



# Anti-Human Trafficking

## WHY COVENANT HOUSE

At Covenant House, our commitment to youth facing homelessness goes way beyond their first moment of crisis. In order to truly help a young person change their life, we know that opening a door is just the initial step in a long journey. We must provide transformational programs that give our youth the tools and support they need to build a future of their own.

## PROGRAM DETAILS

Human trafficking is a multi-billion-dollar international criminal industry to buy and sell human beings, and children and youth experiencing homelessness are a prime target. Today, we are doing more than ever to protect and safeguard young people victimized by human trafficking and we are helping these young survivors transform their lives — not just for the time they are with us, but for a lifetime.

We meet trafficking survivors' immediate needs for food, clothing, shelter, safety, and medical care and we recognize their unique needs for extra levels of protection, including safe spaces and rigorous mental health care to help them sort through their experiences and reclaim their potential. Based on our unique understanding of this issue, we offer our young people a complete array of tailored direct care services that give them the best chance to heal and succeed.

## IMPACT

Without having a standardized process to routinely screen and identify young people who have experienced human trafficking - using a trauma-informed and strengths-based approach - we could be missing an opportunity to better identify, serve, and support these young people to help them move forward in their lives. This program investment will help lay the groundwork over the next year by supporting sites to implement a tiered approach to screening and identification.

## SERVICES



## LEARN MORE

[covenanthouse.org/program-investment](https://covenanthouse.org/program-investment)



## MEET KASEY

Kasey kept it secret when an older relative began sexually abusing her. In her teens, she felt even more ostracized when she came out as gay. When Kasey met Sarah, a woman who cared about her and wanted to be with her, she found the first confidante whom she could trust with her past and escape from her loneliness.

Sarah introduced Kasey to heroin as a way to cope with the trauma she had experienced. She quickly became addicted to the drug and to her new, loving girlfriend, creating a disconnect between Kasey and her parents. In pursuit of funds for their addictions, Sarah forced Kasey into prostitution, becoming her pimp. Sarah manipulated Kasey into working long hours at night meeting johns, giving her meth to keep her awake. Heroin helped Kasey come down from the effects of meth, pushing her further into the cycle of addiction. Kasey was never given the money she earned; Sarah forcibly took the money to maintain their drug supply.

When Kasey was assaulted so violently that she was left with permanent physical health issues, she decided that was enough. She found her way to Covenant House, where she realized she could get the healing she desperately needed.

Kasey made great strides with her trafficking case manager and over time, she formed a bond with Covenant House's substance use counselor. With a robust support system in place, Kasey has overcome massive obstacles in her addiction journey. She has been clean for the most extended period since being trafficked. Kasey has started to make friends at Covenant House and reconnected with her parents.

## ABOUT COVENANT HOUSE

Covenant House builds a bridge to hope for young people facing homelessness and survivors of trafficking through unconditional love, absolute respect, and relentless support. Our doors are open 24/7 in 34 cities across six countries and our high-quality programs are designed to empower young people to rise and overcome adversity, today and in the future.

## THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

Covenant House conducted a multi-city study in partnership with the University of Pennsylvania and Loyola University New Orleans. The result led to one of the largest-ever data sets on human trafficking and exploitation experiences of young people facing homelessness.

The study revealed that nearly 20% of the 900+ youth surveyed across 13 cities had experienced trafficking; for young women, the prevalence was a stunning 25%. And, 68% of youth who had either been trafficked or engaged in survival sex had done so while homeless.

