





the muse, kitti

Have you experienced a system failure? Have you been treated unfairly, discriminated, abused, or harmed by "systems" such as police, hospital, doctor, bus driver, welfare office, shelter staff, and other social services?

Please share your experiences *anonymously* (we do not ask for or share your name). We collect stories of system failures to build power, challenge institutions and hold them accountable.

Report a "system failure" or contact us through:

Online: http://systemfailurealert.org/report Email: info@systemfailurealert.org

Text or Voice Mail: (713) 364-4475

Mail: SFA!/CHR, PO Box 3484, Federal Way, WA 98063

Stories From Aileen's

a zine

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This zine was created by Olivia Orosco, Breanna Guzman and Grace Yoon for BCULST 587/BISIA 410 Labor Stories During Pandemic Times, a University of Washington Bothell creative writing course in the spring of 2021. With support and guidance from Professor Ching-In Chen and TA Simon Wolf.

The stories featured are shared from interviews done with Princess, Tracy, Tecia, Mia, Teranie and D at Aileen's.

June 2021

when i went to emergency room with an abscess, doctor refused to treat my pain and accused me of drug seeking.

Are your support "SYSTEMS"

a nurse asked me why i was so upset about being raped if i sometimes have sex with strangers to get money.

police trespassed me from the homeless camp i was living in and destroyed my belongings.

at a public library, staff refused to let me use the key to the restroom. i think it's because i am homeless.



does not respect my gender identity or call me by the name i want them to use.

my case worker

working for YOU?

my counselor keeps suggesting that my boyfriend is pimping me or trafficking me even though it's not true.

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ALERT

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The cards on the next pages are meant to be shared.

Cut them out and give them to people you think could use them!

<u>introduction + acknowledgments</u>

The three of us came to this work for the first time through this course and though we learned immensely about sex work through the resources listed at the end of this zine as well as from those at Aileen's themselves-- we continue to learn and grow around the nuanced nature of this topic. As such, all errors or misconstructions in this zine are our own.

We are grateful to Aileen's cofounder, Emi, for their patience and support as we worked on this zine. We are thankful for Emi's ongoing work with Aileen's and their expansive activism far beyond Aileen's walls. As naive strangers with little experience and lots of questions, we were welcomed warmly and eagerly at Aileen's by those we interviewed and met, for that too we are grateful.

Our hope with this zine is to offer insight into the often stigmatized work of the sex trade. We hope to challenge some preconceptions and push readers to hold nuance in their analysis. But most succinctly- we hope this zine offers those we interviewed a space to share their stories and experiences. We hope that this zine does their stories justice.

olivia, grace and breanna

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a bit about Aileen's

who: Aileen's is by and for women in the sex trade, women who are homeless or unstably housed, women doing survival sex, coming out of prison, having their kids taken by Child Protective Services, struggling to make ends meet, as well as sex workers from all walks of life.

where: Aileen's is a peer-centered organizing and hospitality space located in Federal Way for women working along the Pac Hwy. This is the area south of Seattle stretching from around SEATAC airport to the south end of King County that is home to many women who trade sex and where Gary Ridgeway, a.k.a. Green River Killer, sought his victims.

why: Women along the Pac Hwy need a safe place to get off the street, even temporarily, a place to get and give support without being hated or judged, a place to share safety information like the bad date line and receive life-saving harm reduction tools.

when: Aileen's opened its doors in April 2019 and has provided a hospitality space, non-judgmental and accepting community, peer support, resources, harm reduction advocacy, etc. In October 2019, we were awarded a King County grant which allowed us to start a peer leadership program—the combination of trainings, internship opportunities, and intensive case management to remove barriers to each woman's participation.

want to visit Aileen's or know someone who may?

call or email to check on hours. Aileen's hours are always changing and these could be out of date by the time you get this!

phone number: call leslie at 253-241-1205

email: info@aileens.org

website: www.aileens.org

we hope to see you for a shower, clothes, hygiene items, harm reduction supplies, hot food, coffee, and lots more!

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We are starting the South King County

BAD DAFE LINE

A "bad date" is someone who is **violent or dangerous** toward those of us working in the sex trade. We share identifying information about dangerous people we encounter, such as what they look like, what car they drive, where they were, and what they did, so that we can help each other make **more informed decisions** about what we do. We welcome people of any gender to report bad dates.

