

2021 UPDATE

May of 2021 marked 10 years since Awaken began transforming lives in our community, working to eradicate commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking. Since the organizational launch in May of 2011, Awaken has reached more than 700 women and children in the Northern Nevada community, helping them regain their freedom and dignity.

With gratitude, we look back over the past 10 years and acknowledge the incredible support this community has provided to Awaken and the women and children that we serve.



2021 PROGRAM MILESTONES

- In 2021, Awaken assisted 113 courageous women and 64 teens who had been trafficked, step into new lives of their choice. Awaken provided effective and impactful programming to women and children including emotional support, therapy, safe housing, educational opportunities, a drop-in center, and social and community building programs.
- Awaken's goal is to build trusting and lasting relationships with individuals who are "in the life" or seeking to leave their current situation. The survivor led Drop-in Center often serves as the entry point of services for victims, as a safe place to seek services on their own terms.
- During 2021, we were able to increase to a staff of three dedicated Survivor Advocates. The increased staff enabled Awaken to increase the drop-in days and hours from three half days a week to five full days a week. These Survivor Advocates are passionate and committed to the process of walking alongside victims as they reclaim and rebuild their lives.
- Awaken celebrated three years of offering safe housing through our Awaken Housing Program. In 2021, eight women were able to live in the Awaken House for a collective total of 734 nights where they could sleep safe and secure in a place of rest and healing. During their stay, they received educational and job training opportunities and the time and support needed to recover from past trauma.





- We completed our first school year at the Awaken Education Center (AEC), offering educational support for local teens who have been trafficked. Awaken joyfully celebrated one participant who graduated from her senior year of high school through the AEC. She offered to share her testimony of how she went from victim to survivor to thriver:



“ I was failing nearly every single class except for Freshman Seminar. The longer I stayed out on the streets the harder it was becoming for me to want to go home. One time when I did make it back, my mother made me go to the doctors and that’s when they called Awaken. Awaken really saved me from a terrible road I was headed down and I’m so glad they did because without them I have no idea where I would be today.

But thankfully to them I finished school early, I was accepted into college, no longer living that life anymore. I am able to say my mother is proud of me. Who I am today is because of Awaken, my mom and my choices but mostly Awaken and my mom. If you would have told me as a freshman, I am who I am today, I would have laughed in your face. NEVER did I think I would be here today. I am now going to college to become a nurse and I know now that I am capable of a lot more than I think. Now if you don’t take anything from this, N.R Narayana Murthy once said *“Growth is painful. Change is painful. But nothing is as painful as staying stuck where you do not belong.”* ”

Every woman and child who enters the doors at Awaken is at a different place in their life. Each of them has a unique history and experience that has led them to seek a new path.

Thank you to our community, our donors, and our survivors, for standing with us for 10 years as we collectively embrace new choices and different paths. Thank you for engaging in improving the lives of others and for supporting our efforts to give back and strengthen our community by elevating those who have the courage to leave the sex trade in Nevada, and to live and pursue a life of freedom and joy.

Sincerely,

Melissa Holland and Jen Robinson
Co-Founders, Awaken

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