



St.  
Jude's  
Ranch for Children  
*A Community of Hope*

## **HEALING CENTER**

Providing a safe and supportive place  
for child victims of sex trafficking to heal

Presented by: Christina Vela  
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## **GUIDING PRINCIPLE**

For over 50 years, St. Jude's Ranch for Children (SJRC) has been a community dedicated to hope and healing for Southern Nevada's abused, neglected, abandoned and homeless children and youth.

## **MISSION**

Transforming the lives of abused and at-risk children, young adults and families by empowering them to create new chances, new choices and new hope in a caring community.

## **VISION**

To break the cycle of abuse and neglect by mending spirits and renewing hope.

## **COMMUNITY OF SERVICES**

### **AGES 0-18 Treatment Services**

- Therapeutic Foster Homes
- Clinical & Behavioral Health Services
- Pregnant & Parenting Teen Program
- Transitional Living
- Sibling Preservation

### **AGES 18-24 Community Living Services**

- Transitional Housing
- Rapid Re-Housing
- Family Support Services
- Clinical & Behavioral Health

**NEW – Healing Center**  
Child Victims of Sex Trafficking

## SUMMARY OF NEED

Child sexual exploitation is one of the most reprehensible and destructive offenses confronting America today. It harms the safety and well-being of our young people, it devastates our families and communities, and it degrades our strength as a community.

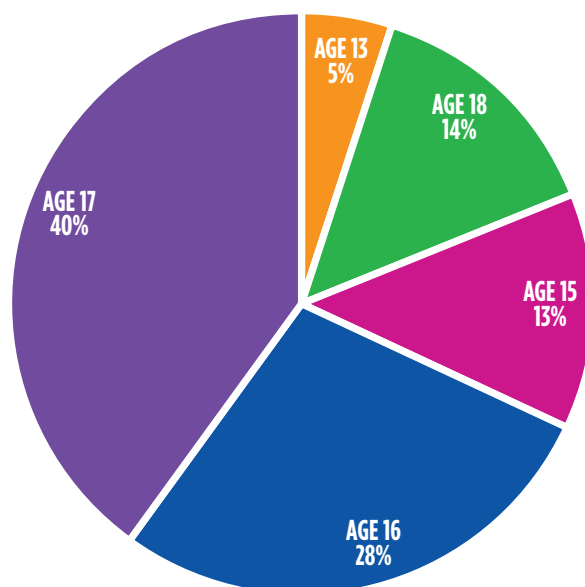
No matter what form child exploitation takes—from the creation and circulation of child pornography to the trafficking of children for sex—it demands the full attention of law enforcement, policymakers, community leaders, philanthropists, and service providers, each of whom plays an essential role in combating this unconscionable crime.

The commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) involves the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, or advertising of a minor child for the purpose of a commercial sex act. Traffickers often prey upon a child’s vulnerability and use psychological pressure, violence and intimidation to control the child for financial benefit relating to their sexual exploitation. Purchasers of children for sex encompass all racial, socio-economic and cultural statuses. Child sex trafficking has devastating consequences for its victims, including long-lasting physical and psychological trauma, disease, or even death.

***“The longer you stay, the less hope you have”.***  
-16-year-old trafficking victim

In 2016, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD)<sup>1</sup> identified 140 minor sex trafficking victims. That same year, 187 youth came before the specialty juvenile diversion Girls’ Court in Clark County for sexual exploitation-related charges; 110 of these were new to the calendar. Of these cases, all were females and the following table demonstrates ages:

### Ages (187 victims in 2016)



<sup>1</sup>ASU School of Social Work. “2014 Las Vegas Sex Trafficking Case Study.”  
2014 Las Vegas Sex Trafficking Case Study, [goo.gl/rT9A1v](http://goo.gl/rT9A1v).

## SUMMARY OF NEED (CONT.)

Furthermore, in 2016, Nevada was ranked 11th in the nation for the number of human trafficking cases reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline<sup>2</sup>.

