

books have been written on the subject. Those I read were disappointing. Though there are many excellent nonfiction accounts and narratives written about human trafficking, I am convinced that a new audience of advocates fighting for the rights of children and women could be reached with well-written fiction! 📖



*Elaine Sommers Rich, 84
Bluffton, Ohio*

Theresa Flores tells her story in the Winter 2010 issue of the *University of Dayton Magazine*. At age 15 she was coerced into two years of being trafficked for sex. Finally, a waitress asked Theresa if she needed help and called the police, who saved Flores. Recovered after 23 years of healing, Flores now helps to rescue victims of sex trafficking. Sin can be very lucrative. Witness the three huge international criminal “businesses” in the order of dollars generated: selling (1) drugs, (2) human beings, (3) arms.

“Human trafficking is the fastest growing criminal industry in the world.... Unlike drugs, which, once consumed, are gone, human beings can be used and exploited over and over again, making them a valuable commodity,” explains Rachel Braver in her 2010 *Fellowship* article “Human Trafficking in Our Backyard.”

I live a pleasant life in small town Bluffton, Ohio. It includes wonderful people in my university and church communities. Yet, barely two miles away, interstate highway I-75 runs all the way from the Canadian border, via Detroit and Toledo, to Florida. Toledo (also Harrisburg, Pennsylvania) has been exposed as a center for a child prostitution ring. In 2005 only Miami, Portland, OR, and Las Vegas had more arrests for this crime according to the February 11, 2010 *Lima (Ohio) News*. We must wake up. Sex trafficking is in our backyards.

I first became aware of sex trafficking and wrote about it in a 2007 *Mennonite Weekly Review* column after reading a wake-up book, *Not for Sale*, by David Batstone. Several readers responded appreciatively. Among them was our Mennonite Women USA executive director, Rhoda Keener. How grateful I was when Rhoda introduced the resolution opposing human trafficking at the summer 2009 Mennonite Church USA Assembly in Columbus, Ohio. It passed. Now to put it into action. 📖

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