

EXHIBITION INFO

FOR THE STORY OF FOSTER
CARE VOLUME 2

THE STORY OF
FOSTER CARE

volume two

EMPTY FRAMES INITIATIVE



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ABOUT THE CREATION

By generous estimates, only 6% of children in the United States will ever enter into the formal foster care system.

However, by government estimates, 50-80% of minors recovered from human trafficking had prior experience with the child welfare system.

In a national survey of adult survivors, conducted by Polaris, it was found that 34% of survivors surveyed had been involved with child welfare at some point in their childhood, with an additional 22% of survivors reporting that they felt child welfare should have been involved.

In *The Story of Foster Care* vol. 1, audiences were invited into the intricate world of foster care as told by former foster youth, foster parents, and caseworkers. In this sequel work, viewers will learn from the perspectives of individuals who experienced both foster care and human trafficking, individuals who work at organizations supporting their healthy exit from trafficking, and from child-welfare professionals who witnessed the connections. This gallery is a collection of photos and stories that illustrate the foster care system's connection to the world of human trafficking. *It is not as we perceive it.*



*Story of Foster Care, Vol. 1
displayed at City Gallery, Raleigh, North Carolina in 2019*

[Link to Video Walkthrough of SOFC Gallery at NACC's 2022
National Conference in Baltimore, MD](#)

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

- The purpose of this gallery is to spark conversation, to challenge assumptions, and to honor the work each artist has put into crafting their narrative.
- When Empty Frames Initiative takes the gallery to a new location there is no charge affiliated with the display.
- This gallery view of Volume 2 includes 30 pieces ranging from 8"x10" to 60"x40". The original gallery includes 21 pieces with a similar size range and both are available for display.
- There are a variety of lectures and conversation starter pieces that the EFI team offers to host sites & partners, ranging from a broad discussion on the intersection of these issues to topics on the role of the church in society. These are listed at the back of this presentation.



*Story of Foster Care, Vol. 1
at For the Sake of One's Hope Banquet, Texarkana in 2022*

[Link to Video Walkthrough of SOFC Gallery at CAFO
Summit 2022, Atlanta, GA](#)

**If you or your organization would like to bring the gallery to your city but don't know of a physical location able to host the gallery please reach out to our team. We can look with you to find a connection. We would love to share the gallery in your community.*

REQUIREMENTS FOR HOSTING

- The stories contain sensitive content and we are asking that host sites provide a space where doors can be closed
- Our organizations preference is two or three connected rooms where the viewer can walk through at a leisurely pace and have a little more privacy as they navigate the gallery. An alternative arrangement would be one relatively large room, with enough space for portable walls to be set up (we have found that a single room will need to be at least 24x36).
- If the venue has any room/s with brick walls that is the easiest way for EFI to install the exhibit (using brick clips to hang the photos and non-damage putty for the stories). If there aren't any rooms with brick walls the team brings in portable walls and easels that require slightly more space.
- The gallery works extremely well in partnership with events/fundraisers, and the expectation is that the event will be beneficial for hosting site. If there is no coinciding event and the gallery is serving simply as a community education feature it would ideally be set up for a full week at the host location allowing more time for individuals to view the gallery.

PREVIEW OF PIECES

We've included one piece from each artist on the following pages. Some of the writing has been condensed and the pictures cropped for the purpose of this short presentation.

