



Friends New Underground Railroad

Olympia Friends Meeting
3201 Boston Harbor Road NE
Olympia, WA 98506-2800
Phone/text: (360) 888-5291
Web: <http://friendsnewundergroundrailroad.org>
Email: info@friendsnewundergroundrailroad.org

Evelyn Kemirembe 27 - Settling in Rwanda, November 2014

A Friends New Underground Railroad Story

Am called Evelyn Kemirembe. My friends call me Eve, though I don't know if I have any true friends in this world. Am not afraid to say that am a lesbian and only attracted to gals sexually. Its unfortunate that I was born and raised in Uganda, a country where am a social outcast, in Uganda I was considered mentally disabled, a curse and evil.

Am a trained midwife who graduated in 2011 with flying colors and everybody celebrated, on the eve of my graduation, my father hinted on it that I should get married as the village is complaining as to why am not married, somehow this went into a hot heated discussion involving several of our family members and clansmates. It was common knowledge to everybody that am a lesbian, so the clan meeting concluded that I be cured of my lesbianism. This means that an able man is identified on the Village and he publically rapes me before the clan members. Because the family members feared that I was going to run away, I was put under house arrest till the following morning and at 10Am, the event took place, I was raped, ashamed, embarrassed and dead inside, if only I had a chance before the public raping, I could just take my life. To make the matters worse, the man who raped me also infected me with HIV/AIDS, after days of several rituals and cultural performance I was forcefully married off to the man and my parents asked for big bride price.

To cut the long story short, I ran away from my marriage within 3 weeks and I was depressed for over a year, and I even failed to get a job as I was not myself, the man had not only raped me, ashamed me, embarrassed me and took away who I am, but also gave me HIV/AIDS and impregnated me. Being a trained medical worker I aborted at 2months.

Early year I got a job, no sooner had I started working, than the news went out about my sexual orientation and though the management loved me and appreciated my work, they had to ask me leave, when I insisted to stay, the police was involved and since the public knew little about the Anti – gay law which was later turned down, my life was at stake, I was at extreme risk, and with no family or real friends, it was time for me to run.

Saving the world details, I benefited from the timely, quick and instant support from the FNUR Quakers, all they needed to know was if was claim was real and honest, it wasn't hard to prove my case, it was investigated by some dedicated volunteers who put their own lives on daily risk to save others. I was put on the list, called the passengers' list and the coordinator (who has now passed on in the line of duty) did all he can to give me and others the support we needed to cross to a safe country. We were met by ground support who helped us process papers and am happy to say that, Uganda is no longer home, even if it becomes a free country. Am happy to settle here in Rwanda where fewer people mind my sexual orientation.

Without FNUR and the Quakers, I could be dead, like many of my fellow lesbians in Uganda. It hurts her few cases make it to the International news. The whole should do more for the Lesbians and Gays in Uganda. More investments should be made to document cases of hate crime against the Lesbians and gays.

Am now settling in Kigali Rwanda, working with a private clinic.

My life story is longer than I can ever share but as I put myself together, I will keep on writing.

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