

Project LIFE

Living In Freedom from Exploitation



Human Trafficking in San Diego County

Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery. It involves controlling a person through force, fraud, or coercion to exploit the victim for forced labor, commercial sex, or both. **According to the FBI, San Diego is one of the 13 highest sex trafficking areas in the United States.**

In San Diego County there are at least 8,000 identified trafficking victims every year, most of whom are American women and girls. Their average age at recruitment is 16.



Project LIFE: Trafficking Intervention and Prevention

Project LIFE provides crisis intervention, comprehensive behavioral health care, and case management services to trafficking victims across San Diego County. **Without exception, every victim that turns to Project LIFE for help has experienced abuse and suffers deep emotional scars.** From addressing urgent needs through long-term stabilization, Project LIFE utilizes evidence-based, trauma-informed interventions that enable victims to overcome abuse and start on the path to physical and emotional healing. Plus, Project LIFE works to stop future trafficking by conducting prevention workshops that empower at-risk youth to avoid the activities and behaviors that put them at-risk of becoming victims.

Intervention Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crisis response and victim advocacy with on-call 24/7 support for victims in law enforcement custody• Basic needs that include safe housing, medical care, clothing, and food• Intensive, trauma-informed case management and behavioral health therapy• Coordination of medical care, legal assistance, and other vital services	Project LIFE has served 324 trafficking victims since program launch in 2011.
Prevention Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prevention workshops provide at-risk youth with the information they need to avoid becoming a victim• Workshops customized to meet the needs of youth at mainstream schools, probation schools, juvenile detention centers, and other sites convenient for participants• Topics address behaviors that make youth vulnerable, how youth are coerced into sexual exploitation, and how traffickers use social media to recruit victims	Project LIFE has conducted prevention workshops and groups with more than 900 at-risk youth.

Project LIFE also educates professionals who may encounter trafficking victims in their line of work on how to recognize the signs of trafficking and the appropriate steps to take to intervene. **Since program launch, Project LIFE has conducted outreach programs with more than 10,000 local professionals and community members.**

From victim to survivor...

North County Lifeline has helped me realize that I am no longer a victim of sex trafficking, but I am a survivor.” - Project LIFE Client and Survivor

Hope



Martha was a child victim of commercial sexual exploitation, but she was the one who got locked up. From age 14, Martha started getting into trouble and spent her time in and out of juvenile hall.

But Martha is also a survivor. With trauma counseling and support from Project LIFE, she is overcoming her traumatic childhood. She even recently graduated from high school a few months early. Martha’s mother tries to help, but she is a disabled single parent who struggles to pay the rent. Project LIFE is now providing transitional housing that keeps mother and daughter together while they search for an affordable apartment. With support from Project LIFE, Martha and her mom now have hope for brighter future.

Care



When Anita came to Project LIFE, living with abuse was the only life that she knew. Anita was a victim throughout her childhood and, sadly, she continued to be a victim her adult relationships.

Anita was exploited for commercial sex and a forced labor throughout her teen years. When she became an adult, she lacked experience with normal relationships and unwittingly allowed the abuse to continue. Project LIFE is providing Anita with intensive, trauma-informed counseling to help her change her expectations and avoid predatory relationships. Anita has been placed in transitional housing and can now focus on herself—getting long overdue medical attention and building the skills she needs to get a job.

Recovery



When Gloria was detained for theft, her arresting officer quickly realized that she was a trafficking victim. Gloria’s situation was desperate—she was unemployed, pregnant, and already the mother of two children.

But Gloria was used to trouble, she was raised in a variety of foster care placements which made her vulnerable to exploitation—and she had turned to drugs and alcohol to help her cope with the abuse. Project LIFE is providing Gloria with trauma-informed counseling which is helping her stay clean and sober and has placed her, and her children in long-term transitional housing. Gloria is now truly in recovery and she is motivated to start a new life that focuses on her kids.

Editor’s note: names and images have been changed to protect the privacy of our clients.