

# 2017 Annual Report



**Elijah Rising is ending sex trafficking and sexual exploitation by equipping a new generation of justice warriors to confront culture through prayer, awareness, intervention, and aftercare in the spirit of Isaiah 1:17.**

# Introduction Letter

**“FOR MANY WEEKS I WAS LIKE ONE LIVING IN A DREAM OF HELL. THE CRIES OF OUTRAGED CHILDREN AND THE SMOTHERED SOBS OF THOSE IMPRISONED IN LIVING TOMBS WERE CONTINUALLY IN MY EARS. I COULD NOT SLEEP. I COULD NOT TAKE MY FOOD. AT TIMES I COULD NOT PRAY; AND IT WAS DURING THE AGONIES OF THAT TIME THAT I RESOLVED THAT NO MATTER WHAT THE CONSEQUENCES MIGHT BE, I WOULD DO ALL I COULD TO STOP THESE ABOMINATIONS.”**

**BRAMWELL BOOTH - “THE LIFE OF CATHERINE BOOTH: MOTHER OF THE SALVATION ARMY,”  
VOLUME 2, PAGE 344**

Dear Friends,

This quote best describes my entry into the anti-trafficking world six years ago. Once I was gripped with the plight of thousands of women and children **in my city** I was completely undone and knew I had to do something, anything. A cry for this wrong to be righted began to grow steadily inside of me.

If you are reading this report you understand this reality well. I write to you today as friends, partners and colleagues who have given of your time, energy, skills and finances to see a city and a generation freed from the tyrannical grip of hypersexualization. In the following pages we will attempt to outline and celebrate the **incredible impact you have made possible this year.**

Abolitionist Donaldina Cameron’s quote from the early 20th century, still rings true today, *“Rescue work, with all that it implies of struggle, victory, and defeat, sorrow of the deepest, joy of the fullest, is difficult to convey what has really taken place, in a way the most vital part of this work is chronicled only in our hearts.”*

Thank you for your partnership and support. Together, we press on for a culture where true justice reigns, justice that rebukes the oppressor, defends the orphan and pleads the case of the widow.

Until all are free!

Micah Gamboa  
**Executive Director**  
Elijah Rising and Kendleton Farms



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**“The fact that an evil exists and has always existed has never been held by society to be a good reason for not combatting it.”**

**JOSEPHINE BUTLER, ABOLITIONIST**

# Overview of 2017

JANUARY  
OIL & GAS INDUSTRY  
TRAINING LAUNCHED

MARCH  
RUNNING WATER  
AT KENDLETON FARMS

APRIL  
LAUNCHED THE ELIJAH  
RISING PODCAST

FEBRUARY  
INTERVENTION  
JUSTICE RALLY

MARCH  
JUSTICE CAMP  
FOR 100 COLLEGE  
STUDENTS

MAY  
LAUNCH PARTY FOR THE  
KENDLETON FARMS BRAND

**JUNE**  
2 KENDLETON FARMS  
RESIDENTS BAPTIZED

**AUGUST**  
KENDLETON FARMS  
BECAME DEBT FREE

**SEPTEMBER**  
KENDLETON FARMS  
ONLINE STORE LAUNCH

**NOVEMBER**  
600 IN ATTENDANCE AT THE  
NIGHT OF FREEDOM GALA

**DECEMBER**  
SOLD OUT OF KENDLETON  
FARMS PRODUCTS

# Prayer



**Learn to do good;  
Seek justice.  
Rebuke the oppressor.  
Defend the fatherless.  
Plead for the widow.**

-

**Isaiah 1:17**



Elijah Rising is eternally grateful to the countless hours of prayer poured out by volunteers across Houston unto the ending of sex-trafficking. We have had the privilege of collaborating with multiple churches and denominations under this one banner: justice for all.

Perhaps nothing exemplified this more beautifully than during the Justice Rally last February. For 4 days, **25 churches and teams** from all over the city and across denominations, came together to cover 64 hours of continual prayer for justice. Teams prayed for interventions to reach consumers, to impact the prostituted and oppressed, and for freedom to spread across the land.

Among the many testimonies we saw the power of that concentrated effort as **one young volunteer got to lead a consumer to the Lord during a phone outreach.**

With deep roots in prayer, Elijah Rising has fought to

maintain this as the foundation of all we do. Without power and revelation from God, all our best efforts will not produce what we are really after, which is freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind and the oppressed set free.

This year we have been honored to participate in or lead over **200 hours of prayer** for this issue. Looking ahead into 2018, we desire to increase not just the hours of prayer but training and equipping so that meetings can be multiplied across the region and beyond.

Thank you for partnering with us, may 2018 be an even greater year for the manifestation of the kingdom of God!

