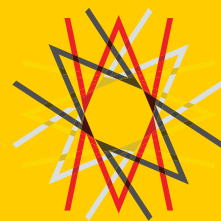


# Celebrating 5 Years in Service of Human Trafficking Survivors

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



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

SUPPORT, ADVOCACY, FREEDOM, AND EMPOWERMENT CENTER

# A Letter from Our Founder & Director

As we mark five years of service to human trafficking survivors, the University of Maryland SAFE Center expresses our sincere gratitude to the dedicated staff, generous donors, University of Maryland leadership, and faithful community partners who have supported our mission and made our vision for this organization a reality. We are in awe of the strength and resilience demonstrated by the survivors we serve, and we remain committed to elevating their voices and centering our services, research, and advocacy efforts around their needs and goals.

## In five years of operation, the SAFE Center has:

- Provided services to several hundred human trafficking survivors and their family members
- Successfully advocated for the passage of three anti-trafficking bills in the Maryland General Assembly
- Leveraged the intellectual and clinical expertise of 10 schools within the University System of Maryland to enhance our services and research efforts
- Developed Human Trafficking Guidelines for Healthcare Providers in partnership with the Maryland Hospital Association to help medical professionals identify and support survivors of human trafficking in the hospital setting
- Launched an innovative economic empowerment program focused on education, employment, and engagement to support our clients in building, maintaining, and flourishing in a more self-sustaining life
- Played a leadership role on labor trafficking by successfully advocating for a state law prohibiting labor trafficking, co-chairing Maryland state and Prince George's County Human Trafficking Task Forces' Labor Trafficking Committees, and representing labor trafficking survivors

- Strengthened the safety net for youth survivors of sex trafficking by serving as Regional Navigator in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties
- Trained over 5,300 professionals to recognize and respond to human trafficking

Our team and the clients we serve have achieved many milestones and faced countless challenges over the course of these past five years, and our ability to meet the acute needs of human trafficking survivors has been bolstered by your commitment, support, and generosity.

As we look ahead to the next five years, we are determined to continue listening to survivors, advocating for justice, providing trauma-informed services, and supporting our dedicated team as we strive after our mission, together.

With gratitude,

**Susan Esserman**

Founder & Director

University of Maryland SAFE Center

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## ABOUT US

The University of Maryland Support, Advocacy, Freedom, and Empowerment (SAFE) Center for Human Trafficking Survivors provides survivor-centered and trauma-informed services, research, and advocacy that empowers trafficking survivors to heal and reclaim their lives. Our supportive services are free to survivors of sex and labor trafficking of all nationalities, ages, and gender identities. The SAFE Center is an initiative of the University of Maryland Strategic Partnership: MPowering the State – a collaboration between the University of Maryland, Baltimore and the University of Maryland, College Park. We are part of the Graduate School, University of Maryland, Baltimore.

# Client Statistics

5-YEAR REVIEW

265+

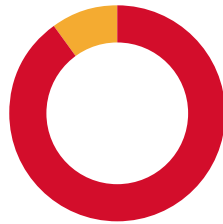
human trafficking survivors

75

family members served

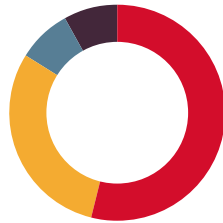
40%

of our clients are enrolled in multiple program services



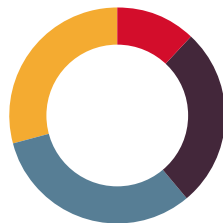
## Gender Identity

- Female: **90%**
- Male: **10%**



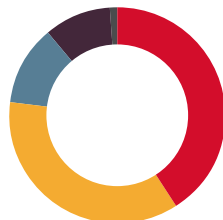
## Trafficking Type

- Sex Trafficking: **54%**
- Labor Trafficking: **30%**
- Sex & Labor Trafficking: **8%**
- High Risk: **8%**



