

**NORTH
STAR
INITIATIVE**

ANNUAL REPORT

**FOR FREEDOM.
FOR LIFE.
FOREVER.**

2023

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.”

1 Corinthians 3:6

Our Board is privileged to witness how God gives growth to North Star Initiative. In early 2023, we opened the Survivor Center as a new administrative hub, and space for residents in the Harbor Home expanded. In the same month, Melinda Clark joined us with over 15 years of non-profit leadership experience, to shepherd our mission and vision as Executive Director. Survivors benefited as we trained our staff in trauma-informed best practices. North Star’s team of staff and volunteers sowed seeds of awareness and hope in the community, collaborating in unique ways with like-minded organizations in the battle to end sex-trafficking.



John Bomberger



Joy Hungerford

Through a year of transitions and growth, thank you for being our co-laborers, standing with us in prayer. We are deeply grateful for your partnership. North Star anticipates exciting and unique opportunities ahead! We aim to enhance community awareness and partnerships, improve survivor programs, and steward resources in Kingdom-minded ways for the glory of the God we serve.

“So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.”

1 Corinthians 3:7



Kelly Gooch
on behalf of the Board



Claire Chivington



Dan Schmierer

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

A graduate of North Star’s restoration program recently told me about a brave new step she was taking in her professional development and ended by saying, “My love for this work started at The Harbor.” She went on to share that despite the challenging training she was undertaking, “God is working. It is all for my good.”

This flourishing is what we seek through daily, incremental investments—your investments in North Star, ours in our team, our team’s investments in residents, and residents’ in each other. Few stories take a linear path from trauma to flourishing, but we believe that each investment is worthwhile and does produce good fruit. In both setbacks and growth, God is working, and it is all for our good. As we center survivors in our work and close gaps in the continuum of care, we are committed to seeing more survivors able to exit the Life and thrive long-term, as the women whose stories are illustrated—with their permission—in photos and quotes throughout these pages. I am grateful to share the journey with you in this report.



Melinda Clark
Executive Director



WHO WE ARE

North Star Initiative (NSI) is an anti-trafficking organization that educates to prevent trafficking and advocates for those who have been affected by it. We are committed to investing in survivors’ healing so that each one can reintegrate safely into the community to enjoy a life of sustained independence.



MISSION

North Star Initiative advocates for and supports survivors of sex trafficking by providing physical, psychological, emotional, educational, and spiritual development through a Christ-centered focus.



VISION

Advocating for the restoration of women from sex trafficking – **FOR FREEDOM. FOR LIFE. FOREVER.**

CONTINUUM OF CARE FOR SURVIVORS OF TRAFFICKING



Stage 1: Emergency Access A place to land

Often a specific experience (an encounter with law enforcement, social worker, outreach, etc.) prompts a survivor to consider an alternative that could allow her to leave the Life. This type of encounter typically requires crisis emergency placement.



Stage 2: Restoration A place to heal

Once removed from the Life, a survivor has the chance to consider what she needs to pursue her dreams and goals. **North Star offers a holistic restoration program through the Harbor** that provides a survivor with individualized support and resources to heal from trauma and make progress towards wholeness. Restoration requires skill, gentleness, patience and grit; it is hard, holy and non-linear work.



Stage 3: Transitional Care A place to build sustainable rhythms

For survivors on a journey of ongoing healing from trauma, having wrap-around support in affordable housing enables them to safely reintegrate into the community, fostering independence and meaningful employment while developing healthy coping mechanisms.

North Star Initiative works to close gaps across the continuum of care so that women can sustainably live in light and freedom.



Our residents participated in a photojournalism project, working to capture the journey of restoration through the lens of a camera and in the words of survivors themselves.

“After so many years of not remembering what joy is, I find myself unable to stop smiling. I am so happy that I finally had the opportunity to leave constant pain and fear behind me, and be welcomed into a beautiful place with friends and a cat. Being stomped on for so long has given me endless reasons to be grateful for every day of rest in my life.

Survivor



“I chose this picture because I feel that it represents regrowth. Just like my journey of regrowth toward a normal life after what I've been through. After being trafficked, I was saved and started like a seed. Then I grew and blossomed into a flower as I worked through my trauma. The work is never done though, and this is just the beginning.

Survivor

We are deeply proud of each woman's individual steps toward wholeness and freedom, and are honored to witness and celebrate their unique stories.



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THE STAGES OF RESTORATION AND TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

The transition from bondage to flourishing is marked by deep grace and healing unfolding in the life of every woman we support.

HER JOURNEY



Lived Experience in Trafficking = Complex Trauma

EMERGENCY ACCESS



NSI staff delivered 75 presentations in the community to raise awareness about the realities of trafficking

Decision for Alternative Emergency Placement

RESTORATION



We loved and served 14 women in our restoration home in 2023

NSI provided 1560 hours of therapy and classes



PHASE ONE

Expanded NSI staff capacity with new full-time roles



520 hours of case management for survivors

PHASE ONE
Safety and Stability
 She is adjusting

PHASE TWO
Healing
 She is acknowledging the pain and creating a plan to heal

PHASE THREE
Empowerment
 She is beginning to dream and create goals

PHASE FOUR
Preparing for Autonomy
 She is endeavoring to establish sustainable rhythms

PHASE THREE

380 hours of training to create the trauma-enhanced context where survivors can thrive