#WHATIFHOUSTON

# Awareness



# Van Tours

Billed as a crash course in human trafficking on wheels, Van Tours continue to be filled with people desiring to get educated about sex trafficking in our city. Our tours are facilitated by an incredible group of Elijah Rising volunteers. Their tireless commitment helps us lead one of the most vital aspects of what Elijah Rising is trying to accomplish by raising awareness of sex trafficking in Houston.

In 2017, Jennifer Madison became our new volunteer Van Tour Coordinator, and she has done a great job coordinating volunteer presenters and drivers as well as working on creating new Van Tour routes for the future. We currently offer Van Tours in Central Houston, Cypress, Katy, and Spring. In 2018 we plan to expand our team of volunteers to meet the continually increasing demand of people wanting to become engaged in ending sex trafficking in our city.

IN 2017  
**1,175** PEOPLE  
EXPERIENCED THE  
REALITY OF  
SEX TRAFFICKING  
THROUGH VAN TOURS

**“I learned more than I could have imagined about sex trafficking and what goes on out in the open, yet unseen, right here in our city.”**

**BOB WICKER, INTERVENTION VOLUNTEER**

# MUSEUM

# Museum of Modern-Day Slavery

The Museum of Modern-Day Slavery is housed in our main office which was once a brothel. Each exhibit is powerful and offers viewers the opportunity to put themselves in the experience of a woman or girl being sold in a Latin-American cantina or Asian massage parlor. The impact of these artifacts sourced from Houston-area raids is undeniably more gut-wrenching than any speaker or brochure could deliver.

However, that sense of shock is then met with testimonies of how God has broken through and has been faithful to His name as a Father, Deliverer, and Redeemer. His power is the only enduring one and is the only hope of rescue for those who remain trapped today.

**Left: recreated room from “Las Palmas” in Houston, TX. This particular club boasted 17 sex rooms upstairs and was trafficking adults as well as minors.**



**Left: The remaining building of Las Palmas was demolished this year. This photo was taken by one of our volunteers that knew some of the women and children trafficked there.**

# Intervention



# Meet Our New Intervention Coordinator

“I took a Houston Van Tour in 2014 and soon realized that Katy suffered the same problem as the rest of the Houston area. Asian Massage Parlors operating in the open with women being sexually exploited on every major street and next to the businesses we all frequented regularly. Soon after, our church took up the challenge of adopting a local massage parlor so we could get to know the women who worked there, building relationships and trust. During our year-long commitment to one local massage parlor, Joanna Jones started the Katy Awareness Van Tours and Interventions, in which I grew more heavily involved in.

In January 2017, I took over the Katy Intervention and Katy Van Tours. Under the guidance and inspiration of the Elijah Rising team I was able to help formalize the intervention process to encourage safe, effective outreach and support the training of new leaders among our volunteers. As the Intervention Coordinator I’m now working to spread these processes beyond Downtown Houston and Katy, and out to the surrounding Houston area as we continue to fight against sexual exploitation and sex trafficking.”

**VANESSA FORBES**  
**INTERVENTION COORDINATOR**



*Vanessa Forbes holds a B.A. in Psychology from Messiah College as well as an MBA from the University of St. Thomas. Working in diverse environments, from children’s mental health to accounting in Oil and Gas, has given Vanessa strengths in organization and procedural management. The Lord’s passion in her heart has driven her not only to reach those enslaved by sexual exploitation but also to work towards shutting down every establishment being used for sexual exploitation in Houston and the surrounding areas.*

# Intervention Stats



863

VOLUNTEERS MOBILIZED TO REACH MEN & WOMEN THROUGH INTERVENTION.



2,150

WOMEN REACHED WITH HOPE THROUGH THE RESCUE HOUSTON HOTLINE NUMBER.



559

SPECIFIC BUSINESSES SUCH AS BROTHELS, CANTINAS, STRIP CLUBS AND HOTELS REACHED BY YOU.

**“When Whitney was given the helpine number, she said she saw it as a sign from God. She’s been thinking of exiting the trade...”**

STRIP CLUB INTERVENTION VOLUNTEER

# Justice Rally

A major highlight this year was the Justice Rally. Abolitionists from all around the world came to be a part of this 3 day intervention intensive. We were able to reach **over 1,000 women** in the commercial sex industry with a message of hope, healing, and restoration. During consumer outreaches we were able to disrupt **787 consumers** from purchasing women. We also saw **41 men** repent of of their actions and 5 salvations.



**185** INTERVENTIONS TOOK PLACE ACROSS THE CITY DURING THE JUSTICE RALLY.





**“I feel like Cinderella and you  
all are my fairy godmother.”**

SURVIVOR IN THE TRADE

BY VANESSA FORBES, INTERVENTION COORDINATOR

It was the Friday before Christmas, the last Fourth Friday Intervention of the year. It was 6pm and while we were preparing to go out to the brothels, cantinas, and Bissonnet street the weather dropped to a freezing temperature in the 30's. The women being prostituted on Bissonnet were completely caught off guard by the drop in temperature and instead of walking their regular posts; many of them were staying warm in their pimps' car while they waited for customers.

