

LIFEWAY NETWORK



2023 IMPACT REPORT

“LifeWay keeps me grounded and plants me where I want to make tiny steps to nourish myself.”

LIFEWAY SAFE HOUSE RESIDENT



MISSION

LifeWay Network joins the global movement against human trafficking by providing safe housing for women who have been trafficked and offering education about trafficking to the general public.

VISION

LifeWay Network envisions a world in which human trafficking is abolished and every survivor is strong, connected and free.

Founded in 2007 by Sister Joan Dawber, LifeWay Network is a 501(c)3 registered in New York State.

[LifeWayNetwork.org](https://www.lifewaynetwork.org)



Dear Friends of LifeWay Network,

This work that we do — the staff, the board, you, and most assuredly the survivors who call LifeWay home — requires resilience. And the LifeWay community is resilient.

We've forged ahead after a global pandemic and then a year of transitions within, emerging on the other side more committed than ever to overcoming trafficking. Whether as educators, fundraisers, social workers, volunteers, leaders, board members, communicators, in-house staff, donors or survivors, we've flexed our resiliency and become stronger and more committed.

This look back at 2023 reminds us of the powerful, positive impact we've collectively made. The team here at LifeWay feels so grateful for each of you for your solidarity, trust and support. And we can most assuredly look forward to a future in which this crime of indignity, injustice and exploitation is further diminished — more potential instances are averted with education, and more survivors are secure with safe housing — thanks to the individual efforts of each of you within our growing, thriving community.

Let's celebrate this progress as we lay the foundation for effective and efficient work fortified by resilience and served with love.

With abiding gratitude and optimism,

THE LIFEWAY TEAM



IN 2023

During Human Trafficking Prevention Month in January, we explored the ways LifeWay Network's safe housing program supports survivors during a virtual Lunch & Learn, "Where Everybody Needs a Sense of Home."

Westchester News 12 turned the spotlight on LifeWay in January when senior investigative reporter Tara Rosenblum spoke with survivor Hilda Chabuka about her labor trafficking experience, her time in our safe housing program and her life today as a chef.



In February LifeWay hosted a virtual screening and discussion for the groundbreaking documentary *Surviving Sex Trafficking*, which examines the ongoing struggles of survivors as they seek to break free of their past, heal their bodies and minds and reconnect with a world of hope.

LifeWay Network hosted a webinar, led by Director of Education and Advocacy Josephine Crisostomo in partnership with LifeWay safe house hosts Sister Kate and Sister Claudia, for the Sisters of Charity — New York. We discussed the realities of human trafficking, and Sr. Kate and Sr. Claudia shared their perspective as religious sisters providing support to survivors within the safe houses.



During their time at LifeWay Network's two safe houses (where they can live for as long as a year), women survivors work with social workers, who connect them to programs and assistance for learning English, getting an education, seeking citizenship, securing health care, finding work, pursuing justice and looking for a safe and secure home.

They can participate in workshops with staff and volunteers such as yoga, art therapy, journaling and financial management and budgeting.

Residents also enjoy community through weekly dinners, during which you might find safe house staff, our social workers, in-home hosts and members of the leadership team gathered around the table sharing a meal and conversation. Sometimes dinner will reflect the culture of a woman living in the home, a chance to reclaim a piece of her history and share it with others.



ETNL

At the 2023 Event Towards New Life, LifeWay Network honored Queens County District Attorney Melinda Katz, the first district attorney in New York City and State to create a dedicated Human Trafficking Bureau to combat sex and labor trafficking in our communities. We also honored Queens Assistant District Attorney Jessica Melton, who was awarded the Thomas E. Dewey medal by the New York City Bar Association for her work in combating human trafficking and who is chief of the Human Trafficking Bureau of the Queens County District Attorney's Office.



We were privileged to hear from a survivor whose American dream quickly turned to a nightmare, thanks to a labor trafficking situation, yet who went on to independence and a new career.



In March, Laraib moved out of our safe housing program. A native of Pakistan, Laraib was a survivor of labor trafficking. With a T visa and support from LifeWay's empowerment programs, Laraib was able to gain full-time employment to support her transition from LifeWay. Thanks to your kindness, that included:

- More than 18 months of safe and secure housing
- A Dress for Success Closet that provides dignified clothing to survivors
- In-house supportive counseling to address complex trauma
- A community of advocates and peers who supported her journey
- Agency to decide how she used her time
- Job readiness, resume-building and interview skills workshops



We were grateful for the support of social work interns Tyler Schultz, a master's student at Fordham University's Graduate School of Social Service, and Sharon Lewis, also a master's student at Fordham University, during the spring.

In June we hosted a virtual Lunch & Learn for those providing direct support services to survivors and the community at large, including case managers, health professionals, counselors, therapists, safe house managers and directors.

