



UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND  
**SAFE CENTER**  
FOR HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS  
EMPOWERING THE STATE

SUPPORT, ADVOCACY, FREEDOM, AND EMPOWERMENT CENTER

**FIRST ANNIVERSARY REPORT - JUNE 2017**

**DEAR COLLEAGUES AND SUPPORTERS:**

As we mark the first anniversary of the opening of the University of Maryland SAFE Center for Human Trafficking Survivors in May 2016, we are pleased to report that the Center is already playing an important role in assisting and supporting sex and labor trafficking survivors and as a leader and advocate in the community. Our first anniversary report of the Center's activities is attached. As the report details:

- We have served 39 human trafficking survivors since our opening.
- Today we provide bilingual case management, mental health, medical and legal services to our clients onsite and through our University partners.
- We are building our Center's Economic Empowerment Program, which is vital to restoring trafficking survivors' independence and self-determination.
- We led Prince George's County's efforts to develop a crisis intervention protocol for trafficking victims in the county, and we co-chair the Victim Services Committees of both Prince George's and Montgomery County's Human Trafficking Task Forces.
- The University setting enables us to leverage critical expertise of the faculty and clinics to provide a much-needed comprehensive interdisciplinary approach. To date, we have collaborated with eight University schools and hosted 25 student interns.

We are grateful for the support and leadership of the University of Maryland in taking on the serious issue of human trafficking in the state of Maryland. We are also thankful for our University and community partners and especially our donors, who have made our Center a reality and a force in the field. The SAFE Center has ambitious plans to advance our work in the years ahead.

Your support for our mission and vision is changing and saving lives.

With gratitude,

**Susan Esserman**  
SAFE Center Founder and Director

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*Students in a communications class plan an awareness event for the SAFE Center.*

## **CLIENT DEMAND SHOWS THE SAFE CENTER'S SERVICES ARE FILLING AN UNMET NEED**

The SAFE Center opened one year ago in Prince George's County because of the unmet need for comprehensive services for victims of sex and labor trafficking in Prince George's and Montgomery counties. Since opening, the SAFE Center has provided intensive case management, legal services, primary medical care, mental health counseling, limited crisis intervention services and/or economic empowerment services to 39 survivors of sex or labor trafficking. While we aim to measure success by client wellness rather than numbers of referrals, the demand for our services confirms our sense of the need in the region and is far greater than would be expected in our first year.

A federal grant that the SAFE Center received in October 2016 from the Maryland Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention's Victims of Crime Assistance Program enabled us to serve our growing number of clients and to provide critical bilingual mental health therapy and bilingual immigration legal expertise in-house.

## **SAFE CENTER IS A LEADER AND RESOURCE IN THE COMMUNITY**

The SAFE Center collaborates with our community partners in the fight against human trafficking. In the past year, at the request of the Chair of the Prince George's County Human Trafficking Task Force, the SAFE Center led the county's efforts to develop a collaborative crisis intervention protocol on human trafficking. Together with members of the Prince George's County Police, the State's Attorney's Office, service providers and local government agencies, we identified gaps in services, solutions and paths forward. The SAFE Center also co-chairs the Victims Services Committees of both the Prince George's and Montgomery County Human Trafficking Task Forces.

Because human trafficking is a largely hidden crime, it is imperative to raise awareness among students and professionals, and to provide tools to enable people to identify and refer trafficking victims for services. Over the past year, we have delivered 15 presentations and trainings to students, staff, and members of different University programs, community organizations, professional associations and faith communities.

## SAFE CENTER TAKES INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING THROUGH UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC AND PROGRAM RESOURCES

The SAFE Center is collaborating with eight University of Maryland schools and multiple programs and student organizations to tackle human trafficking. The University's academic and clinical expertise and programs enable the SAFE Center to take an interdisciplinary approach to research, services, and program development.

### *University of Maryland School of Public Policy*

At the University of Maryland, College Park, the SAFE Center's administrative home is the School of Public Policy, where the Center draws from the School's domestic and international policy expertise, innovative experiential learning programs and initiatives for social change and nonprofit management. During this spring semester, the School offered a course on human trafficking designed to enhance students' skills while completing mission-critical research for the SAFE Center on evaluation metrics, human trafficking crisis intervention and Maryland state anti-trafficking legislation. This research will help us implement best practices and identify areas of potential legislative development.

