

Allegany Franciscan Ministries and Human Trafficking 2007 - 2018



Sophie's Story

"My childhood was not so great.... I always felt loneliness and was upset a lot. When I was 8, I was sexually abused by my older brother, who I trusted, for several years not really knowing what was going on. When I got older and began to understand what was going on, my behavior changed at school and at home. Arguments got really loud.... I didn't want to tell anyone because I felt like nobody loved me or cared, so why should I say anything? Instead I started running away and hanging out until one day I met a recruiter who was finding girls to prostitute.... It was more than just me. There were 3 other girls who were 16 and 17 years old. I was the youngest. I was 13 at the time... The recruiter also owned a tattoo parlor, so he branded us by tattooing our street names on our bodies. He took us to a house run by two female pimps. They told us the rules. We couldn't go anywhere. We would have to take turns cleaning the house. No talking to the clients and if the client wanted to hang out with you, charge them extra. If we broke the rules or we didn't have \$300 by the end of the night, she would beat us with a broom...."

Sophie's mother heard about Project GOLD at Kristi House and was able to convince Sophie at age 15 to meet a Kristi House counselor. Initially, Sophie didn't want help. But she didn't like the violent life she was living either. Project GOLD staff got her engaged in the program and Sophie started actively participating.

"...I thought I was alone in this before I knew about this program. Now it's been a year and I'm thankful to them for helping me. Like the name Project GOLD stands for, now I really am a "Girl Owing my Life and Dreams!!!"

Allegany Franciscan Ministries has funded efforts such as Project GOLD to address human trafficking since 2007. To date, at least 13 grants totaling \$375,500 have been awarded to directly address this issue. The grants have included at least one grant in each of our funded regions and through each of our grant programs (Major, Tau, ACOR, All Region and Scholarship). Funded projects have been local, regional and national in nature, focusing on education, advocacy and victim services.

In addition to our grant-making, Allegany Franciscan Ministries staff have participated and sometimes led regional convening efforts designed to strengthen current partnerships among law enforcement, government agencies, nonprofits, and faith communities. We have attended and hosted meetings and brought potential partners together to strengthen relationships. One staff member completed a 4-hour training course on human trafficking through the Florida Regional Community Policing Institute at St. Petersburg College.

The following pages provide a brief summary of human trafficking related grants awarded to date, from most recent to oldest.

Community Campaign against Human Trafficking - The Free Network Tampa, FL
Free Network Capacity Building Program \$10,000 (2018)

The Free Network focuses on confronting and combating all forms of human trafficking while empowering victims to survive and thrive in their communities. Organization requested funding for technology equipment, website redesign and staff training to strengthen the coalition by increasing capacity-building measures for The FREE Network and their members.

Hepzibah House Boynton Beach, FL

Zibah Treats for a Cause \$10,000 (2018)

Zibah Treats for a Cause is a social enterprise providing employment for survivors of human trafficking. Adult women survivors are hired to work alongside a baking manager who incorporates a structured mentoring program into each workday. Funds will be used for personnel, new equipment and supplies.

Selah Freedom, Sarasota FL

Paint the Town Orange Post-It Campaign, \$10,000 (2015)

Selah Freedom advocates, educates and provides restorative services to and about victims of human trafficking. The project is an awareness campaign on human trafficking in Hillsborough County. In partnership with other Human Trafficking Organizations, Selah Freedom will fill Tampa with "post-its" and marketing material on the signs and dangers of human trafficking and who to call if you see a possible victim.

Florida West Coast Public Broadcasting (WEDU), Tampa, FL
Human Trafficking, \$50,000 (2012)

WEDU will create, produce and air a documentary to develop a deeper understanding of human trafficking's impact, considering elements of both labor and sex trafficking. The hour-long program will expose the worldwide human trafficking epidemic and its presence in Florida and specifically in Tampa Bay. This documentary will highlight the health risks and the mental and physical impact on victims. The hour will be divided into a 40-45 minute documentary and a 15-20 minute complementary panel discussion with experts in the field. In addition, WEDU will work with community partners to develop an ongoing awareness campaign, including the creation and airing of 30-second vignettes for use in a web based format.

International Association of Human Trafficking Investigators (IAHTI), Oldsmar, FL
Human Trafficking Education Program, \$10,000 (2012)

IAHTI will host educational outreach presentations in the Tampa Bay area. Over the past three years IAHTI has conducted outreach throughout Florida, and other states including Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Virginia, Texas, and the District of Columbia. IAHTI staff consists of current and retired human trafficking investigators who educate the community through their own real life experiences. IAHTI has presented at schools, civic group meetings, churches, Department of Justice trainings and for the National Institute of Justice. The education is intended to help members of the community identify potential victims of modern day slavery and properly report their suspicions. In addition it targets youth to help protect them from becoming victims of trafficking. IAHTI will host an annual training conference so that law enforcement, victim service providers and faith based organizations can stay up to date with the most recent technology and ways to assist victims of human trafficking.

