

2025 ANNUAL GRATITUDE & IMPACT REPORT

60 missing, trafficked kids recovered in 'largest child rescue operation in US history': Florida officials



The Redefining Refuge team, with founder and Executive Director Natasha Nascimento in the center, during Dragon Eye, a two-week missing child operation in Tampa Bay considered the most successful operation in U.S. history.

The operation for missing, victims of human trafficking in Pinellas, and Pasco.

Here's how you

- Get informed. Learn about behavior changes; isolate.
- Report suspicious activity. "BEFREE" to
- Talk to your kids. Communication and online grooming.



**From initiatives to impact,
our report tells a story of change.**

Redefining Refuge:
Natasha
Nascimento's
mission of hope for
exploited children

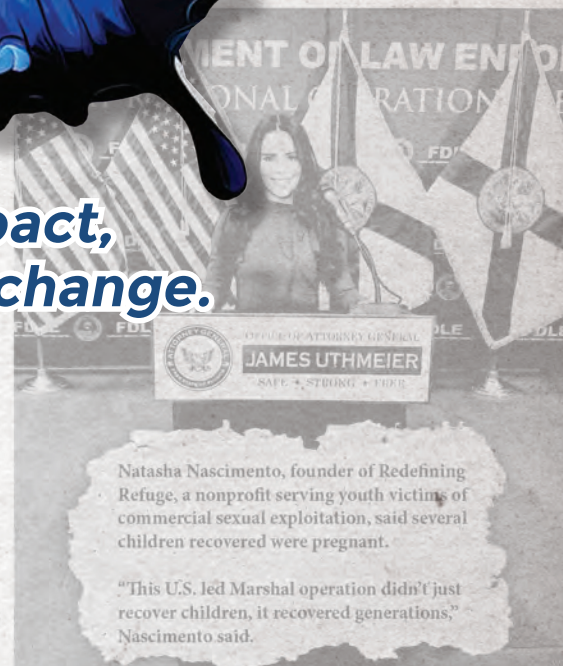
HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Task force works to rescue
children from human
trafficking in Tampa Bay



Natasha Nascimento, founder of Redefining Refuge, a nonprofit serving youth victims of commercial sexual exploitation, said several children recovered were pregnant.

"This U.S. led Marshal operation didn't just recover children, it recovered generations," Nascimento said.



9 WAYS YOU CAN HELP END TRAFFICKING

CHANGE ONE THING | CHANGE EVERYTHING

KNOW THE SIGNS

Learn the red flags and indicators of trafficking

REPORT A TIP

Contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline if you have any concerns about a potential trafficking situation.

Call 1-888-373-7888, text HELP to BEFREE (233733), or email help@humantraffickinghotline.org

SPREAD THE WORD

Share and display our All Hands On Deck Awareness Campaign in your community

THINK BEFORE YOU SHOP

Consider how you shop and eat. Who made your clothes? Who prepared your food? Know which goods may be produced by child or forced labor

VOLUNTEER LOCALLY

Visit www.redefiningrefuge.org/get-involved

STAY INFORMED

Sign up for our Newsletter and follow us on Instagram and Facebook

REGISTER FOR TRAINING

Redefining Refuge provides tailored trainings to help professionals appropriately identify and address the needs of people impacted by Human Trafficking.

USE YOUR SKILLS

Can you train or hire survivors? Reach out to potential local partners. Do you work in a school? Propose anti-trafficking protocols. Are you an attorney? Offer pro-bono services. Writing a story? Use media best practices.

RAISE YOUR VOICE

Ask our Florida Representatives how they are addressing Human Trafficking.

A LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDING CEO



Dear Friends and Supporters,

Every organization has seasons that test its endurance and illuminate its purpose. For Redefining Refuge, this was one of those years. 2025 challenged us in new ways, but like every story worth telling, we emerged stronger, more focused, more united, and more certain of our calling.

In partnership once again with the U.S. Marshals Service, we helped lead a national effort that made history. Together, we recovered sixty children and three pregnant teens; sixty-three lives forever changed. As I said during the press conference, we didn't just recover children; we recovered generations. It was a powerful reminder that the work we do echoes far beyond today.

This year's Storybook Soirée Gala was a reflection of that truth; a night that brought fairytales to life and hope to the forefront. With the incredible honor of receiving White House recognition during the event, it underscored how far this mission has reached and how many hearts it continues to move. Every detail, every story shared, and every dollar raised represented the power of rewriting the ending for children who deserve a new beginning.

Through every challenge and triumph, one truth remained constant: it truly takes a village. Whether through advocacy, partnership, or philanthropy, you have continued to stand beside us.

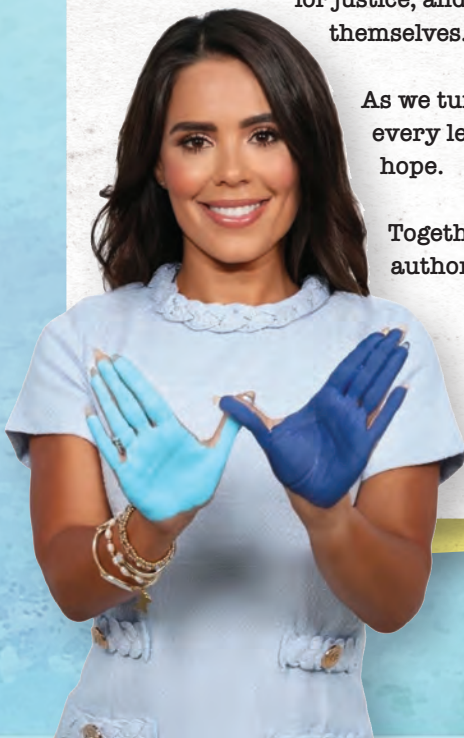
To each of you; our supporters, volunteers, and partners; thank you. You continue to show up not only when it's easy, but when it's hard. You are the reason Redefining Refuge remains a sanctuary for healing, a force for justice, and a voice for those who cannot yet speak for themselves.

