

©Safe Passage
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2025

A love letter *to God,*
to *our supporters,*
and to *our youth.*

Impact Report



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www.safepassageusa.org

Safe Passage



Letter from the President

Because of your support, we were able to **successfully launch our Georgia site** this year.

You probably knew that already.

... But did you know it almost didn't happen?

In 2 Corinthians 12:9, Paul says the only thing we should boast about is our weakness.

My weakness is fear.

Our board and team have been praying about launching our ministry into Atlanta, Georgia for three years. Three years ago, we began praying and preparing the infrastructure for expansion. Two years ago, we joined the Georgia Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force to discern alignment. One year ago, we conducted strategic Discovery Meetings with frontline stakeholders in Georgia to make our final decision. The feedback was overwhelmingly unanimous—**we were urged to come to Georgia**. We were told our mission was critically needed and would fill a gap that has yet to be addressed in a state with such rampant trafficking and exploitation.

After all this work, and as affirmation pointed to confirmation, one final meeting cast a shadow over the momentum. We were confronted with a significant field-based challenge—one that, from a risk standpoint, posed a real and weighty obstacle.

I went to the board and told them I wasn't sure if we should move forward. I presented the facts. They listened. They agreed: there was a mountain of confirmation—and one significant hurdle standing in the way of it all. But they smiled and said, "So... you're going to launch in Georgia, just like you've been praying for three years to do."

Can I tell you that within one month, that obstacle was extinguished?

It was no longer a factor, a hurdle, or a looming discouragement.

In one month, I feared. I was encouraged. We stepped forward. We watched the obstacle fall away. And we found our new State Director.



We watched a real life version of Revelation 3:7 unfold before our very own eyes; **God handled the closed doors, and He opened a way for us**. It is truly special to announce to you that we have launched Georgia.

It is even more special when you understand that this happened with so little credit to my own strength—or even my own faith.

And so it gives me great pleasure to boast in my weakness. Georgia is launched because of God's faithfulness and His **relentless love for exploited children**.

If it were up to me, it wouldn't have happened. It would have unraveled at the last second.

I love when He swoops in like that. It deepens my love for this organization when I watch Him fight for the children all on His own. It increases my faith when I see Him do the building and expanding by His own hand. I wake up every morning aware of the privilege of stewarding something birthed from the depths of His heart and intercession.

And so, with the most humble gratitude, I say **to all of our mentors, prayer partners, and supporters—thank you**. I am at a loss for words. You have placed into our hands the very heart of God—a heavenly gift brought to earth, and entrusted to us together.

Because of your support, the impact of your partnership is clear. In the following pages, you will read stories that reveal **a bittersweet report of lives touched in the fight against child trafficking and exploitation**. This year, Safe Passage reached our highest referral numbers yet—77 youth in Kentucky and 8 in Georgia—while new forms of online sextortion schemes have escalated the threat to young lives. These realities have only dug our heels deeper into our mission: **to protect children, restore childhoods, and nurture them toward a hopeful future beyond exploitation**. Every referral, every story, and every life reminds us why your support matters—because together, we are turning the tide for vulnerable youth and giving them a chance to step into the light, known, loved, and seen.

Sincerely,

Cara Starns

Founder & President

Board Members

Amy Hieb, *Outgoing Chairman*
Darren Foote, *Incoming Chairman*
Beth Stucker, *Secretary*
Chris Vaughn, *Treasurer*
Becky Beanblossom
Andrea Clemmons
Brandon Sowder
Brad McMahan



Combatting Child Exploitation *From All Angles*

Part One: The Problem

I. Rampant Risk

Today's youth face unprecedented vulnerability. Widespread cell phone ownership has placed unfiltered access to predators directly into their hands, while rising depression and a deep search for love and belonging drive many to seek connection online. At the same time, AI-driven sextortion schemes have escalated in sophistication, manipulating and blackmailing children at alarming rates.

II. Unreachable Cases

Child trafficking cases are not centralized—they are scattered across cities, suburbs, and rural communities throughout the state. The nature of trauma often leads to instability in placement, with youth frequently moved from home to home, between foster families, group homes, psychiatric facilities, detention centers, and temporary alternative care programs. Runaway and homeless youth are particularly difficult to engage in traditional office-based settings. These are hard-to-reach youth in constantly shifting environments, requiring an out-of-the-box, flexible service model that goes to them rather than waiting for them to come to us.

III. Disrupted Attachment, Betrayed Safety, and Misplaced Trust

Many of the youth we serve have been abused or exploited by parental figures or trusted adults. **Their earliest experiences of safety were fractured.** As a result, even when placed in healthy and loving homes, attachment can feel foreign—or even threatening. Trauma disrupts a child's ability to bond, to trust, and to receive care. In their search for belonging and affirmation, many turn toward dangerous relationships that promise connection but deliver exploitation. What looks like rebellion is often misplaced trust rooted in deep unmet attachment needs.

IV. Setback in Life Nurturing

Beyond safety concerns, **many youth have missed essential forms of nurturing that prepare a child for adulthood.** Gaps in consistent care have left them without the motivation, self-esteem, and adult guidance necessary to navigate life's next steps. Basic life skills—financial literacy, job readiness, goal setting, and long-term planning—are often underdeveloped, not from lack of ability, but from lack of sustained support.



The steady, faithful
presence of a mentor has
helped youth accomplish
what once felt impossible.

They begin caring for themselves. (...) They
start to believe they are worth the effort.

Part Two: Our Response

I. Prevention and Outreach

Through strategic prevention and outreach programs, we **fortify at-risk youth against sex trafficking and exploitation** by equipping them with awareness, discernment, and resilience. At the same time, our presence in schools, group homes, detention centers, and community settings helps us identify previously undiscovered victims and connect them to immediate, trauma-informed support.

II. Rapid Response and Support Services

Our service model is mobile by design. We provide rapid response to referrals, offering virtual support to parents and social workers who need case management guidance and advocacy. When in-person presence is needed, our team travels directly into marginalized and rural areas of the state to meet youth where they are—**bringing consistent care into unstable environments** and ensuring no child is overlooked because of geography.

III. Mentorship

Mentorship has become a lifeline. When asked **what they want most in a mentor**, youth consistently answer, “Someone who actually wants to spend time with me.” Beneath complex case files and trauma histories is a simple need: **love**. A safe, caring, consistent adult who shows up again and again begins to rebuild trust, restore dignity, and create a stable anchor in lives marked by instability.

IV. WealthGen

WealthGen directly combats generational poverty and the victim mindset that trauma can reinforce. Designed for our 17-year-olds, this program **nurtures essential skills for life, work, and financial sustainability**. Through practical training and guided support, youth gain the tools and confidence necessary to step into adulthood prepared and empowered.



