Survivors of Trafficking Need More Than Rescue. A New Tennessee Nonprofit Is Raising Funds to Give Them a Home

Funds of Freedom hosts its inaugural gala Sept. 10 at The Barn at Sycamore Farms to fund safe housing for women and children

ARRINGTON, TN, UNITED STATES, September 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When a woman or child is rescued from sex trafficking in the Southeast, the first question is rarely about justice. It is about where they will sleep tonight.

Transitional housing for survivors remains critically underfunded across the region, and Middle Tennessee has no dedicated safe home for trafficking survivors. Funds of Freedom, a nonprofit founded by financial educator Michael Lush and the Replace Your University team, is working to change that.

The organization, a registered 501(c)(3), operates with a structure Lush designed to maximize every dollar raised. He draws no salary from the nonprofit, and no funds are allocated to executive compensation.

Funds of Freedom partners directly with The Freedom Collective, which operates rescue and rehabilitation programs, to channel resources toward survivor housing, economic stability and long-term restoration.

"This is mission focused," Lush said. "There are organizations where 5 to 10 cents out of every dollar actually goes to the people in need. We wanted to set this one up with true integrity. It's going directly to the people that need it the most."

To raise funds for its first major initiative, the organization hosted the High Stakes for Freedom Gala on Sept. 10 at The Barn at Sycamore Farms, a private event venue in Arrington, about 30 miles south of Nashville.

The western-themed charity casino night will raise money to help The Freedom Collective purchase a safe home for survivors in Atlanta. Lush said the long-term vision includes establishing a dedicated facility in Nashville as well.

"Right now, women and children are being rescued from sex trafficking. But rescue is just the

beginning," Lush said. "They need a place to go, a place to heal, a place to rebuild. What does life look like after you've been rescued? What does your housing look like? What does your income opportunities look like? We can fill that gap, and we should."

Human trafficking generates an estimated $150 billion in annual profits worldwide, according to the International Labour Organization.

Tennessee consistently ranks among the top states for reported trafficking cases on the National Human Trafficking Hotline, with more than 300 cases reported in the state in 2023 alone. Advocacy organizations say the actual number is far higher because most cases go unreported.

"It's just as much of an issue here as it is in third-world countries," Lush said. "We are not doing enough in the world to fight against sex trafficking. There's not enough hands on deck and boots on the ground."

Matt Rogers, the public address announcer for the Tennessee Titans who is widely known as the voice of the franchise, will host the evening. The gala will feature charity casino gaming using Charity Checks redeemable for prizes, a premium buffet dinner prepared by TN Craft Butcher, an Angel's Envy bourbon tasting, desserts from Cowboy Cannolis, and both silent and live auctions offering travel packages, memorabilia, jewelry, handbags and one-of-a-kind experiences. All proceeds will go directly to survivor housing through The Freedom Collective.

Approximately 200 seats remain for the inaugural event. The organization is seeking business owners, community leaders, philanthropists, faith communities and residents across Middle Tennessee who want to support the mission. Sponsorship opportunities, auction item donations and volunteer positions are also available.

"This is a founding moment, a chance to be part of something bigger than yourself," Lush said. "Whether it's with us or anyone else, get in the game and try to impact more people than just in your immediate sphere. Try to impact the world. If you've been blessed, this is your opportunity to be a blessing."

Tickets and sponsorship details are available at fundsoffreedom.com/funds-of-freedom-gala. The event page is also accessible on Facebook. Individuals and organizations interested in contributing auction items, sponsoring a table or volunteering may contact Funds of Freedom through the event website.

About Funds of Freedom

Funds of Freedom is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded by Michael Lush and the Replace Your University team. The organization raises funds, mobilizes volunteers and provides resources to combat human trafficking in the United States and abroad. While national

organizations focus on policy and prosecution, Funds of Freedom addresses what happens after a rescue: the housing, economic stability and long-term support that survivors need to rebuild their lives. The organization partners with established groups working on the front lines of rescue and aftercare. No executive compensation is drawn from donated funds. For more information, visit fundsoffreedom.com.

About Replace Your University
Replace Your University is a financial education company founded by Michael Lush, a 20-year veteran of the banking and lending industry. The company teaches real-world strategies for debt elimination, wealth building and financial independence and has served more than 10,,000 clients through its coaching, courses and community programs. The company is based in Franklin, Tenn. For more information, visit replaceyouruniversity.com.

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