

# HOW SEX TRAFFIC SURVIVORS CAN BECOME INVALUABLE SURVIVOR - MENTORS & LEADERS

*January is National Human Trafficking Awareness Month, and Selah Freedom has been mentoring sex traffic survivors to becomes leaders and inspirators*

SARASOTA, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, January 2, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Despite significant progress in Florida to combat sex trafficking, one of the most important roles we have learned is the tremendous value that survivors of sex trafficking can have as inspirational leaders and mentors in the anti-trafficking movement. They are the new age of "survivor-leaders."



Sex Survivors can be invaluable leaders and mentors to others

As Florida's largest anti-sex trafficking organization, we have learned to rehabilitate, mentor, train and partner with survivor leaders so they can bring unparalleled skills and share their myriad of first-hand experiences of trafficking, offering hope and help to the thousands of young women and men who are victims of the horrific epidemic.

January is National Human Trafficking Awareness Month, and anti-sex trafficking organization [Selah Freedom](#) believes that all stakeholders in America should focus on strengthening trauma-informed approaches to ensure that effective anti-sex trafficking practices reflect the specific needs of a wide range of trafficking experiences. These efforts include funding research and engaging survivor leaders throughout all stages; standardizing language and definitions to allow for clear and concise understanding of sex trafficking terms and approaches; and prioritizing equity and meaningful inclusion so that survivors engaged are reflective of the multi-dimensions of human trafficking.

Fortunately, preventing human trafficking and assisting survivors are priorities of the United Nations, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Justice (Greenbaum & Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect, 2017; U.S Department of Justice, 2017; U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2018). In fact, as of October of 2022, the U.S. Department of Justice awarded \$90 million in funding to combat human trafficking, provide



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*Stacey Efaw, Executive Director, Selah Freedom*

services to human trafficking victims and support research and evaluation on responses to human trafficking.

A cornerstone to implementing this model is to ensure survivor leaders are at the front and center of efforts to combat this crime that affects every zip code in America. To do so requires a radical shift in the public's mindset that will accept and support ongoing inclusion of survivors as experts, leaders and partners in all decision-making processes.

"We believe that strengthening survivor engagement and ensuring survivors' full participation in the anti-trafficking

movement, can be a double advantage: It will better prevent and prosecute human trafficking and ensure survivor prosperity," says Stacey Efaw, Executive Director, Selah Freedom. "Knowing how to work with survivors in a respectful and equitable way is not a skill that happens overnight, though we're championing this cause here in Florida and we aim to make it a model throughout the nation."

How can we accomplish this on a national level?

- Adopt trauma-based, compassionate support to survivors with respectful treatment by law enforcement agencies.
- Improve training for criminal justice students, including training focused on identifying the signs of trafficking, responding to trafficking, and respecting survivors.
- End the criminalization of survivors.
- Seek more grants to support survivor-led and other nongovernmental organizations implementing anti-trafficking programs.
- Ongoing coaching for potential grantees that helps organizations, including those that are survivor-led
- Recognize the importance of ensuring individuals with trafficking experience to participate fully in the anti-trafficking workplace, including appointment to advisory boards, in research efforts, through peer support programs and as key program staff members.

A Game Changer? Selah Freedom's Consulting Program

Selah Consulting is under the leadership of Selah Freedom and offers a variety of supportive services such as how to build a residential program, curriculum and online courses for survivors and the at-risk population, and staff training. Selah Consulting evaluates the current state of the organization and develops a tailored training plan to address a combination of residential programming, trauma care and staff training.

Selah Consulting is working to infiltrate the market through nonprofits, youth education even in health care. Selah Consulting wants to move strategically to build our reach to make a global

impact. Year one our focus will be throughout the state of Florida, year two will focus on the Eastern region of the United States, and the third year we plan to expand into the Western Region.

Selah Consulting was awarded the Platinum 2017 Seal of Transparency. The Platinum Seal of Transparency is- the highest level of recognition offered by GuideStar, the world's largest source of nonprofit information and provide the information to potential funders and donors.

Furthermore, in 2014, Selah Freedom, in partnership with Florida State's Attorney's Office and Sarasota Police Department, developed one of the first of its kind [TYLA](#) (Turn Your Life Around) Court Program. This program provided trafficking survivors wrap around support services such as trauma therapy, education and career services, support groups, instead of incarceration for solicitation charges.

Because of TYLA, trafficking was reduced by over 90% in Sarasota.

Survivors of human trafficking reflect the diversity of our country. They represent different races, skin colors, national origins, disabilities, religions, ages, genders, sexual orientations, gender identities, socioeconomic statuses and education levels. And just as there is no single profile of a trafficking survivor, their experiences differ too.

Selah Freedom and Selah Consulting is proud to say there are zero organizations who offer ALL the services we offer. We offer virtual courses for BOTH staff & survivors, onsite training, services for minors & adults, how to engage with your local enforcement and ways to combat trafficking from all angles.

We are the game-changers needed in America to bring an end to sex trafficking once and for all.

#### ABOUT SELAH FREEDOM

Selah Freedom continues to foster survivor engagement and the survivor-informed approach for all aspects of anti-trafficking efforts and is committed to sharing our experiences and programs with other organizations doing this work in thoughtful and sustainable ways. We have served survivors nationally since 2011 with an 87% success rate of residential survivor graduates not returning to the life. We're combating sex trafficking from all angles including awareness, prevention, residential care, outreach support and offering consulting to other organizations nationally. The University of South Florida has deemed Selah Freedom as the leading national model for survivor care. Survivor curriculum and care provider training has been created and developed because of Selah's successful programming.

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