Part Three: The Impact

I. Youth Protected, Hidden Victims Discovered

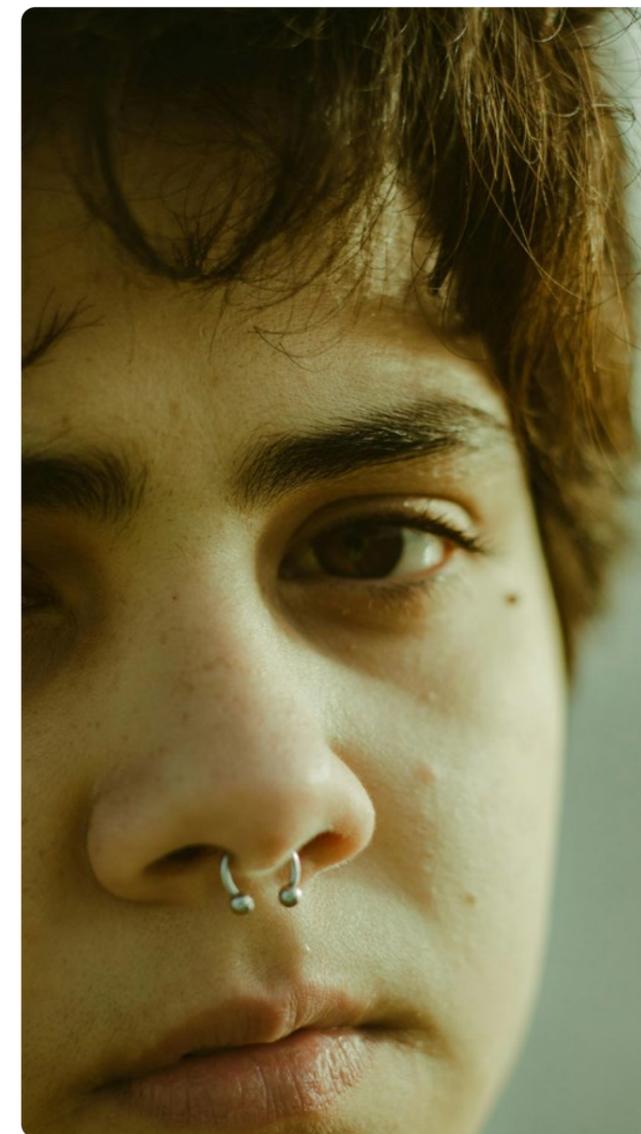
Our work is bittersweet. We meet youth who have endured lifelong abuse and exploitation—many who never realized they were victims. Through prevention and outreach, we witness “lightbulb” moments when **young people recognize their worth and begin exiting cycles of exploitation**. Lonely youth find connection through safe mentorship. Disclosures are made. Reports are filed. Counseling begins. Healing, often slow and sacred, takes root.

II. Connections Sustained for Hurting Youth

Community-based support changes everything. Sometimes three hours into rural communities, marginalized youth are met with an extraordinary show of love when we arrive—and when we raise up a mentor within their own community to walk alongside them. These in-person supports have led to **powerful, life-altering confessions and courageous decisions**. Youth have chosen new paths, stepping away from exploitation, self-harm, and self-sabotage **because someone showed up and stayed**.

III. Brave Steps Forward, Together

Mentorship fills a missing piece that programs alone cannot supply. It gives youth someone in their corner who will not give up or walk out. The steady, faithful presence of a mentor has helped youth accomplish what once felt impossible. They begin caring for themselves. They take brave steps forward. They start to believe they are worth the effort.



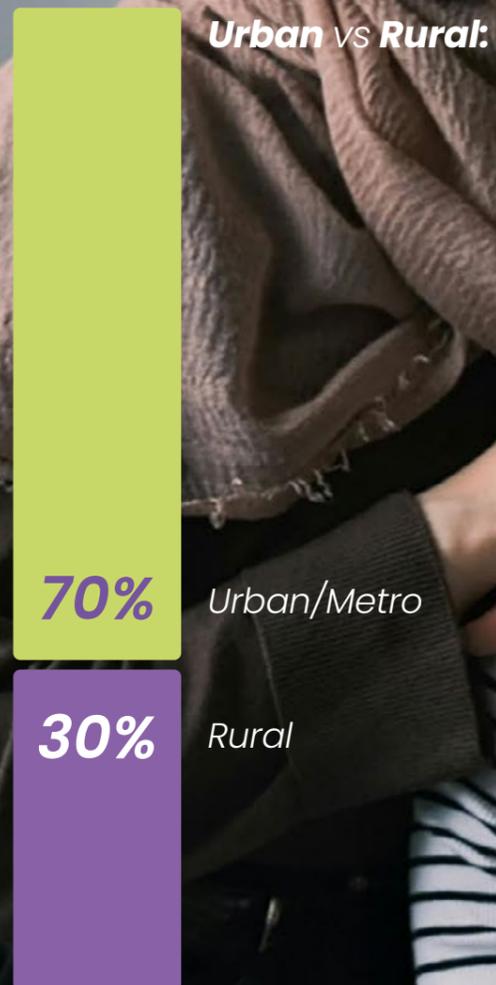
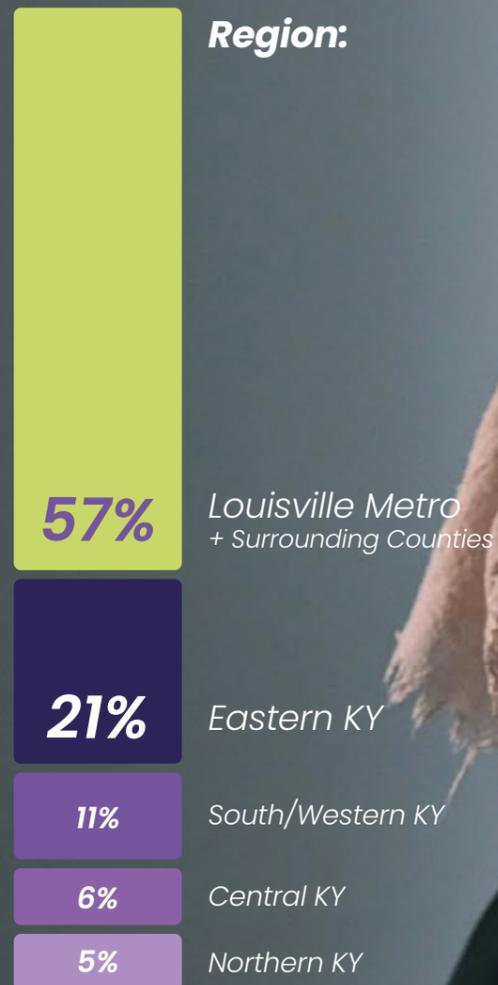
IV. Childhoods Restored, Young Adults Emerging

WealthGen is a two-edged gift. On one hand, it restores essential experiences of childhood that were lost to trauma—guidance, encouragement, and preparation. On the other hand, it launches equipped young adults into the world. They have budgets, checking accounts, debit cards, driver’s licenses, resumes, jobs, and apartments.