780 hours of nutritional wellness and fitness sessions



PHASE FOUR

NSI staff supported two survivors as they graduated and moved to transitional housing in 2023



Transitional Housing

Flourishing and Sustainability



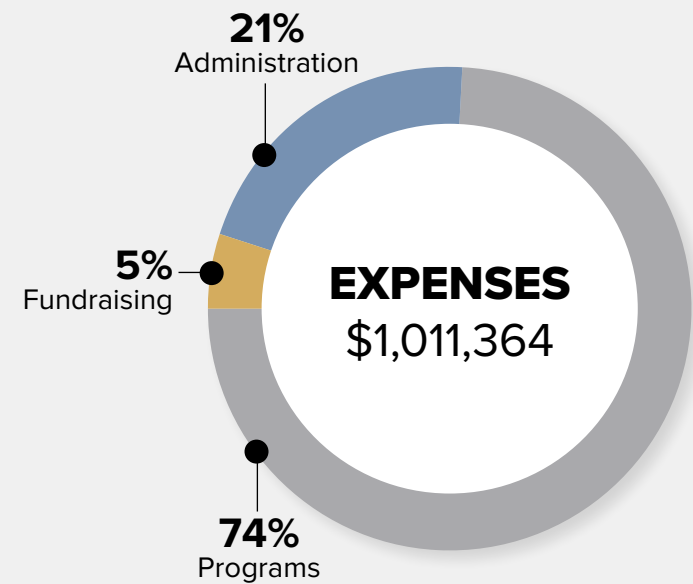
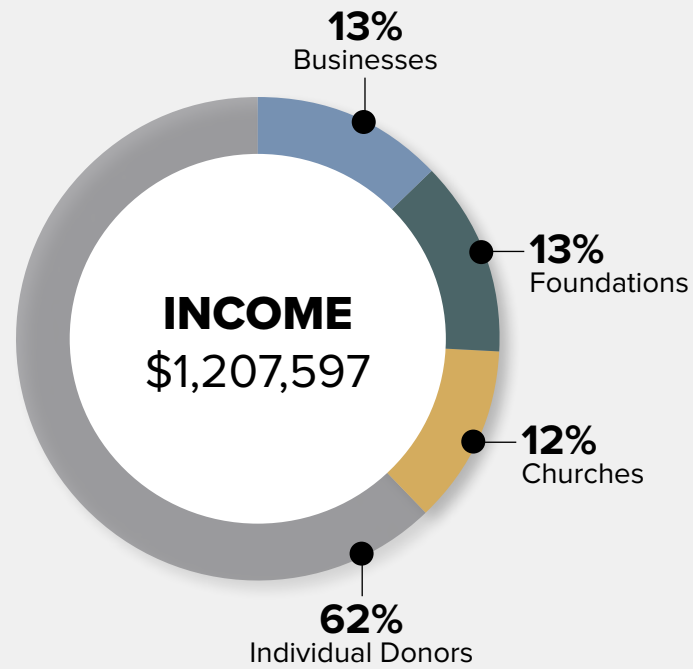
TRANSITIONAL CARE

Meaningful Community Integration



Scan to learn more about the phases a survivor experiences on her journey toward flourishing

FINANCIAL REPORT



Thank you for funding our mission! Funds above budgeted expenses are being invested in new programs in 2024.



“ I volunteer my time and contribute financially to North Star Initiative because I believe in its mission to rehabilitate and support victims of sex trafficking. Having personally experienced the devastating effects of childhood sexual abuse, I understand the profound impact it can have on one’s life. But most importantly, the hope they offer survivors through their Christ-centered approach to recovery and care is the true, lasting rescue all of us desperately need. I’m grateful for the opportunity to serve the staff and residents at North Star Initiative, and I’m eager to see how their work in 2024 will continue to showcase gospel reenactment.

Michael Ibarra

THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING

In the past year, our dedicated volunteers have generously contributed a total of

2,082
HOURS

equivalent to

3 months
OF WORK

a value of over

\$50,000

worth of skilled work that impacted North Star’s mission.



Volunteers who invest in North Star’s team amplify our ability to continue doing good work well. They encourage staff on the front lines of trauma care, cultivate a stronger community, and collaboratively create a compassionate and empowering environment for survivors.

Look online for more opportunities to invest your time in serving North Star’s mission.



THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

The more we know about the realities of trafficking, the more equipped we are to make our communities trafficking proof because we know what signs to look for and how to prevent exploitation.

We would love the opportunity to partner with your school, civic group, business, church, and organization to build awareness.

Book a speaker by visiting our website.



EMMA'S JOURNEY

What made you decide to come to the Harbor?

"I wasn't safe, and I knew that if I stayed where I was, I would be dead or worse."

What surprised you about your experience in the Harbor?

"I wasn't expecting to stay sober. I thought I'd heal through the program then go back to alcohol. But because of my time in the Harbor, I've remained sober and my kids have a mom."

Does the program you went through at North Star still have any effect on you?

"My case manager helped me with financial literacy to learn how to budget my spending and save money. Because of that, my family has an apartment that we wouldn't otherwise have, and we are saving to buy a house! I never thought that would happen."

What will you do next?

"I want to be a woman of God and continue to take care of my family. I'm learning not to extend myself beyond my limits and am studying to become a wellness instructor. I work as a recovery specialist, helping other people."