Underground Network (fiscal agent), Tampa FL

Created - Outreach Project and Capacity Building, \$80,000 (2012)

Created is a grassroots, faith-based organization committed to the restoration of vulnerable women involved in the sex industry to an understanding of their value, dignity and purpose in God. The organization engages at risk women with the objective of them entering Created's program to provide them with life skills and job training, educational support, spiritual formation classes, referrals to drug treatment programs and a mentor. Created is a member of the Underground Network Inc., a non-denominational network of churches that is designed to empower communities to reach and serve those who are poor and marginalized, and which serves as fiscal agent for this grant. In recent years there has been a significant increase of human trafficking victims in the Tampa Bay area. The development of a strategic plan, resource development from an Outreach Coordinator and development of training resources and volunteer support will allow Created to increase its capacity and make a larger impact in the community. This two year extensive planning and implementation process for Created's outreach project will assist in building the long term sustainability of the organization.

VIDA Legal Assistance, Coral Gables, FL

General Operating Support, \$50,000 (2012)

VIDA (Voices for Immigrant Defense and Advocacy) provides direct legal representation and support services to low-income immigrants living in Miami-Dade who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and other violent crimes. The organization was founded in 2011 by five attorneys with extensive experience providing legal assistance to immigrant women. In 2011, more than 9000 cases of domestic violence and sexual assault were reported in Miami-Dade County, but many victims, especially immigrants, are particularly reticent to come forward and seek assistance. In VIDA, clients find a trusting and welcoming organization that they can turn to for help. The organization will provide legal assistance and representation as well as social services to survivors of violence, mostly adult women, so that they can obtain immigration relief, work authorization, and stability in their personal lives. The program will serve 50 Hispanic immigrants at the Miami-Dade County's Coordinated Victim Assistance Center and MUJER in South Miami; and Haitians at Sant La (Haitian Neighborhood Center).

YMCA of Greater Miami, Miami, FL

Summer Camp Outreach, \$10,000 (2012)

The YMCA of Greater Miami provides a Summer Camp Outreach Program to youth residents at Boys Town Children's Village in Miami-Dade. The youth have been identified as unaccompanied, undocumented, immigrant boys and girls between the ages of 11-17 who have been determined not to have lawful immigration status in the United States. Many of the youth are classified as smuggled and/or trafficked children. The program offers a variety of activities, including: physical exercise, such as swimming and indoor/outdoor games; literacy; arts and crafts; and field trips. The program will improve the overall quality of life for the children and specifically their physical fitness and reading levels. Funding supports a 10-week Summer Camp program for 60 children.

Catholic Charities Legal Services Archdiocese of Miami, Miami, FL

Women and Children Project, \$50,000 (2011)

Catholic Legal Services was founded in 1994 to provide immigration services to immigrants in the Archdiocese of Miami who lacked sufficient means to obtain legal help. This project provides legal advice, representation and related assistance to abused immigrant women and their children. Among the undocumented, abused women and children are the most vulnerable, and they have nowhere to turn to escape their exploitation and mistreatment without obtaining legal status in the US. Proper

immigration status empowers these women to leave abusive situations, increases economic opportunities, allows for access to social and health services, dissipates the threat of deportation, and places many on the path to citizenship.

Center for Strategic Philanthropy and Civic Engagement (CSPCE), Boca Raton, FL
Regional Leadership Summit on Human Trafficking, \$10,000 (2011)

Allegany Franciscan Ministries was the lead sponsor for this first-ever Regional Leadership Summit. CSPCE brings community members together in an atmosphere of support to systematically solve existing and emerging problems that could not easily be solved by one group alone. A collaborative has been building in South Florida with existing agencies, organizations, and institutions who have been working on the issue of human trafficking for many years. This group hosted a summit in May 7, 2011 to gather, learn and think through long-term solutions. Over 180 participants (including law enforcement, community agencies, practitioners and government) reviewed gaps including research and data, enforcement, education, aligning community efforts through 2-1-1s and developing a basis for policy discussion at the state level. One of Allegany Franciscan Ministries' regional vice presidents helped to organize the Summit, and facilitated a session on the topic of Human Trafficking as a Public Health Issue. The summit was a success, garnering ongoing communication/education through a dedicated website page, white paper and framework for future Summits.