As we turn the page into a new year, we carry forward every lesson, every victory, and every heartbeat of hope.

Together, we are not just changing lives, we are co-authoring legacies.

With gratitude and resolve,

Natasha Nascimento



REDEFINING REFUGE

Our Services

Established in 2010, Redefining Refuge is a specialized nonprofit and advocacy organization supporting children ages 9-17 who have been harmed by, or are at risk of, commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking. We provide safety, advocacy, and steady support while working alongside child welfare partners to ensure each child receives coordinated, trauma-informed care. Our goal is simple yet profound: to protect dignity, foster healing, and help children move toward safer, more hopeful futures.



LIFE SKILLS MANAGEMENT
YOUTH EMPOWERMENT GROUPS
SUPERVISED VISITATION
ASSISTANCE WITH TRANSPORTATION
CONSULTATION WITH CAREGIVERS
COURT ADVOCACY ASSISTANCE
ANCILLARY NEEDS ASSISTANCE

COMPREHENSIVE CARE PLANS
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
TELEHEALTH AND THERAPY
ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES
TREATMENT PLANNING
HEALTHCARE APPOINTMENTS
FACILITATION OF NON-MEDICAL SERVICES
EDUCATIONAL AND TUTORING ASSISTANCE

**WE ALSO PROVIDE TRAINING
AND CONSULTATION TO:**
FOSTER PARENTS,
COMMUNITY BASED
CARE AGENCIES
HOSPITALS
CORPORATIONS

REDEFINING REFUGE IMPACT STORY

My Baby

She had been missing for years.
Not days. Not weeks.
Years.

By the time she was recovered during Operation Dragon Eye, she was six months pregnant, actively addicted to crack cocaine, and under the control of a trafficker who forced her to use in order to keep her compliant. She had been stripped not only of her freedom, but of her identity, her safety, and her sense of future.

She was still a child.

When law enforcement located her, she was immediately transported to the hospital. As protocol requires, Redefining Refuge Youth and Family Advocate Ady Pena accompanied her; because no child should walk through the most terrifying moment of their life alone.

In the hospital room, the lights were dim. The ultrasound machine hummed softly. For the first time in her pregnancy, she heard something she had never been allowed to hear before.

A heartbeat.
She froze.
Her breath caught.
And quietly, almost in disbelief, she whispered:
“My baby.”



It was the first moment of safety she had experienced in years. The first moment of connection. The first moment where something belonged to her again.

That single sound; the steady rhythm of a tiny heart became the turning point.

In that moment, she chose courage. She told law enforcement everything she knew: names, locations, patterns, details she had been too afraid to share before. Because now, it wasn't just about surviving. It was about protecting the life she had just heard.

Her trafficker was arrested. He was charged. He was held on a \$250 million bond. And a cycle that had spanned generations was interrupted. This is the child our Founder referenced during the Operation Dragon Eye press conference when she said, “Today, we didn’t just recover children, we recovered generations.”



Because when you recover a child who has been missing for years, you don't just save one life. You save the child they were. You protect the child they are carrying. And you alter the future that was being written for both of them.

This is what impact looks like.

Not just arrests. Not just numbers. But moments... quiet, sacred moments where a child hears a heartbeat and realizes they still have a future worth fighting for.

And because of supporters like you, she didn't face that moment alone.

REDEFINING REFUGE

Our Village

MEDICAL + MENTAL HEALTH PARTNERS

BayCare Health System
Tampa General Hospital
Gracepoint Wellness
Journey Forward
Juvenile Assessment Center
Juvenile Addiction Receiving Facility
Devereux Behavioral Health

LAW ENFORCEMENT ALLIES

U.S. Marshal Service
Tampa Police Department
Florida Department of
Law Enforcement
Homeland Security
FBI
St. Petersburg Police Department HCSO

CHILD WELFARE

Children's Network of Hillsborough County
FL Department of Children and Families
FL Department of Juvenile Justice
Guardian ad Litem Program
Attorney Ad Litem Program
13th Judicial Circuit of Florida
Children's Board of Hillsborough County
Gulf Coast JFCS

YOU

See Benefactors



LEGISLATIVE

Commission on Human Trafficking -
Hillsborough County

Office of the Attorney General -
Statewide Council on
Human Trafficking

NON-PROFIT AGENCIES

Heart Gallery of Tampa
Tampa Museum of Art
Mary Lee's House
Wheels of Success
Metropolitan Ministries
More Too Life
One More Child
SAFE in Tampa
FREE Network

Camelot Community Care
Children's Home Network
Created
Horse Force
Junior League of Tampa
Lutheran Services
University of South Florida
Trafficking in Persons Lab
Community Foundation of
Tampa Bay

A LETTER FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT



Each year, I am reminded that the story of Redefining Refuge is not written by one person or one organization—it is co-authored by an entire community.

Last year, I wrote about the village that has grown around our mission. This year, that village has become the co-author of countless new chapters. Whether you donated, volunteered, amplified our message, or simply had the courage to learn more, you picked up the pen. Every page turned at Redefining Refuge has your fingerprints on it. Because of your support, the children we serve have safe spaces, therapeutic care, and the resources they need to begin healing.

As we gather at the Storybook Soirée, I am inspired by how beautifully this theme captures our journey. The children we serve are not defined by the dark chapters behind them. Their stories are still being written, and thanks to you, they do not write alone. You are co-authors in their stories of healing, resilience, and hope.



Still, there are chapters ahead that will test us. Traffickers remain determined and adaptive, and the needs of our kiddos remain complex. But our collective resolve is stronger. Natasha and her team continue to lead with relentless passion and creativity, ensuring that every child who comes through Redefining Refuge discovers not only safety, but also the truth that their voice, their dreams, and their future matter.

As you reflect on your role in this story, I encourage you to see yourself not as a spectator, but as a co-author. With your partnership, our kiddos' stories will continue to be filled with hope, dignity, and the promise of tomorrow.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for turning the page with us. Thank you for reminding our kiddos that their story is far from over, and their best chapters are yet to come.