As we walked by with our supplies, one of the windows

rolled down and a lady asked us if we had any hand warmers, remembering us from last month's intervention when we handed out handwarmers. Within minutes we had multiple cars rolling down windows asking us for more supplies, and we nearly ran out.

We began talking to two ladies out on the street who were wearing next to nothing, and had only flip flops on their feet. As I spoke with the two ladies I asked them, "could I put some hand warmers in some slippers to keep your feet warm?" She looked at me

and said, "I don't want to ruin my new slippers." **So I grabbed another pair of slippers and got down on my knees, on the dirty cold street, and put hand warmers in slippers and slid them onto her feet.** We then did the same thing for her friend. She then said, "I feel like Cinderella and you all are my fairy godmother." In that moment I realized what truly being a servant looks like. It isn't pretty, it isn't neat, and this isn't a fairytale.

As I put those slippers on I prayed over their feet, and fought to hold back the tears because I knew that the

remainder of the night these ladies will be sold by their pimps to strangers. The need was so great that night that we assembled a small team to go out again the next night to deliver full drawstring bags, of blankets, hand-warmers, and slippers.

There is a myth deeply entrenched in our society that we must rescue the sex trafficked yet the woman being prostituted does not need help because she is doing it by choice. I realized that regardless of the reason these women are there, we need to do something.



# Kendleton Farms



# Kendleton Farms

Purchased in 2015, Kendleton Farms was the product of a grand vision made possible by you! **The vision is simple: create a place where those who have survived sexual exploitation could live, heal, work and begin to rebuild their lives.** The property we purchased was incredible—10 buildings complete with single-family residences, dormitory spaces, and more. Vision spurred us on as hundreds of volunteers joined us in a massive, two-year campaign to restore the dilapidated structures. Week after week you gave up your weekends and your skills to bring new life to this property.

Slowly things began to take shape. Leaks were patched, fences built and mended, and shells of buildings were transformed into welcoming homes, all because of your tireless efforts.

Now that season is coming to a close, together we have almost completely renovated 6 residential homes, built a 2,000 sq. ft. garden, laid new water pipes to multiple buildings, and more!

This remarkable progress has been made possible by volunteers and donors like you. By leaning heavily on volunteer labor and donated materials we estimate we were able to save tens of thousands of valuable dollars in estimated renovation costs.

Now these spaces will be able to be utilized solely for survivors and their caregivers. The main goal of 2018 is to be able to officially open the doors of Kendleton Farms and utilize the multiple bedrooms to their fullest potential.

Not only were the living spaces renovated but Kendleton Farms Market was launched as a way to provide jobs for our current residents. We are thrilled to announce that the Market sold out completely over the Christmas holiday!

Thank you for every weekend spent, and every wall painted, and most of all for your unwavering dedication to see a safe and beautiful place for survivors created.



# NEW BEGINNINGS AT KENDLETON FARMS

Having entered into the world of aftercare with the purchase of Kendleton Farms, we have discovered an even deeper admiration for the woman who chooses to leave her life of exploitation. The complexities which bind a woman in prostitution are numerous and profound. Often, both her need for survival and her emotional connection to her trafficker are manipulated to ensure that she hovers between feelings of terror and a twisted sense of romantic love, thus further disconnecting her from any healthy and meaningful connections.

This was the case with Tracy\*, one of the survivors Kendleton Farms welcomed during 2017. Tracy came to us on an

emergency basis after being discovered by HPD during a sting. When discovered, she was **8 months pregnant yet still being exploited** by her “boyfriend.” Strong emotional ties to her trafficker and a dependency on him for survival kept Tracy in a position to continue to be exploited despite the horrific situation.

Sex trafficking has so many faces and does not discriminate. Oppressors will utilize all means necessary to entrap the vulnerable while the drive for money, sex, and power from the buyers overrules all decent objections and reasoning.

Although Kendleton Farms

was not officially open we were honored to be considered by law enforcement to host, for a short time, this sweet young woman. During her stay with us, she was able to rest, recuperate, and within a few weeks give birth to a healthy child.

Although the transition was a hard one for her, to be torn from the person she, in a twisted way, believed “loved her”, we watched as she navigated the effects of trauma with courage and grace. In time, she and her baby **were able to transition safely back home to her extended family.**

Kendleton Farms is a place for those who are broken and have

been exploited to find rest. It’s a place where a new normal can be discovered, where we pray the gentleness of healthy connections and a caring community can be discovered by the women we serve.

Without your help through countless volunteer hours building fences, painting, completing renovations, and more, we would not have been able to house any women at the farm this past year.