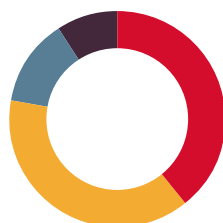
## Age

- Under 18: **12%**
- 18-24: **27%**
- 25-35: **32%**
- Over 35: **29%**



## Regions of Origin

- United States: **41%**
- Latin America: **36%**
- Asia: **12%**
- Africa: **10%**
- Europe: **1%**



## Race & Ethnicity

- Black or African American: **39%**
- Latinx: **38%**
- Asian: **13%**
- White or European American: **10%**





# Social Services

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Social services are the foundational component of our comprehensive service model. They are individualized to the specific needs presented by youth and adult survivors as they navigate long-term service plans, coordinate with varying system contacts, address the impacts of trauma, and encounter crisis situations. The SAFE Center's social services team responds to each of these needs through relationship-building and survivor-centered social service provision.

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## PROGRAM PILLARS

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### INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT

- Cultivating a trusting, affirming, and therapeutic relationship grounded in a trauma-informed approach
- Developing individualized, survivor-led service plans
- Connecting clients with a primary and long-term contact for coordination of a wide range of services
- Referring to external providers for vital resources



### CRISIS INTERVENTION

- Providing after-hours and weekend crisis intervention services
- Coordinating access to emergency safety planning and food, clothing, and hygiene supplies
- Sponsoring emergency hotel shelter
- Offering emotional and moral support



### BASIC NEEDS

Depending on the client's self-identified needs and goals, our case managers may provide:

- Food and clothing
- Rental assistance
- Housing and shelter placement coordination
- Public benefits and health insurance application support
- Connection to medical, dental, and substance abuse treatment providers
- Transportation assistance



### VICTIM ADVOCACY

- Developing safety plans
- Offering social service advocacy
- Exploring victim benefits and entitlements
- Accompanying clients to court appearances





# 419

transportation  
services provided



# 110

crisis interventions  
for 93 clients



# 36

families provided with  
rental assistance



# 3,220

hours dedicated to case  
management services



## CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

When Gabby\* was first referred to the SAFE Center, she was facing numerous barriers including homelessness, lack of social support, threats to her safety, and minimal education. Even while processing extensive trauma related to her trafficking history, Gabby found the strength and resilience within herself to seek support from her case manager at the SAFE Center, and she stayed engaged and focused on her goals no matter how many roadblocks were thrown her way. Together with her case manager, Gabby tirelessly advocated for her needs, gained access to safe long-term housing, and applied to a highly competitive technical school program with an essay about her journey to empowerment through the SAFE Center. Gabby was accepted to the program, and after receiving news of her admission, she thanked her case manager for helping her turn her life around.

\* A pseudonym

# Legal Services

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The SAFE Center's legal team meets the immediate legal needs of human trafficking survivors through in-house services and coordination with other victim service providers and pro-bono attorneys. Our attorneys support survivors in navigating an array of concurrent legal issues and proceedings. We represent survivors in pursuing humanitarian visas, seeking compensatory relief in judicial and administrative proceedings, and supporting criminal cases relating to their trafficking. At the same time, we assist survivors in immigration challenges they may confront.

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## PROGRAM PILLARS

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### FULL-SERVICE IN-HOUSE IMMIGRATION REPRESENTATION

- Representing and advocating for survivors before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and Immigration Court
- Offering advice and representation in petitioning for T-Visas, U-Visas, Asylum or Withholding of Removal, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, and other forms of immigration relief
- Advocating for authorized public benefits for clients assisting law enforcement with investigating and prosecuting their traffickers
- Working with the International Organization for Migration to reunify survivors with their parents and/or children living in their home countries who have been separated due to trafficking



### CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS REPRESENTATION

- Representing and advocating for victim-witnesses in federal and state investigations and prosecutions
- Coordinating complex legal issues at the intersection of immigration and criminal justice
- Filing for protection orders and helping clients expunge eligible convictions





# 215

legal matters

## Immigration Case Matter Types

- T Visa: **41%**
- Adjustment of Status: **27%**
- Removal Defense: **11.5%**
- Asylum: **11.5%**
- U Visa: **9%**



### CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

"I don't know what I would have done without the advice and counsel of the SAFE Center, both on escaping my trafficking situation and later what to do to bring traffickers to justice. Every trafficking victim should have help from the expertise of such professionals at the SAFE Center."