Jen Gudenkauf

REDEFINING REFUGE



Humanitarian of the Year Award



Pinwheels for Prevention



Pinwheels for Prevention



Celebrated our 15th Birthday and a Kiddo who was referred when she was 12, her 18th Birthday.

Mommy & Me High Tea®

An Eventing Tampa Bay
Signature Event

Benefitting



PREVENTION IN ACTION:

The Eventing Tampa Bay Signature Mommy & Me High Tea® Event
founded by Alyssa Rhoads

While much of Redefining Refuge's work takes place in moments of crisis, prevention begins long before a child is ever at risk. Our partnership in the Annual Mommy & Me High Tea® has one clear purpose for us: to strengthen families, foster connection, and reduce the vulnerabilities that traffickers exploit.

At its heart, this event is about presence; caregivers showing up, children being seen, and families building trust, communication, and confidence together.

Trafficking does not begin with abduction.

It begins with isolation, unmet needs, silence, and a lack of protective relationships. Prevention is about addressing those gaps before harm occurs.

Strengthening the Protective Factors

The Mommy & Me High Tea® centers on the very things research shows keep children safer:

- Engaged caregivers
- Open communication
- Body autonomy education
- Children who know their voice matters
- Families who practice connection intentionally

Through shared experiences, guided activities, and age-appropriate education, families are given tools that are not routed in fear to help children understand boundaries, consent, and self-worth in ways that are empowering rather than alarming.

This is prevention that feels like love, not lectures
Teaching Safety Through Song

One of the most meaningful moments of the event

is a simple one. Children gather with their caregivers and sing together, a familiar melody paired with words that quietly plant seeds of safety, confidence, and self-agency.

Written by our Founder specifically for this event, the song uses repetition, rhythm, and warmth to teach children that their bodies belong to them, their voice matters, and trusted adults are there to listen.



Alyssa Rhoads with daughters

Mommy & Me High Tea®

An Eventing Tampa Bay
Signature Event

Benefitting



"My Body's Mine"

(sung to the tune of The Wheels on the Bus)*

My body's mine from head to toe,
Head to toe, head to toe.

My body's mine from head to toe,
And I can say "no, no, no!"

A hug or touch is up to me,
Up to me, up to me.

A hug or touch is up to me,
It's my choice—wait and see!
If I feel sad or scared one day,
Scared one day, scared one day,
If I feel sad or scared one day,
I know just what to say!

I use my voice, I'm brave and strong,
Brave and strong, brave and strong.
I use my voice, I'm brave and strong,
To tell what's right or wrong!

For many children, this is the first time they hear these messages spoken clearly, positively, and in a way they can remember. For caregivers, it opens the door to conversations that continue long after the event ends.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Children who understand body autonomy, who feel safe speaking up, and who have engaged caregivers are significantly less vulnerable to exploitation.

Prevention is not loud.
It doesn't make headlines.
But it changes trajectories.

The Mommy & Me High Tea® is not just a celebration, it is an investment in families, in resilience, and in futures that never need rescuing.

Visit MommyandMeHighTea.com
for event details.



Save the Date
5.3.2026
Armature Works, Tampa



Redefining Refuge: Natasha Nascimento's mission of hope for exploited children

Launched in 2010, Tampa Bay nonprofit Redefining Refuge has a vital, heart-wrenching role in providing care, support, and advocacy for children and youth recovered from exploitation and trafficking.

BY DEBORAH BOSTOCK-KELLEY • TALENT • SEPTEMBER 3, 2025

In a world that too often turns away from its most vulnerable, Natasha Nascimento and her team at Redefining Refuge, the nonprofit she founded in 2010, continue to rise with courage, compassion, and unwavering resolve.

For the second year in a row, Nascimento and Redefining Refuge joined forces with the U.S. Marshals and a network of committed agencies in Operation Dragon Eye, a sweeping effort across the Tampa Bay area to recover exploited children from the horrors of trafficking and offer them safety, healing, hope, and refuge.

Florida continues to rank among the highest states in reported human trafficking cases, according to the National Human Trafficking Hotline, a sobering reminder of the critical need for intervention and advocacy.

Bill Berger, U.S. Marshal for the Middle District of Florida, described the two-week covert sting in late May and early June as “the largest in the history of the United States Marshal Service, if not the history of the United States.”

Sixty children ages 9 to 17 were recovered. According to the office of Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier, eight individuals were arrested on charges ranging from human trafficking and child endangerment to drug possession and trafficking.

Unlike last year's operation, several of the recovered children this time were pregnant. Because of the coordinated effort behind Operation Dragon Eye and the haven Redefining Refuge provides, these young mothers now have the opportunity to bring their babies into the world free from the trauma and cycle of exploitation.

“This is our second year doing this with the U.S. Marshals,” Nascimento shares. “Redefining Refuge acted in the same capacity as this year. We hosted the centralized command post. All of the different agencies, the law enforcement, advocates, non-governmental agencies, are a giant collaboration, essentially, like an interagency collaboration, but there's a centralized command post for it.”

That command post housed analysts from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the Tampa Police

Department, Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, St. Petersburg Police Department, Pasco County Sheriff's Office, and the Attorney General's Office, along with analysts from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, whom Redefining Refuge secured grant funding to bring down for the operation. The logistical and emotional magnitude of the operation is staggering.

“A lot of what goes on in the command post is we're supporting all the field agents,” Nascimento says. “When they're out there in the field, we're giving them data or giving them information that can assist them in their recovery.”

HEALING AND SUPPORT

BayCare, which provided medical and mental health care to youth recovered during the operation, also offered valuable cooperation to create a healing environment. Along with More Too Life and Bridging Freedom, fellow nonprofits with a mission to fight child trafficking, team members from Redefining Refuge and BayCare transformed a hospital wing into a welcoming, trauma-informed space for the recovered children.

