

2023 Annual Report

MISSION

Call to Freedom brings wholeness to all individuals impacted by sex and labor trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation by navigating a healing path through our continuum of care model.

VISION

Our vision is to create a comprehensive CommUnity model of care for individuals, and support communities while educating and advocating to combat sex and labor trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We model Christ in our approach to restore wholeness to those impacted by sex and labor trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

VALUES



DIGNITY We value the individuals we serve and accept them where they are on their healing journey. We demonstrate respect and empathy within the Call to Freedom culture through validation, listening, and providing support.



PERSON-CENTERED

We focus on the needs of the individuals we serve by ensuring they receive the services, being flexible, and honoring them.



EMPOWERMENT We empower individuals and communities to prevent sex and labor trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation through education and safety strategies. We empower the individuals we serve to create and achieve personal goals. We empower our team members to utilize a care team approach with clients, each other, and partners.



INTEGRITY We utilize a care team approach to provide consistent and dependable support to the individuals we serve. We continually improve our model based on research and feedback.

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT + CEO

This year has highlighted the remarkable strength of collaboration. Together, we've made a significant impact, and I am deeply moved by the steadfast commitment of our donors, partners, volunteers, and staff. Their resilience and dedication to those we serve have been truly inspiring.

As the number of people seeking our help grows, we are beginning to grasp the full extent of how human trafficking has impacted communities throughout South Dakota. Despite these challenges, our vision remains bold. We are committed to expanding our continuum of care model statewide and beyond, bringing best practices and industry-leading standards to communities across the nation.

Because of your support, Call to Freedom continues to deliver comprehensive, trauma-informed, and coordinated care for individuals affected by human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. Our holistic, survivor-centered model incorporates survivors' voices into program development and provides specialized housing for women and their children.

Since our founding, Call to Freedom has served over 1,400 clients. In 2023 alone, we received 216 new referrals and provided services to more than 419 individuals. It is the extraordinary generosity of donors like you that enables us to meet the needs of South Dakota's most vulnerable individuals. Our mission thrives on the continued support of contributors like you.

I invite you to learn more about our work in supporting survivors and our efforts to protect children from being recruited into this dark world.

Thank you for inspiring us and answering the call—the Call to Freedom.

BECKY RASMUSSEN President + CEO Call to Freedom Because of your support, Call to Freedom continues to deliver comprehensive, trauma-informed, and coordinated care for individuals affected by human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.





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FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR



Each year's annual report is an opportunity for Call to Freedom (CTF) to reflect on our mission, our dreams, our challenges, our growth, and accomplishments, as well as check in with our Heavenly Father to discern His plans for us.

Since 2016, CTF's mission has been to bring wholeness to all individuals impacted by sex and labor trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation by navigating a healing path through our continuum of care model. Our vision is to create a comprehensive CommUnity model of care for individuals, and support communities while educating and advocating to combat sex and labor trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. We model Christ in our approach to restore wholeness to those impacted by sex and labor trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

Amid hard, unyielding work, it can often be challenging to find quiet moments to reflect on the magnitude and beauty of all we've accomplished in the past eight years. We've grown our team to 27 employees, built a supportive housing site from the ground up, and served over 1,400 clients. In 2023 alone, CTF received 216 new referrals and served 419 clients. Each of these survivors came to us with unique experiences, challenges, needs, and dreams. Each is a child of God who we had the privilege of serving, often in their darkest hour. As I reflect upon the past year, I'm truly in awe of the significance of these milestones and give thanks for the hope and healing of every human life behind these statistics.

Marissa's House began as a building with 7 efficiency apartments, a safe haven for 6-18 women per year between 2017 and 2021. In 2021, CTF supporters provided us the opportunity to build a new 12-unit apartment complex that supports the recovery of human trafficking survivors and keeps their families together. In 2023, Marissa's House served 22 women, 25 children, and 13 families. That same year, 63% of families at Marissa's House were involved with Child Protective Services; of those, 100% were successfully reunited with the help of CTF.

