



IGNITE hope

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For Immediate Release
Sept 9, 2020

DENTON, TEXAS—Bob Williams, CEO of Ranch Hands Rescue Counseling Center and Animal Sanctuary in Denton, Texas, just announced ambitious plans to open the first long-term safe house in the country exclusively catering to male victims of sex trafficking 18-24 years old. Williams will modify their existing headquarters with renovations starting immediately once permitting and funding is finalized. Bob is driven to open the safe house by January 2021.

The hard truth is that sex trafficking is on the rise in the US. The U.S. Department of State reports 300,000 American children are lured into the global sex trade each year. Previous estimates believed boys to make up only 10% of these victims, however, new data suggests that it is closer to 50% (DOJ; DOS; Homeland Security; Stemple and Meyer). That would mean up to 150,000 boys each year. These boys become young men who grow up in a life of sexual and physical abuse, criminal involvement, and constant chaos. As a result, agencies find particular difficulty identifying male victims and catering to their unique needs. In fact, of the 64 trauma care beds in Texas, NONE of them are for young men who have been sex trafficked. This is unacceptable. Young men are THE MOST overlooked demographic in commercial sexual exploitation (Stemple and Meyer).

“If we don’t provide shelter for victims of sex trafficking, their abusers are extremely likely to find them and bring them back into the trade,” Williams admonished. “No person should be subjected to such a monstrous situation, but trafficked boys in particular are being overlooked; we’re going to change that, now.” These young men will be the forgotten ones no longer.

Ranch Hands Rescue has a reputation for building refuges for victims who have survived “the worst of the worst” circumstances. Their two animal sanctuaries house over 50 farm animals, most reclaimed from law enforcement, that were found in neglectful or abusive situations pushing them to the verge of euthanasia, and all with severe medical issues. The counseling center focuses on the 1-8 percent of trauma victims that don’t respond well in traditional counseling. That includes veterans with PTSD, sexually abused children and adults, and sex trafficking victims. Licensed Professional Counselors take clients out to the animal



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sanctuary for time with horses, llamas, goats, sheep, and a mélange of other farm residents, where they can connect with a quiet companion who knows the depth of their pain.

“Once a person stops responding to traditional counseling, he or she is susceptible to developing self-destructive behaviors, such as eating disorders, physical mutilation, drug and alcohol addiction, or suicidal tendencies, just to name a few.” says Williams. “Our Equine and Animal Assisted Counseling approach gives emotionally tortured people the chance to reach the roots of trauma with the help of a rehabilitated animal by their side. This safe house will give hope to even more people who have been living through highly destructive cycles of abuse and slavery.”

With an unaccounted number of sex traffickers taking advantage of the un-tolled I-10 and I-35 corridors of Texas and the Mexican border, safe houses for victims are severely needed across Texas and the U.S. The U.S. Department of State highlights the grim reality for male sex trafficking victims:

"Authorities...often do not recognize male victims due to biases or the tendency to perceive males as less vulnerable to human trafficking or erroneously view human trafficking as exclusively the sex trafficking of girls and women...Instead of being treated as exploited individuals, they are at greater risk of being penalized or fined for offenses, such as crossing a border illegally, or of facing charges and imprisonment for crimes committed as a result of being trafficked."

Mr. Williams has made his organization’s ambitious goal clear, “This will be the first safe house in Texas for young men ages 18-24, and the first in the country to cater to male sex trafficking survivors.” Williams stated, “Since we have a deficit of male care nationwide, we want to open our doors to those in need across the country. We’re ready to join with anyone who wants to fight this fight with us.”

If you’d like more information on the programs Ranch Hands Rescue offers, call the Ranch Hands Rescue office at 940-240-0500. For all media contact, email bob@ranchhandrescue.org, or call 817-907-5626. For any questions regarding the clinical component, contact Director of Clinical Services Landon Dickeson at landon@ranchhandrescue.org. Visit their website at www.ranchhandrescue.org.