“One of my biggest things during the recovery process is, we didn't want to bring kids to a hospital where there were white sheets, because they have white sheets in hotels and motels,” Nascimento says. “BayCare allowed us to come in and bring all of these colorful sheets, little stuffed animals, clean clothes, snacks, and all that sort of thing, so really, BayCare allowed us to create a really soft landing in what could otherwise be construed as a very clinical environment.”

The work is not only logistically challenging; it is emotionally wrenching.

“It's one of the most difficult things that you'll ever do as a human being, especially if you're a human being that cares deeply about what you're doing, so it's hard, very, very difficult work,” Nascimento shares.

This year's operation recovered more than double the children than last year. It also brought times of heartbreak.

Continued on next page.

83 DEGREES MEDIA ARTICLE FEATURE

"The very first day, we recovered a young girl who had been missing for around nine months," Nascimento says. "You're a 15-year-old. You're a mom. And we called her dad. She doesn't have a mom. She passed away. And so we called her dad to let him know this really great news: we found his daughter... And instead of the dad saying, 'Oh, my gosh, how is she? Where is she? Can I come see her?'... The dad immediately says, 'Oh, well, I mean, what do I need to sign because I can't take care of her?'"

"And then you are in the position where now you've got to go tell this girl that's just been recovered under awful circumstances, who's lying in a hospital bed surrounded by a bunch of strangers, you have to be the one who says, 'Hey, your dad doesn't want you.' I can't imagine hearing that, as a grown adult, never mind as a 15-year-old... And then you wonder why these children run away or why these children stay missing... For children who are sort of stuck in that in-between, it's awful. Imagine that for a child. They found you, and you're just like in this horrible in-between of where-do-you-go because you belong to no one. Your parents don't want you. You don't have any other family. And you don't belong to the state. And then people wonder how kids end up with traffickers who're providing those tangible needs of 'Well, I want you. You have a stable living situation. I'm going to love you,' even though it's conditional and it comes with horrible, traumatic strings attached."

Still, Nascimento and her team persist, fueled by love, humility, and the hope that change is possible – at every level.

"If you look at how child welfare was designed, historically, it was designed to give families a temporary hand up... Now child welfare has become this institution where families are just giving their children to," she says. "In two weeks, we had three different families say, 'Well, we just don't want our kids anymore, so you take them.' And that's just happening across the board, so I think we need to provide more family support, obviously, because I think a lot of this is generational."

REFUGE REDEFINED ONCE MORE

Nascimento reflects on the journey from Redefining Refuge's earliest days.

"When I started doing the work, my goal was not even to have a residential program at the time," she says. "My goal was just to redefine the narrative that was surrounding this group of children. I think back then, there was no legislation in place that protected these children. These children were criminalized for being sexually assaulted, essentially. It's interesting that Redefining Refuge has the name that it has because I think it's continued to redefine what refuge is at so many different junctures. Refuge at one point was legislation, and changing the narrative around these kids. And then refuge at another time was an actual physical location where you could house those kids.

And now refuge is looking like, intervening in these critical moments for children, for their own children."

For Nascimento, the most humbling moments come when children who have been recovered return to help others.

"We actually have three different children that are wanting to do anything," she says. "Can we intern with you? Can we work with you? Which is so beautiful. And I guess we're trying to figure out the dynamics with that. And I'll tell you why I'm so careful. I never, ever, ever want children to feel indebted to Redefining Refuge in any way, or that we did something for them expecting anything in return, because that would mean that we're just like the people that hurt them. We're trying to therapeutically navigate that with the therapist on board. What is the motivation for them wanting to do this? Is it that they just want to help other kids, or is it that they feel indebted to our agency? And if there's any overarching theme of 'I just feel like I want to do something for Redefining Refuge,' then I wouldn't do it because that's not the right thing. It's a very new position for us to be in, but it's come up a lot in the last six months. There's nothing more powerful than lived-experience experts being on your team and being able to advocate for their peers."

Nascimento shares insights on how the community can be part of the solution to the scourge of trafficking.

"Obviously getting training and being aware of what to report is always helpful," she says. "But the most helpful thing that anyone can do is become a guardian ad litem. That's just such an important component of these kids' lives... Become a foster parent, somebody who can even help with respite care for children. Those are some big asks, but those are just truly transformational things that you can do for children... I always say that the best intervention, or the best transformation, is the relationship. It's not the program. It's who you connect with at those programs. And so, you know, one relationship could be the difference between a child ending up with a trafficker and a child not."

Nascimento emphasizes the importance of listening deeply and providing a platform for the children's voices.

"I think the biggest thing that I've learned in the last decade is, you know, there's this narrative that says, 'Oh, you're giving a voice to the voiceless.' And I just don't think that's true," she says. "I think these kids have voices. It's just that no one was listening to them."

What Nascimento and her team do is more than recovery. It's restoration. It's rewriting futures. And it's a powerful affirmation of what she has long understood: these children have always had voices, Redefining Refuge simply chose to listen.

Trafficking Isn't What You Think: Myths, Missing Youth and the Power of Paying Attention

by Natasha Nascimento

What comes to mind when you hear the phrase “human trafficking”? If your first thought is a movie plot or a dramatic abduction overseas, you’re not alone. But here’s the truth: Human trafficking is happening in our own backyards, and it rarely looks like what you think.

At Redefining Refuge, we’ve spent over a decade supporting young survivors of sex trafficking right here in Tampa Bay. Many were never “taken”; they were overlooked. They ran away from unsafe homes, aged out of foster care without a plan or simply went missing without anyone asking the right questions.

MYTH #1:

Trafficking always involves kidnapping.

FACT:

The majority of children who are trafficked knew their trafficker and in some cases, believed they were in a relationship. Coercion and manipulation are far more common than force.

MYTH #2:

It only happens in big cities or foreign countries.

FACT:

Florida consistently ranks among the top three states for reported trafficking cases. It’s not a far-away issue; it’s a local crisis.

MYTH #3:

Trafficking doesn’t affect “normal” families.

FACT:

Traffickers exploit vulnerability, not background. Kids from every zip code are at risk when there’s a gap in supervision, stability or support.