*Look out, world! Prepared and empowered young adults are emerging—**no longer defined by exploitation, but by resilience, dignity, and hope.***

Kentucky Impact

↳ **77** Referrals



Rapid response
provided to 77 referrals

Assessing risk and/or level of exploitation, linking wrap-around resources, supporting parents and social workers through case management.

25 support services

provided to at-risk youth. Addressing safe versus unsafe people, healthy attachment, dating violence, safety and crisis planning, and more.

17 new mentorships

30 active alumni matches

1.2K youth educated in trafficking & abuse prevention

1.8K professionals educated in trafficking awareness & response



Georgia Launch

Safe Passage · More love, more life & more hope.



Meet the Pioneers



Bekka Prewitt
Mentorship Coordinator



Nina Downs
State Director

“Rehoboth”

A Message From Nina

August marked the beginning of a sacred journey as I stepped into a God-ordained adventure, joining Safe Passage as Georgia’s State Director. I am deeply privileged to walk this path of restoring hope and healing.

In Genesis 26:22, Isaac named a well Rehoboth, declaring, “Now the Lord has made room for us, and we will flourish in the land.” Rehoboth means “broad places” or “room to expand.” It came after seasons of resistance and closed wells—evidence that when opposition pressed in, God Himself created space.

With God’s mercy guiding us and Rehoboth—the Lord making space for us—we have started to unite with and build partnerships within the communities of Georgia, opening doors to combat child trafficking and serve our vulnerable youth. What we are witnessing in this launch is not merely growth, but God making room—establishing a broad place for this mission to take root and flourish across Georgia.

Sincerely,

Nina Downs
Georgia State Director

Georgia's Launch Timeline: Wins and Challenges

2023-2025

August

September

October

Wins

- ↳ Two years of virtual membership on the Georgia Anti Human Trafficking Task Force to observe alignment for Safe Passage's presence in Georgia
- ↳ **20+ Partnerships** prepared through virtual Discovery Meetings
- ↳ Board of Directors builds out **strategy and risk assessment**

Challenges

- ↳ Wisdom for navigating barriers of fear, risk, and discouragement

Wins

- ↳ **\$80,000 Seed funding** for Georgia was made possible through HQ and the faithful support of its donors
- ↳ Hired Georgia State Director
- ↳ Finalized **strategic plan** through December 2025
- ↳ First ministry introduction at Trinity Presbyterian Church
- ↳ Joined Cobb Collaborative
- ↳ Meetings with:
 - Special Victims Division (Atlanta Judicial Circuit)
 - Rescuing Hope
 - Salvation Army
 - Georgia Children's Advocacy Center

Challenges

- ↳ Challenges identifying Mentorship Coordinator candidates fully aligned with organizational values during phone screenings
- ↳ Networking outreach efforts that did not result in timely or meaningful connections
- ↳ Cold email outreach yielding minimal response to date

Wins

- ↳ Encouraging meeting with Wellspring's Receiving Hope Center: a group home for trafficked and exploited youth
- ↳ **First mentor onboarded** ✨

Challenges

- ↳ Challenge determining best strategy to kick off fundraising efforts; limited personal connections, holidays to work around, timing our first "ask" for maximum impact



Vivid Impact Golf Scramble, thank you!

Wins

- ↳ Official dates set for Brunch of Hope and Mentorship Training - we're going for it!
- ↳ **Mentorship Coordinator hired** and onboarded with a 3 month integration and training plan
- ↳ Joined Dawsonville Collaborative
- ↳ A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been established with Wellspring's Receiving Hope Center to **provide mentorship and aftercare services** for trafficked youth transitioning from group homes back into home settings.
- ↳ Delivered **first church presentation** at Trinity Presbyterian Church, blessed to receive Georgia's very first donations, totaling \$450
- ↳ Built key connections with:
 - Passion City Church
 - Hillside Behavioral
 - City of Refuge
 - Promise 686
 - Pastors Association
 - Trinity Anglican

Challenges

- ↳ Limited response from potential partners, particularly churches, despite outreach efforts
- ↳ Need for clarity on the most effective approach to engaging the Division for Family and Children Services, and Child Advocacy Centers



Georgia's Launch Timeline: Wins and Challenges

November

Wins

- ↳ **First youth referral!!!** ✨
- ↳ November brings **four total referrals** through the Wellspring partnership: 3 girls, 1 boy
- ↳ Georgia team attended and trained on key events in Kentucky: Night of Hope and the annual Unfiltered Retreat
- ↳ Connections building with:
 - Fulton County Schools
 - City of Atlanta Church
 - Perimeter Church

Challenges

- ↳ Continuing to build partnerships and increase Safe Passage visibility across Georgia amid holiday interruptions
- ↳ Anxiety related to the first Mentor Training preparedness
- ↳ Significant time and effort required to establish initial connections to provide out-of-county support for youth referrals
- ↳ Continued limited response from outreach and partnership efforts

December

Wins

- ↳ December brings **three more referrals** through the Wellspring partnership: 3 girls
- ↳ Team assigned to three Working Groups within the Georgia Anti Human Trafficking Task Force



Hayride at the Unfiltered Retreat

Challenges

- ↳ Holidays interrupting progress in connection and fundraising development

January

Wins

- ↳ **\$80,000 in seed funding** pledged to Georgia for 2026 through HQ's tremendous supporters, providing three months of operating support
- ↳ **First monthly partner onboarded!** ✨
- ↳ Met with Devereux and Grace's Place; two group homes serving trafficked and exploited youth. MOU in development to provide support groups for youth in their care, along with mentorship and aftercare support for youth exiting their care. **Georgia referrals projected to quickly match or exceed Kentucky's history.**
- ↳ Identified the first mentor for an out-of-county youth
- ↳ **Successfully conducted our first mentorship training, resulting in 13 pending mentors**

Challenges

- ↳ Cancellation of the Brunch of Hope due to inclement weather was a disappointment. Date postponed to March. Setback in building connections, recruiting mentors, and raising critical funds.
- ↳ \$100,000 needed for "core program launch"
- ↳ \$200,000 needed to support full scale impact
- ↳ We lean on God.



Georgia's First Three Referrals

When we said “yes” to launching in Georgia, we knew we were stepping into holy ground. New territory. New partnerships. New stories waiting to unfold. What we didn't know was how quickly the first three referrals would shape us.

They weren't just names on an intake form. **They were young lives carrying complex histories**, layered trauma, guarded hope, and flickers of resilience. They arrived one by one—each story different, each need urgent, each outcome uncertain.

This post is an inside look at the bittersweet, up-and-down journey with our very first three referrals in Georgia. It's a glimpse behind the scenes—the prayers, the phone calls, the setbacks, the small victories, the moments that broke our hearts, and the ones that reminded us why we said yes in the first place.



Micah

Micah is **17 years old**. For much of his life, he has carried painful labels placed on him by both peers and family—labels that have shaped how others see him and, over time, how he has come to see himself. At school, **he is known as “the gay druggie,”** a name that has followed him and reinforced stigma, isolation, and emotional distance. At home, he has not experienced consistent safety or support, leaving him feeling unseen and unprotected.