We celebrate many accomplishments in 2023. CTF was selected a finalist for Organization of the Year by the Liberator Awards, an award

which honors organizations from across the United States who have stepped up to the plate and worked hard to help those effected by human trafficking.

SHERI CARMON

Safe House Project awarded a Gold Certification to Marissa's House for providing residential care that exceeds national standards, recognizing it as one of the best in the country. CTF also received a specialized care badge for exceptional care for underserved populations, including pregnant and parenting survivors, those with mobility issues/disabilities, and those with language interpretation needs.

In May 2023, "A Parent's Guide to Understanding Human Trafficking and Healing Their Children" was released. This book is an exciting new resource available for parents, educators, and advocates of freedom written by Ruth Atkins, grandmother of a trafficking survivor, with input from Mary Jackson, CTF's Survivor Services & Program Coordinator.

Additionally, we answered the call to educate our community on the issue of human trafficking. CTF provided multiple awareness programs to shine a light on modern day slavery. Our staff provided 130 community trainings to 2,487 attendees and 174 youth trainings to 3,004 attendees; offered 81 informational meetings attended by 686 participants and in 48 awareness events educated 6,838 attendees; and interacted with 1,162 attendees at 33 CTF educational booths.

In-roads have been made in the battle against human trafficking, yet we still have so much more to do to help survivors navigate a healthy path and ensure that this issue is brought to light.

As the CTF Board of Directors looks to the future, we see the importance of a unified office where all staff and services can be brought together under one roof, streamlining and improving the services we provide. To maintain the momentum and the quality of the services provided, it is imperative that we accomplish this.

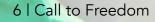
We thank you, our supporters, for joining the call and being part of the solution. We look forward to all the coming year has for the organization and your continued support.

"For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope." Jeremiah 29:11

MORE THAN A NUMBER IN 2023					
the age of youngest client served	25% of total clients served have a disability	9 reservations in South Dakota where we served clients	419 total clients served	89% of total clients served were victims of multiple crimes	13 families served at Marissa's House
100% of clients felt they were accepted by CTF staff		13,119 total services provided		9,258 hours of services were delivered	
31% of total clients served were victimized by an intimate partner or dating relationship		699% of total clients served were homeless at some point in 2023		86% of total clients served were below the federal poverty level	
people received prevention, training and educational sessions		25,000 total square mile footprint where CTF's clients were served		100% of families at Marissa's House involved with Child Protective Services were successfully reunited	

100% clients served felt more hopeful about their future because of CTF

130% increase in males served from the prior year



BECAUSE YOU BELIEVED Gold Certification for Call to Freedom

Call to Freedom's Marissa's House was honored to be awarded Gold Level Certification in 2023 through Safe House Certification, a national accreditation process developed by Safe House Project. We offer transitional residential programming to single female adult survivors, as well as pregnant and parenting female adult survivors. Through a six-stage certification process, this program was evaluated against established standards for management, governance, financials, and operations. Final certification status was determined by a third-party review board comprised of industry experts.

According to Safe House Project, safe homes awarded Gold Certification have demonstrated their success in providing ethical, safe, therapeutic, well-resourced, and sustainable residential programming to survivors while meeting and exceeding best practices in survivor care, as established through empirical research and survivor input. Call to Freedom was also awarded three Specialized Care Badges in the areas of Pregnant & Parenting, Mobility Issues/ADA Compliance, and Interpretation. Specialized Care Badges are reserved for those programs who provide exemplary service to survivors that have been historically underserved.

McKenzie Huska, Call to Freedom's Director of Marissa's House & Outreach Services, expressed the value of Certification. "We are humbled and honored to be awarded Gold Certification through Safe House Project. Call to Freedom has always strived to meet the diverse needs of survivors by providing comprehensive, ongoing, and coordinated services to all individuals impacted by human trafficking. Marissa's House is a 12-unit apartment complex that supports the recovery of human trafficking survivors and keeps their families together. We have found — through both research and our work — that creating a safe environment where women can be supported and find stability is necessary for successful long-term transitions out of a trafficking situation. Marissa's House aims to meet the needs of survivors who wish to receive the support of Call to Freedom during their recovery but are also focused on healthy families."