Thank you for helping create a safe place for women and their children. Here’s to 2018 and the exponential expansion of Kendleton Farms services!

**“I feel very blessed to be here today and to be alive and able to heal because most girls don’t get to do that.”**

**SURVIVOR, KENDLETON FARMS**



**“I learn a lot about God while working in the garden. He takes away the dead parts by pruning us, and it is painful. But no matter what God prunes, He always revives. And even though the dead parts are a part of our story it is no longer you.”**

**SURVIVOR, KENDLETON FARMS**



# Social Enterprise

This year we launched the Kendleton Farms online store, our very first social enterprise. We have a variety of hand-built goods ranging from candles & soaps, to leather goods. All products are made by survivors of sex trafficking.

The survivors that run the workshop enjoy the farm and their jobs, but at the end of the day, they are still in an incredible transition from one life to another. We make amazing goods, but they are made with the belief that **people come before profits**. We have spent time together in tears, and in celebration. We all know that what we are doing is so much more than pouring candles and making soap. Every woman who works with us knows that she is not going to pour soaps forever.

Instead, our job is the beginning of economic support for the women who are building out new lives, new dreams, and a decent savings account. We are not nearly at the finish line, but every box we send out is the best reminder that we are headed there.

You can buy our products online at **kendletonfarms.com** or at the Kendleton Farms Market at our main office.

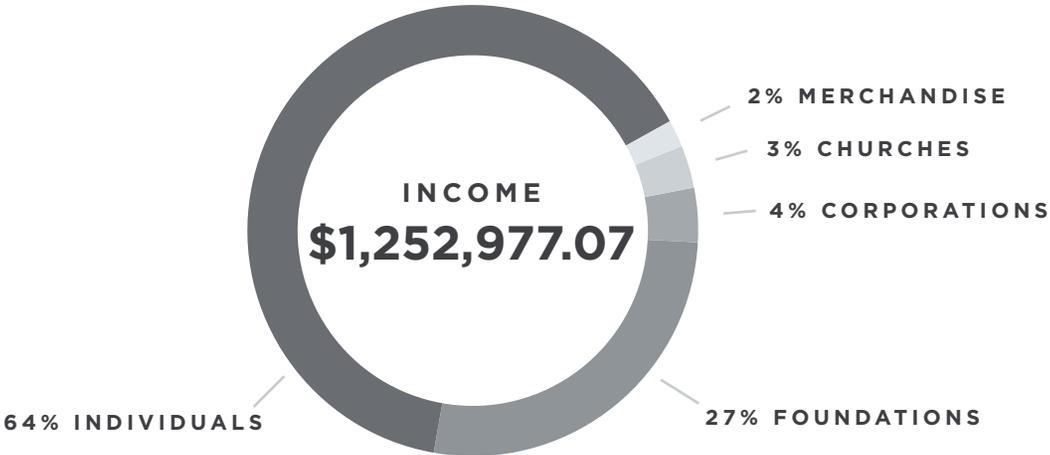
**SAM HERNANDEZ**  
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE DIRECTOR

# Financials



# Overview of 2017

2017 was a year of monumental milestones in the history of Elijah Rising that can only be a testament to the goodness of God. Elijah Rising is blessed beyond measure and we want to be an even bigger blessing in the lives of those who have fought for survival in one of the world's most deadliest industries.



**PROGRAMS**

**55.6%**

**OPERATIONS**

**26.7%**

**FUNDRAISING**

**17.7%**

# Letter from the Board of Directors

Dear Friends,

Elijah Rising turned five years old in 2017 – and what a year it was! As an organization, we grew and stretched in ways thought humanly impossible, and doors of opportunity we never even knew existed began to swing wide open for us.

Most notable were the Super Bowl Justice Rally, launch of Kendleton Farms' online store and our first ever gala, which raised over \$260,000! The outpouring of love and support has been astounding and humbling. We are eternally grateful for such solid and faithful partners in this fight against sex trafficking and sexual exploitation.

In 2018, our focus is on refining and revamping our operations to maximize the organization's effectiveness and to produce even more results, which look like victims rescued and freed, traffickers (and their enablers) held accountable, and survivors made whole.

As society around us awakens to the gross, pervasive sexual abuse of women and girls, we dig our heels deeper into this fight, especially for those whose voices have been utterly muted, but whose bodies are sold every day as cheap commodities.

Lastly, I encourage you in this: do not lose heart in this fight. Remind yourself why you joined; renew your passion for justice. And see the soon-coming day when every woman, every child is free. It is an honor to fight, and to continue fighting, sex trafficking and sexual exploitation alongside you.

For the ending of sex trafficking,

**AUDREY MANITO**  
**CHAIRMAN**  
**ELIJAH RISING**



ELIJHRISING.ORG