Living between judgment at school and instability at home has made Micah vulnerable. In moments of crisis, he has made survival-based choices to meet immediate needs, some of which carried significant risk. During one such encounter, **Micah was held at knifepoint, drugged, used, and went missing for several days.**

Eventually, Micah entered a residential program for trafficking survivors. For the first time, he began to feel a sense of safety—particularly relief from the mental and emotional abuse he experienced at home. As his discharge date approached, fear set in. The thought of returning home felt unbearable. Rather than leaving, **Micah delayed discharge through self-sabotaging behavior**, which resulted in a hospitalization lasting several weeks.

He wants to stop running, and his deepest desire right now is to finish school. **Today, Micah is still searching for a path forward—one that protects his life, honors his resilience, and gives him the chance to heal, recover, and complete his education.**



Callie

When we first met “Callie,” she walked into the room like she owned it.

Her outfit was bold and carefully styled, her long hair freshly done, her makeup flawless. Tucked under her arm was a worn stuffed bear she’d carried since childhood—a quiet contradiction to the confident persona she projected. She laughed loudly, made quick jokes, and scanned the room as if she was always measuring the temperature of a space.

Callie is **sixteen**.

At school, she has a reputation. She doesn’t let anyone disrespect her—or anyone she cares about. Teachers know her name. Administrators know her file. She currently wears an ankle monitor through a juvenile diversion program after multiple altercations. When asked about it, she shrugs. **“You have to be a certain way,”** she says. **“Or people walk all over you.”**

Callie loves what she calls “the scene”—parties, older crowds, the attention, the lights, the glamour. She describes it as freedom. What she doesn’t describe—at least not at first—is the vulnerability underneath it.

Over time, pieces of her story surface.

An unstable home life. A pattern of older boys who made her feel chosen. A boyfriend who once left her outside in freezing weather after an argument. A night when she didn’t have a

ride home and felt she had no choice but to rely on someone whose intentions weren’t safe.

Callie doesn’t frame these moments as exploitation. She frames them as “just how things are.”

But beneath the bold exterior is a young girl who desperately wants to belong.

When asked what she wanted in a mentor, Callie didn’t say homework help. She didn’t say tutoring.

She said, “Someone who would actually go places with me. Someone who gets it.”

She is searching for guidance without wanting to lose her identity. She protects the vulnerable at school because she knows what it feels like to be unprotected. She commands respect because she has rarely felt secure.

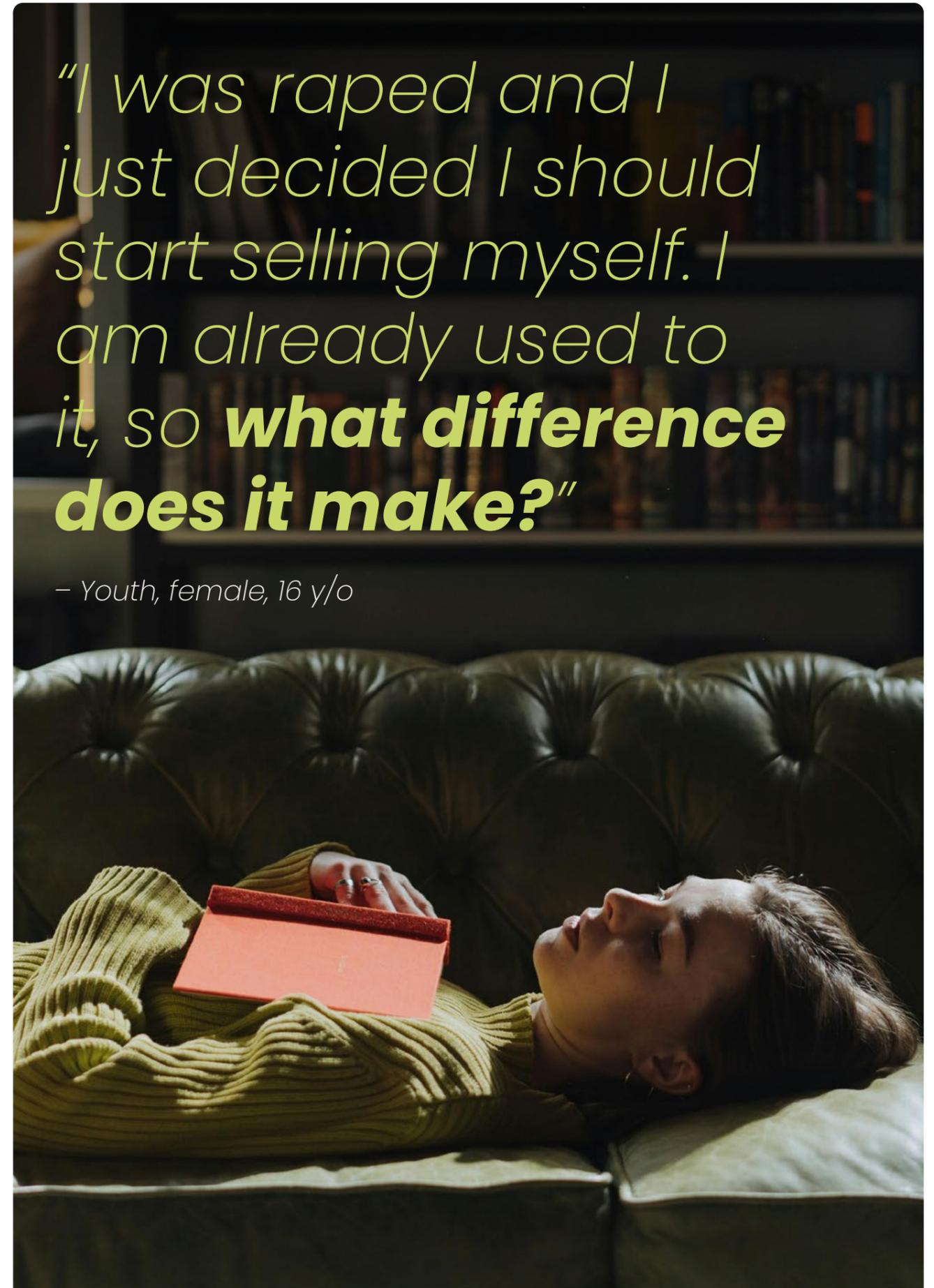
With consistent mentorship, **we have seen glimpses of who Callie is becoming when she doesn’t have to perform.** She laughs differently. She asks deeper questions. She begins to consider what healthy relationships look like. She starts imagining a future not defined by survival or social status.

Callie’s story is not over.

And because of faithful supporters, she does not have to navigate it alone.

