

A Moving Story

BY PATRICIA O'BRIEN

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Junior American Legion Auxiliary member, Lauren Moschitta, served as guest speaker at the Manhasset Unit 304 meeting in November. Her topic was the work being performed by Sister Rita Giarretta, a Catholic Ursuline sister who supports young women escaping from impoverished areas within Africa and the Middle East in search of a better life, only to become the victims of abusive human sex trafficking.

After reading about Giarretta in a Sunday *New York Times* article, Lauren performed months of research and communicated back and forth via email and post with



Lauren Moschitta

Giarretta in her safe house in Caserta, Italy. Arrangements were made for Moschitta to visit Casa Rut, the safe house, and she did so in August.

The week-long visit allowed Moschitta to enter their home and their lives. She viewed firsthand the struggles the young women face and the hope that has been given to them by Giarretta. Giarretta provides for their bodily needs but also educates their minds and helps them to escape the abuse through productive work that allows them to establish themselves economically.

Moschitta spoke of the struggles Giarretta has faced in assisting the women, including her battles with the mafia. Giarretta's work has been blessed by Pope Francis who is a major advocate for the poor and abused.

Giarretta has a website at www.coop-newhope.it that is accessible in the United States and promotes the products produced by the young women she is helping. The site might require a translator for the words but the products are self-explanatory.

Moschitta returned home, spent time as an intern in a court house and resolved to become an attorney whose primary work is advocating for abused women and children.

With a little push, the auxiliary may be able to inspire Moschitta to take her presentation "on the road" in Manhasset to increase the level of understanding within our community of a very serious issue and to remind the community how important it is to protect youth.

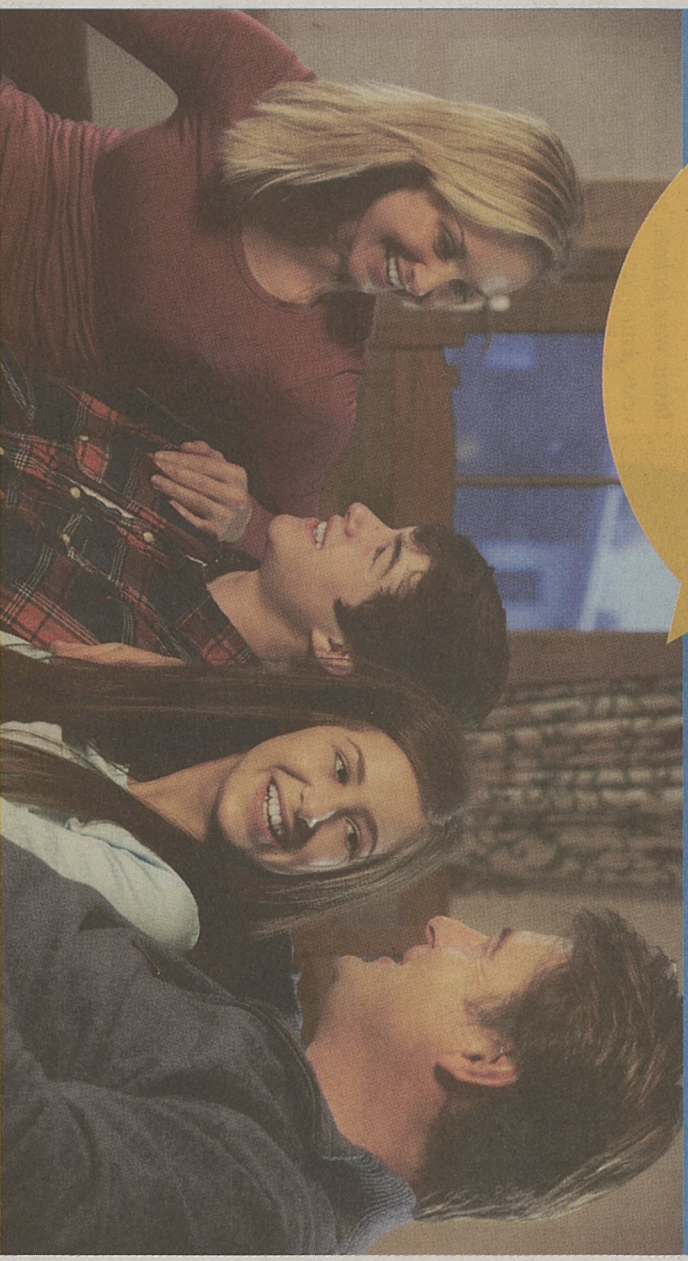


*This Holiday Season
Give Your Child
a Precious Gift*

The way you talk to your child
becomes their inner voice

Alcohol and drugs
have no place in a
healthy childhood

Parents are the
leading influence
in a child's
decision not to
drink alcohol or
use drugs



Talk to your kids about the consequences of alcohol and drug use.
talk2prevent.ny.gov • [Facebook.com/Talk-2-Prevent](https://www.facebook.com/Talk-2-Prevent)

**Talk 2
Prevent**



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