

A Salon of an Empowered Woman

Hala Nader, a 33-year-old divorcee, lives with her children in El Kom El Akhder in upper Egypt. Hala has a son Philopater (10) and a daughter, Eriny (4). Hala's husband, Michael Hashat, paints houses. Michael applied severe mental and physical abusive towards the family. Finally, Hala took her children and moved to her father's home. Michael threatened and refused to provide financial support. Although, Hala has filed for divorce, she is still waiting for the official certificate.

Egypt's population is primarily of the Islamic faith, only 12% of Egyptians are Christian. Divorce is rarely allowed in the Christian community because of the strong biblical belief against marriage separations. Divorce often results with women being socially isolated and scorned. The disgrace imposed by society obliges women to stay in deplorable marriages. So, it took extreme courage for Hala to approach the Church to request a divorce.

Hala went through an exceedingly difficult period. Now shunned by her community, unable to provide for her children and no legal divorce papers, Hala went into a deep depression. She lost hope and belief in life and God. Despite such a dark and bleak outlook, Hala opened a small kiosk selling coats, handbags, and women's accessories.

When *Finding Freedom through Friendship (FFF)* and the *Council of Services and Development (CSD)* met Hala, she tearfully shared her desperate situation. However, she impressed the team with her ingenuity and inspirations of opening a hair salon. In less than a month, with a grant of 3,000 EGP (\$175) a hair dryer and flat iron were purchased for Hala to begin a hair styling career.

Today, Hala's coiffure and women's accessories are successful. The revenue from the businesses covers food, clothing, education and medical care. Hala is expanding by adding products, services and equipment. She has been accepted by the community and is a positive contributor to society.

As Hala's business grew, her confidence increased. FFF & CSD believe in the holistic approach to restore both the emotional and physical state so the individual can live to their utmost potential. This was achieved with the regular visits by Marian, the team facilitator who totally believed in Hala's potential.

Hala is exemplary. She valued her self-respect to divorce her husband knowing that she would be an outcast by society. She overcame depression, successfully operates a business and restored her faith in life and God.

“With realization of one's own potential and self-confidence, one can build a better world.”
– The Dalai Lama



CONTACT

Jody Greenlee
Executive Director
+1 859.608.7747
Jody@FreedomThroughFriendship.org

Marguerite Doyle
CFO & Middle East Director
+1 859.312.3964
Doyle@FreedomThroughFriendship.org

Finding Freedom Through Friendship
1781 Eastwood Drive
Lexington, KY 40502
finding-freedom-through-friendship.org