*“I was raped and I just decided I should start selling myself. I am already used to it, so **what difference does it make?**”*

– Youth, female, 16 y/o



*“The program has been such a blessing for us. **It gave my child someone who truly cared, listened, and guided her when she needed it most.** Knowing she had that support made a huge difference for all of us, and we’re so grateful for it.”*

– Parent

Kaliyah

“Kaliyah” was **fourteen** the first time she ran.

The foster home felt temporary. School felt hostile. The rules felt suffocating. When a group of older teens offered her a ride and a sense of belonging, she didn’t hesitate.

What began as couch surfing quickly spiraled. Someone offered her a vape when she didn’t have one. Someone else offered food. Then came requests in return. She was told it was no big deal. She was told this was how you survive.

Kaliyah was trafficked before she fully understood what that meant.

Eventually she was located and placed in a residential program. By then, she carried more than trauma—**she carried a felony record, probation requirements, and a deep distrust of authority.** Her anger was quick. Her walls were high.

But so was her intelligence.

Kaliyah is articulate, perceptive, and fiercely aware of injustice. Beneath the survival instincts is a young woman who speaks tenderly about wanting to care for elderly people someday. She talks about faith with sincerity. She asks thoughtful questions about purpose.

In the residential program, she worked to manage her impulsivity. She began attending Bible studies. She asked staff to teach her how to cook simple meals so she could “be ready for real life.” She applied for jobs.

Progress, for youth like Kaliyah, is rarely linear.

After discharge, she moved in with a family member—an arrangement with a 30-day limit. Housing instability loomed again. A lingering arm injury made employment difficult. Options narrowed quickly. Shelter became a possibility.

And then she stopped answering calls.

For many youth with histories of exploitation, silence is not apathy—it is overwhelm. It is shame. It is fear of disappointing the very people trying to help.

The window between vulnerability and re-exploitation can be painfully small.

Kaliyah’s story represents a critical reality: **rescue is only the beginning.** Without stable housing, consistent mentorship, and long-term community support, the risk factors that once led to trafficking remain.

But when a safe adult shows up consistently—when a mentor answers the late-night call, when a community refuses to give up—the trajectory can change.

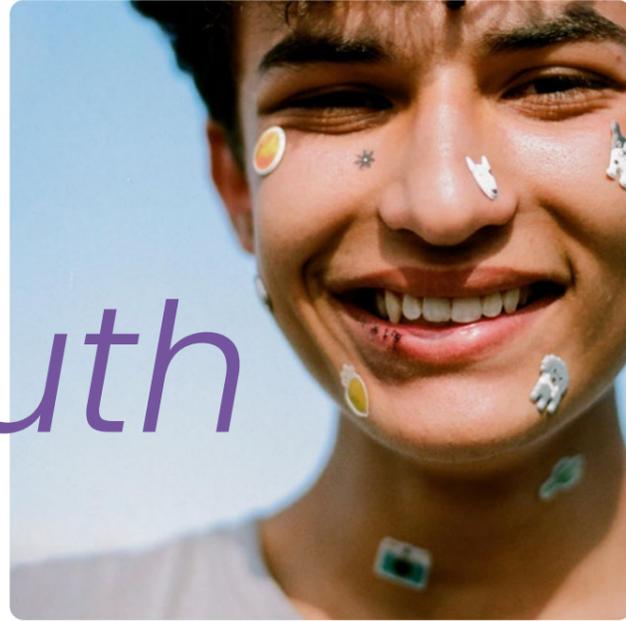
We have seen it happen.

Young women who once traded their bodies for survival now mentoring others. Youth who once ran now choosing stability. Stories that began in exploitation ending in leadership.

Your support makes that possible.



About The Youth



Stage of Crisis

87%

*Sexually Trafficked
or Exploited*

*Use of **sexortion** in
addition to exploitation:*

18%

Sextortion

4%

AI Generated Sextortion

13%

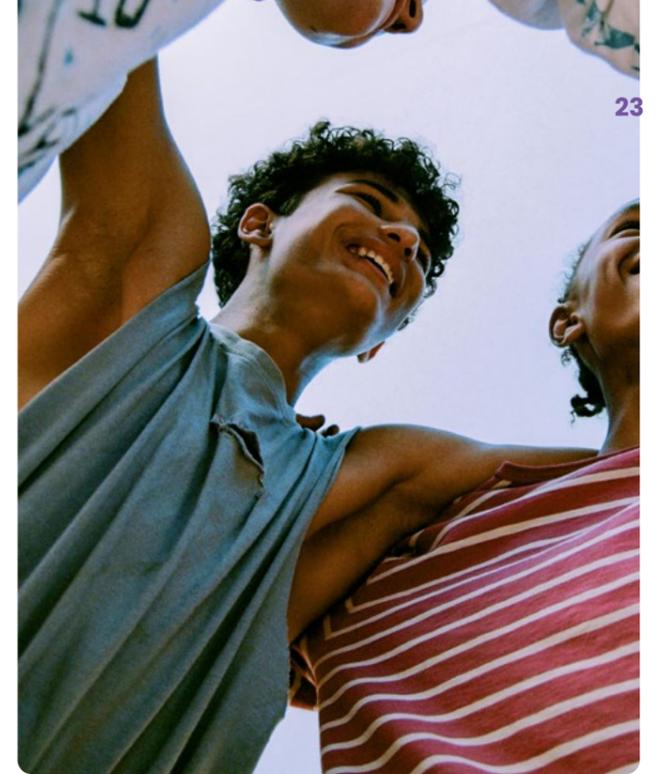
*Groomed or
At-Risk*

Child Sex Trafficking

Child sex trafficking occurs when a minor is involved in any **sexual activity in exchange for something of value**, such as money, gifts, shelter, drugs, or protection. Under the law, any commercial sexual activity involving a child is considered trafficking, even if there is no visible force or coercion. A trafficker may recruit, control, or profit from the child, but even without a third party, the exchange itself qualifies as trafficking. The child is always the victim.

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children is a broad term that describes any situation in which a child is **sexually used for someone else's benefit** or gain in exchange for something of value. It includes child sex trafficking as well as other forms of exploitation, such as paying a minor for sexual images or engaging them in sexual performances. In all cases, a child cannot legally or developmentally consent to this exploitation.



Sextortion

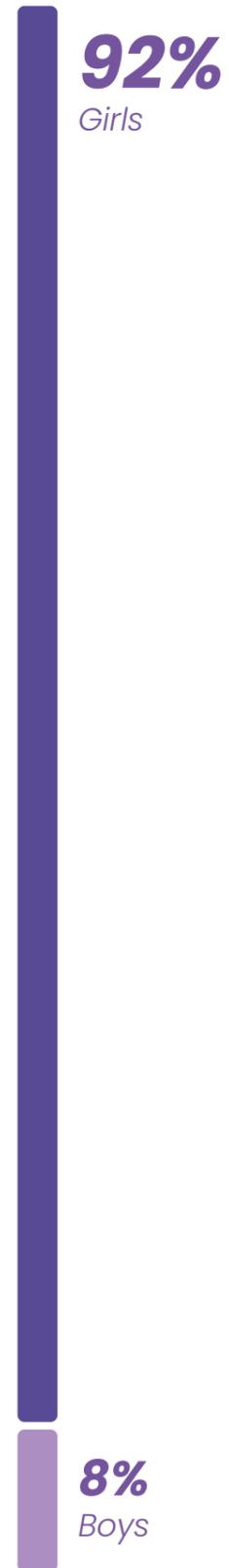
A form of blackmail where someone **tricks or pressures a young person** into sending sexual photos or videos, then threatens to share them unless the child sends more images, pays money, or complies with other demands. It often starts with what feels like a normal online friendship or romance.