Franciscan Federation, Washington, DC

Franciscans Working for the Rescue & Safety of Human Trafficked Women & Children \$5,000 (2011)

This grant supported educational efforts to prepare membership for an annual conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in July 2011, at which time a resolution on Human Trafficking was introduced and approved. Members received the DVD "Lives for Sale", produced by Maryknoll and Lightfoot Films, for viewing prior to the conference. The intent was for members to commit to responding appropriately to prejudices, inaccurate information, misconceptions and the like, when faced with opportunities to do so. Members were encouraged to engage in advocacy efforts as they arise. Since the conference, members have been encouraged to promote public workshops on human trafficking in various parts of the country.

Franciscans International, New York, NY

Trafficked: Their Stories at the UN, \$5,000 (2010)

Franciscans International is a non-governmental organization that voices concerns at the United Nations, with and on behalf of the most vulnerable, about justice, poverty and the planet. This program raises awareness of the trafficking of women and girls throughout the world and the work of religious communities in addressing the problem. Franciscans International partnered with the Sisters of Notre Dame to solicit stories about human trafficking through a program called Speak Up. Funding was used to produce a video titled "To Whom It May Concern" based on these stories and to cover travel expenses for speakers at an event on International Women's Day that included a film screening and panel discussion.

Kristi House, Miami, FL

Operating Support, \$50,000 (2010)

Kristi House serves as the Children's Advocacy Center for Miami-Dade and provides services to child victims of sexual abuse and their non-offending caregivers from extremely low to low income households. The grant supports Project GOLD which provides case management, outreach, advocacy, and mental health services to commercial sexual exploited children victims, survivors and those at risk.

Project GOLD started in 2007, at which time there were no services in south Florida for prevention and treatment for this extremely vulnerable, high risk population; the exploited children were consistently treated as criminals in the system rather than victims. The project also raises awareness of the issue, works on advocacy and policy matters, and collaborates with partners to strengthen the community's capacity to more effectively serve victims. This grant represents Allegany Franciscan Ministries continued commitment to the issue of human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of children in Miami-Dade and further builds and strengthens the investment we made to Project Gold in 2009. Funding was specifically used by Kristi House as local match to obtain a \$500,000 four-year grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJ). Funding from RWJ and local funding partners will be used to help Kristi House open and operate a Drop-In Center for girls to escape the streets and pimps, obtain crisis intervention, case management, and other support services to restore their lives. The Center is scheduled to open in March 2013.

Kristi House, Miami, FL

Commercially Exploited Children's Project \$50,000 (2009)

This project addressed the needs of children and adolescents who have been lured into the commercial sex trade. This is a population of young girls, some as young as 12 and 13 years old, who are victims of prostitution, pornography, and pimps. The project brought together over 35 community partners to address this issue and coordinate the provision of comprehensive services for survivors. The program included a drop-in center, street outreach, transportation, client emergency needs, in-school prevention programs, behavioral assessments, and case coordination and therapy. The project addressed the needs of girls being exploited in the sex trade and offers a path of healing and hope for the future. Funding supported the Project Manager's position. Funding also helped Kristi House mount a successful advocacy campaign to change state and local laws and policies impacting victims of trafficking. Their efforts led to the passage of the Florida Safe Harbor Act in 2012. The law now requires police officers to route the child victims of human trafficking through specialized safe houses; prior to the law's passage, children apprehended by the police were sent to the criminal justice system. The Act also requires special training for police officers who work with sexually exploited children.

Kristi House, Miami, FL

World Congress II Against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, \$500 (2008)

Capacity Building Scholarship for Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Project Manager to attend the World Congress III Against Children and Adolescents in Rio de Janeiro November 2009.

World Relief Tampa, New Port Richey, FL

Tampa Bay Community Response to Survivors of Human Trafficking, \$5,000 (2007)

The Tampa Bay office of World Relief (WRT) has been in operation since 1980. Through 2005, World Relief Tampa assisted refugees – victims of war and persecution – helping these new immigrants to replant their lives in the United States. Starting in 2006, WRT received a grant from the Department of Justice, Office of Victims of Crime to provide services to victims of human trafficking. In order to meet the challenge of locating and assisting local victims, WRT partners with the Clearwater Police Department, to provide services directly or through local service partners. Grant funds were used for victim services including interpretation, transportation, housing, food, clothing, healthcare, and employment assistance for victims of human trafficking and homeless persons.

This list includes only those funded projects that are directly and primarily related to the issue of human trafficking. Allegany Franciscan Ministries has provided many more grants to support organizations and projects that connect to human trafficking in some way. For example, a transitional housing program for teenagers, some of whom have been trafficked, and the Florida Catholic Conference (the nonpartisan public policy voice of the Catholic Church in Florida) which advocates for many issues including victim's rights. Our grant for general operating support of the Tampa Bay Healthcare Collaborative allowed them to utilize an intern who dedicated a semester of studies to the issue of human trafficking and its national and local impact.