One of the most critical intersections we see is between child trafficking and missing youth. In fact, one in six runaway children reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children are likely victims of trafficking. That’s why Redefining Refuge partnered with the U.S. Marshals Service for a major child recovery operation for the past two consecutive years, because the faster we find them, the better their odds of escaping exploitation.



photos by Tracy Briggs-Torres Photography

To mark **World Day Against Trafficking in Persons on July 30**, we’re inviting the entire community to take a stand with us through our “All Hands On Deck” initiative. At its heart is a simple act with a powerful message: **paint your hands blue, position them in the form of a butterfly, post a photo and tag us** [[@redefiningrefuge](#)] to show your solidarity with survivors and commitment to raising awareness.

Across the region, our mural of blue butterfly handprints grows, each one a symbol of hope, unity and protection. It’s a reminder that when we join hands (literally and figuratively), we shine a light on hidden truths and create safer futures for our kids.

➔ Here’s how you can help:

- **Get informed.** Learn the real signs of trafficking: sudden behavior changes, isolation, expensive gifts or older partners.
- **Report suspicious activity.** Call **1-888-373-7888** or text **“BEFREE”** to 233733.
- **Talk to your kids.** Conversations about safety, boundaries and online grooming save lives.



The goal isn’t to scare; it’s to equip. Every blue handprint matters. And every voice raised in truth brings us closer to a world where every child is seen, safe and free.

WORLD DAY AGAINST TRAFFICKING 2025



ALL HANDS ON DECK

All Hands On Deck is a call to conscience.

Human trafficking does not end when we notice it. It ends when we refuse to look away.

In partnership with the Junior League of Tampa, this year we witnessed the power of collective resolve and what happens when care becomes action and concern becomes commitment.

The protection of children is not assigned to a single role or institution. It belongs to everyone willing to stand in the gap.

Every voice carries weight. Every choice matters.

And when every hand is on deck, every child stands a chance.



REDEFINING REFUGE

Because of You...

CHILDREN WERE NOT ALONE.

Recovered youth were met by trained advocates who stayed with them during medical exams, interviews, and moments of extreme fear ensuring safety, dignity, and trust when it mattered most.



LAW ENFORCEMENT COULD STAY LONGER.

Your support helped cover overtime, logistics, and on-the-ground needs; allowing officers to remain focused on recovery and accountability, not resource limitations.



MEDICAL ADVOCACY WAS PRESENT.

Children navigating hospitals, ultrasounds, and treatment were supported by someone whose sole role was to protect their well-being, voice, and choices.

CRITICAL INFORMATION WAS UNLOCKED.

When children felt safe, they spoke. When they spoke, traffickers were identified, arrested, and held accountable.

GENERATIONS WERE PROTECTED.

Intervention didn't stop at recovery, it altered futures, disrupted cycles of exploitation, and created space for healing to begin.



60 missing,
in 'largest ch
history': Flor



The operation focused
victims of human traffi
Pinellas, and Pasco co

Here's how you co

- **Get informed.** Learn the behavior changes, isolation
- **Report suspicious activity.** "BEFREE" to 233733.
- **Talk to your kids.** Conve and online grooming save



Redefining
Natasha
Nascimen
mission o
exploited

HILLSBOROUGH CO

Task force w
children fro
trafficking in

GROWING THROUGH THE YEARS

2010

March Established on March 17th

November Public Awareness Campaign Launched with the goal of reframing "Child Prostitution" as a Social Justice Issue of Child Trafficking.

2012

January 1st Annual Bubbles and Butterflies Gala.

August Implementation of a Safe House Program for Trafficked Youth.

2013

January Governor Scott Officially amends the Florida Legislation being victimized and should be recognized under the Safe Harbor Act as such.

April Statewide officials visit our unoccupied Safe House.

2014

March Discussions and appearances with Policy Chief, Healthy Families Subcommittee; Florida House of Representatives Health and Human Services Committee regarding Certification of Safe Houses and Redefining Refuge's Model

May Awarded Spirit of Humanity by DeBartolo Family Foundation

October Begins and Intensive Case Management Services

November Invited to the United States Capitol to represent the State of Florida at a Congressional Briefing

2015

January ABC Action News Awareness and Prevention month alongside RR

March Courtesy Nissan, Hyundai and Kia debut Awareness Campaign "Together We Can Drive Change"

2018

February City of Tampa Press Release announcing Awareness and Prevention Partnership between the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit.

June Awarded \$500,000.00 by the Florida Senate Management Services

October Featured in KNOW Tampa

2019

April Joins Shared Hope International's Center for Justice and Advocacy in Mesa, AZ for National Work Group.

May Launches mobile Social Messaging Campaign with Pilot Project.

June Mentorship Partnership with Florida Panhandle Safe House Program and becomes Circuit 13 Human Eckerd Connects

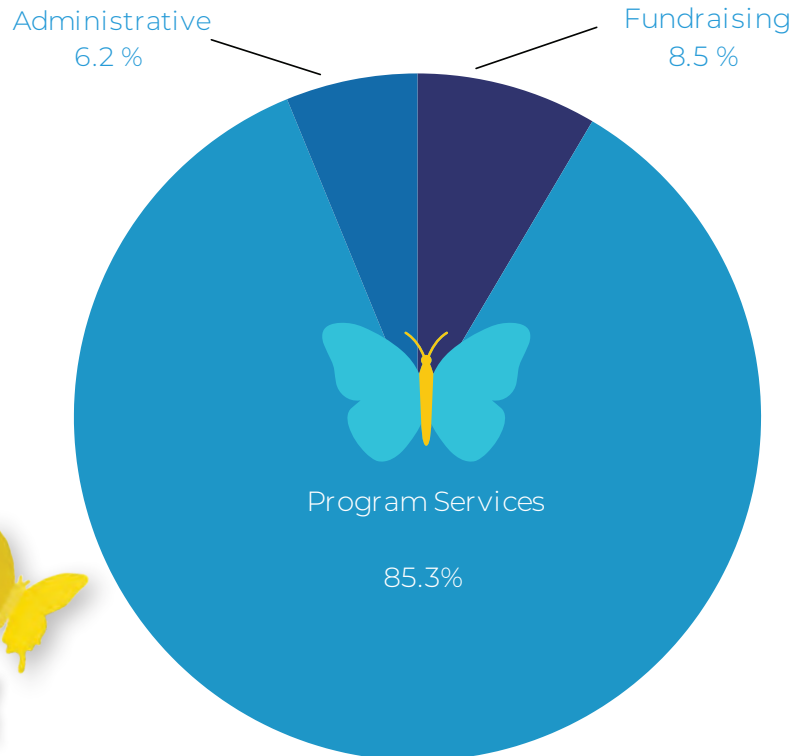
July Becomes a Project Mentor for Girl Scouts Gold Award.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