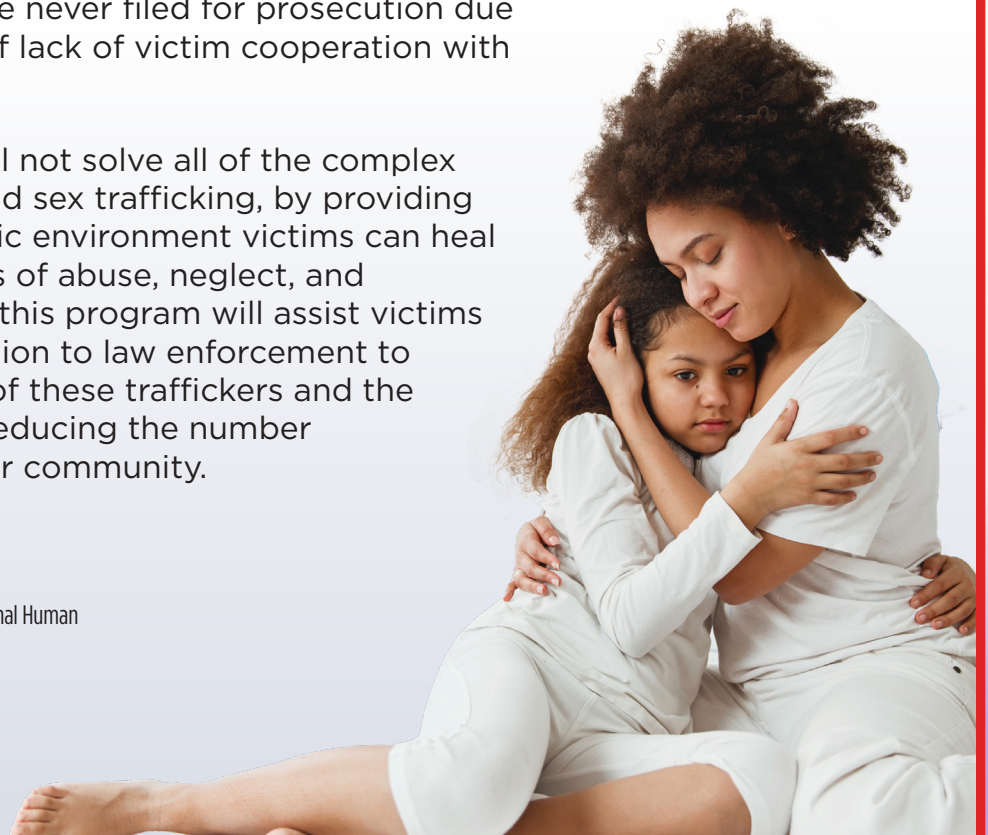
As a community, we must mobilize all resources to prevent child sex trafficking, to end this modern-day slavery, to aid its victims by providing high quality treatment services for modern day slavery, and to bring the perpetrators of this crime to justice. These efforts are vital to the State of Nevada, county, local, tribal and federal agencies as well as children's advocates, juvenile justice partners, residents and visitors.

The program proposed by St. Jude's Ranch for Children is one of several solutions needed to combat this problem in our community and State. According to the 2014 Las Vegas Sex Trafficking Case Study, several concerning facts were identified by a review of 159 separate sex trafficking cases reviewed to include:

- 64.7% of cases involved a minor (under age 18) victim
- The average minor victim was a 16-year old African American female
- Less than half of the minors had a missing person's report filed on them, indicating that while using a missing person's report is an important tool for looking for sex trafficked minors, the family disconnections or "throwaway" status of minors may also contribute to the minor being vulnerable to the sex trafficker.
- 73.4% of the cases were never filed for prosecution due to a common feature of lack of victim cooperation with law enforcement.

Although this program will not solve all of the complex issues associated with child sex trafficking, by providing a nurturing and therapeutic environment victims can heal from the incredible effects of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Additionally, this program will assist victims in delivering vital information to law enforcement to increase the prosecution of these traffickers and the buyers of child sex, thus reducing the number of exploited children in our community.

<sup>2</sup>National Human Trafficking Hotline. "Nevada." National Human Trafficking Hotline, <https://goo.gl/D7YjBN>.



## **PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND EMOTIONAL EFFECTS OF TRAFFICKING:**

Sex trafficking causes harm to victims in a variety of ways and can, in certain instances, be fatal. As stated by the Institute of Medicine, “sex trafficking of minors could result in immediate and long-term physical, mental, and emotional harm to victims.”<sup>3</sup> According to Greenbaum & Bodrick<sup>4</sup>, there are numerous health effects associated with child sex trafficking.



According to the 2014 Las Vegas Sex Trafficking Case Study<sup>5</sup>, while most Nevada sex traffickers come from Nevada and California, Nevada is a frequently targeted market for inter-state sex trafficking.

This issue has been getting worse each year. For instance, in 2016, Nevada had 168 reported human trafficking cases. In 2017, there was an 18 percent increase in the number of crimes reported. Of the reported cases of human trafficking, sex trafficking was the most prevalent form.<sup>6</sup> This data demonstrates a growing problem in Nevada and that our community must respond strategically and with intention to address prevention, victim services and holding the perpetrators of the crime to justice.