Alia Dewees, Safe House Project Director of Aftercare Development and Survivor Leader expressed the need for this certification to bring greater support to survivors. "Daily we see quality programs break the cycle of victimization for trafficking survivors. This certification provides a straightforward way to evaluate organizations that are serving trafficking survivors and reward those meeting best practices, while driving all programs to excellence, thereby reducing re-victimization nationwide. Safe House Project's certification model was created in collaboration with industry experts including survivors, law enforcement, social workers, health care professionals, mental health professionals, and leading residential programs for trafficking survivors in order to provide survivor care that goes beyond a basic industry standard of care."











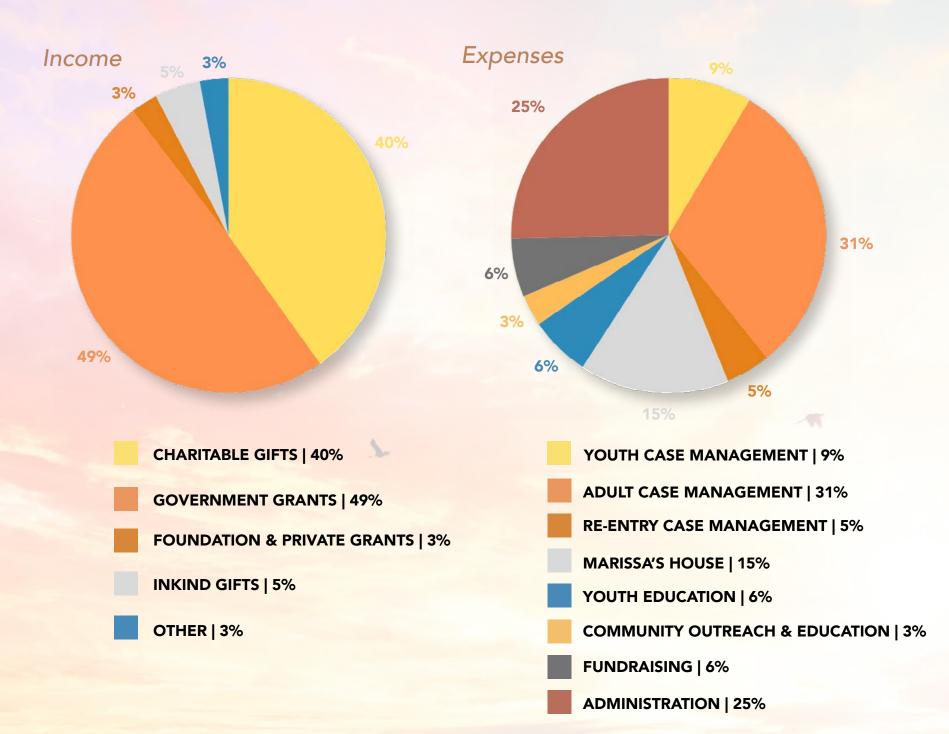
MARISSA'S HOUSE SURVIVORS STARTING THEIR NEW LIVES

A pivotal part of Call to Freedom's services includes a 12-until apartment complex named after a young teenage girl involved in trafficking.

Marissa's House supports the recovery of human trafficking women survivors and keeps their families together. It helps us create a safe environment where individuals can be supported and find stability.

While the complex provides shelter, survivors are also offered access to other supportive services with the goal for clients to transition into productive and self-sufficient members of our community.

Marissa's House offers 6 onebedroom, 3 two-bedroom, and 3 three-bedroom units for survivors and their children. All are fully furnished to be as comforting as possible for the women starting these journeys.



