had been sexually abused in their childhood by catholic clergy and nuns who were supposed to be caring for them in the Provolo Institute in Verona. They came down by coach, having travelled from Verona to Rome overnight. They were tired and unsure of what was awaiting them, and on top of that, they cannot hear or speak.

We were all a bit awkward and ill at ease, to start with, but gradually as we started to speak and tell our stories, we became braver and more at home with the words that none of us like to repeat or remember.

The deaf people began to talk as well, falteringly at first, but with the help of a translator and one of them who was able to sign we started to hear each other, for the first time. We cried all day, partly because of the horrific tales that we all had to tell, and partly with joy that we had found each other. Family was created for us on that day.

We were all self funded, but had managed our travel fares because of our determination. Our friends from Verona had managed to scrape up the money to pay for the coach, but had only enough to stay until 4pm. We were keen to all meet up in the evening, and celebrate our survival, and so between us we managed to find the money to allow them to stay later. We met again at the Piazza Castel St Angelo opposite the Vatican. It was an amazing evening, we talked, sang, lit candles, laughed, cried, talked to the world's press and despite being turned away from walking into the vatican square by the police, we knew we had made a real mark, and a great sense of empowerment became evident.



Since then we have had three more meetings, one in London, one again in Rome, and one in Verona where we supported our brave brothers and sisters as they demonstrated in front of the institute that treated them so terribly.

There is no substitute for meeting each other face to face, no amount of therapy, or legal support can match the empowerment you feel by being able to look into the eyes of someone who has shared your pain.

For survivors new to being able to show their wounds, there is no experience more comforting than being able to take the hand of someone who is a perhaps a little further ahead.

So our gatherings are desperately important to us.

We will continue where possible to be self supporting through our own contributions and efforts, but there are many who cannot possibly afford those fares, maybe a coach journey or a train to meet up with those who will be their companions through their constant ups and downs.

We would like your help!

We would like to create a travel fund for just those people who otherwise could only perhaps dream of being present. The coach fare from Verona to Rome, the train fare from Scotland to London, maybe an overnight stay.

These are not "holidays" these are powerful therapeutic encounters which are enabling us to strengthen our bonds and fight our demons.

We often come from isolated communities, which is why we were easy prey to these criminal predators, The catholic church has always relied upon keeping survivors are "isolated" unable to communicate with each other, gain strength from each other and the the world the truth about their crimes

Help us gather more strength, increase our family, making the world accessible and to become a force to be reckoned with in the fight for survival against all odds



Scope

Creation of a "Travel Fund" for those who can not pay to travel to our events.

Your Participation

We need your help to help others in need!

You can make a enormous difference to the lives of Survivors of childhood sexual abuse by the catholic clergy worldwide.

Your donation will allow Survivors of clergy sexual abuse, who otherwise can not afford the expenses, to join us at our events, to connect with other Survivors, to re-gain strength and courage, to face their lives so brutally disrupted as a child.

You will start off a positive chain of events that will reach beyond your imagination!

Participants will return to their homes so much stronger, healthier and with much better chances to cope with their lives. Thus creating a better future for their children and well prepared to help others.