<sup>3</sup> Institute of Medicine, et al. *Confronting Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking of Minors in the United States: A Guide for Providers of Victim and Support Services*. 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Greenbaum J, Bodrick N, AAP COMMITTEE ON CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT, AAP SECTION ON INTERNATIONAL CHILD HEALTH. *Global Human Trafficking and Child Victimization*. *Pediatrics*. 2017;140(6):e20173138

<sup>5</sup> ASU School of Social Work. “2014 Las Vegas Sex Trafficking Case Study.” 2014 Las Vegas Sex Trafficking Case Study, [goo.gl/rT9A1v](http://goo.gl/rT9A1v).

<sup>6</sup> National Human Trafficking Hotline. “Nevada.” National Human Trafficking Hotline, <https://goo.gl/D7YjBN>.



## WHY ST. JUDE'S RANCH FOR CHILDREN?

### Gap Analysis - Treatment Resources in Nevada:

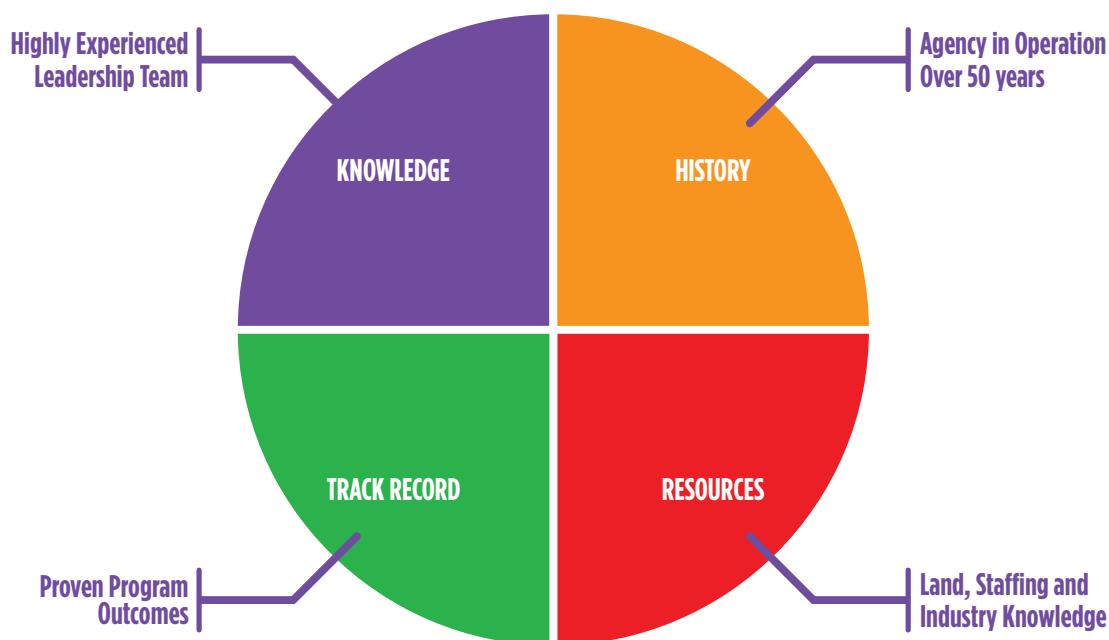
Although there is a growing need for services for victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) such as housing, trauma-based therapy, case management, and advocacy, the rate of which service providers are able to meet the need has not increased at a sufficient rate. In Southern Nevada there are no current residential treatment centers or specialized housing options, specifically for minor victims of sex trafficking.

Without appropriate services, these victims are often unnecessarily detained in the juvenile detention facility or placed in settings such as emergency shelters where they cannot be maintained thus increasing the opportunity for continued exploitation and victimization. For some, out of state residential centers are utilized which have a higher cost of care as well as further isolates the victim from their community and any natural supports they have available to them.

### Rationale - How can we help?

Since 1966, St. Jude's Ranch for Children has provided residential and community-based services to children and youth that have experienced not only physical and emotional abuse, but also that are Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children victims, pregnant, parenting, and homeless youth. All our programs have filled a void in the Southern Nevada community and this program is in alignment with our long-standing mission to serve those most in need. Throughout our history we have asked how we can serve this evolving population of young people that have suffered trauma.

## ST. JUDE'S RANCH FOR CHILDREN QUALIFICATIONS



# PROPOSED HEALING CENTER PROGRAM

## Overview

As an extension of existing programs, St. Jude’s Ranch for Children desires to create a non-institutional Healing Center on our existing Boulder City campus. St. Jude’s Ranch for Children is a community dedicated to hope and healing and that fosters a sense of dignity, a place for both physical and emotional healing while victims develop positive and pro-social skills, work towards educational and other life goals. By specializing services for Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children victims we will continue our work in support of our mission, vision and core values.