Program Efficiency Ratio



Revenue		
	State Funding	\$299,685.00
	Private Contributions	\$397,747.00
	Investment Income	\$36,593.00
	Total	\$734,025.00
Expenses		
	Program Services	\$461,322.00
	General Admin	\$34,042.00
	Fundraising	\$46,585.00
	Total	\$541,949.00

IRS FORM 990 AVAILABLE AT [IRS.GOV](https://www.irs.gov)

ANNUAL OVERVIEW



* HILLSBOROUGH county foster care community youth

139

YOUTH RECEIVING
ASSISTANCE VIA OUR
HUMAN TRAFFICKING
LIAISON AND
SPECIALIZED CASE
MANAGEMENT
SERVICES *

76

COMMUNITY YOUTH
REFERRED WHO ARE
NOT IN FOSTER CARE

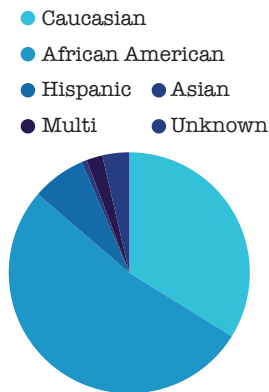
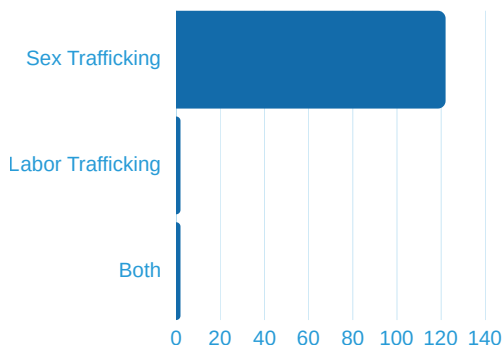


85% OF OUR CENSUS
CONSISTED OF FEMALE YOUTH,
11.5% CONSISTED OF MALE YOUTH

AVERAGE ANNUAL COST OF
COMPREHENSIVE CARE
PER CHILD

\$ 3,898.91

RESTORING HOPE



DEFENDING INNOCENCE

OVER 35,605 PROFESSIONALS TRAINED IN THE
FOLLOWING DISCIPLINES:

CHILD PROTECTIVE INVESTIGATORS

CHILD WELFARE CASE MANAGERS

LAW ENFORCEMENT

JUVENILE PROBATION OFFICERS

SCHOOL PERSONNEL

ATTORNEYS

PHYSICIANS

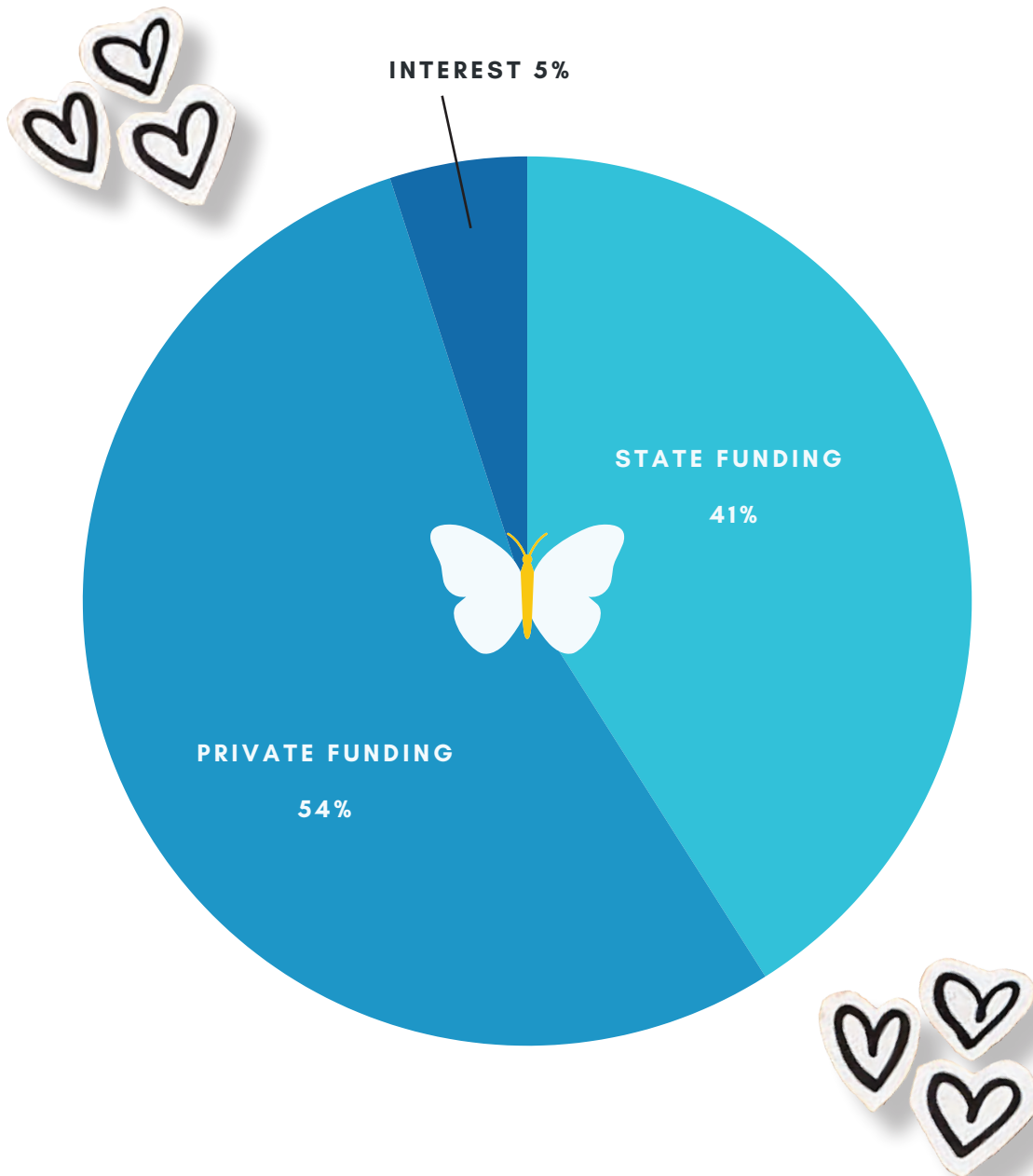
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