AI Generated Sextortion

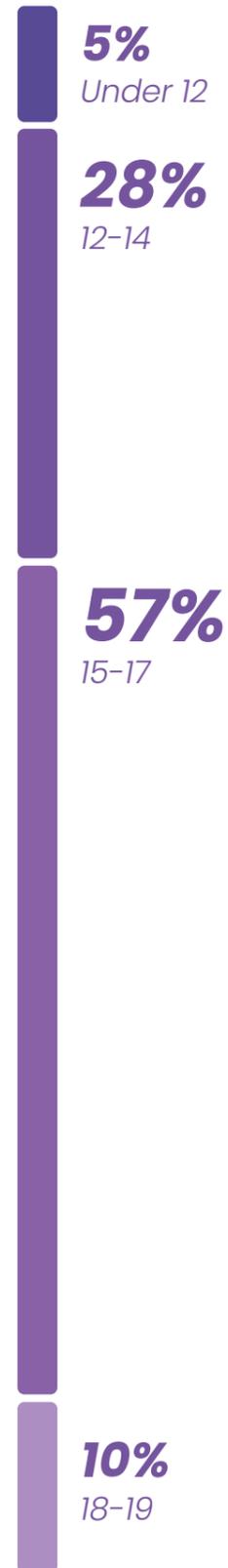
A newer form of sextortion where **predators use artificial intelligence (AI) to create fake nude or sexual images of a child** – sometimes using only a regular photo pulled from social media. The predator then threatens to share the fake images unless the child pays money or sends real explicit content. Even though the images are fake, the fear and harm are very real.



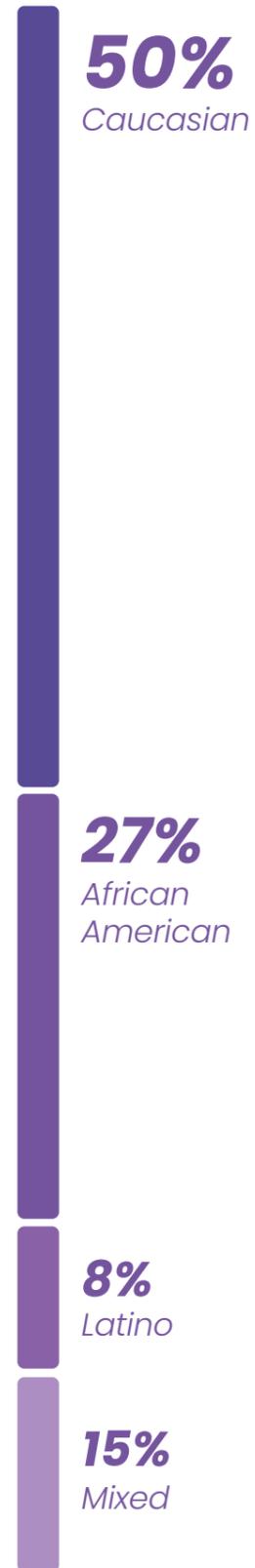
Gender



Age



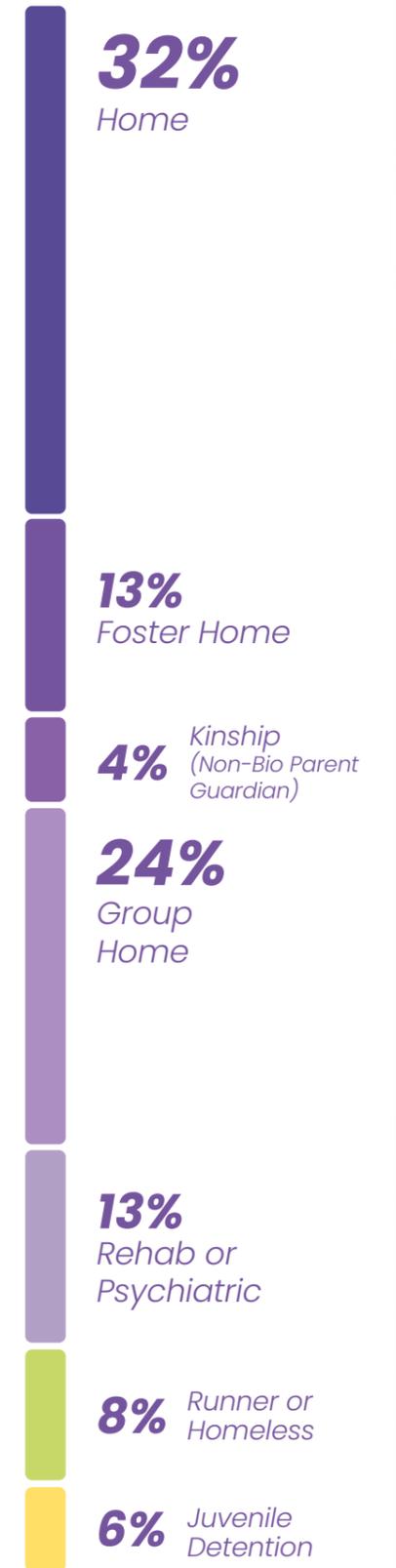
Ethnicity



Referral Source



Placement



"You are the
one keeping
my life
together."

— Youth, female

"You can't see the wind, but
you can hear it and feel it. **You**
can't see God, but you can
hear Him and feel Him."

— A youth's revelation at the Unfiltered Retreat



2025's Alarming Trends



Group Exploitation

What began with one girl desperate to be seen and accepted by an online “boyfriend”—a perpetrator exploiting her vulnerability—spread through a rural Kentucky small town. He used charm, gifts, and attention to gain trust, then sexually exploited her and coerced her into recruiting other girls through social media. Under threats and manipulation, the pattern repeated until eight girls were being trafficked and abused by the same perpetrator.

Online/Ai/Sextortion

We sat across from 16 year old Sydney* in a rehab facility after she attempted to take her own life by overdose. She had been groomed and exploited by complete strangers online. She even had over 100k subscribers, many of whom paid to talk to her online. What began as a “harmless” side hustle became a tool to blackmail her into sending private photos, videos, and information about her family.



