

Steps to hosting a Gracehaven Share the Story

1

Download the available materials. Tell us that you are hosting an event by emailing Kate Sullivan at ksullivan@coyfc.org so we can be praying!

2

Pick a date/time and invite your friends!
Let your guests know if you will be providing drinks, or other snacks.

3

Make sure you have a way to show the videos on a tv or projector, so people can see and hear stories from graduates of Gracehvan

4

Once everyone is at your event, take attendance and get everyone's name, email, and phone number that will provide it

5

Share information about child sex-trafficking, Gracehaven, and your selected student stories!

6

Provide your guests with ways that they can get involved. Suggest volunteering, going on a tour, or you can point them to the website



Instructions for Evening of Event



Get your fire started before guests arrive so you don't have to worry about it as guests are arriving - then welcome people to come in.



When guests arrive, ask them to put their names down on a sign-in sheet, along with their email addresses (and an option to opt in or out of emails from Gracehaven).



Once people are settled, give a short introduction about Gracehaven, and why you felt called to host this event! This is your chance to share your story, and why you care about these students' stories



Following the introduction, you will go ahead and read aloud the testimonies and stories from students who attended camp, and the positive impact that camp had



At the end, offer an opportunity for guests to get involved with the cause. On the website, gracehaven.me, guests can find opportunities to give, volunteer, go on a tour, or just get on the news letter. Inform your guests about it.



Have a great time hanging out with your guests for the rest of the night! It is smart to put out a table that has some handouts with a QR code to the Gracehaven site



Student Stories

caseworkers recounting their interactions
with survivors

SYBIL

Sometimes survivors form “trauma bonds” with their abusers. Even though they mean harm, the girls feel that this is one person who provided attention and kindness -- traits survivors want to experience. This was the case with “Sybil” who was trafficked at a young age by a family member. After Children’s Services removed her from the home she was in and out of foster homes for years. She was desperate for connection, which led her to a relationship with a man who was planning to traffic her. Fortunately, Gracehaven was able to help move her into a safer living situation and is working with her every week to build her self-esteem and other strengths to help protect herself. Sybil is thriving, has started to recognize danger and has built healthy and strong relationships with her new family and friends.

APRIL

April was a graduate of Gracehaven's residential center. She's been with us a year and has grown tremendously. Before she came to us she was angry and had an attitude of been there, done that. She absolutely didn't like the word 'no' and raged when she was denied her way. What is she like now? She's a beautiful young lady who has become a leader with the other girls. She's willing to have the difficult conversations with girls when they want to give up. She's had many challenges as she prepares to return to the community, but she's taking them all in stride. Why the change? She feels safe and secure at Gracehaven. She's found people who love her and refuse to get up on her no matter what. And she's learned effective coping skills to deal with her trauma.



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ROSY

“I want to become adoptable.”

That was “Rosy’s” goal when she began meeting with her Gracehaven case manager. Though in her early teens, she’d been exploited as a young girl, and was at high risk to be trafficked. With a mother who didn’t believe that she was ever abused, Rosy sought attention from men.

Rosy worked on being open and honest with her case manager, and especially wanted to improve her coping skills. They talked about making good decisions and recognizing safe adults - which was a new concept to her. In fact, learning to make safe decisions helped her become more secure in herself. After six months of working together, Rosy had made significant progress - and was ready to be placed with a family who wanted to adopt her. She was so excited to be part of a family and ride her bike around the neighborhood.

She told the other girls in her group home, “If you are thinking about being part of Gracehaven, do it! The staff is so nice. They teach you so much about trafficking.” Her case manager faithfully spent hours with her every week - and the focused, consistent time with a safe, encouraging adult made all the difference.



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DANIEL

Gracehaven works with teenagers who are victims of sexual exploitation. But do you know that our team also supports young boys and girls who are victims of labor trafficking/exploitation? This is an area that is much less known but can also cause considerable trauma. Here is a scenario that shows how easily it can occur:

“Daniel” is a 15-year-old boy who lives with his two older brothers and mom. His older brothers have a history of getting in trouble at school and occasionally with the police. Daniel has suspected his brothers of buying or selling illegal things but tries his best to stay out of it.

