



Inspiring stories of hope, healing & redemptive transformation
in communities experiencing poverty

VOL 2, ISSUE 1 — WORLD IMPACT

"You'll Never Amount to Anything"



A TRAUMA HEALING STORY

by Marcella Rivera, World Impact ministry partner
Community and Leader Development Executive Assistant,
Building Hope in the City

I grew up in a home with a single mom who had trauma but never dealt with it. She ended up transferring that trauma onto her children in the form of physical, emotional, and verbal abuse. This caused my life to be turned upside down and inside out. By the age of 14, I found myself being kicked out of my home and placed into foster care. From the age of 14 to 24, I sought comfort for my pain through everything but the Lord.

The phrases "You're not worth the blood, sweat, and tears it took to bring you into this world" and "You'll never amount to anything" continued to ring loud and clear in my ears, hence the reason I married the first guy who asked me to marry him.

He was a Christian and I was not, so I thought I hit the jackpot. I would hear the name Jesus and how he loved us, but I couldn't believe he could love someone like me, so I continued trying to make it on my own.

Ten years of marriage and five kids later, my husband decided life was too short and found a new family. My life began to take another turn as I found myself being a single

mom raising five kids. Similar to my mom, I didn't realize I had trauma, so it didn't get dealt with.

The church just kept telling me to have faith, pray about it, trust the Lord, and surrender all things to Him daily. I realized there were certain things I couldn't share with them or else I would find myself being disciplined for not having enough faith to trust the Lord.

I suppressed my feelings and kept moving on. I couldn't go back to my old ways, so I buried myself in ministry work. I figured that was a safe bet because no one would tell me to stop doing work for the Lord.

Marcella's story continues inside.



Thoughts from Our Trauma Healing Team

Leaders often carry huge burdens for lack of safe spaces to process their own pain which can lead to burnout or “bleeding” on others. In the trauma healing training, Marcella was given safe space for her own journey and as a result has further clarity in her call and is more equipped to create that same safe space for those who are hurting.

Karin Esselstrom
World Impact Trauma Healing Specialist

Marcella’s heart for the Lord and her community resonates in everything she does. When she came to the first Equipping, she found that the tools not only helped her to walk alongside others in her community with the Lord’s healing, but were also encouraging her heart and giving her space to heal and “not grow weary in doing well.”

Kim Contreras
World Impact Trauma Healing Specialist

Transformative stories, such as that of Marcella Rivera, highlight the significance and impact of our trauma healing program. These testimonies demonstrate that when leaders are equipped with Bible-based resources, underpinned by compassionate care and support to address complex life wounds, they experience God’s redemptive healing. As a result, these leaders become empowered change agents of hope for those they serve, and the communities they represent.

Renee Bacon
World Impact Trauma Healing Director

A TRAUMA HEALING STORY, CONTINUED

During this time, I noticed how the pastors and others of the church were responding to those who struggled with mental illness. I noticed how they were looked down upon, talked about, and mistreated because of their lack of faith in Christ but instead in modern medicine. I vowed to do something about it and not sit around and let wonderful people be mistreated.

Because of your generosity, Marcella and others like her have discovered our Trauma Healing groups and found new freedom and wholeness in Christ for themselves and their families.



I heard about World Impact and their Trauma Healing Training at a CCDA National Conference. I decided to take their training to be a support and advocate for those who dealt with mental illness. Little did I know that by going through the adult classic training sessions I would discover that I had been living with trauma for 40+ years. This opened new doors, new avenues, and a whole new meaning of life for me.

Going through the six lessons in just three short weeks began to stir up new life in my body, spirit, and soul that I had never experienced before. I had given my life over to Christ, but I didn’t realize my heart had been wounded. The Lord needed my wounds to be discovered, healed, and me to be made whole in Him.

These wounds were never made to be ignored; Christ has been waiting for me to release them to Him.

Salvation is for the forgiveness of sins, but salvation doesn’t heal the trauma of our past. This is why people struggle with mental illness. The Bible says, “But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5 NIV).



World Impact is equipping Trauma Healing facilitators – leaders like Marcella – all over the country, thanks to you!

Yes, by His wounds only will we be healed. This process begins when we get to the root cause of our wounded hearts and flesh it out to release it to the Lord. “By his wounds we are healed.”

Tools that I received through the Trauma Healing Training are designed to be used repeatedly. While we will always have suffering, we must change how we respond to it.

The tools that this training offers has encouraged me to take this resource into prisons. I have heard it said time and time again, “hurt people hurt people.” There are programs all over the place for victims of all types of violence/abuse, but what I wasn’t seeing was programs for the victimizer.

If we are all made in the image of God, and Christ died for all, then what are we doing to ensure that those who have been hurt or victimized aren’t out here hurting and victimizing others?

Again, we know we will always have suffering, but what are we doing to minimize the destruction it causes, so people are able to be made whole in Christ to fulfill their purpose and receive God’s love and peace?

“As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.”

James 2:26



Marcella Rivera was born and raised in Kansas City, Missouri, and moved to North Olmsted, Ohio, in 2016. She is mom to her five adult children, and Abuela to her three precious grandchildren. She received her BA in Management and Human Relations in 2010 and her MA in Pastoral Ministry in 2022. She has many years of organizational and administrative experience, and currently serves as the Community and Leader Development Executive Assistant for Building Hope in the City. In addition, she is a licensed minister, World Impact certified Trauma Healing Facilitator, and has a heart for serving marginalized communities in Cleveland.

Marcella is a member of Imani United Church of Christ in Euclid, Ohio, which supports her ministry work in a local prison, a reentry program, and community healing groups.



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grow their ministries without
adequate training.*



UPCOMING EVENTS



**Thank you for keeping the following
opportunities in prayer:**

March

Evangel School of Urban Church Planting | Detroit, MI
Evangel School of Urban Church Planting | Annandale, VA
Exponential Conference | Orlando, FL
Sowing Seeds in the City | Washington, DC

April

Evangel School of Urban Church Planting | Louisville, KY
Evangel Dean School | Louisville, KY
Empowering Atlanta Gathering | Atlanta, GA
World Impact Staff Leadership Gathering | Wichita, KS

May

Evangel School of Urban Church Planting | Los Angeles, CA
International Trauma Healing Training | Tanzania and Kenya
Evangel School of Urban Church Planting | Oakland, CA
Sowing Seeds in the City | Atlanta, GA

June

Empowering Kansas City | Kansas City, MO

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