

Stepping Stones Network - Church Champion Program

Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking is a growing problem in the US and our local community. This crime, and the tragic sin underlying it, brings deep trauma and loss to all individuals involved – the victims, those purchasing sex, and even the perpetrators. Those who are touched by this need God's mercy, compassion and grace to overcome this evil and to be restored to a fruitful life. John 3:17, "God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him." Will your church become a champion in this fight?

Our Vision

An engaged and compassionate community where sexual exploitation is not tolerated, human rights and dignity are valued, and the lives of both victims and perpetrators are being restored through God-centered relationships.

Our Mission

To educate and engage the community in preventing domestic commercial sexual exploitation and providing comprehensive, restorative care to survivors.

Our Goals

- **Community Engagement** - To activate the community and the church by raising awareness of the reality of sex trafficking and offering specific ways to get involved.
- **Prevention & Protection** - To end demand for commercial sexual exploitation and protect people from becoming victims through: 1) Confronting attitudes about the misuse of sex and cost of being part of the demand; 2) Educating the public on the tactics used to lure victims and users; 3) Advocating for enforcement of laws related to sexual abuse and commercial sexual exploitation; 4) Finding ways to prevent high risk youth from falling into exploitation.
- **Restorative Services** – To provide outreach to those involved in sexual exploitation by: 1) Working in collaboration with other community organizations and agencies; 2) Providing comprehensive services and life restoration through a residential program for adult female survivors (18+), with an emphasis on moms and their children; and, 3) Offering programs for non-violent users of prostitution ("johns") and pornography.

Our target geography is Lake County, IL and surrounding areas; however, we will receive restorative client referrals from anywhere in the US and will make our resources available to anyone via the web.

The Unique Role of Every Church

We believe that the church is foundational to meeting the vision, mission, and goals of Stepping Stones Network. We are committed to building long-term partnerships with churches that have a passion and sense of calling to bring compassion and justice to the issue of sexual exploitation. To that end, we have created a **Church Champion Network**. This network will provide a service to you and will engage the church community in a coordinated response to sex trafficking, so that we can use our collective energies and resources wisely. While we must work together, each local congregation has its own identity, composed of the resources, gifting, and capabilities that God has gathered, along with the particular call or vision that energizes your leadership. The network will encourage your church to find its unique, local involvement in this worldwide problem.

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Church Champion Commitment

- 1) Assignment of a leader(s) to be the link between Stepping Stones and your church. This person will be your Church Champion Liaison and will identify specific ways for your church to get involved.
- 2) Consistent communication opportunities for your congregation to hear about the issue, volunteer and giving opportunities, and the progress and practical needs of Stepping Stones and its clients.
- 3) Annual financial support (e.g., via missions' budget, special offering, fundraising opportunities).

Free Benefits for Champion Churches

- 1) Access to the latest information, research, and programming on this issue.
- 2) Assistance in developing and carrying out the response that is appropriate for your church.
- 3) Access to programs and approaches on a) sexual discipleship and b) healing for those who are suffering from sexual violations and/or life effects related to deceptive views or harmful uses of sex.

Church Champion – Liaison Role

A Church Champion Liaison will work closely with Stepping Stones Network to understand our vision and activities, keep your church up-to-date, and work with you to coordinate your church's unique response. More specifically, the Church Champion Liaison will be responsible to:

- Attend a once-per-month Liaison meeting run by Stepping Stones Network.
- Deliver or schedule educational presentations to your leadership and congregation.
- Help match Stepping Stones' needs with your church's identity and "DNA". Examples:
 - a) Your church has a lot of people who are handy with construction and building projects, so you decide to "own" all the house maintenance;
 - b) Your church is great at doing events, so you take on the coordination of a major fundraiser;
 - c) You have a strong women's ministry and many mature women looking for ways to serve, so your women's ministry provides client mentorship and restorative home visits;
 - d) You have a number of very committed prayer warriors/intercessors, so they commit to meeting for prayer for us and our clients.
- Recruit, keep track of and encourage volunteers to serve on Stepping Stones' teams as individuals and/or on your church's specific response teams.
- Work with leadership to determine level and approach to missions giving or fundraising.

Suggested Time Commitment: The time commitment will vary, depending upon size of church, nature of church involvement, and whether a church develops its own local team. We estimate between 8 and 15 hours/month.

Suggested Qualities: While they may possess a variety of different spiritual gifts, all Church Champion Liaisons should have a heart for issues of justice, mercy, and local missions, a working knowledge of our church, and some communications and administrative capability.

A Final Challenge: Christ calls us to give generously in a way that reflects the priorities and values of his kingdom. In so doing we will reap eternal rewards. (Luke 16:9; cf. II Cor. 9:6-11). As believers, we ask the Lord to show us what He is doing and then join Him. It appears to us that God is on the move to bring mercy and justice to the issue of modern day slavery. Please prayerfully consider how you might join Him and us in this movement to change the culture and bring practical love to the lives of the people involved, who so desperately need our help.