You can give us an anonymous report through:

- 1) phone/voice mail: Leslie @ 253-241-1205
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some helpful vocabulary and framing

You may notice that people talk about sex work using different words that may be similar but not interchangeable. It is important, as with most things, to be as specific as possible and to follow the lead of how people identify themselves.

sex trade/industry- the diverse economy that exchanges money, goods or services for sexual activity. The sex trade is also sometimes used expansively to include non-consensual or exploitative sex work.

example: Lots of women participate in the sex trade in order to make ends meet.

sex worker- a broad term that people use to identify themselves or someone else who engages in selling their own sexual labor or performance. This can include stripping, webcamming, escorting, dancing, etc. It is important to note here that not all people who engage in the sex trade identify themselves as sex workers.

example: Diamond identifies as a sex worker. She webcams as a full time job.

sex work- the act of selling sexual labor example: Cynthia's money from sex work helps them pay rent.

johns– buyers of sex

cleans- clean needles used to inject drugs

frequently asked questions (faq's)

1. Why do people do sex work?

people engage in the sex trade for lots of reasons and often due to intersecting realities of "choice, circumstances, or coercion" [1]. some people find liberation or power in the ability to monetize their body that is often already objectified. some turn to sex work out of poverty, often because racism/sexism/ableism/homophobia/transphobia keeps them out of other labor markets. some find sex work offers flexibility around other parts of their lives, family obligations, criminal records, mental health struggles, drug use, and/or other jobs.

2. But don't women need saving?

if by saving you mean offer women the support needed to engage in labor relations that are safe, desired and sustainable, then yes. these are the same conditions that all workers being forced into exploitative labor markets (the military, agricultural work, meat processing facilities) desire. but if by saving women you actually mean the longstanding practice (seen just recently in the 2019 raids in the Seattle Chinatown International District) of raiding places of work making large public claims of "ending human-trafficking," arresting people, taking away workers agency, source of income and charging people with crimes—what has actually been done is not saving, but merely a further vulnerabilizing of already marginalized workers [2].

Aileen's is a peer-led grass-roots group providing hospitality, community outreach, and leadership opportunities for women working along the Pac Hwy.



Open Hours for Women

FRIDAYS 6-11pm

showers, clothes, harm reduction supplies, hygiene items, food, coffee, and lots more ♥♥♥

we can come pick you up—give us a call!

call leslie @ 253-241-1205 for location, or ask ladies in the know!

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Koyama, Emi. "Silencing and Intimidation of Women of Color at 'Men Against Sexism' Conference." Shakesville, 14 Aug. 2013, http://www.shakesville.com/2013/08/silencing-and-intimidation-of-women-of.html?m=1. Accessed May 21, 2021.

Massage Parlor Outreach Project and Chinatown International District Coalition. "Solidarity
with Massage Parlor Workers Means Ending Police Raids and Patrols in the CID". Coalition for
Rights and Safety, 2021, https://humbowsnothotels.wordpress.com/2021/03/25/solidaritywith-massage-parlor-workers-means-ending-police-raids-and-patrols-in-the-cid/.

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BAD DATE UNDE

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3. Okay, but what about children?

"most 'rescued' youth are 16-17 years old...'Rescue' actually means arrest and involuntary detainment of minor 'victims' by the police in many cases" [3].

There are push and pull factors at play. A focus on only the pull factors not only drives the market to create demand but also makes workers more vulnerable to policing. Street youth will still need to do things to survive...

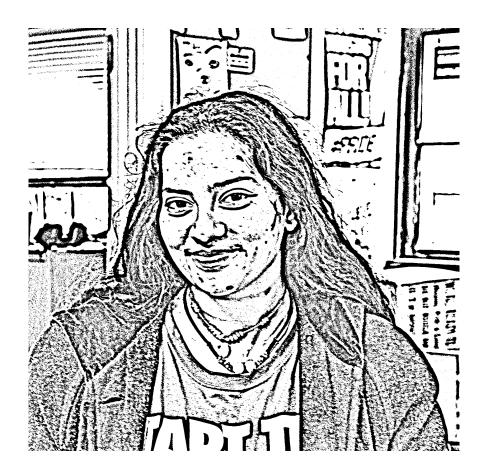
4. Why are anti-prostitution laws and policing not a good thing?

more policing does not help sex workers. more policing does not support the failed systems that lead women to turn to sex work. policing is not a solution to social problems. policing increases the profiling of young women of color. more policing pushes the sex trade further underground and makes sex workers more vulnerable to abuse from the police as well as manipulative johns and pimps.