August brought a lively group for a lovely evening at our Tarrytown office, where we hosted a Summer Sip and Paint on August 31. Art supplies, wine and light bites were included, and the group learned more about what LifeWay Network is all about.



LifeWay Network again earned a badge from Great Nonprofits, a website that allows users to review and rate charitable organizations, and to help others find trustworthy nonprofits. Thank you so much to all who submitted your testimonials to help us secure a 2023 badge!



We were delighted to be joined for a luncheon at our Tarrytown offices in February by some of the religious sisters whose deep support helps LifeWay to flourish.





LifeWay's Director of Education Josephine Crisostomo attended the 23rd Annual Gladys Ricart & Victims of Domestic Violence Memorial Walk / Bride's March in September. This annual event began in New York City in 2001 to remember Gladys Ricart, a Dominican woman from Washington Heights who was murdered in New Jersey on September 26, 1999, by her abusive former boyfriend on the day she was to wed her fiancé.

Vulnerable women are frequent targets of human traffickers, and trafficking victims are frequently subjected to abuse. Human trafficking and domestic violence both rely on a skewed power dynamic maintained through some combination of physical, emotional, psychological, sexual and economic abuse, as well as isolation. At LifeWay, we seek to address a survivor's whole life dynamic.



We had fun in the fall with a booth at Oktoberfest at Captain Lawrence Brewing. It was a great opportunity to spread the word and engage new audiences in the fight against trafficking.



LifeWay Director of Education Josephine Crisostomo and Fundraising Manager Chloe Kastner attended the Nonprofit Westchester event to meet members of the local community.

LifeWay hosted a booth at the 11th Annual Miss Abbie's Halloween Health/Wellness Fair & Block Event to spread awareness of our safe housing program to the Bronx community.

Lynn Shaw, founder of Lynns Warriors, hosted LifeWay Education Director Josephine Crisostomo on her far-reaching and powerful show to discuss trafficking.



Beatrice Johnson, LifeWay Network's high school volunteer from Convent of the Sacred Heart, organized a clothing drive on behalf of the survivors of human trafficking whom LifeWay serves.



The Japanese art of Kintsugi goes beyond joining pottery with gold. It's a philosophy of embracing human flaws and creating something even more beautiful out of the brokenness. Members of our community gathered in December to learn this heartfelt practice at our Winter Soiree.



Nicky Hilton Rothschild and Stacey Bendet from Alice + Olivia brought extra holiday cheer when they donated a custom Christmas tree to one of LifeWay's safe houses and bought gifts for the residents.



BEHIND THE SCENES

Sabrina Zottoli, Social Worker

Sabrina is a dedicated social worker with seven years of experience advocating for and supporting survivors of human trafficking. Deeply committed to trauma-informed care, Sabrina works tirelessly to empower individuals who have endured exploitation and abuse, helping them navigate the journey of recovery and reintegration.

Sabrina provides comprehensive case management services, connecting survivors with resources such as housing, legal assistance, counseling and healthcare. Through individualized care plans, they help clients rebuild their lives, focusing on healing, safety and long-term stability. They collaborate with law enforcement, nonprofits, and other service providers to create a coordinated response to trafficking that prioritizes survivor autonomy and dignity.

Sabrina is also passionate about working in HIV prevention, dedicated to promoting education, awareness and access to care for those at risk.

Giving to nonprofits across the country took a sharp turn in recent years, and LifeWay was not immune.

To better understand, we gleaned some insights from a September 2024 report by The Generosity Commission titled “Everyday Actions, Extraordinary Potential: The Power of Giving and Volunteering. Research and Recommendations for the Future of Generosity”:

In 2022, the total amount raised in the United States represented a decline of 8.4 percent from the year before in inflation-adjusted dollars; in 2023, total giving fell by another 2.1 percent, according to the latest accounting from Giving USA.

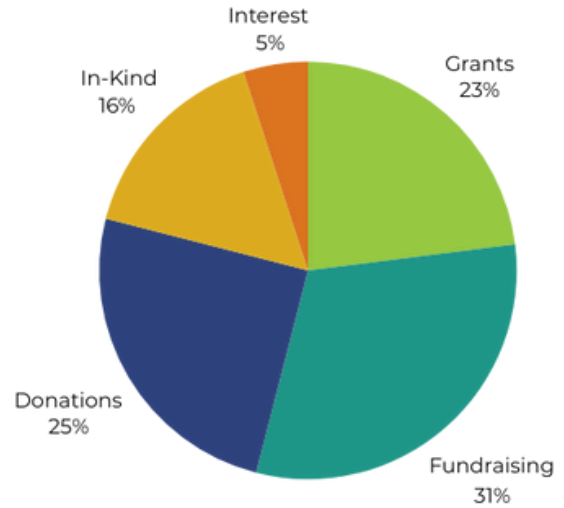
According to the Philanthropy Panel Study, the philanthropy module of the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, “the only existing longitudinal dataset on philanthropy based on a nationally representative sample of U.S. households,” the share of U.S. households reporting donating to nonprofit organizations fell from 65.4 percent in 2008 to 53 percent in 2016. Then, in 2018, the latest year for which we have figures, the proportion dropped below 50 percent for the first time, to 49.6 percent.

