



UNBOUND
WACO

Unbound Media Kit

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Not in My City: Unbound Waco Fights Against Human Trafficking

WACO, Texas, Jan. 1, 2021 – January is National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. Human trafficking is the fastest growing criminal industry in the world, with more than 40 million victims worldwide. Human trafficking happens when a person is forced, tricked or manipulated into providing labor or sexual service for someone else’s financial gain.

Traffickers often target and exploit the vulnerabilities of their victims. Common vulnerabilities include age, socioeconomic status, immigration status, lack of support system, previous abuse, trauma and homelessness. These are common themes, but anyone can be a victim.

“When you get into it, it’s just so different than what media portrays it as,” Unbound Waco Director of Programs Allison Denman said. “It’s usually this really seductive, kind of alluring lifestyle that twists into something much darker.”

Traffickers deceive their victims with promises of love, a better life, a job, protection or whatever needs and desires they have. Often, victims don’t recognize what’s happening, or that help is available.

“I think that’s just like the most impactful, meaningful part, is when you get to feel like you’re intercepting them at a moment in time and they are in this fork in the road and if they would believe you, like if they would just believe in what you’re saying, it could change their life forever,” Denman said.

Community members can get involved in being part of the solution by [learning](#) about human trafficking and how to fight it, [serving](#) by contributing time and skills or [giving](#) through donations to meet tangible needs.

“I think it’s an honor to be able to worry about it,” Denman said. “It encourages me that I know someone is caring about them.”

Unbound Waco is committed to the fight against human trafficking in our community. For more information, resources or help visit Unbound’s [website](#).

About Unbound

Unbound Waco supports survivors and resources our community to fight human trafficking. We envision a future where our community is free from human trafficking. We are hope-driven, service-oriented and excellence-focused. Unbound was launched in 2012 out of Antioch Community Church in Waco, Texas when a group of church members witnessed local exploitation. Unbound Waco was founded as the first Unbound location to address this injustice.

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Unbound Op-Ed for The Lariat

How can we take ownership of what happens in our city?

People often believe that human trafficking doesn't occur in their community. This is a myth. Human trafficking happens here. Even Waco.

There are approximately 313,000 victims of human trafficking in Texas and approximately 79,000 minor and youth victims of sex trafficking according to a [report](#) by The Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault at The University of Texas at Austin.

Waco is in the middle of the "Texas Triangle." This refers to the major interstates that cross Texas and connect Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio to the rest of the country. The [Texas Triangle](#) is considered one of the most heavily trafficked regions in the United States.

So, what are we doing about it?

Unbound Waco is an anti-human trafficking nonprofit organization in Waco that fights against the exploitation and coercion through labor or sexual service of victims for someone else's financial gain.

This exploitation and manipulation of vulnerable populations is not acceptable. As college students, many of us can give our time more freely than in other stages of life. Let's do our part and be a strong, active voice for those who do not have a voice.

Unbound Advocate Maddie Swarbrick says "finding your lane" is the best way to serve Unbound and fight against human trafficking.

"You don't have to jump into every single aspect," Swarbrick said. "Like we have people who, their way of supporting us, is donating items from their own personal small business. Like that is how they are supporting us."

Just think what could be accomplished if every Baylor student entered the fight against human trafficking. What if, instead of being unaware, we were educated community members who watched out for the good of others. Reporting situations, speaking up and taking care of our social workers by supporting them.

"Supporting people who are fighting the cause is also fighting the cause," Swarbrick said.

As a united Baylor community, we could have boundless impact on the very real lives of others who live a block away from us if we simply take ownership.

Waco is our home now. We live here most of the year, go to all the coffee shops and restaurants and drive the streets every day. Let's be active community members.

Let's do our part and link arms with Unbound Waco.

Let's be the forerunners in activating our community to identify and report trafficking. We need to educate ourselves and be active members of this community. We shouldn't passively love people or stand on the sidelines watching when peoples' lives are being turned upside down by the unjust actions of others.

"I think investing in people's lives authentically is emotionally heavy, no matter where you go," Allison Denman, Unbound Waco Programs Director, said. "So, I think that it's definitely a choice to live with that and to carry it with someone but, that understanding of faith and having that source of hope outside of the work is essential."

Unbound Waco recently released their online [store](#). The catalogue has a canvas tote, stickers, t-shirts, hats and more. While simple, these items carry a logo, and with it a purpose. Just a sticker or a t-shirt may have no extraneous meaning to you, but it represents something completely invaluable to someone else.

We can help our local anti-human trafficking agency through purchasing items from the shop, investing our time and attention to social workers to let them know we support them, learning about human trafficking, giving and offering our time and skills through volunteer work.

"We do say awareness saves lives," Denman said. "But awareness only saves lives if there's action involved afterwards, if it changes the way that you live."

Instagram Post Content

Below are photos for Instagram. These pieces were created to showcase the methods traffickers use to target victims on social media.

The design makes use of the look and format of direct messaging on Instagram. All four photos would be posted together and in the same order as they appear here. A warning is given, followed by a conversation sample and two tips for online communication. The purpose of these communication pieces is to show individuals on social media how social media is used in the baiting tactics of traffickers.

Warning: The next photo contains an example of messaging tactics a trafficker could use to target a victim on Instagram.



Hey, cutie! You are gorgeous! :)

Do you want to be one of our specially-picked brand ambassadors? Would love to collab with you! You would get 50% off our merchandise and free jewelry and clothes!! Let me know, sweetie!

Awe thank you! That sounds super cool! :) Can you tell me more about the brand ambassador program?

All you would need to do is send a photo of yourself and give us some info so we can send you your free clothes and jewelry!

Okay, well let me think about it and I'll get back to you!

Tip No. 1:

Never respond to
messages online
from people you
don't know.

Tip No. 2:

Never give out information online and never accept jobs offered to you on social media.