



# Guadalupe Workers



March 2017

*The problems are so immense; I don't know where to begin. The welfare system has trained the mothers to passivity; they allow the men to move in and move out; they allow the bills to pile up, the property taxes to go unpaid; they allow the septic systems to back up. Recently we moved a mother, a mother of nine, out of a house in the vicinity of Livernois and Warren. We bought for her a larger brick house. We had to put a furnace and water heater in it, but we're used to that. Alicia and Emmanuel also spent a day helping with clean-up and painting, but we're used to that too. Otherwise, the house has all the good stuff—walls, floors, sinks, windows, a sound roof. The house from which she moved, however—the house in which she had lived with her nine children—had windows missing and broken, holes in floors, ceilings and roof. Not to mention almost \$5,000 in unpaid property taxes. We gave her and her children, then, a chance to start over.*

*On the very same day she and her family were moving into their new*

home, another mother, Erica, with 6 kids, was trying to find a place to live. *She had been living* in the lower unit of a duplex; the upstairs neighbors, though, had been causing literal terror for Erica's family. Her phone calls to us were always hard to decipher. She spoke of partying, gunshots, multiple appearances by the police. Finally, she packed up everyone and left. She has so many kids, no one was able to house them all at once. She divided them up, then, while she went to stay at her sister's. Her situation, right now, is unresolved. *Then there was Cherrita* who, with four children, lived in a shelter for 90 days, the maximum time allowed. When her time was up, and with no place to go, friends of ours in South Lyon took in the whole family. Meanwhile, Alicia had begun the process to get Cherrita approved for a house in Lansing—quite an accomplishment, given that Cherrita had absolutely no money and no credit history. Cherrita, though, never fulfilled the landlord's requests; then the windstorm came, with several

subdivisions in the South Lyon area losing power, including the one in which Cherrita was staying. Her host family made it clear that she was still welcome to stay, but she moved out and, as far as we can tell, is doing the Detroit house-hop (a process in which a mom and her kids will live from place to place, one week to the next).

### *Our sidewalk counseling*

certainly gets no easier, either.

One of the “pro-choice escorts”

filed in a Detroit court an affidavit claiming that Alicia twice had pushed her to the ground. The affidavit was part of a process to have a Personal Protection Order filed against Alicia, which would have kept her away from the escort whenever the escort appeared at Summit, effectually keeping Alicia away from Summit itself. We all dutifully appeared at the court hearing. The escort approached the bench, repeated her grievances to the judge, who without further ado seemed on



Cont.

the verge of granting the PPO till it was all thrown out on a technicality.

So we're continuing our regular appearances at the abortion clinic. Only five of us are regularly going. Three Guadalupe Workers were there this morning. Three. There were fourteen escorts.

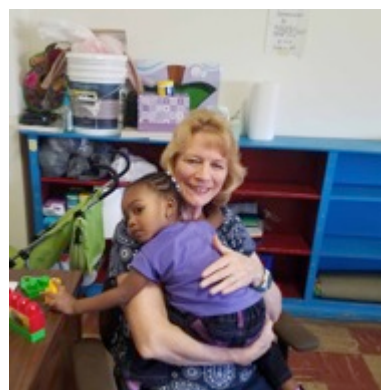


Alicia told me a couple of times last week, "I'm

ready to quit." And this morning I lay in the MRI tube, thinking about what my comrades at that moment were dealing with in the city—the heavy, wet snow, the overwhelming opposition, and of course the passive mothers with the abortion appointments. But when I was liberated from the tube, I drove to the city to join them at our office on the southwest side. Today the famous Dr. Janet Smith was coming to give a talk to our mothers. These once-a-month Saturdays, when we host a presentation for our moms, are always long days. They begin with cleaning and food preparation, followed by the organizing of the baby-sitting areas and crews; usually the talk begins 20 to 30 minutes later than is scheduled, and afterwards it seems no one can go home, as kids keep playing and moms wait for a chance to talk to Alicia. The same Alicia who said twice last week that she was ready to quit. The same Alicia who finds the passivity of the mothers to be so frustrating—yet, who can't quit, because she loves them, and loves their children.

### A Call, or Not a Call?

Alicia was asked recently to speak on her vocation—that is, on her work in Detroit. She was hesitant to accept the invitation, simply because she doesn't see her work there, especially the sidewalk counseling, as a vocation, a calling. If someone is going to be executed, she reasons, and if you know when and where, you try to rescue him. It's not a calling. It's a human obligation. It kind of reminds me of a hymn—one that I can't stand. The hymn warbles on about how we are all called "to act with justice" and "to love tenderly." No, no, no! These actions are not callings. They are requirements.



Please send all correspondence and/or support for the Guadalupe Workers to the following address:  
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