"...criminalization is not about what the laws on the book say, but about the targeting and persecution of communities and individuals deemed criminal, as the extra-legal executions and murders of Black men and women by the law enforcement and the dearth of prosecutions against such actions attest. Criminal laws do not make criminals; they are merely tools to further persecute those who are already labeled by the society as criminal." [4]

^{3.} Koyama, Emi. "Rescue is for Kittens: Ten Things Everyone Needs to Know about "Rescues" of Youth in the Sex Trade" eminism.org, 13 Aug. 2013, https://eminism.org/blog/entry/400.

^{4.} Koyama, Emi. "My Rejected Response to the Question 'Should Prostitution be Legal?" eminism.org, 6 Oct. 2016, http://eminism.org/blog/entry/461.





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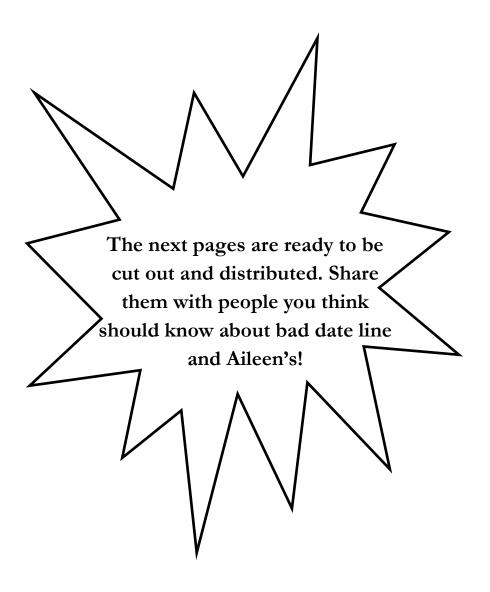
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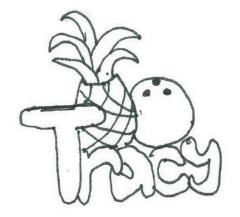
how she came to Aileen's:

"I was pregnant and working and sleeping at a shelter every night and I was trying to see if I could have a midway spot somewhere. I heard about a lady's group, only ladies, and I'm like—well ok let's see what's going on. I kept on checking in and well I been trying, it was a hit or miss. It was like I was playing phone tag with Aileen's location and I made it finally. I finally got the hit and I made it and was like— ok we're here. And altogether at the same time and it was so, it was a group of us ladies. I'm the one who made it out of that group..."

her work with System Failure at Aileen's:

"So system failure is...any program, entity or anything that is meant to serve the public and they do not serve the public in a manner that they are supposed to. It's generally the failure of a system. If it's a grocery store or doctor's office, an emergency room, bus drivers, police, anybody. Any kind of public servant or any kind of public entity....whether it's public or private or nonprofit. They are all systems that are in place to serve and when they do not serve and do their purpose or change of laws happens...they are all failures of a system that was created to support and help us... all the stories [those recorded when someone submits a system failure to Aileen's] are taken anonymously. So we only ask demographic questions so we can make like stories and build power and make change. Legally make change is our goal."





South King County BAD DATE LINE is a project of Aileen's. We want to hear from people of any race, age, gender, sexuality, etc.

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- 2) email: baddate@aileens.org
- 3) facebook message to @aileenshome
- 4) on our website at http://aileens.org/baddate
- 5) in person with our peer outreach worker or during our open hours

Please include as much information as possible, such as: how the bad date looks like, what name they go by, color and make of their car, where and how you met them, what they did or tried to do, around what time, etc. If you feel comfortable, please also include your demographic information (race, age, gender, sexuality, etc.) because certain bad dates target specific kind of people and it helps to know about that.

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South King County Edition • Spring 2021

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Younger handsome Black male with long dreads. Goes by D. Drives a grey crown victoria with a scrap or dent on drivers side. Will offer cleaning job with air bnb downtown seattle. Went with him at 430 am in his car. I guess i fell asleep because i woke up to him naked and masturbating on top of me with garbage bags covering the windows. He was jacking off. I tried to get him off and he became super aggressive and grabbed my arm and breast really hard. He ejaculated on my jacket before i was able to jump out of the car. I realized later he cut holes in my clothes over my breasts and crotch. Hes anywhere between Tacoma and seattle and comes off as clean cut and polite. (3/2021)

white guy probly early 60 5'10 200lbs half bald named Terry. He owns a nice home in kent. meets girls online and will try to do anything to not hold to the promises he makes. Wont use a condom and will try to get rough about it when you say no... at first seems harmless until u get to close. tries to play mind games with u and get personal over phone. calls alot. he has nice cars but never goes out to meet he had me come to his very nice house (3/2021)