MOVED FROM DESPAIR TO EMPOWERMENT

Mariana's story traces back to her childhood in poverty in Guatemala, where she lacked healthy examples of relationships. As a child, she became a victim of trafficking, exploited by her own family as a means to generate income. She fled to the United States, only to encounter another cycle of vulnerability. Mariana met her husband, whose abusive and exploitative behavior extended not only to her but also to her children.

> Her relentless drive to overcome life's hardships has resulted in a remarkable increase in her confidence.

Driven by the desire for a better life for her six kids, Mariana found herself repeatedly caught in difficult situations, without stability or access to support. Her husband perpetuated a climate of fear, using physical abuse against her children and threatened her with deportation in an effort to control her. In 2019, Mariana reached out to Call to Freedom after her husband was deported, seeking safety and a new beginning for her family. Faced with eviction and working only a few hours a week for minimal pay under the table, Mariana struggled to find assistance due to documentation challenges and insufficient work hours.

Call to Freedom intervened, providing support for refugee resettlement and connecting Mariana with a mentor. Her children received counseling at the Compass Center to address the trauma they had endured. After three years of persistent efforts,



Call to Freedom secured a work permit and visa for Mariana.

Empowered by this newfound status, she was accepted under Call to Freedom's transitional housing program and managed to pay off substantial debts to her landlord. Through the housing program, Mariana receives short-term rental assistance that has allowed her to build savings and take meaningful steps towards selfsufficiency and financial independence. Having entered the workforce as a full-time employee for the first time, Mariana is diligently working on budgeting and saving. Her relentless drive to overcome life's hardships has resulted in a remarkable increase in her confidence. In transforming her own life, Mariana has also become a beacon of hope for others. She referred two fellow Hispanic trafficking survivors to Call to Freedom, highlighting the positive ripple effect of empowerment and support. Through her journey with Call to Freedom, Mariana has moved from despair to empowerment, embodying the transformative impact of compassion, advocacy, and resilience.

AUTHOR OFFERS VOICE OF HOPE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING





CALL TO FREEDOM

A Parent's Guide to Understanding Human Trafficking and Healing Their Children

ORDER THE BOOK NOW



WATCH THE INTERVIEW HERE

Ruth Atkins credits God and Call to Freedom with helping her through one of the most difficult chapters in her life. She hopes that by writing a book about human trafficking, she can help prevent others from becoming victims.

In a candid conversation on the Triumph Talks podcast with Melanie Davis, Atkins shared her motivation for writing "Call To Freedom: A Parent's Guide to Understanding Human Trafficking and Healing Their Children."

Atkins' expertise stems from the experience of her granddaughter, who became a human trafficking survivor eight years ago. Atkins was determined to understand the dynamics of trafficking and prevent others from falling victim. One of the first steps in her mission of education and empowerment began with her decision to volunteer at Call to Freedom.

Motivated by that firsthand experience and guided by the expertise of Call to Freedom, Atkins collaborated on a comprehensive resource guide for parents grappling with the reality of their child's trafficking. The book serves as a beacon of hope, providing essential insights, warning signs, and practical advice for parents, teachers, and caregivers.

Atkins notes that when this book was published, in the United States, only 3% of human trafficking victims were ever identified. Since then, that number has dropped to an alarming 1%. She calls the fact her granddaughter was discovered and is now thriving "a miracle."

Reflecting on the pivotal moments following her granddaughter's trafficking, Atkins shares advice she received from a detective: "Don't ask too many questions. Just listen. She is the victim in this." This guidance underscores the importance of empathy and support in the immediate aftermath of discovering a loved one's trafficking experience.

For more information on "Call To Freedom: A Parent's Guide to Understanding Human Trafficking and Healing Their Children," visit www.CallToFreedom.org or find it on Amazon and Kindle.