Red Flags by Tonnette Patterson

Which Road by Monique McClendon

Vulnerabilities by Betty Beatty

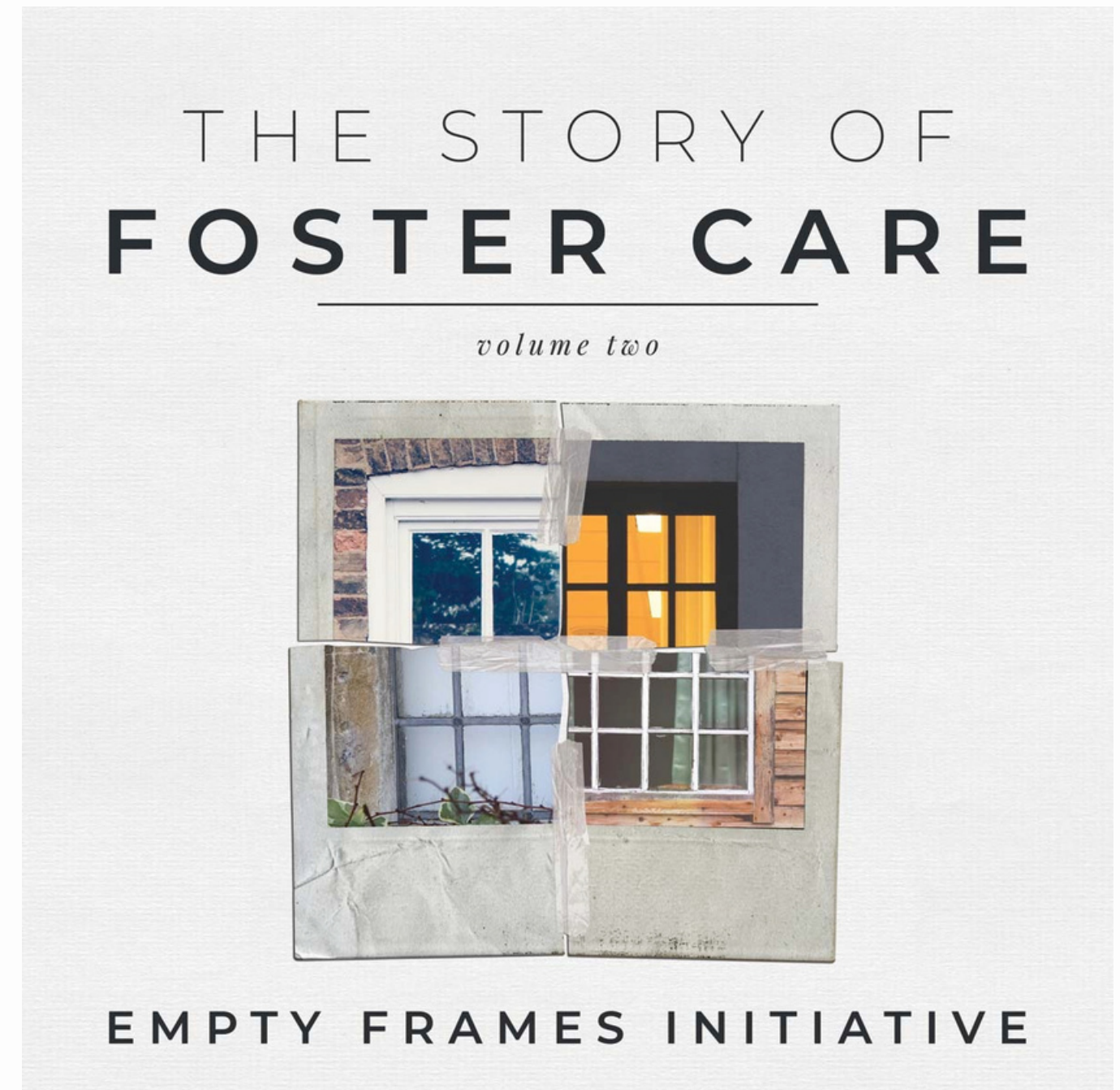
She, Her, Them by Arcelina Galvan

Not For Sale by Khalila Riga

Layers of Brokenness by Kristen Motta

Time Is by Courtney Dunkerton

When You Have a Foster Child in Your Classroom by Lauren Clark



RED FLAGS

Why didn't someone rescue me?

Not all feral children are raised by wolves.

Some grow up with the likes of madams and drug lords who thieved in the shadow economy. It was a world devoid of love and belonging, protection and positive role models. A world that denied me the necessity of a consistent bed to sleep in, without the monsters that lived underneath it. The type of monster that only comes out to play when it thinks you are sound asleep. A culture that muttered "hallelujah" and "yes ma'am", while simultaneously filling my thoughts with a sense of hopelessness, blueprinting the maladaptive behaviors into my young, innocent, subconscious mind.

Days turned into months and those into years.

Why didn't someone rescue me from the vortex of hatred and disdain, as the red flags sway briskly in the wind for all to see?

NO ONE EVER COMES!



WHICH ROAD

I could come up with numerous reasons for how Arise for Girls came about, but really, I don't know.

"I just got here."

What I do know is that life comes with stories, some are more significant than others, and many roads led here.

Some of the roads were fast and some of the roads were slow.
Some roads went up hill and down hill.
Some roads were filled with pot holes.
Some of my roads were smooth and some of my roads were rough.
And some led me to roundabouts that if I wasn't careful of I could go around and around not knowing where or how to get off.
And the road "getting here" looked like a road leading somewhere, but then it looked like nowhere, but eventually I arrived here.

My road began by listening to and following the Holy Spirit. Having faith that I hear His voice. Then I follow.



VULNERABILITIES

Let me tell you how the system did me, the system stole the first 3 years off and on from me and my baby.

I can look back now and see the lack of dignity the system had for me. The system played on my insecurities, provided me with no place to create stability. The system helped create every part of my instabilities, the system looked at me with no empathy. The system borrowed a lot from me, which later allowed men to learn every vulnerability, how to exploit me. For years my humanity was never placed on my individuality. The system disregarded every part of me, they created every part of my lack of morality, the system humiliated me, the system enjoyed every part of my misery, the system never envisioned a life for me or my baby. Let's not create the fantasy the system was created to protect me or my baby.

The system was designed with every opportunity to exploit me and my baby.



SHE, HER, THEM

She might be just surviving, sometimes there are reasons why she can't get a legal job.

Her way of having a choice, not knowing she's been coerced to believe that it's her only choice.

Them desperately trying to escape their trafficker. The deceiving manipulative man, who's also gorgeous yet abusive, forcing them to make his bag.



NOT FOR SALE

While my husband and I were going through the classes to become Foster parents, I heard this question come up repeatedly: 'Can we choose what child we get?'

The response verbalized to us was that it was possible. Then, that same response was confirmed in the form of a questionnaire.

