

# ABIDE'S

## *Patron - Sex Trafficking Disruption Project*

**Purpose of Project:** To end the demand for domestic sex trafficking in Southeast Michigan and ultimately the United States.

The federal definition of sex trafficking is; *inducing a person by force, fraud, or coercion to participate in commercial sex acts, or in which the person induced to perform such act(s) has not attained 18 years of age.*

Patron seeks the direct disruption of attempts to purchase another human for sex. We will do this by partnering with “The Epik Project.” <https://epikproject.org/> This approach is powerful because disruption occurs at the point of the online money for sex transaction. We empower and inspire men to creatively and sacrificially engage this issue by developing their comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the multi-layered and complex nature of a society where women and children are vulnerable and at-risk of being trafficked. This process includes a collection of phone metadata from those who are attempting to purchase sex. The data contribute to the development of a buyer typology. We seek to engage with men from a posture of mercy and awareness as we offer sex addiction resources. Our goal is nothing less than cultural transformation and the elimination of sexual slavery.

The recent cultural tidal wave of the #timesup and #metoo movement has forced us to reckon with the fruit of generations of misogyny and toxic masculinity. Men create most of the demand for sex trafficking in the United States while courageous women fuel and lead the anti-trafficking movement. Providing men an avenue to safely and tangibly engage in this fight opens their eyes, minds, and hearts in a way that programs which only focus on education and awareness cannot. Men who commit to this initiative agree to take on a posture that seeks to understand the deeper and shared societal problem(s) that exist within the foundation of a culture where men rape for cash behind closed doors and an ambivalent patriarchal society assaults women and children in virtually every

exposed social context. The trafficking abolition community estimates that men created approximately 90%+ of the demand for the sex trade, yet only comprise 10% of those actively fighting against sex trafficking. Male presence, as imperfect allies/partners of women currently leading this movement, will ultimately assist the long process of a holistic culture change. We feel that it is this holistic culture change that will open our community to youth education and awareness programs. Our five-year plan includes developing appropriate youth programs.

We agree with the law enforcement officials who have stated that the trafficking problem will never be solved by only arresting victims and perpetrators - a comprehensive solution to sex trafficking must include demand abatement. Your support of this effort will allow Patron to expand our trafficking disruption work throughout Southeast Michigan.

## **PARTNERSHIPS & PROCESS**

Through our partnership with The Epik Project, we recruit and train men to participate in online patrols once per month and participate in designated training and development sessions from experts in both Law Enforcement and Non-Profit sectors bi-monthly. Online patrols consist of three to six men at an undisclosed location, placing fake ads online, and then disrupting subsequent attempts to purchase the females listed in the fake ads. These disruptions include communication from a script that has been developed and vetted by law enforcement and sex trafficking survivors. The caller's phone numbers are logged and available for follow up by law enforcement. Men who commit to participation do so for one calendar year. The 'Epik' organization partners with us by providing, technology, software, scripts, a platform that allows us to buy ads online anonymously and security technology that allows us to work safely. We provide them licensing fees and revenue from leadership conference attendance.

## **PROGRAM NEED**

The average age that a female is lured, coerced, or forced into sex trafficking in the U.S. is 13 years old. Research data from the Polaris Project and the FBI show human trafficking on the rise in Michigan. From March of 2017 through February of 2018, our six

(6) fake ads on Backpage.com were hit over 20,000 times by 9,500 unique buyers. Averaging only four (4) patrols per month, we were able to disrupt approximately 3,000 attempts to purchase sex locally in Southeastern Michigan via phone and text. We have grown from 13 to 32 men on our active volunteer roster in that time. Seven secure patrol locations are currently available for use in Oakland, Macomb, Wayne, and Washtenaw Counties.

With the recent government seizure of Backpage.com, The Epik Project is currently monitoring over 50 websites where activity has reported migration of buyers and traffickers. We are also currently in the midst of a nationwide callback/text back campaign – reaching back out to the national database of 52,000 sex-buyers. The Epik Project has engaged with and reminding those men of the realities of sex trafficking within their communities while encouraging them to choose not to participate in perpetuating the demand for pay-for-sex. The abolition and law enforcement communities have little doubt that traffickers will migrate to a new platform as they had in the past when other online platforms were shut down. Disruption work will resume after our monitoring of the web space, and consultation with government agencies help discern where to direct our work most effectively.