Grace was referred to Call to Freedom through Minnehaha County's Drug Court, a problem-solving court designed to keep people living with substance use and mental health disorders out of the criminal justice system and into lives of recovery and stability. She had experienced multiple sexual assaults, exploitation, and intimate partner violence. Like many who've experienced severe acts of violence, she turned to drugs to numb pain that she couldn't express. To society, she was nothing more than an "addict"—no one asked what experiences in her life led to her drug use or whether she needed help. During her addiction, Grace was in a relationship with a partner who was physically, mentally, and emotionally abusive and controlling. She became pregnant with her son, and, to cope with the abuse, she continued to use substances during her pregnancy. As a result, her child was placed into Child Protection Services' custody, and Grace's parental rights were ultimately terminated.

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Grace began receiving services from Call to Freedom in March 2022, but continued to struggle with relapsing amidst challenges including the loss of her grandmother. She entered Drug Court, where she was ordered to undergo treatment. She failed to remain in treatment due to the timing of her grandmother's funeral and struggling with processing the grief. She was in and out of jail and facing termination from Drug Court. With support from Call to Freedom, she enrolled at the Arch, a residential treatment center located in Sioux Falls, and began accepting help and support instead of pushing people away.

Grace completed the Arch successfully, then moved into the Oxford House, a sober living home, where she served as the house manager. She recently graduated from Drug Court and the Leaders of Tomorrow program. Today, Grace serves as a Peer Support Specialist through SD Department of Mental Health. She works full-time and is in a healthy relationship. Her partner is in recovery as well and they gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. She reconnected and mended family relationships including her dad, brother, sister-in-law, and her son. She continues to meet with her Call to Freedom case manager and occupational therapist monthly.

With the support of Call to Freedom, Grace has learned how to draw boundaries with unhealthy relationships and how to cope with the stress of life's challenges.

Grace stands as a living example of what's possible when survivors are treated with compassion and connected with community resources. Grace's path to healing—an ongoing, lifelong journey—was riddled with hurdles and imperfections, but Call to Freedom staff remained a constant support. Grace has learned that a life free from violence and full of hope is not only possible, but that as a child of God, she's deserving of it and loved beyond measure. **\$10,000+** Ballard Spahr LLP Evereve

\$1,000 - \$5,000

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8th Annual CommUnity Breakfast brings support and awareness to human trafficking. Nearly 1200 people gathered for the 2023 CommUNITY Breakfast to benefit Call to Freedom in October 2023. The event brings support and awareness to human trafficking in the area.

It is more than just a fundraiser though. It's a reminder that this organization is a beacon of hope for survivors on their journey. Call to Freedom is grateful for everyone who donated, for survivors sharing their stories of restoration and for the event sponsors.

Amount Raised: \$308,189









THANK YOU TO OUR 2023 CORPORATE SPONSORS!









NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS













LIBERATOR AWARDS



OUT IN THE COMMUNITY



HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT & COMMUNITY TRAININGS



Call to Freedom relies on the support of YOU, our community. Your involvement fuels our momentum and drives meaningful change. Moreover, it offers vital encouragement to survivors, reassuring them that they are believed and their voice and experiences matter. Your contributions, whether through financial support, time, or prayer, are instrumental in guiding us on a path that best serves those in need.





MONICA RILLING EDEN SCHANZENBACH Managing Director of Development & Community Engagement

RACHEL SCHARTZ Director of Grants Management

Your contribution of funds, time, or items makes a life-changing difference in the recovery of individuals impacted by human trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation. If you feel moved to give a donation, leave a legacy, or would like to discuss endowments or planned giving, please reach out to 605-799-6153.

THANK YOU!

2023 was an amazing year for Call to Freedom. Our continuum of care approach positions South Dakota as a leader in supporting individuals affected by human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, and it truly would not be possible without you. Your support has not only propelled our mission forward but has also made a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve. We're deeply grateful for your personal commitment to and belief in our cause.

Thank you for answering the call.

Our continuum of care model is shaped by survivors' input by employing a variety of ways for them to share their voice, including through client satisfaction surveys, listening session, and having a full-time lived experience expert on staff. We ensure holistic and meaningful care by providing safety, basic needs, a supportive housing site, medical assistance, transportation, and other specialized services.

