



West Michigan Training Center

THE STORY

As the strip club door swung open, Monique eyed the women making their way through the crowded space. Something told her these women were different than the normal clientele she faced night after night. These women were safe. Intrigued, she sought them out. Within an hour, Monique's life completely changed as the women whispered visions of hope and dignity into her wounded heart. The next day, Monique left the industry. But how does a mommy of four—a woman who has only worked the night while her babies slept—how does she write a resume worth reading? She needs training.

Running from an abusive home, Kristina fled to the same world Monique had left. Instead of escape, further bondage ensued. Kristina ran for a second time. This time, she ran to WAR, Int'l. Today, she has completed her cosmetology training and supports both herself and her sister, who was being sold at home.

THE PROBLEM

Contrary to popular belief, women "working" in the adult entertainment industry want out. In fact, if given the opportunity, many would leave. And yet, for most of these women, *alternative employment opportunities are far and few between*. In addition, their lack of credible work history, inability to write resumes, and sparse skill sets bring new challenges to the task of job hunting.

Women At Risk, International (WAR, Int'l), has successfully begun and sustained a number of international partnerships that provide at-risk and rescued women with alternative employment. Whether it is through a sewing center, café, cake decorating program, cosmetology, or academics, the door for future employment is opened. Sadly, such programs remain to be established locally.

Research shows restoration of trafficking survivors primarily depends on their ability to find an alternative source of income. When they cannot, survivors will only flounder at best. Others will find it impossible to survive, eventually ending up exactly where they came from.

THE SOLUTION

Here at WAR, Int'l, we firmly believe our responsibility exceeds simply talking about the employment crisis. We must go a step beyond and provide survivors with the ability to secure *real jobs*. While we cannot personally employ every woman who walks through our doors, we can provide training that will further their employment prospects. As already mentioned, this method has proved successful in numerous WAR, Int'l programs across the world. By instituting a similar program in West Michigan, victims could receive job skill training, legitimate work experience for their resumes, and increase their chance at a sustainable job in the near future. At the heart of this project is a passion to see women reach for their dreams, refuse to settle for less, and accomplish their goals.

THE PLAN

As our national network continues to expand, WAR, Int'l is now partnering with safehouses in eight different states, and our product reaches all 50 states. Our constituency reaches beyond this through our three stores, over 50,000 plus mailing list, and have held over 1,200 home parties and events in 2013. This allows us to contact many over the course of the year who may be in need, or know of someone in need of a training center.

We began to examine the dozens of women who have already approached us, just wanting a chance. The time has come to beta test a training center that would provide both local and out-of-state victims with the help they so desperately want. Sometimes it is necessary for the safety of the woman to leave her state upon rescue. The center would be located at WAR, Int'l's headquarters in Wyoming, MI. Women from all 50 states could escape their traffickers and come here for a year of training, counseling, and a chance to build a resume to seek employment with dignity. As WAR, Int'l's headquarters is owned outright by the organization, this will allow for financing to fully go toward the program itself.

At the time, WAR, Int'l is looking for a \$500,000 startup that would provide funding over a three year period. Based on the quotes of two separate outside contractors, a portion of this funding would be used to retrofit space located on the second floor of our current building. The majority of the funding would provide two salaried positions for the training center director and staff over the three year period as well as startup for the salaries of the women as the program works toward sustainability.

As an organization, we incorporated stateside in the worst economy since the depression, in one of the worst states. Despite this crisis, we have grown to a \$3.5 million company. Fiscally conservative, we have no debt, and are beta testing this program stateside before going into a large scale endeavor. Phase II will necessitate a number of grants in the millions. Overseas proven programs have proven their worthiness time and again where we impact thousands of lives. This testing process is our due diligence to show positive outcomes on a small scale here in the US.