### *University of Maryland School of Social Work*

The SAFE Center's home school at the University of Maryland, Baltimore is the School of Social Work, which has expertise particularly on domestic minor sex trafficking in Maryland. The School's Ruth Young Center has for a number of years spearheaded an anti-trafficking training program for child welfare



*Students from the consulting team present their final plan.*

## MULTIFACETED STRATEGIC PLAN DEVELOPED FOR VITAL ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS

Economic empowerment is vital to trafficking survivors' long-term recovery and independence. The University of Maryland Robert H. Smith School of Business's Center for Social Value Creation has provided the SAFE Center with a sophisticated strategic plan for developing an essential economic empowerment program. The graduate student consulting team brought their business, nonprofit, policy and data analytics experience to bear in developing the plan. An Economic Empowerment and Volunteer Program Manager will join us in June through the Campus Compact Mid-Atlantic AmeriCorps VISTA program to begin implementing the strategic plan.

workers across the state of Maryland. The SAFE Center is helping the Ruth Young Center in the second phase of their project by providing services to trafficked children and youth. We will be participating in multidisciplinary teams to respond to the needs of trafficked children and youth in Montgomery and Prince George's counties.

The School of Social Work has assisted the SAFE Center in developing protocols and best practices for service provision and evaluation. This past year, the SAFE Center was a field placement site for three of the School's social work students, and will be a field placement site for two more in the upcoming fall 2017 – spring 2018 academic year.

### *Other Graduate and Undergraduate Programs*

In addition to the University of Maryland Schools of Social Work, Public Policy and Business, the SAFE Center collaborated with the following schools and programs over the past year:

**School of Law:** The SAFE Center benefits from the research analysis and casework of the Francis King Carey School of Law students and from the availability of expertise in top clinics.

**School of Nursing:** To provide primary medical care, the SAFE Center has partnered with the School of Nursing's Governor's Wellmobile Program. In addition, the University's medical and nursing faculty, staff and students provide much-needed healthcare services for our clients.

**School of Public Health:** A student fellow completing doctoral-level studies is evaluating health needs of trafficking survivors and best practices and partnerships for healthcare delivery. We are also collaborating with the Center for Healthy Families for the provision of family therapy to SAFE Center clients.

**College of Behavioral and Social Sciences:** The SAFE Center is working with faculty-run doctoral student psychology clinics to assist in providing services to clients. A significant number of students in the MLAW undergraduate law and policy program have provided research and outreach assistance to the SAFE Center through student internships.

**College of Arts and Humanities:** Through the communications department of the College of Arts and Humanities, the Graduate Studies in Interpreting and Translation Program is assisting the Center with translation of our victim outreach brochure and intake forms into multiple languages.

Over the next year, we will continue to build on these relationships as well as form new collaborations with additional programs.



Students at Maryland Day write notes of hope for the SAFE Center's clients.

## UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND STUDENTS AMPLIFY THE SAFE CENTER'S SERVICES, RESEARCH AND PROGRAMS

Since we began operations, the SAFE Center has hosted 25 student interns. Students have joined us from a range of disciplines: social work, law, public policy, public health, criminal justice, psychology, economics, art and women's studies. Under the supervision of SAFE Center staff, students have provided case management client services, developed initial financial literacy and survivor leadership curricula, conducted resource mapping of relevant community services, worked on solutions for gaps in emergency housing, and delivered presentations and served as liaisons to the Prince George's County Human Trafficking Task Force. Students also interviewed clients, conducted legal and social sciences research, engaged in legislative analysis, monitored trafficking-related bills in the Maryland General Assembly and conducted research for protocol development.

University of Maryland student organizations, classes and programs have been supportive and enthusiastic about the SAFE Center's mission and work. The Center for Social Value Creation's consulting team advising the SAFE Center's economic empowerment programming brought an interdisciplinary approach to the development of their strategic plan. The team consisted of graduate students from the Schools of Business, Public Policy and Social Work. Out of 12 teams that presented their projects at the Business School's Change the World Showcase this May, the team advising the SAFE Center won first place.

In November, a student team in the communication department's communications and event planning class, together with the student organization Students Ending Slavery (SES), designed and executed an event to increase public awareness of human trafficking and encourage support for the SAFE Center. Their semester-long efforts culminated in an evening of live music, food donations, presentations on human trafficking and a raffle of donations from national and local businesses.

SES has worked closely with the SAFE Center over the past year. SES students have interned at the SAFE Center, facilitated SAFE Center events, raised money for the SAFE Center and invited the SAFE Center to present at SES events. As part of Maryland Day, SES asked passersby to write uplifting notes to trafficking survivors that we could display at the SAFE Center and distribute to our clients.