The new Healing Center will be separated from the existing campus and the plans include multiple homes that foster a sense of safety through family-styled residential services, as well as an Administrative and Emergency Shelter building. There will also be a Multi-Purpose Building that will include an on-site school, meeting space, a library, computer lab, yoga and meditation room as well as a space for physical fitness. Additionally, there will be a series of therapy offices and areas outside to encourage transformation through a connection to nature.

## Program Design

The Healing Center will offer trauma specific treatment to victims with a goal to have them move along the continuum of healing, from victims to survivors, and then thriving in our community. Due to the complexity of emotional, physical, and sexual trauma experienced there will be an array of treatment modalities to meet these victims where they are in the healing process. Through this program, victims will receive treatment and services to address safety needs, gain a deeper understanding of the victimization they have experienced, improve self-esteem, develop and/or enhance motivation for change, improve life skills and empower them to reach life goals.

Program design may include:

Assessment And Diagnosis	Trauma Specific Therapy	Therapeutic Behavior Management	High Quality Clinical Services	Family Support Services
Job Skills Training	Educational Support Groups	Independent Living Skills	Financial Literacy	Substance Abuse Treatment
On-Site School And Tutoring	Medical Treatment	Mentor-Advocate Support	Music, Art And Animal Assisted Therapy	Positive Youth Development

## **PROPOSED HEALING CENTER PROGRAM (CONT.)**

The physical campus design will embody the commitment to healing by providing opportunities for victims to reframe the world and themselves through a connection to nature and nurturance. Additionally, the goal is to inspire the residents to increase a healthy sense of independence as they progress through the treatment program. The campus will not only have space dedicated to treatment but there will also be intentional use of nature, i.e., walking trails, outdoor sitting areas etc. that will be part of the treatment process.

### **Safety & Security**

At the Healing Center there will be a commitment to nurturing a sense of both physical and emotional safety for all residents. In partnership with local, State and Federal law enforcement there will be campus security and surveillance in both passive and active ways to ensure safety of the campus residents, the larger SJRC campus and the Boulder City community. St. Jude's Ranch for Children is working with security experts to design a system that does not rely on institutional means of security but rather relies on technology.

### **Staffing**

This program will be staffed with on-sight and experienced staff to include a Program and Clinical Director, direct care staff and other positions to support the intensity of services that will be provided. All staff will receive high quality training that is trauma informed and sustains the quality of programming aligned with the program design. Additionally, there will be formal and informal relationships with other community service providers to ensure a well-rounded program.

### **Cost of Care**

The chart following depicts the approximate costs of two programs that house this population as compared to what St. Jude's Ranch for Children could. From this chart, we can see that St. Jude's Ranch for Children provides services to an underserved population at below market costs in addition to the specialized treatment services they will receive. This suggests that St. Jude's Ranch for Children has a major competitive advantage and that there is a greater return on the investment of dollars spent to care for child victims from grants and 5% from miscellaneous sources (Refer to Figure 8.)



## PROPOSED HEALING CENTER PROGRAM (CONT.)

Juvenile Detention Cost	Child Haven Cost	SJRC Healing Center
\$360/day (approx.)	\$410/day (approx.)	\$180/day (approx.)
<b>Core value:</b> Detention is a location where juvenile delinquents remain in custody while they are waiting on pre-trial or have been sentenced to prison time or other facility for long-term care and programs.	<b>Core value:</b> Temporary shelter provided to children who are a victim of abuse and neglect pending a more permanent placement.	<b>Core value:</b> A residential program dedicated to helping victims heal from the effects of abuse.

*“I was 5 when the first activities I think would fall under the [family] trafficking umbrella took place. My family had been abusing me before that, but the first time there were clients I was 5ish. It lasted until I was 17 and got away. I had some pretty severe eating disorders for many years which no one helped with – they started when I was 8 and came to a head after my child was killed in front of me right after he was born when I was almost 16. I was literally dying in front of people and no one did anything. Most of my hair fell out, my skin turned yellow and peeled off, all my cuts and bruises would take months to heal – I walked around for weeks with open, bleeding, weeping sores and literally no one did ANYTHING. They all just ignored it. I was also obviously severely depressed, angry, and suicidal from elementary school on but still, no one really did anything.” ~Anonymous, CSEC Survivor*



## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

Nevada faces a growing prevalence of sex trafficking crimes involving minors. These children face devastating consequences that include physical, mental, and emotional harm. If this issue is not currently handled with proper care, these unfortunate incidents can lead to severe injury or death. Even though these sex trafficking victims have not always received justice, times are changing. Solutions toward this problem continue to progress and St. Jude's Ranch for Children wants to be part of this progression.