Income Diversification



REDEFINING REFUGE

14TH ANNUAL

Bubbles & Butterflies Gala

A STORYBOOK SOIRÉE



In partnership with



A huge THANK YOU again to our Royal Village of Sponsors and Partners! We continue to receive such a remarkable feedback on the event, and we could not have done it with a support of each of you....until next time!



REDEFINING REFUGE



OPERATION DRAGON EYE



OPERATION DRAGON EYE WAS A MULTI-AGENCY EFFORT, BUT RECOVERY ALONE IS NOT RESCUE.

Redefining Refuge served as the official command post for Operation Dragon Eye, providing the centralized coordination infrastructure necessary for a recovery operation of this scale.



In addition to serving as command post, we authored and secured the grant funding that set the operation in motion, ensuring law enforcement agencies had the resources required to remain focused on recovery, accountability, and child safety without limitation.

This work would not have been possible without the extraordinary leadership and commitment of Simon Canasi, Executor of the Adele S. Burnett Foundation, and Tara Ruberg whose partnership, trust, and belief in this mission helped transform an urgent vision into a fully realized, life-saving operation.

Redefining Refuge's role ensured that children were not only found, but protected, supported, and able to speak safely.

Our advocates were responsible for:

- Accompanying youth during medical exams, forensic interviews, and hospital stays
- Providing trauma-informed presence during moments of extreme fear and disorientation
- Supporting disclosure by establishing safety and trust
- Coordinating immediate post-recovery needs across child welfare, healthcare, and law enforcement
- Remaining with children beyond the moment of recovery...when the real work begins

When children felt safe, they spoke.

When they spoke, traffickers were identified, arrested, and held accountable.

This is why recovery must be paired with advocacy and why Redefining Refuge remains an essential operational partner in large-scale child recovery efforts.

OPERATION DRAGON EYE



“This U.S. led Marshal operation didn’t just recover children, it recovered generations.”



Natasha Nascimento, founder of Redefining Refuge, a nonprofit serving youth victims of commercial sexual exploitation, said several children recovered were pregnant.



HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY

Task force works to rescue children from human trafficking in Tampa Bay



CHIEF MORALE OFFICER

OPERATION DRAGON EYE



HILLSBOROUGH, PASCO & PINELLAS COUNTIES

60

YOUTH
RECOVERED

8

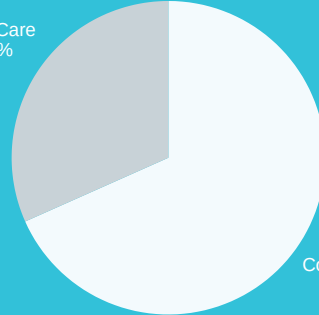
ARRESTS



RESTORING HOPE



Foster Care
31.7%



Community
68.3%

DEFENDING INNOCENCE

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS:

- BAYCARE
- BRIDGING FREEDOM
- CHILDREN'S NETWORK OF HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY
- FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES
- FL DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN & FAMILIES
- FL DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE
- FL DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
- HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
- MORE TOO LIFE
- NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN
- PASCO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
- PINELLAS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
- REDEFINING REFUGE
- ST PETERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT
- TAMPA POLICE DEPARTMENT

THANK YOU

EMPOWERING INDIVIDUALS

GRATITUDE IN ACTION



Donor Appreciation Dinner

At Redefining Refuge, we believe gratitude should be felt, not just expressed.

Our Donor Appreciation Dinner was created as an intentional space to pause, reflect, and thank the individuals who make our work possible; not with formality, but with meaning.

For this evening, donors were invited to bring something deeply personal: their favorite childhood book.

Books that once lived on nightstands. Stories that offered comfort, courage, escape, or hope. Pages that shaped imagination and reminded them they were not alone.

Together, these books became more than gifts, they became bridges between generations.

RESTORING WHAT WAS MISSED

Many of the children we serve were never read to.
Never tucked in.
Never given stories where good triumphs and safety is assumed.

By sharing a beloved childhood book, donors offered something profoundly simple and profoundly powerful:
a piece of innocence.

Each book was gifted to a child in our care — creating moments of connection, normalcy, and imagination that trauma too often steals.

This was not about charity.
It was about restoration.

STORIES THAT CONTINUE

As donors gathered around the table, we were reminded that stories shape who we become.

That evening honored the truth that while Redefining Refuge works in moments of crisis, our supporters help rebuild what was lost, one story, one child, one quiet moment at a time.



GRATITUDE IN ACTION



Commendation for Distinguished Service

Presented to

Katasha Nascimento

In recognition of your outstanding leadership, unwavering commitment, steadfast advocacy, and tireless dedication to the success of Operation Dragon Eye.