"I am forever grateful for the years of hard work by the SAFE Center legal team helping reunite me with my son. Of all the injuries I suffered at the hands of my trafficker, being separated from my child for so long was the hardest blow. Now that I am finally back together with him, I feel that my healing can really begin."

# Economic Empowerment

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Enhanced education and meaningful employment opportunities are vital to restoring human trafficking survivors' independence and reducing their vulnerability to future exploitation. The SAFE Center economic empowerment team supports our clients in building, maintaining, and flourishing in a self-sustaining life.

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## PROGRAM PILLARS

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### EDUCATION

- Enrolling survivors in online English Language Learning programs
- Supplying survivors with free laptops, internet access, and technology training sessions
- Connecting survivors to financial literacy programs and resources



### EMPLOYMENT

- Conducting employment skills and career goal assessments
- Securing paid internship opportunities
- Providing support in the job search, application, and interview process



### ENGAGEMENT

- Facilitating one-on-one mentorship between survivors and professional volunteers
- Partnering with employers to provide industry training programs for survivors clients



# 50

clients received  
economic empowerment  
services since 2019



# 48%

of economic empowerment  
clients enrolled in English  
language learning



# 30

laptops distributed and  
over 40 hours of technology  
training provided

## ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PARTNERSHIPS

**Industry Engagement:** The SAFE Center was selected by Marriott International & the Global Fund to End Modern Slavery to pilot their hospitality career readiness training before its worldwide distribution. This stipend-paying industry training opportunity will improve employability for our clients facing economic instability during the pandemic and beyond.

**Free Tax Preparation:** The SAFE Center launched a partnership with TerpTax, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program available through the University of Maryland's Robert H. Smith School of Business. Survivors reported feeling supported, safer, and empowered through this program, with some earning refunds ranging from 10-15% of income. A full 100% of participating survivors said they plan to use TerpTax again next year.

## CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

"[My laptop] is working great! I was actually able to finish my English class with an A because of it. And my English teacher suggested that I submit my essays for a conference exhibit at my college!"

"Thanks to VOXY [the English language program provided by the SAFE Center], I am learning about this beautiful new language and at the same time, I'm able to do everything for myself in this country. A long time ago, it was so hard for me to make an order from a restaurant, and now I know I'm capable of working there."

"After starting her home-based catering business offering Filipino street fare and baked goods, one of our clients landed her long-time dream job of becoming a cook this year. She's now going to prepare meals for college students at a large local university. This goal-oriented, resilient client participated in four of five economic empowerment programs offered by the SAFE Center in 2020."



# Behavioral Health Services

Human trafficking survivors experience numerous forms of physical and psychological abuse throughout their victimization, leading to serious costs to their emotional and mental health. The SAFE Center provides trauma-informed and culturally appropriate behavioral health services for our clients to address individual mental health needs, build self-esteem, and facilitate healing.

## PROGRAM PILLARS



### COUNSELING

Providing emergency and long-term mental health counseling to help survivors develop healthy coping skills, understand the effects of trauma, and process traumatic events



### GROUP THERAPY

Coordinating group therapy opportunities for clients to build mindfulness and coping skills in community



### OUTREACH & PREVENTION

Conducting victim outreach and trafficking prevention efforts within two local international high schools



869

counseling  
sessions provided



165

parents, school staff, and student peers  
educated on trafficking and violence prevention



## CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

Some of the survivors we work with have shared that for many years, they were unable to talk about the traumas they endured while being trafficked because they thought no one will believe them. After participating in our therapy programs, our clients have said they finally feel “believed and listened to.” Therapeutic services tailored for the unique needs of each survivor open up the space for survivors of human trafficking to engage in the work of healing and regain a sense of dignity, respect, hopefulness, and the ability to trust again.





# Community Engagement

Building partnerships with local community organizations, departments of juvenile and social services, and law enforcement agencies to identify and support survivors of trafficking under their care.