### **Funding Need**

St. Jude's Ranch for Children is committed to ending sex trafficking of child victims in our community. The Healing Center will serve as a visible sign of hope and a functional space for healing so that victims receive the supports they need to thrive. But St. Jude's Ranch can't do this alone. We need community leaders and philanthropic champions to step up and join us.

St. Jude's Ranch is working with respected architect LGA and other partners to identify construction cost estimates to include security plan and needed equipment.

### **How to Help**

St. Jude's Ranch for Children is calling on community leaders to invest in the development and long-term success of the Healing Center. There are numerous ways to support this important project:

- Fund the construction of the Healing Center - naming opportunities are available as an anchor sponsor and to support healing spaces at the Center from therapy rooms, a yoga and meditation studio, tranquility garden, and many more.
- Support marketing efforts aligned to the launch of the Healing Center that will build awareness of this crime and support victims in their quest for help
- Contributions to help staff and sustain operations of the Healing Center long-term (either through multi-year commitments or seeding the launch of an endowment)

We can further accomplish our mission of contributing to the transformation of the lives of the abused and at-risk children, young adults, and families, by properly utilizing all of our resources. We will successfully build and maintain a high-quality treatment facility, bring perpetrators to justice, and help sexually exploited children move along the continuum of healing. We are relying on the generous contribution of private donors and foundations.

Additionally, we will have a combination of county contracts and grants to maintain the sustainability of this program. The goal of our treatment center is to provide a continuum of healing to victims in order for them to be able to thrive in the community. By initiating this program, we will address safety concerns, treatment, and residential services.

The initiation of this program will bring a better future for sexually exploited children. This future will continue the provision of the justice and compassion these victims deserve and will free them from detainment, abuse, and neglect. St. Jude's Ranch for Children remains committed to continuing the journey of breaking the cycle of injustice towards sexually exploited children in Nevada.

*"It is hard to breakthrough to us... We have walls built up so high and everyone we have ever known has lied to us, hurt us, used us and abused us. It takes time and trust." ~Jessica Kay, Survivor*



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### **Plan Contributors:**

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Nonprofit, Community, and Leadership Initiative, School of Public Policy and Leadership  
Sneha Patel, Dannica Donalvo, Eli Epstein



I'm a long time fan and supporter of St. Jude's Ranch for Children.

It is as a survivor I write this.

When Christina shared the project plans with me, I cried and it's difficult to discuss without sobbing each time. Sobbing with gratitude that there is hope that real change will soon occur.

People with good intentions have done wonderful work in this area...they've done the best they could with what they knew and the resources they had. But we need to do things differently if we're ever going to find a solution to this horrific issue. We cannot continue to misdiagnose the problem, mistreat victims or replicate a system that has failed our children for decades.

We have to be creative, innovative and courageous enough to be the first...to do things differently...to invest in an area that has been virtually ignored by funders.

What will happen when we stand with victims, hearing their silent pleas for us to finally not just "get it" but to do something about it, ignoring all political maneuvering and naysayers and just doing what we know will work? What miracles will occur when they are surrounded and supported with all—not just minimal—resources they need? What heights will they soar to when victims are treated with love, respect, and understanding from every single adult tasked with helping them? I don't know the answers, but I can't wait to find out!

This Healing Center is more than just a huge step forward to a solution. We can't continue to put bandaids on the problem by only providing housing, or only providing mental health support, or only providing mentoring...all that is desperately needed, but alone it is inadequate. The Healing Center will partner with those that provide those services so lovingly and so well, while bringing its own expertise. It is only when every single vital service and resource needed is working together in a nurturing environment that a solution will be found. Then, the victims will be thriving survivors and will be able to see the light at the end of the long, traumatic tunnel they traveled shining brightly upon them.

There is a lot of fabulous work being done in our community; many of them you're hearing about this evening. I promise you that this project, when it comes to fruition as it is proposed, will be something we look back at as one of our proudest moments in a community that has a lot to be proud of.

So for anyone who has a desire to help end sex trafficking, there is no opportunity better than this one. Help wherever else you want to because a lot of work is necessary, but please support the Healing Center at St. Jude's Ranch for Children. Even if you can't help financially, everyone can help by speaking positively about it. Words matter. And they matter more than ever at this time for trafficking victims.

Thank you for all you do. I am grateful to live among you in this compassionate community of ours.

-Amy Ayoub, The Zen Speaker