## **FINANCIAL VIABILITY**

We project to have over five thousand online purchase disruptions in 2018 and expand to ten locations for patrols while growing our volunteer team to over forty men committed and participating on our roster and participating in ten patrols per month. It is this expanded capacity that will allow us to serve additional counties. Our long-term funding plan is through donations from volunteers, partners, donors, corporations, foundations and various non-profits. Due to the violent nature of the trafficking trade, we do not publish our donor list. Our project manager has recently assisted in the training of teams in Kansas City. The Patron project is so compelling our project manager has nearly raised enough support to be self-sustaining despite working two part-time jobs. The focused work and new regional partnerships your support will facilitate will undoubtedly result in the Patron project's permanent financial viability. As we facilitate the expansion of The

Epik Project to other communities outside the Detroit metropolitan area, additional grant funding will be important. We anticipate that local foundations outside our area will help support our expansion until the local support base develops as it has here in Southeast Michigan.

## **REQUEST FOR SHORT TERM FUNDING ASSISTANCE**

We will contract for community organizing and expansion of our work to additional counties by recruiting additional volunteers and safe locations from which to work. Your funding will also allow us to develop training and recruitment initiatives that will expedite the growth of our program while making our work more transferable to other Southeast Michigan communities. We currently have 32 men actively volunteering in our program and would seek to increase that number of men to 75 by March of 2020. We project that this is the optimal number of volunteers to serve Southeast Michigan. Once a full complement of volunteers is working, some of the training and recruiting funds will be redirected to purchasing website ads targeting the various area codes of metro Detroit. This change will reduce our operational cost, improve financial viability while ensuring that we disrupt trafficking throughout the entire Southeast Michigan community.

## **LONG-TERM VISION**

A definition of “patron” is simply, “a person who buys goods or uses the services of an establishment.” Men from our communities become patrons of the local sex industry by their passive acceptance of sexually explicit advertisements and entertainment, the use of pornography, attending exotic night/strip clubs, and the direct purchase of sex.

Another definition of “patron” is, “someone who is identified, named, or honored as a special guardian, protector, or supporter.” Partnering or participating with Patron is choosing to no longer be a casual patron of a culture that accepts and perpetuates the exploitation of human bodies; and instead, choosing to become a patron for our daughters, sons and each other.

Phase two of the Patron project will include tailoring advisement services to the unique character of various organizations that seek to support anti-sex trafficking initiatives in fiscally responsible, morally ethical, and culturally effective ways and development. Our third phase will consist of implementation of a media literacy curriculum for students in Jr. High School through High School. The media literacy program will be designed to help empower, encourage, and educate teenagers about the strategies and tools of marketing and advertising. We believe this program can help students develop critical thinking skills that can help them understand the media exposed to constantly, rather than passively absorbing what media is feeding them. Phase one (current) directly supports both subsequent phases by establishing the credibility of leadership, forging a strategic interpersonal network, and creating widespread support for more progressive tactical initiatives that move citizens toward sacrificial and developmental service.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT**

Patron is a nonsectarian program of Abide Ministries. Abide has been serving the community since 1996 and has a proven history of introducing programs that serve the community and strengthen families. The tie that binds all members of our team is that each sacrifice to serve the community in a pioneering way. Our core belief is that we are all created by a loving creator and have innate value. We seek to love our neighbors as ourselves regardless of race, religion, sex, sexual orientation or other distinguishing factors. We serve the entire community in many ways. Abide is a leveraged, low overhead partner for foundations and organizations. Abide team members live a modest lifestyle and raise personal support to fund living expenses.

## **EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS & LEADER QUALIFICATIONS**

The “The Epik Project” has reduced online sex solicitations on specific web locations by 60% in Portland, Oregon since its inception in 2012. Eight United States metropolitan areas have benefited. Key local law enforcement community members and veteran trafficking abolitionists have recognized our program manager’s skill and sophistication.

