

HOPE RISING

A Program for Survivors
of Human Trafficking

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You think it can't happen here in Maine. It can. And it does.

Human trafficking is a form of violence that occurs everywhere. It can start in a way that seems harmless. In the case of sex trafficking, a common scenario is a teen or young woman, usually leaving a difficult home life, meets a charming man who offers a seemingly secure lifestyle – including a place to live, food, clothing, a sense of belonging, and things she could never afford otherwise. Then, the relationship switches. In order to get the things she needs and wants, now, she has to do what this pseudo “boyfriend” wants her to do, which is often have sex for money. The “boyfriend” or trafficker, may use drugs to further make the woman dependent upon him. Once this cycle begins, it can be difficult for the woman to get out safely. She may be in fear, is isolated, and does not know where or how to turn for help. She may also blame herself for the violence perpetrated against her.

In 2016, the National Human Trafficking Hotline received more than 20,000 calls from across the country, and unfortunately even here in **Maine, an estimated 200 to 300 girls and women, ages 14 to 30, are trafficked each year.**

In spite of the rising numbers, safe residential housing with intensive clinical treatment is only available one place in Maine — Hope Rising. Started three years ago, Hope Rising is a pilot program of St. Andre Home in Biddeford, a well-respected leader in meeting the needs of vulnerable women and children since 1940.

Hope Rising operates a physical home that houses five women aged 18 and older, with stays of up to 24 months. This unique program provides a safe setting and comprehensive services so clients can recover from the traumatic experiences they have endured and reclaim their lives.

Since its inception, Hope Rising has provided phone consultation to over 100 survivors across the country, with most from Maine and throughout New England; outreach (in-person) services to 30 survivors; and residential treatment to 25 survivors at our safe house. **On average, Hope Rising receives five requests for services each week** — proof that the need for our services is not only real, but **far beyond our current capacity** to deliver. And we recognize that to meet this ever-growing need, we need to ensure our safe house can continue to operate and expand our offerings to help women move beyond a life of being trafficked, and lead free and fulfilling lives.



A branch of St. Andre Home

Outcomes have proven that the curriculum of counseling, life skills, healing therapies, and mentoring is successful:

"They have truly helped me rebuild a healthy foundation to a path of success, dignity, worth and a new life. One day at a time."

"At Hope Rising, you are seen as women of dignity, honor and grace, not judged by what has happened to you."

How do we plan to meet this ever-growing need for services?

1. **Continue the residential home pilot program** and ensure funding is in place to make it permanent.
2. **Add intensive outpatient treatment.** After leaving being trafficked and exploited, many survivors have a range of physical and emotional needs, including an extensive trauma history. As they work toward addressing their needs, survivors often benefit from treatment to address mental health and substance abuse needs. This provides them with greater stability and ability to live a life of their own choosing—including having a job they like, maintaining their own home, and connecting with family and friends.
3. **Explore options for transitional short-term residential housing** to work in tandem with outpatient services. With a strong outpatient offering, some women may be able to transition more quickly, requiring residential housing for only 30 days or less, allowing us to serve more women than is possible within our current model.

This work is important and relevant to Maine. It is important to support women as they leave a life of exploitation and move forward, and, to prevent exploitation before it occurs. We see you as an important part of this work. I will follow up in the coming weeks to discuss how we can work together to stand up for and with girls and women and speak out against human trafficking. Survivors need to be supported, and the health and safety of our communities depend on it.



Frequently Asked Questions



Is this really a problem in Maine?

In 2016, the National Human Trafficking Hotline received more than 20,000 calls from across the country. Here in Maine, an estimated 200 to 300 girls and women, ages 14 to 30, are trafficked each year.

How are women trafficked?

Everyone's story is unique, but for none of these women was it a choice.

- In some instances it begins in childhood when a father or a mother's boyfriend, or even a mother prostitutes a young girl and she sees it as her role in the family as way to help provide shelter, food and clothes.
- Some women are trafficked by their husbands and boyfriends as a way to make money or pay bills.
- Some women have left unstable homes and have been exploited by men who seem charming and promise them a better life. Only later these "boyfriends" take advantage of their vulnerabilities and force them to have sex with other men in return for the roof over their head, food, clothing, entertainment and drugs.

Are these women drug addicts and alcoholics?

In most cases the women we serve struggle with addiction related to their trafficking (or being trafficked.) Drugs and/or alcohol become an escape to ease the pain and numb the feelings that come with trauma.