Believing They're A “Sex Worker”

A concerning call came from a 16-year-old girl's high school counselor, who had overheard lunchtime conversations about her stripping at a local club. Michelle* was already on our referral list after local law enforcement took her to a juvenile detention center after they found her running tricks for criminals who exploited minors to further their schemes. When those criminals noticed her “mature” appearance and vulnerability, they persuaded her that she could pursue a “career” in sex work at the only club in town willing to overlook her age.

Juvenile Detention Involvement

From an adolescent psych unit- to a foster home- to 3 weeks on the run- to rehabilitation- to juvenile detention... we had received many calls about 15 year old Lorena*. She was first exploited at 12 when she ran from abusive parents to a family friend's house, who demanded sexual favors in exchange for her shelter. Over three years, Lorena had never stayed in single placement for more than 30 days, often finding herself turning to drugs to numb the exhausting instability.

Drugs & Alcohol Abuse

Before any supportive adults were involved, Max*—only 15—was navigating layered trauma, substance use, unsafe relationships, and instability at home. She went missing for three weeks and was later found two hours away with a 28-year-old man she believed she was dating, after which the Health Department recommended HIV testing. Max later shared she was drugged and engaged in survival sex, and she disclosed she was pregnant—overwhelmed and unsure what to do.

Survival Sex

“Well if my mom made me have sex with men for her drug addiction, does that mean I was trafficked?” In a prevention session, she found the courage to name a painful truth: her mother's addiction didn't just create chaos at home—it turned Jessie* into a source of supply. Her own mother coerced and facilitated her exploitation, arranging access to men and expecting Jessie to comply so drugs could be obtained, a form of familial trafficking that replaced protection with betrayal. Years of instability and exploitation have shaped how Jessie searches for safety and belonging—often in ways that blur boundaries and leave her vulnerable again.

Familial Trafficking

We got the call about 13 year-old Eric*, whose world had just shattered after investigators uncovered that the man who had raised him had been exploiting his trust by secretly filming him. When the FBI traced the online content back to his father, Eric was left reeling—grieving the loss of the relationship he thought he had, trying to make sense of the betrayal, and struggling to feel safe in his own life again. In the aftermath, his mom was suddenly parenting on her own, holding together her family while they faced the long road of healing

*alias name

KENTUCKY

- Substance use involvement: **75%**
- Early childhood sexual abuse: **90%**
- Running away prior to exploitation: **70%**
- Survival-based exchange (housing, food, drugs): **72%**
- Trafficker known to youth: **87%**
- Exploitation by family member or caregiver: **45%**
- Online grooming present: **68%**

GEORGIA

- Substance use involvement: **70%**
- History of sexual assault / rape: **72%**
- Running away / placement instability: **100%**
- Survival-based exchange (housing, food, drugs): **72%**
- Juvenile justice involvement / court charges: **66%**
- Suicidal ideation or self-harm: **66%**
- Parental absence / caregiver inconsistency: **85%**

Introducing WealthGen

A personal reflection from Cara Starns, Founder

WealthGen was born over a melting Dairy Queen blizzard and a question that I thought was lighthearted.

I was sitting across from my mentee, talking about life the way we often do, and I asked a question I had asked before, expecting the usual playful answer: ***“What do you hope your life looks like in a few years?”***

Most times, she would grin and say, “A red truck, a farm in the country, and a man.” That last part always sent us both into giggles.

But this time was different.

When I asked about her future, the smile didn't come. Instead, she looked down and said quietly, “I think I'm going to be homeless.”

It wasn't dramatic. It wasn't exaggerated. It was honest. And it was afraid.

That moment revealed something I see often in our work. **We serve youth who have lived through a decade or more of recurring trauma.** Many have moved from home to home, system to system, surviving instability that most adults would struggle to endure. Many have lacked consistent nurturing, financial modeling, and the basic safety nets that teach children how to plan, dream, and build.

Yet at 18 years old, the world expects them to step into adulthood with a stable job, a plan,

and the skillset to sustain themselves.

For many of the youth we walk with, their 18th birthday doesn't feel like freedom. It feels like a cliff. A deadline. A shadow looming with fear and uncertainty. I have watched too many young adults remain in unhealthy relationships, unsafe housing, or survival-based lifestyles simply because they did not yet have the tools, confidence, or coaching to take life head on.

WealthGen was created in response to that fear-filled confession: “I think I'm going to be homeless.”

WealthGen exists to educate and empower our youth with essential life skills and consistent coaching before they age out. At 17 years old, they begin learning practical foundations: how to budget, how to save money, why good credit matters, how to apply for jobs, how to search for safe housing, and how to plan realistically for independence. But I didn't want to stop at information. WealthGen pairs education with ongoing coaching, because life rarely unfolds exactly according to plan. When setbacks arise — and they do — our youth have someone walking with them.

In its name, WealthGen carries a deeper vision. It is about more than money. It is about breaking cycles. Breaking generational poverty. Breaking victim mindsets that whisper, “This is all I'll ever be.” I want our youth to believe they can build something stable, safe, and sustainable.



★ ***In 2025, we piloted WealthGen with our first group of participants. Today, our first graduate has a safe job, a used car she saved up for herself, and an apartment of her own. What once felt impossible now has keys, a lease, and a steady paycheck attached to it.***

WealthGen exists because of you. It would not be possible for us to launch and sustain this program without the consistent support of our generous partners. You are helping rewrite futures that once felt destined for homelessness into stories of stability and self-sufficiency, beyond exploitation, and into generational hope.



Fall Party



Jane loving on her mentee



Mentors teaching girls how to make pasta



Hayride at the Unfiltered Retreat



Hayride at the Unfiltered Retreat

Mentors In Action

Mentors in Action

Jake taught his mentee how to follow a budget, offering gentle, grace-filled encouragement when mistakes were made, supporting a young man who had never received consistent guidance.

Denise showed up for her mentee in a critical medical situation, sitting with her, praying with her, singing over her- for six months, as she recovered in a hospital bed.

Meredith waited out being "ghosted" for four months, and provided gentle and consistent outreach until her mentee was ready to talk about her unexpected grief.

Jerri drove four hours round trip to visit her mentee in a crisis stabilization program.

Tammy jumped at the opportunity to help grow her mentee's garden planted in remembrance of her unborn baby.

Rachel answered a fearful call when her mentee went into labor, fearful of who would be there to support her and her baby after finally blocking her trafficker.

Dora offered a listening ear and prayer to the desperate parents of her mentee, helping them reframe what they saw as "defiance" as a little girl's desperate need for love.

Grant caringly restored a healthy picture of what a father figure should be through steady presence, basketball games, and unconditional love and safe support.

Dana faithfully shows up to every hang out with a smile and giggles for her mentee that has learned to protect herself with a hard exterior.

Stacy patiently waited for her first face-to-face meeting with her runaway mentee, assuring her that once they met, she would never be without someone checking in to make sure she was safe.

Kaitlyn and Janie have committed to fervent prayer for their missing mentees, sending messages into the silence—steady reminders that someone is waiting, believing, and ready when they return.

And so, so much more.