Our project manager (Name withheld for his protection) has established himself within the local, anti-domestic sex trafficking community. He was invited to lead or co-lead break-out sessions in five anti-trafficking conferences and symposiums in 2017-2018:

Two MAP (Michigan Abolition Project) sponsored events

- Two by Pearls of Great Worth
- One by Kensington Community Church (along w/agents from Homeland Security and U.S. Attorney's Office)

Invited to share with:

- Oakland County Sheriff's Office
- Thai National government including representatives from their Attorney General's office, Royal Thai Police & Department of Labor
- Nepalese government (Federal Judge & an anti-trafficking NGO)
- U.S. Attorney's Office for Eastern Michigan
- FBI
- Homeland Security
- Michigan State Attorney General's office
- Recruited to assist in training The Epik Kansas City team
- Michigan State Human Trafficking Task Force
- Leading two break-out sessions at upcoming Michigan State Human Trafficking Task Force conference in Saginaw (Fall, 2018)

## COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Patron and The Epik Project promotes cross-agency cooperation between the State of Michigan, the Federal Government, and after-care specialists and private citizens. The

various volunteer online patrol teams constantly collaborate with each other by sharing best conversational practices on the phone, on texting, and utilizing a common database. We are unaware of any other organization that directly communicates with sex-buyers at the point of purchase using a position of mercy. We currently collaborate with the Oakland County Sheriff's office (letter available upon request). Our metadata and topology data are available for sting operation planning, and we will share the results of our web monitoring. Your support will allow us to collaborate with six additional sheriff's offices serving the entire Southeast Michigan Community.

## **COMMUNITY VITALITY**

Patron promotes community vitality and improves our quality of life by working to eliminate the trafficking of underage children and women. Our work has shown that the customers driving the demand for sex with women and children come from all areas and social strata of our community, but most come from within the white, middle-aged, suburban communities. Patron is currently situated and most active within these communities.

The disruption of trafficking strengthens the social fabric of our community and families, yet, Patron's impact is not limited to trafficking disruption. Recruitment meetings challenge men to think about how their choices and behaviors impact women and children. Few men leave meetings without having had an opportunity to rethink the effects that the hyper-sexualization of our culture has on their lives and the lives of the women and children they know and love. Your support will expand our impact on the community by allowing us to develop training and recruitment materials that will allow Patron's initiatives to extend to all Southeast Michigan and beyond.

## **INCLUSION & EQUITY**

Sex trafficking disproportionately affects low-income girls and women. We feel our work to engage people in direct and meaningful discussions about how the sexualization of our culture impacts the most vulnerable among us, addresses some of the diversity, inclusion and equity challenges that face our region by addressing crimes that disproportionately impact minorities and children.

## **FUNDING AND ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLANS**

Funding for our work will come from a variety of sources including our contributors. The Abide General Fund and Patron program pay administrative costs. A national foundation provides \$10,000 in annual support. Our donor base grows as our community connection expands and deepens. We have approached a Livingston County Foundation for support and a Washington State-based foundation is familiar with our work and is finalizing their review of our proposal.

Wide recognition of our program manager for leading trafficking disruption efforts in Southeast Michigan is not enough to ensure the successful expansion of this program. Your support is needed to take our work to the next level by creating training and promotional initiatives that enhance the quality of our organization. Your partnership will allow us to recruit and develop additional leaders, not just volunteers. This strategic development will allow us to train more volunteers, more effectively. The training initiatives will allow existing team members to train recruits while the program manager directly engages in holistic community networking and organizing, and consistent volunteer recruitment.

Our program manager has demonstrated the ability to lead teams that disrupt Southeast Michigan sex trafficking while being a positive impact on the Metro Detroit trafficking abolition community. However, we will not be able to continue this work and effectively expand to all of Southeast Michigan without your funding. Multi-county organizing requires additional resources for travel, meeting spaces and recruitment amenities such as meals. Relationship development with donors of safe patrol locations and skilled volunteers that can share in community organizing activities also requires additional funds. We have a solid plan for doing this work. We can realize this plan with your support, the support of current donors and the support of new donors.

## **WORK PLAN**

The cost to expand operations from Oakland County to Wayne, Macomb, Monroe, Washtenaw, St. Clair and Livingston Counties:



- Expanded volunteer recruitment and training = \$10,000
- Expanded fake ads on the web = \$15,000
- Developing additional patrol teams, leaders, and recruiters = \$7,000
- Leaders stipends = \$3,500
- Stipend for trainers = \$3,000
- Epik national training and leadership development = \$3,500
- Two additional anti-trafficking patrol kits = \$2,500
- Feasibility study for youth education initiative = \$4,000
- Evaluation = \$1,000
- Project management = \$5,500
- The above infrastructure is required so that our program manager can work full time on program expansion.

