

CONSTRUCTION FOREMAN

Who You Are Matters: Combating Trafficking Every Day

Sam is a construction foreman who recently learned about the issue of human trafficking and is looking at how he can engage. He is excited to share about the issue with the people he knows, but he wants to DO more.

At a local event, Sam learned that his community has two residential programs for human trafficking survivors. A home for adult women is currently open, and a residential program for youth is in the planning stages.

He learns that the home for youth is looking to be connected to contractors, surveyors, and architects. They also would like to brainstorm with someone about what is possible when building. Sam sets up a meeting to talk with them about his experience in building, timelines, companies that often donate to nonprofits, people he would recommend they connect with, and understanding the construction process. Based on what they need and are interested in, he is able to provide introductions and information that will help them as they plan to build.

Sam then meets with the residential program that is currently operating and serving adults. He learns that they need some repairs and upgrades. Sam and his network can meet with the program directors and custom design these enhancements, get the materials donated, or donate the labor to make them.

Sam has also learned how often construction workers can be exploited in labor trafficking. Understanding the importance of fair wages and safety conditions will help him to identify any situations that are suspicious. He shares about this with his employer and coworkers so they can be aware of what to look for in their field and how to report suspicions of trafficking.

Sam has learned that his specific skill and talent were needed right in his own community by those serving survivors. Before learning about the needs of his community, Sam thought that because he was a male and because he was not specially trained that there was nothing he could do to serve the needs of rescued women and girls. He was also unaware of the pervasiveness of labor trafficking in the USA. Now, by simply enhancing his knowledge about his community's needs, Sam is equipped to make a difference right where he is every day.

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Human trafficking occurs on construction sites, in residences, and in businesses across the country. Construction foremen, builders, and property owners are in a unique position to identify labor trafficking and to identify locations where exploitation may be occurring (empty buildings, developing areas, etc.). Additionally, the needs of residential programs, anti-trafficking organizations, and service providers are growing daily. These programs benefit greatly from the expertise and services of building professionals.

As a professional, you can make a big difference with simple adjustments to what you are already doing every day! Consider the following:

- Learn how to identify labor trafficking on job sites and what types of labor trafficking are common in your community. Explore what the US Dept. of Labor (www.dol.gov) and the International Labor Organization (www.ilo.org) publish each year about human trafficking.
- Program the National Human Trafficking Hotline (888-373-7888) into your personal and work mobile devices, and bookmark www.humantraffickinghotline.org so that you can quickly and anonymously report any suspicious activity you see.
- Ensure that the contractors and sub-contractors on your worksite are paid fair wages.
- Research, to the best of your ability, the labor in your supply chain and make your purchases from trusted manufacturers.
- Connect with service providers and those who desire to open residential and nonresidential programs for trafficking survivors, and consider how you or your company can support their efforts with in-kind donations, services, consultation, or financial gifts.

When we engage together, miracles happen. Eradicating human trafficking will not be an easy task, but the steps to engaging the fight are simple. For more information about combating human trafficking and protecting vulnerable populations as a business, individual, or organization, visit www.engagetogether.com.