Your ability to overcome extraordinary challenges with thoughtfulness, precision, and care exemplifies the highest standards of service. Through your exceptional efforts, you provided critical operational support and created an environment in which this mission could thrive.

Your fierce advocacy on behalf of the children we serve, your attention to both mission-critical details and human needs, and your selfless devotion reflect great credit upon yourself and embody the spirit of this operation.

With sincere appreciation, we commend you for your extraordinary contributions and lasting impact.

Presented by

*The United States Marshals Service
in collaboration with Operation Dragon Eye
June 13, 2015*



REDEFINING REFUGE

The Next Chapter

Every story reaches a point where survival is no longer the goal.

Growth is.

In 2026 and beyond, Redefining Refuge is focused on strengthening the systems that protect children before, during, and after exploitation; ensuring no child falls through the cracks once the headlines fade.

OUR 2026 PRIORITIES INCLUDE:

DEEPENING POST-RECOVERY SUPPORT

Recovery is the beginning, not the end.

We are expanding capacity to ensure recovered youth receive:

- Consistent advocacy beyond initial crisis response
- Stabilization during medical, legal, and placement transitions
- Long-term coordination that reduces re-exploitation risk

Why this matters:

Without sustained support, recovery moments can become revolving doors.

SCALING PREVENTION THAT WORKS

Prevention must be proactive, relational, and rooted in dignity.

We will continue expanding:

- Family-strengthening initiatives like Mommy & Me High Tea®
- Body autonomy education that empowers rather than alarms
- Community partnerships that build protective factors early

Our goal: futures that never require rescue.

STRENGTHENING SYSTEMS THROUGH TRAINING

Traffickers adapt and so must the professionals on the front lines.

We are increasing:

- Specialized training for law enforcement, healthcare, and child welfare
- Cross-sector collaboration models that improve identification and response
- Trauma-informed practices that reduce harm during intervention

35,000+ professionals trained and counting.

BUILDING SUSTAINABLE CAPACITY

To protect children consistently, we must build an organization that is resilient, staffed, and prepared.

Strategic investments will support:

- Advocate retention and training
- Infrastructure that allows rapid response
- Technology and data systems that improve coordination and accountability

Strong systems protect children when individuals cannot.

Your Role in This Chapter

Every expansion, every safeguard, every trained professional is possible because someone chose to invest; not just emotionally, but tangibly.



You are not supporting a moment.

You are helping write a future where protection is the standard, not the exception.

REDEFINING REFUGE BENEFACTORS 2025

Elanit Aarons-Kravetzky
B.B Abbott
Adewale Adeyemo
Andie Adrian
Ashley & Marty Agard
Tony Aguiar
Shelizbet Aguirre
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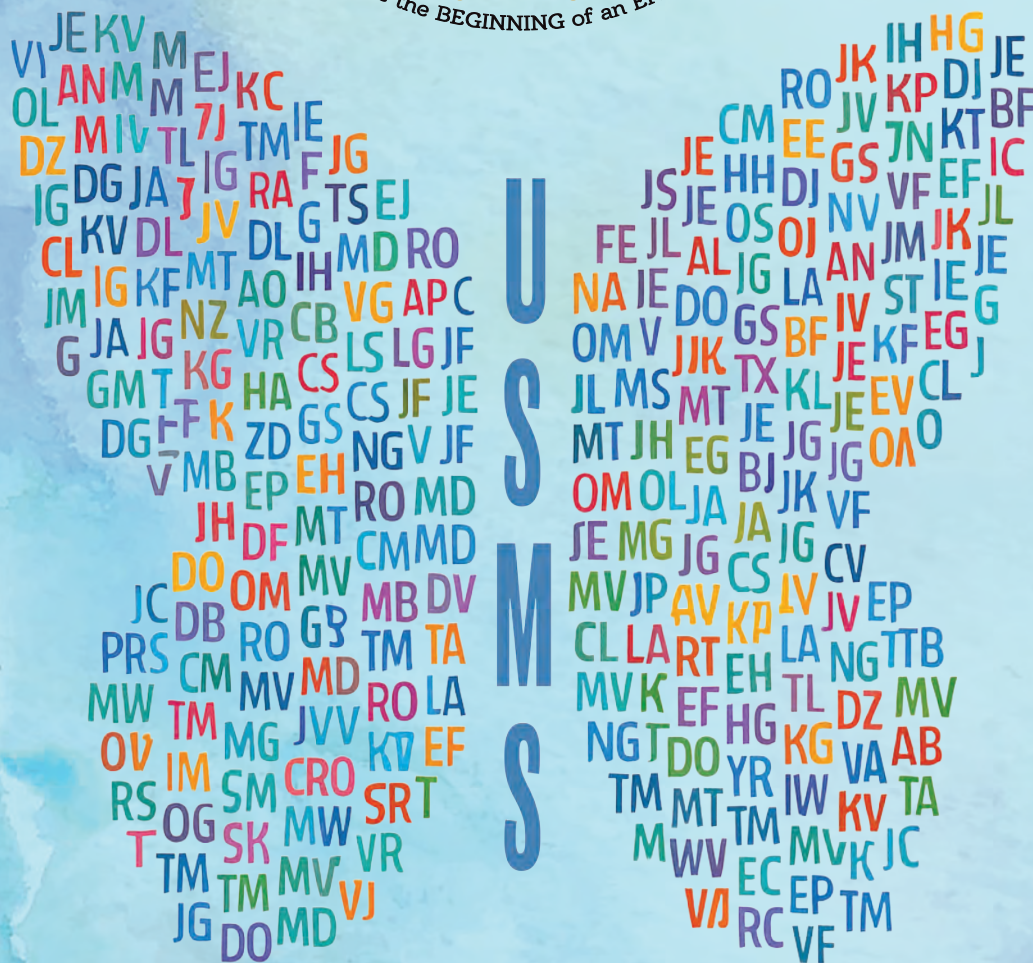
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2025 ANNUAL GRATITUDE & IMPACT REPORT



OPERATION DRAGON EYE 2025