White male chronic sex offender named Casey. Lives close to Federal Way High School. Has a super high chain link fence around his house with keep out signs and cameras everywhere. Cruises up and down Pac Hwy in classic cars. A red mustang and a camaro. Total stalker weirdo who has stalked and verbally assaulted neighborhood girls. Used to bring his underage daughter with him to pick up dates and brag he was having sex with his daughter. He got really angry when I terminated the date. Tall and kind of big with long stringy, greasy hair. Deep voice. Always wears shorts all year round. Uses black and jib. (3/2021)

Black male in white camaro with red stripe down the middle of the whole car. Recently released from a six piece at walla walla. Rapes and robs. Has gun. (3/2021)

Happened to a friend a while back. She got into a older blue station wagon with a skinny white guy near 250 and Pac Hwy S. He said "pick one two or three. A gun, taser or knife. Which one do you want me to kill you with?" By a miracle she was able to escape. (3/2021)

Want to report a BAD DATE to help our community? See reverse side!

role at Aileen's:

"For me because I smother, I naturally you know just help...

...we give people food and you know any toiletries. Or whatever we have... a lot of, you know, donations and stuff. But you know we do buy a lot of stuff too. Whatever they need, you know, toiletries, blankets, tents. Hats, gloves, jackets, shoes, socks, underwear.

...Anything that we can think of that you need out there. And stuff and if the woman need anything they come to me.

...I do my best. I mean we have a lot of things come up that you know, like unforeseeable things. But you know- so I try to make sure things get done and run smoothly at Aileen's."

Bad Date Line:

"Bad Date Line is, is it kind of like the women that are out here on pac highway and or anybody really. If you run into the wrong man. And so we let it be known who would be looking for what they drive, like, some of the things that they've done where we're giving a foresight for the next woman out there so that they can be aware of the person and of it, you know, what's going on, you know, who to look out for."

role at Aileen's:

"Every other Wednesday I do outreach at the place [Aileen's] and I welcome people. I do the showers and stuff like that and every other Wednesday I go do Little Debbie's."

Little Debbie's food recovery and distribution that she facilitates:

"One day somebody said hey you could go get Little Debbie's. So I started getting it and I thought I've got all of these boxes of Little Debbie's and I work for this place. Why don't I take it up there? I know these girls can use it and I know that they would give it to all of these homeless people. So I started bringing it up and they couldn't believe it and said oh my gosh...It's given this place a good opportunity to give it out. So they think of this place and they always have goodies you know."

the importance of Aileen's:

"I was in the sex industry for a long time, a long time. I mean, I did some crazy things in my life that I thought about, you know. I had some bad dates and I mean, that gets to me, I think about what I could've done to change it...

I wish I had a Bad Date Line thing. Like anything, something I... maybe more girls back then maybe, maybe a lot of people wouldn't have had that bad dates...

I, I believe in this place a lot."

Want to support Aileen's?

Give to their GoFundMe. They are so close to their \$20k goal! http://gofundme.com/aileens/

Or support them on a more consistent basis via Patreon. https://www.patreon.com/aileens



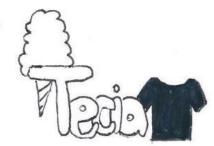
to learn more

local websites, blogs and talks:

- Aileen's co-founder, Emi Koyama's insightful blog, https://eminism.org/
- Coalition for Rights and Safety for People in the Sex Trade in Seattle/King County, Washington. http://rightsandsafety.org/

broader context:

- •Angela Jones, 2021, "Sex work, part of the online gig economy, is a lifeline for marginalized workers." The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/sex-work-part-of-the-online-gig-economy-is-a-lifeline-for-marginalized-workers-160238#comment_2519267
- •LaShawn Harris, 2016, Sex Workers, Psychics and Number Runners: Black Woman in New York City's Underground Economy. University of Illinois Press.
- •Studs Terkel, 1976, Working. Pg 40. Harper Collins.





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importance of harm reduction at Aileen's:

"It really is an impact on the community as a whole and not just me, or the people around me that I am using with, the people that, you know, are just walking down the street. Yeah, because I provide a way for people to bring in needles and get more—like they have an incentive to bring them in, and you know, prevents the couple walking with their little girl, from her tripping and falling and getting poked and getting, you know, whatever was in it.

