

# THE HARBOURAGE [safehouses for trafficked victims]

## > the issue at hand <

**Human trafficking** is a worldwide epidemic that exploits men, women and children for various services. As most of the general public is familiar with in some shape or form this degradation of human life, few are familiar with its existence within the United States. Not under lack of concern, but under a lack of awareness. The reality is that every year, nearly 50,000 women and children are brought into the United States for **sexual exploitation** and over

100,000 U.S. women and children are sold for sexual services within the United States every year. 50% of these victims are under the age of 18, including boys and girls as young as 4 years old. (CIA & USDOJ) Fortunately, there are organizations, both private and federal, that are constantly working to rescue those involved and arrest those responsible; however this is just the first step. The women and children that are rescued under the age 18 are placed

into foster care. Those who are too old, are simply released. **This is the real tragedy** because no rehabilitation takes place and rarely are foster homes prepared to give these victims the attention they need. **The care for these victims should be a lifelong commitment.** Organizations need to take responsibility for the lives of these women and children in order to give them the specific care and attention they need.

## > the safehouse <

[The Harbourage] is a safehouse located outside Gainesville, FL that takes in (nondiscriminatory) victims of sexual trafficking. At these safehouses, the residents will learn to operate as a family unit consisting of six to eight persons per household with one or two house parents. They will be counseled, taught, and ultimately reintroduced to a stable life through a safehouse that holds no age bias and places no limit on the duration of stay. All are treated on an individual rehabilitative basis and all are given an equal opportunity to live in peace.

## > the site <

The site is located just outside the city of [High Springs, Florida]. In such a rural area, the design of the site heavily relies on seclusion as a means of security. However it is still very important for those staying at the safehouses to be very active in the city and local community. Fortunately, the city of High Springs, although small, has a very strong and meaningful voice. With barely even 4,000 citizens within the city limits, this town is full of citizens that have a voice and genuinely care. Not only does this city have weekly events and markets, but it operates in conjunction with the activities taking place in Gainesville, a larger city only 30 minutes south. With such a strong local culture, the integration of the residents at the Harbourage will be seamless.

## > the rehabilitation <

[through nature] The severity of abuse in each victim of sexual trafficking varies, but the bottom line is that each boy, girl, man, or woman has spent a significant amount of time trying find consistency. This lack of consistency will lead to significant emotional, interpersonal, and spiritual stress. The beautiful thing about Nature is that it gives back what is put into it. A flower blooms when it is watered, this is constant. Therefore when a child or young adult has the opportunity to take responsibility in Nature, he or she will reap what is sown.

[through pure living] In a world where the last thing that these adolescents are exposed to is pure, it is very important to employ simple, natural and sustainable ideas that bring about pure living. Connecting with natural function builds upon ones innate ability to operate simply and efficiently. Humans need this connection in order foster creativity and productivity. So commonly are children separated from nature and consequently cannot appreciate the things they are given, the food that they eat, or the environment they live in. At the Harbourage, each resident is required to take responsibility in the day to day functions of the house and be involved in every aspect of a sustainable life.

[through fidelity] The essence of trafficking is rooted in deception and altering one's concept of reality. It creates a world that is inconsistent and intrusive. Therefore the goal is to design spaces that allows its user to imprint and form a strong relationship with his or her built environment. The spaces are meant to be very tangible and adherent to a connection to the surrounding environment.

No matter what the situation, people need to find truth. Whether religious or not, the one thing that is true is the world around us. Life is difficult enough and the last thing that someone needs is an environment that discourages contemplation. Nature is a constant truth that bridges all beliefs. With this element in the architecture, a strong foundation is laid for answering life's biggest questions.