We were asked to choose things such as race, age, gender, personal background, level of difficulty, etcetera. And then they went one step further in communicating that 'if it doesn't work out with that child, you can call to have them removed from your home and wait for a different placement'.

Instantly, I was flooded with all of the memories of my own experiences within the foster care system as a young girl. The countless homes, and the constant message of not being good enough. There is a striking correlation between our youth and foster care to the world of human sex trafficking.

In both realms, we see the commodification of youth in foster care and of adult trafficking victims. We should each feel accountable to stand up for those who are being oppressed.

We are NOT property.
We are NOT for sale.
We are NOT property.



LAYERS OF BROKENNESS

Beneath the smooth, seamless surface of a sand dune rest fragile layers packed and stacked tightly together, made from years of exposure to harsh elements.

As intricate humans, we all have complex broken layers that form who we are. These pieces of ourselves are necessary to the composition of our core. They are layers that represent every soft and jagged edge and corner of our lives, filled with both darkness and light.

If we're not careful, these delicate pieces can be quick to collapse, as sudden as a runoff, dismantled by the storm.



TIME IS

Is time to step away
Wheels not slipping so easily
Weight bearing holding ragged space
Wearing out
Grains of sand - testimony of wind and
wear
Passing out of one chamber
Slipping into the next
Til, upended, and rust is scraped
and spent again
Is time
Renewed, sustained



WHEN YOU HAVE FOSTER CHILDREN IN YOUR CLASSROOM

I never thought too much about foster care until my sophomore year of college when I had to go to a seminar called, "When You Have Foster Kids In Your Classroom." I remember sitting there listening to a former foster youth tell his story, talking about how his dad would burn cigarette butts in his arm as a form of punishment, until his teacher finally noticed. I was shaken as I imagined being that teacher and finding burn marks on my first grader's arms. And then my heart sank as he went into detail of getting taken from his home as an elementary-aged child, and then put in a new house that felt unfamiliar and scary and lonely. He went on to tell how his now-parents welcomed him in, and how it eventually led to adoption. I sat there listening to him, feeling overwhelmed and angry with the injustice of it all, and then surprised at the glimpses of beauty and hope.

There are certain moments in my life where I can look back and see how it changed the whole trajectory, and this is one of them. Not long after hearing this teen's story, I changed my major to social work and started looking into child welfare. Now I look back and see this day as the very beginning of my journey exploring what it'd look like to find my own place in the messy, hard, beautiful and holy work of foster care.

HOW TO REQUEST THE GALLERY

Empty Frames Initiative will be touring the gallery around the US in 2023. At the link below entitled “Gallery Request Form” you can find when the team will be in your region and request the tour stop at your community center, church, local gallery, or another venue most fitting for your community!

As of December 2022, the expectation is that the book version of this project will be available in late Summer of 2023. At that time we will also be offering opportunities to host “author panels/signings”.

Step 1

Consider the venue where you could host the gallery & the timing that you would want the gallery present

Step 2

Fill out the Gallery Request form linked below:

<https://calendly.com/emptyframesinitiative/sofc2request>

Step 3

Receive an email from an Empty Frames Initiative team member that will follow up to confirm or adjust the time and dates!

EMPTY



FRAMES
initiative

CONTACT US

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SPEAKER INFO

One of the primary goals for the gallery is to engage people in a deeper conversation about the foster care system and human trafficking.

Often those conversations come about naturally after viewing, and other times they need to be brought out through a formal, intentional dialogue.

The speakers listed here are willing to speak on a variety of topics relevant to this issue. When you submit your application to host the gallery Empty Frames Initiative will let you know what speakers and topics are available for the dates and location you've suggested!

Betty Beatty

- Intersection of Foster Care and Human Trafficking
- Housing & Community Resources
- Ethical Confidentiality

Miriam Cobb

- Intersection of Foster Care and Human Trafficking
- Storytelling Through Photography
- What is "Aging Out"
- Role of the Church in Society

Sarah Chambers

- Intersection of Foster Care and Human Trafficking
- Storytelling Through Photography
- Collective Healing / Learning of Love

Khalila Riga

- Intersection of Foster Care and Human Trafficking
- Best Practices for Anti-Trafficking sites
- Trauma Informed Care
- Dignity of Everyone Involved

SOURCES:

- 1) Wildeman, Christopher, and Natalia Emanuel. "Cumulative risks of foster care placement by age 18 for U.S. children, 2000-2011." PloS one vol. 9,3 e92785. 26 Mar. 2014, doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0092785
- 2) U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families. (2013). / https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/acyf_human_trafficking_guidance.pdf
- 3) Polaris Project (2023). "IN HARM'S WAY: HOW SYSTEMS FAIL HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS". <https://polarisproject.org/national-survivor-study/>
- 3) Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2017). Human trafficking and child welfare: A guide for child welfare agencies. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau.
- 4) Debra Schilling Wolfe, MEd, Johanna K.P. Greeson, PhD, MSS, MLSP Sarah Wasch, MSW Daniel Treglia, PhD, MPP. (2018). Human Trafficking Prevalence and Child Welfare Risk Factors Among Homeless Youth. The Field Center for Children's Policy, Practice & Research, University of Pennsylvania

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