Over the last several decades, existing data suggests that the share of Americans who report volunteering with nonprofit organizations also declined. The rate of volunteerism, as measured by the Current Population Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, reached a 15-year low in 2015.

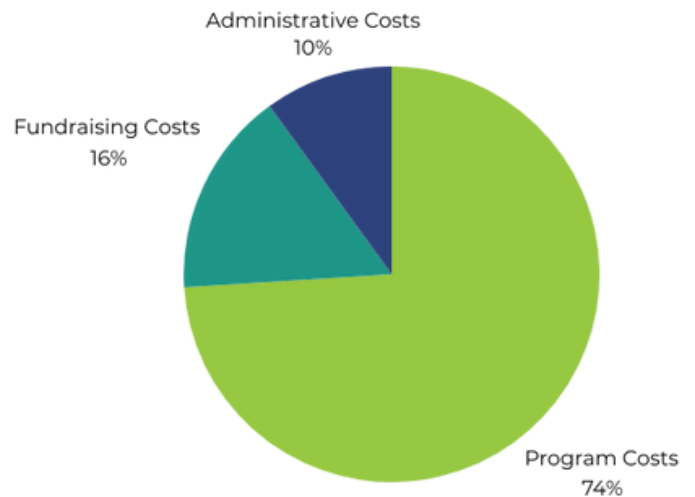
We’re optimistic that LifeWay will emerge from this period stronger; indeed, things are already on the upswing, thanks to you, our community. We’re grateful for your steady support of this hard work to prevent human trafficking and support survivors.

2023

INCOME



EXPENSES



LifeWay's safe house residents can truly enjoy a sense of home as they heal and prepare for life ahead. They read, study, bake cookies, garden, play games, watch movies and enjoy occasional planned outings organized by LifeWay Network.



“These women are smart, talented, creative people with dreams and bright futures. LifeWay is firmly committed to supporting this restorative work, and I am grateful for the privilege to be a volunteer in this effort.”

—2023 LifeWay Volunteer of the Year
Marianne Lannig



“I was able to pursue my passion mostly because I had that peace of mind of having a safe place to live, food on the table and a supportive community who was encouraging and believed in me. I experienced the kind of empathy that you don't see anywhere else. Living together was something different and special.”
—2023 LifeWay graduate

“LifeWay became my first and only family in the U.S. It only grew and strengthened over time. I used to stay at home most of the time while I was waiting for my documents, and cooking was my favorite. Every time I cooked a meal, it was well received and appreciated. That made me very proud of myself and my cooking skills as a way of restoring my confidence and gathering the courage back to stand up tall and be an advocate for myself.”
—2023 LifeWay safe house resident



SUPPORT

- Shop our Amazon Wish List: See <https://bit.ly/LifeWayWishList>
- Volunteer. Email contact@lifewaynetwork.org.
- Like, comment on and share our social media at Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Threads.
- Host a Meet and Greet to help grow our network. Email development@lifewaynetwork.org.
- Host an educational presentation for your school, group or organization. Write to education@lifewaynetwork.org.
- Donate. Give at [LifeWayNetwork.org](https://www.lifewaynetwork.org).

THANK YOU

You change lives. It's that simple.

LifeWay Network is more than a nonprofit. It's more than an office, more than safe houses, more than this annual report. It's you, the community.

You are the ones who show up and help out at the events and fundraisers, in the safe houses and the office. You are the ones who share your time and ideas so that the organization can constantly improve. You are the ones who give so generously to put a roof over survivors' heads, food on the table and hope in their hearts.

With this, you create opportunities for a different future for women who have survived trauma. For a life of independence. Freedom. From the staff of LifeWay Network, thank you for all you do. You inspire us.



ENDING HUMAN TRAFFICKING.
RECLAIMING LIFE.

LifeWay Network 2023 Impact Report



BEHIND THE SCENES

Julianne Will, Marketing and Communications Specialist

I've worked part time for LifeWay since March 2022. My responsibilities have included social media, PR, the website, blogs, fundraising, education, event support and a lot of other writing and design, including this impact report.

One of my abiding goals is to make life on earth as close to life in heaven as it can possibly be. (Current inspiration: *Mountains Beyond Mountains* by Tracy Kidder.) So while I enjoy and take pride in the work that I do for my freelance clients, my role at LifeWay brings me fulfillment. I feel incredibly fortunate to do something this meaningful.

SAVE THE DATE

- May 19, 2025: Charity Golf Tournament
- June 5, 2025: Event Towards New Life