**145+**  
trainings provided



**5,300+**  
individuals and  
professionals trained

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

We are committed to ensuring that the SAFE Center is an actively anti-racist institution as a part of our mission. Without that commitment, we cannot adequately serve our client population – the majority of whom are women and girls of color. We are working to ensure that our programs, partnerships, and policies reflect this core value by:

- Creating a Director of Equity and Community Engagement position and a staff-led equity and inclusion committee
- Employing an equity and inclusion lens to evaluate SAFE Center policies related to personnel, programs, and partnerships
- Aligning community partnerships with organizations led by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color and with the SAFE Center's goal to prioritize a public health approach to identifying and providing outreach to human trafficking survivors
- Focusing on the legacy of racism as a root cause of human trafficking

## TASK FORCE INVOLVEMENT

The SAFE Center has co-chaired numerous committees within local and state human trafficking task forces, including the Prince George's County Human Trafficking Task Force Victim Services and Labor Trafficking Subcommittees; the Montgomery County Human Trafficking Prevention Committee; and the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force Labor Trafficking, Medical, Housing, and Legislative Subcommittees.





# Advocacy & Research

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## RESEARCH

Partnering with community stakeholders and university colleagues to research social, legal, and public health aspects of human trafficking

Supporting the SAFE Center direct services programs and policy initiatives by implementing and managing grant deliverables, conducting data collection and analysis, evaluating program outputs and outcomes

## UNIVERSITY COLLABORATION

In addition to leveraging the intellectual and clinical expertise of 10 schools in the University System of Maryland, the SAFE Center has hosted 135 interns and volunteers. These students and community members have engaged in research and community outreach, and they have offered service-provision support under the supervision of our staff.

## ADVOCACY

Advocating for laws and policies that support trafficking survivors

Following the successful passage of the Anti-Exploitation Act of 2019, which criminalized labor trafficking in Maryland for the first time, the SAFE Center has strived to create a sustained, state-wide focus on labor trafficking policies and case identifications, investigations, and prosecutions. By initiating and co-chairing the first Labor Trafficking subcommittees within the Maryland Human Trafficking Task Force and the Prince George's County Human Trafficking Task Force, we are convening and training key stakeholders in labor and health inspection agencies, states attorney's offices, workers' rights groups, and others to partner with us in enhancing the state of Maryland's anti-labor trafficking efforts.



# SUPPORTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS DURING THE PANDEMIC

*A Six-Month Impact Review of the UMD SAFE Center's Pandemic Response*



**INCREASE IN NEW CLIENTS  
SUPPORTED BY THE SAFE CENTER**

## ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

**2.7x**

The number of clients who  
received employment assistance

**2.0x**

The number of clients who  
received job application support

**2.8x**

The number of clients who  
enrolled in job skills programs

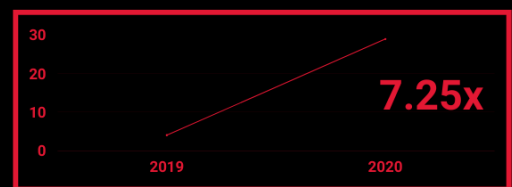


**INCREASE IN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH  
SUPPORT PROVIDED**

## EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE



The amount of support provided for  
emergency housing assistance



The number of clients received  
emergency food assistance



**INCREASE IN CLIENTS RECEIVING  
LEGAL ASSISTANCE**



# Our Supporters

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We express our heartfelt thanks for each of the donors who have contributed to our mission over the past five years. Our efforts would not have been possible without the financial contributions made by these public and private funders, and we are grateful for their commitment to partnering with us as we strive to support human trafficking survivors in reclaiming their lives.

We also express our immense gratitude for the many individual volunteers, interns, and organizations who have made in-kind donations by contributing their professional services; organizing donation drives; and personally donating much-needed technology, food, clothing, and toiletries for the SAFE Center's clients. We are especially grateful for the in-kind support we have received from Steptoe & Johnson LLP, TISTA Science & Technology Corporation, Jean Schlesinger, Susan Vallon, Kaller Fine Arts, Tri-Graphics, and Westwood Cleaners.