One day his oldest brother was put on house arrest. Not long after that his brothers told him that since “Dante” was on house arrest, they needed Daniel to make a drop for them. At first he declines, but after being tossed around by his brothers, he agrees. He takes the backpack of some small firearms and other weapons to a street corner and places it in the designated area. Upon Daniel’s return, his brothers tell him now that he has done something illegal, he is one of them. He has to continue to work for them and do whatever they ask with the threat of being beaten if he declines.

Daniel considers asking a teacher at school for help but feels like he cannot talk to anyone now that he has done something illegal. Daniel didn't consent to be a messenger, and he wasn't given a choice. Force and coercion are key components in exploiting minors for the financial gain of others.



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CHRIS

Did you know that many teens are actually exploited by members of their own families? Here is a scenario that shows how teens can be manipulated and abused in this way.

“Chris,” a 14-year-old from a rural Ohio town, lost his mother to breast cancer. Before Chris was born, his father, “Jack”, struggled with opioid abuse but his wife helped him get clean. After her death, Jack began abusing opioids again to cope with the loss. This was expensive, and after losing his wife’s income as well money became tight. Being in a small town, Jack was unsure how to get help and was afraid of judgment and retribution. Jack’s supplier would visit their house and always made Chris uncomfortable -- he didn’t like the way the supplier looked at him.

After a few weeks, Jack’s addiction became so serious that he lost his job and wouldn’t leave the house. In order to get enough money to continue to support his opioid addiction, Jack began to give Chris to his supplier as a form of payment. Chris would try to get away or fight back, but the supplier forced him to take opioids to relax so he could continue to abuse Chris. This ugly cycle continued until Chris finally was able to tell someone who helped get him get out of the house.

Unfortunately, familial trafficking happens more often than we'd like to think. Our Prevention Education programs provide relevant and important information for youth and adults who want to learn more about human trafficking and how to prevent it.



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DESTINY

How does a history of abuse, especially in a foster care setting, impact a teen? Here is a scenario that shows how easily teens in this situation are negatively influenced.

"Destiny" is 15 years old. Her father died from a drug overdose when she was 6. Since then, Destiny has lived in foster care. From the age of 10-12, Destiny was sexually abused by one of her foster brothers, and it only ended when he turned 18 and moved out of the house.

When Destiny began middle school she struggled academically. She started to hang out with older friends who could drive so she wouldn't have to be home alone. With these new friends, Destiny started to experiment with marijuana and alcohol. Every day after school she went to her friend "Maya's" house so they could smoke weed. Maya's older brother, "Jessie," who was 24, took an interest in Destiny. He bought Destiny and Maya alcohol and took them wherever they wanted to go. After a few weeks, Jessie asked Destiny to be his girlfriend. She was so excited about having a boyfriend and felt loved and cared for by him. He took her shopping on the weekends and took her to hotel parties to meet his friends which made Destiny feel important and mature. One night when Destiny was at Maya's house and they were both high, Jessie had one of his friends come over to give Destiny a tattoo of his initials to symbolize their love.

Since Destiny was so traumatized and in need of belonging, she easily allowed the older man to manipulate her.



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ARIEL

When "Ariel" first began meeting with her case manager, she was very closed off and untrusting. She did not see a need to learn about sex trafficking or learning skills to prevent sexual abuse and exploitation from happening to her. She even became so frustrated with her case manager's attempts to invest in her that she requested to stop meeting.

However, her case manager encouraged her to give it one more try. And it worked. They continued to meet for nearly a year, discussing how Ariel could be more aware of the dangers around her. And this month, Ariel successfully completed case management services. She also completed her GED, developed positive coping skills and learned about respectful communication.

What made the difference? Her case manager's compassion and diligence to invest in her. In fact, when Ariel requested to graduate services, she said how grateful she was for her case manager's persistence and obvious concern for her.