Total One Time Cost Over Eighteen Months: \$55,000

Networking with law enforcement agencies, trafficking abolition groups, men's groups, non-profits and religious institutions allowed Patron to become firmly rooted in Oakland County while establishing a foothold in neighboring counties. Our program manager is scheduled to lead two breakout sessions at the fall 2018 Michigan State Human Trafficking Task Force Conference. The conference will serve as a platform to extend Patron's reach to all Southeast Michigan counties. We will also extend our networking by reaching out to the professional organizations of the law enforcement, partner organizations and religious institutions we have partnered with in the past. We will meet with a representative of six additional Sheriff's offices and hold community organizing and/or volunteer recruitment meetings in all seven counties that you serve over the next 18 months. We feel that it is this work that can impact the culture of a community. We

will also commit to providing our consulting services (phase two) and our educational programs (phase three) throughout Southeast Michigan.

We plan to develop training materials and train selected volunteers to teach recruits. A key volunteer will be identified to help lead community organizing in the communities we have not reached. This key volunteer will receive a small stipend. Your seminal funding is essential for the expansion of our recruiting and training activities and the strengthening of our organization. Will you please consider funding a portion of our work plan.

## **COOPERATION**

As previously mentioned, cross-agency cooperation and shared learning is a priority of our work. We will continue to share best practices and lessons learned with appropriate non-profits, NGOs, and governmental agencies. Our program manager began his work by reaching out to law enforcement and trafficking abolitionist groups for training, mentorship, and strategic discussions. He has since become a leader in the anti-trafficking community.

Our development director has a proven record of successful project management and reporting which is very often rewarded by follow-on funding. We are confident that we will be able to meet your needs for transparency and clear reporting of the impact your investment makes on the women and children of our community by disrupting sex trafficking.

Our time is unique in human history; our society is reexamining generational power-dynamics for their tangible fruit. The uncovering of systemic and multi-generational abuse has revealed a social fabric that is utterly devastated by cycles of trauma. Human trafficking and sex trafficking is fast becoming the *“justice du jour”* within popular culture and media. Awareness is the first step, and we are thankful for this. People favor quick-fixes, and justice fads come and go. Finances are often directed toward, and focused on, arresting victims and perpetrators due to the experience of immediate results. The injustice cycle unfortunately continues. The average number of times a trafficking survivor is “rescued” (extracted by law enforcement or acquaintances) before finally escaping such

a life is seven (7) times. Perhaps this is the reason that law enforcement openly admits we will never arrest our way out of the trafficking problem.

## **EVALUATION PLAN**

We plan to write an interim report on the anniversary of the grant award and a final report upon completion. All reports will account for spending. Any additional request will be replied to promptly. A wise, strategic, and comprehensive network of anti-trafficking groups who are supported by visionary, forward-thinking organizations and individuals interested in long-term sustainable work is essential. In a supply-and-demand industry, we must recognize that if the demand lessens, then so will the exploitation of human bodies. The full elimination of sex trafficking of women and children is our ultimate measure of success. Cycling survivors through the revolving doors of our justice system is not a substitute for true success. Cultural change requires focused long-term effort. This project is an effort to build the foundation for sustainable cultural change across all Southeast Michigan. Therefore, we will measure and evaluate our impact by measuring the growth of our organization and its reach into new communities. We will also measure the increase in our trafficking disruption calls and our efforts to reach out to the sex buyer database. We constantly assess and reassess our relationships with supporters, law enforcement, and the trafficking abolition community. If we are fortunate enough to be awarded funds, we will confer with the foundation to identify best practices for evaluating our relationships. Our organization has the technical capacity to perform focus groups and written or online surveys. The men we disrupt are engaging in illegal activity. We do not expect them to help evaluate our work. However, we do expect that we will continue to obtain meaningful anecdotal stories of our restorative engagement of sex buyers. Finally, we will make ourselves available to work with our national partner to assess the restorative impact of reaching out to sex buyers at times that they are not actively trying to purchase sex.

We must not discount any area of focus within anti-trafficking work, yet we believe that demand abatement is a “tip of the spear” in its ability to engage with those who are creating the demand for sex trafficking within our communities through awareness,

education, and direct disruption. Demand abatement and cultural change must be a part of our society's solution to the sex trafficking problem. Your consideration of our request inspires and humbles us. We thank you for your time.