## PUBLIC FUNDERS

University of Maryland, Baltimore  
University of Maryland, College Park  
University of Maryland Strategic Partnership:  
    MPowering the State  
U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime  
Maryland Governor's Office of Crime Prevention,  
    Youth, and Victim Services  
Maryland Crime Research and Innovation Center  
Prince George's County

## PRIVATE FUNDERS

### Over \$100,000

The David and June Trone Family Foundation

### \$10,000 – 99,999

Brokell Foundation  
Campus Compact Mid Atlantic, AmeriCorps VISTA  
The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation  
Clark Foundation  
Esserman Family Foundation, Inc.  
Equal Justice Works  
Susan G. Esserman & Andrew Marks  
The Greater Washington Community Foundation  
Steptoe & Johnson LLP

### \$5,000 – 9,999

Megan & Theodore (Trey) Blanchard  
Vince & Susan (Kris) Falcone  
Greater Suburban Maryland Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc.  
HITT Contracting Inc.  
Law Firm Vendors Association, Inc  
Al and Susan Minite  
RBC Wealth Management  
Sienna LLC  
University Christian Church



### **\$1,000 – 4,999**

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American Endowment Foundation  
David & Deborah Astrove  
Charlene Barshefsky & Edward Cohen  
Brigida Benitez  
Sherry & David Berz  
Ketki Bhagwati  
Michael Boucher  
Laura Esserman & Michael Endicott  
Lisa Esserman  
Ann Marie Etergino  
Stephen Fennell & Barbara Smith  
Gerald Foster  
Nancy Hendry & William Baer  
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Eleanor Roberts Lewis  
Terry Lierman  
June Linowitz  
Susan Liss  
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Rafael Sagalyn  
Linda Stein  
Debra Waggoner  
Washington Express LLC  
Derrick West  
Patricia White & James Nickel  
Charles (Sandy) & Helen Wilkes

### **\$500 – 999**

Joseph Ardito  
Joseph & Lorraine Ardito  
Sonya E. Bowen

Steven H. Brose  
Sarah Buffone  
Sara Cochran  
Lisa Davis  
J K Moving Services  
Law Offices of Steven D. Kupferberg  
Qin Liu  
Lucinda Low & Daniel Magraw  
Pratik Mathur  
Doris Meissner  
Molly Poag  
Providence-Fort Washington UMC  
John & Lynn Sachs  
Jean Schlesinger  
Seasons Culinary  
Scott Sinder  
Marilyn Smith  
Robert Taylor & Vicki Jackson  
Judy Wang  
Harry Wellens  
Philip West & Barbara Yellin

### **Up to \$499**

Ampal Pizza LLC  
Christine & Eric Anderson  
Laurie Edelstein & Scott Anderson  
Joni Andrioff  
TC Anthony  
Laura Ardito  
Kara Towers Atkinson  
Kelly Blake  
John Michael Brewer  
Laura & Adam Briskin-Limehouse  
Des'Ree Brown  
Christine Carnavos  
Russel Chittum  
LCpl. Benjamin Cockcroft & Grace Daigle  
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Elizabeth Domingo



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Clifford Marks  
Stephen Marks  
Christopher McGrath  
Mid Atlantic P.A.N.D.A. Coalition  
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Mary Rutledge  
Barbara Salkin  
Laura Schierlmann  
Paul Schwiep  
Ira & Nancy Shapiro  
Lauren Shapiro  
Douglas Smith  
Ellayn Smith  
Sebastian Smoot  
Mya Stanley  
Johanna Stengel  
Students Ending Slavery  
Kim & Thomas Sullivan  
Charlotte Triefus  
Maureen Tucker  
Roberto & Eva Vilarrubi  
Lisa Vuolo  
Washington Hebrew Congregation  
Abby Weeks  
Meredith & Peter Wellington  
Kathie Whipple  
Woman's Club of Kensington  
Mary Woodson  
Irene Yrure  
Anne-Marie Zell  
Marie Zinnert  
Peter Zukowski



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

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SUPPORT, ADVOCACY, FREEDOM, AND EMPOWERMENT CENTER

**[umdsafecenter.org](https://umdsafecenter.org)**