How old are the women Hope Rising serves?

We have received referrals for minors through women in their 60's. Currently the home has women ranging in age from 24 – 39.

How many women can participate in the Hope Rising program?

At any given time Hope Rising can accommodate five women in our residential safe home. In addition we are able to provide support to many other survivors of human trafficking in the community and maintain a supportive role for many of the women who have come to Hope Rising. In the past three years, we have served 100 survivors across the country, with most from Maine and throughout New England; outreach (in-person) services to 30 survivors; and residential treatment to 25 survivors at our safe house.

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Why is the number of women you serve so small?

In a residential program, five is truly the optimal number for success!

On average, Hope Rising receives five requests for services each week — proof that the need for our services is not only real, but far beyond our current capacity to deliver.

Are you planning to expand?

- **First and foremost, we want to continue the residential home pilot program** and ensure funding is in place to make it permanent.
- **THEN, we hope to add intensive outpatient treatment.** After leaving being trafficked and exploited, many survivors have a range of physical and emotional needs, including an extensive trauma history. As they work toward addressing their needs, survivors often benefit from treatment to address mental health and substance abuse needs. This provides them with greater stability and ability to live a life of their own choosing—including having a job they like, maintaining their own home, and connecting with family and friends.
- **Finally, we plan to explore options for transitional short-term residential housing** to work in tandem with outpatient services. With a strong outpatient offering, some women may be able to transition more quickly, requiring residential housing for only 30 days or less, allowing us to serve more women than is possible within our current model.

How long is the program?

It typically takes 9 to 12 months for a woman to successfully complete all the stages of the Hope Rising residential treatment model. (*See treatment model infographic*)

What are greatest needs of the women?

Besides the therapy needed to heal and move beyond the cycle of violence, the needs are as varied as the women we serve. For some, it is basic needs of clothing and household items to start fresh and for others the needs are much greater, such as assistance with paying for college courses.

How many women go back to their traffickers or “return to prostitution?”

Statistically, it takes seven times for someone to be able to leave trafficking, which is the same amount of times it takes someone to leave an abuser in a domestic violence situation. Traffickers are very good at what they do and often target others in ways they can exploit their vulnerabilities.

Women come to Hope Rising all across this spectrum, for some it is the first time they have left their trafficker and they don't go back. For other women coming to Hope Rising, they have left their trafficker or traffickers in the past, and come to Hope Rising for help and support to get their lives going in the direction they want. We understand that leaving the life of trafficking, with all the trauma that is inflicted, is a process.

How many women stay sober or “clean”?

Recovering from a substance use disorder is a lifelong process. Coupled with the trauma of being a survivor of human trafficking there are often instances of a relapse. At Hope Rising we often talk about how traffickers use substances to control victims/survivors, and the ways in which we provide support for the women to address their substance and trauma needs, as well as the ways in which the women connect with recovery resources. We help them to recognize and talk about recovery from substance dependence as a long term journey.

How do you measure success of the program?

At Hope Rising we take great joy in the daily successes we see of women reaching major milestones while there with us, such as:

- feeling and being safe, when she hadn't been safe for years;
- taking care of personal needs such as going to the doctor when she wasn't able to see a doctor when she was trafficked; or
- getting a good grade on a test as she is furthering her education.

After a client leaves the program, we celebrate that the women are in a much better place to manage life after leaving 'the life' and we see the majority of women reconnect with family and have access to their own housing.

While Hope Rising cannot remove the women's problems nor needs in their lives, overwhelmingly women who have been at Hope Rising attest that being in the program helped them be better prepared to manage their lives.

If I fund you, how much of my money will go directly into the program?

Here are the funding levels we are looking at. 100 percent of your donation would go for the programs listed below:

\$250,000	Helps launch a pilot Outpatient Services Program to serve more women in need
\$125,000	Funds group therapy sessions for all women receiving in-house treatment for a year
\$75,000	Funds one woman for an entire year of residential treatment
\$50,000	Funds outreach and training efforts in the community to assist in identifying and getting victims of human trafficking into treatment
\$25,000	Funds Hope Rising's social enterprise effort (Freedom Formul-ah Salt Scrub) to help women gain valuable business and entrepreneurial skills
\$10,000	Funds life skills classes for the women on a variety of topics such as employment, money and household management, healthy relationships and parenting.
\$5,000	Helps a woman with tuition costs to aid her on the path to financial stability