For what it's worth: **Our mentors are our heroes.**

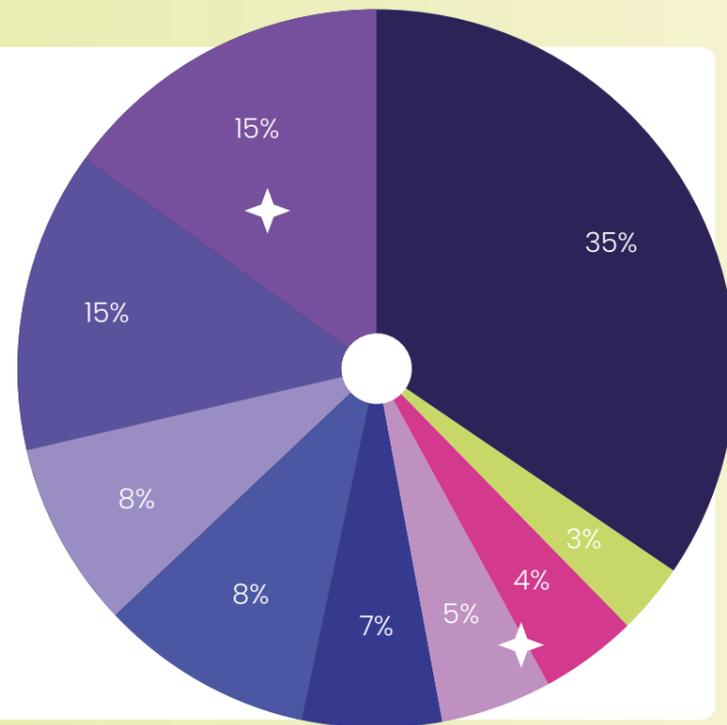


Financial Overview

Income:

\$526,065

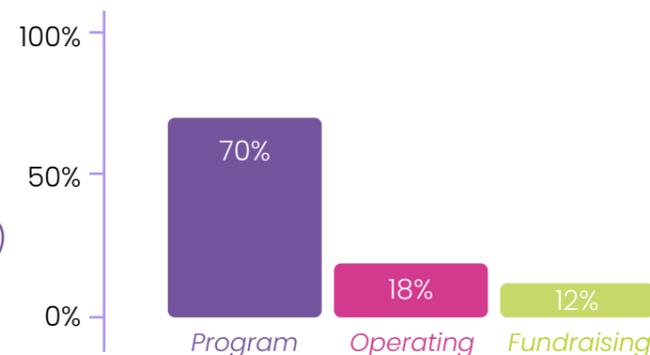
- * **35%** Foundations
- * **15%** Monthly Partners
- * **15%** Grants
- * **8%** Churches
- * **8%** Night of Hope
- * **7%** Investment Income
- * **5%** General Donors
- * **4%** Other
- * **3%** Micro Events



Expenses:

\$317,813

- * **\$222,469** Programming (70%)
- * **\$57,206** Operating (18%)
- * **\$38,137** Fundraising (12%)



Net Revenue: **\$ 208,251**



PRAISE GOD!

Safe Passage closes 2025 with a positive net revenue, ready to immediately fuel life-changing work in 2026. Our Georgia launch is in full "faith mode," already providing direct services to trafficked youth while prayerfully building local funding from the ground up. Georgia's operating costs for 2026 are projected up to \$250,000 as we scale discerningly from launch to full impact.

We're dreaming even bigger: helping youth cross from 17 to 18 with the skills, confidence, and guidance to step into adulthood with hope, jobs, and financial independence. With your partnership, we can nurture this new chapter and help youth thrive. **More updates coming soon!**



Reflections From The Field



Cara Starns
Founder and President

What was the hardest moment for you this year?

In February I learned that a 16 y/o boy had committed suicide due to the fear and emotional overwhelm of an AI generated sextortion scheme. My stomach sank. It impacted our team so deeply. We immediately launched into efforts to prevent this from happening again. It may take us years to create a widespread solution, but we are focused and committed to it.



Meredith Whitfield
Kentucky State Director

What is something the public doesn't see about the day-to-day reality of this work?

The multidisciplinary, complex nature of anti-child trafficking means walking into many different spaces - meeting with legislators to share real, on-the-ground stories, partnering with youth pastors, educating law enforcement about emerging threats, or sitting in a McDonald's to giggle about TikTok trends with 15-year-olds. What the public doesn't see is the delicate, and at times almost comical balance of carrying the weight of the complex trauma these youth face while also nurturing the lighthearted, goofy moments that build trust and honor their dignity.



Lindsey Underwood
Mentorship Coordinator, KY

What was your funniest or most joy-filled moment of the year?

It was in the heat of summer when Rachel and I went to meet a girl. My car decided not to start that day... so the smoothie we brought her melted. Luckily, she had an amazing sense of humor, loved her melted smoothie, and laughed at me calling me "brokie." It got even funnier as she watched Triple A tow my car—I was stranded with a bunch of teenage girls giggling at me. One of the funniest moments of the year, even if my dignity was at an all-time low!



Rachel Allen
Prevention and Outreach Coordinator, KY

When did you see a youth begin to believe they were worthy of love? What shifted in that moment?

During a prevention session, one girl approached me afterward to talk about the abusive relationships she had experienced. As she shared, she moved from blaming herself to realizing the patterns she had been repeating weren't her fault. The shift happened when she said, almost in disbelief, "I think I deserve better now." In that moment, I saw her begin to believe she was worthy of love and respect in a relationship.



Nina Downs
Georgia State Director

What has been your most precious memory since launching Safe Passage in Georgia?

My most precious memory since launching Safe Passage in Georgia was spending an afternoon with our very first three youth. Just being with them—listening to their stories, sharing laughter, and sitting with their hopes, fears, and dreams—wrapped my heart in a deep warmth I can't fully put into words. As we talked and connected, I could feel the tiniest sparks of hope beginning to grow. In that simple, beautiful time together, I was reminded why this work is so sacred, so necessary, and so deeply worth every effort.



Bekka Prewitt
Mentorship Coordinator, GA

What was it like to meet your first youth referral? How did that moment impact you?

Meeting my first Georgia youth referrals was exciting and heartbreaking at the same time. Distressing to hear some of these three youths' traumatic stories and witness the place they are currently in. Yet expectantly hopeful as well that they are choosing to be mentored and the knowing this new friendship with a caring, responsible, Christian adult might make all the difference in their current dark, confusing world and be the catalyst of real growth and lasting change down a healthy new road, to a new life... and to Jesus.

2025

Memories



Hayride at the Unfiltered Retreat



Fall Party: S'mores & Pumpkin Painting

Gifted Bibles being opened.



Georgia team experiencing the Unfiltered Retreat in KY.



We were chosen as the Local Missions Partner Highlight for **Northside Christian's Missions Expo** - Thank you!



Unfiltered Retreat: Hearing the story of Jesus encountering the woman at the well.



Speaking to representatives in Frankfort

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