...People just look at people like, oh that person is high or whatever... And I am just like, you are missing the whooole point here. The whole point is that regardless of what they are doing I am not going to judge them as a person because they have a vice or they enjoy doing something that sometimes gets out of hand. I am going to provide them the healthiest way possible for them to continue doing what they are doing without being judged and with the biggest positive outcome for the community. That is what my goal is.

...In a lot of ways, had I not, you know, been a drug user or experienced that, I don't think I would be as effective as a harm reduction specialist because I can go to somebody and not have to try not to judge them."

why Aileen's is meaningful:

"The one thing Aileen's means the most to me is a place of acceptance... because you know, coming from someone who, I am gender fluid and have been gay my whole life. Like I've known I was different...I have always been really feminine. I have always been judged on one thing or another, for being myself or for using drugs or hanging out with this person or that... I have always being judged...and finding a place I am accepted for who I am and all of my faults and all of my positive attributes... there is not anywhere else that I can think of, actually, that I 100% felt secure in that."

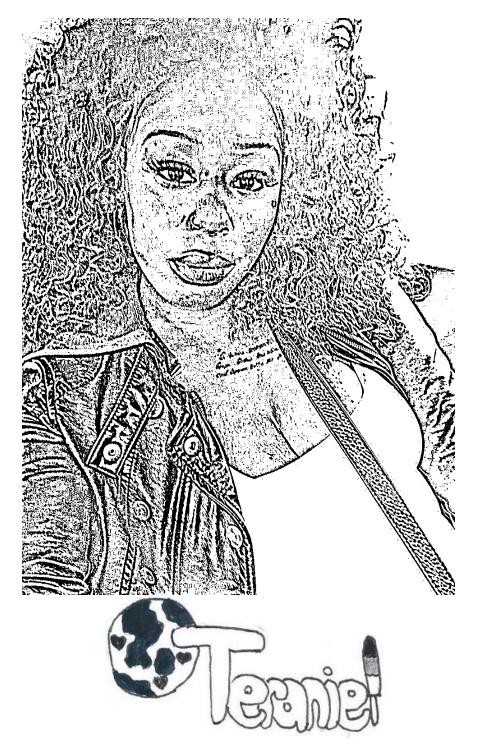
a bit about who she is:

"i am 30 years old and i have 2 little girls-make that 3 in August! I will then be the proud single mother of 3 amazing guardian angels (and I mean this as seriously as I can be in every way possible) they are my whole world, every reason for my being and the only reason I breathe. There is no me without them. period.!!

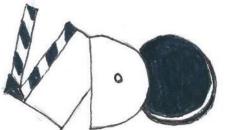
goals for the future:

"...so first, I'd like to be in my fifth year of clean time, aka sobriety, and living a way better and healthy life. Then I'd like to have all three of my girls in my/OUR home together somewhere where I and they are happy, right now we are hoping that that is Texas. And lastly for now, but not in the least bit all, I plan to have accomplished in 5 years, I'd like to be working. Not just any ol' working though I'd love to be maybe doing case management and/or still be a part of Aileen's and its major growth spurt I've envisioned for Aileen's. I really don't think Aileen's sees REALLY sees just yet how uniquely innovating and revolutionary what we have here going on is and I would love to be apart of breaking that blindfold and just completely just trailblazing the hell out of the world with AILEEN'S ALL OVER THE PLANET!

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importance of Aileen's and role of policing:

"...back in your time, you know, you could have had somewhere like this.

I caught my first charge on South Tacoma Way, And they had this thing where, where they pulled you over with all these cops and they said that the john., he was an undercover, was like, he's a serial killer. He's gonna kill you. So like, you're like all kinds of scared. I was all like, oh god, you know, like, so I was like, yeah, basically I told them myself because they were like, he's a serial killer. And he was going to kill you and all this weird stuff. So yeah. I was like, Oh my God.... They charged me with a solicitation of prostitution.

...but I didn't know better. Like I didn't, there was no outreach. I was way younger when that happened, you know, I was actually working on the street. I was like old fashioned life. You know, if you're going to hoe, you're going to hoe, you know, so I hoed."

city of Federal Way's rejection of county needle exchange programs:

"So when we are out there and we are helping people and we build some kind of regularity, some kind of trust with them... and if they were to have that taken away, that's just like horrible. so you just, like, you see these people in city council, and you see the mayor, people with fucking higher class that doesn't even understand or grasp the aspect of what it's like to be poor or below poverty level during the coronavirus taking more resources away from people who need it... because they don't know what they are talking about, they only know what they want it to be like, but what they want it to be like and what it's like are two different things."





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