



Immediate Release

Michigan Abolitionist Project joins Vista Maria

Enabling further education, engagement and eradication of human trafficking in Michigan and beyond

(Dearborn Heights, MI) - Human trafficking is one of the fastest growing crimes in the world and in our own state. Attorney General Dana Nessel, early this March testified before the House Judiciary Committee in support of 26 human trafficking bills recommended by the Michigan Human Trafficking Commission. "The very tactics a trafficker uses to exploit a victim's vulnerability also keep a victim from reporting. Often, victim reports are the best evidence against a trafficker." The local agencies of Vista Maria and the local Michigan Abolitionist Project are stronger in the fight against anti-trafficking by joining leadership and forces.

By combining two of Michigan's leading human trafficking programs, Vista Maria and the Michigan Abolitionist Project are better positioned to improve awareness, advocacy and services to combat human trafficking. "Vista Maria's expertise has been in the area of innovative treatment and services for adolescent survivors and we have been an influential advocate for survivor-focused legislation. Our partnership with MAP will strengthen our collective ability to raise awareness, improve training and broaden our advocacy within the anti-trafficking movement." said Angela Aufdemberge, President and CEO of Vista Maria.

The journey began because of the trust and respect that was built over our multi-year relationship. "Through this trust and respect for the work each was doing, we realized that our missions complement one another. We decided that together we would be stronger, more effective and able build our capacity," says Kathy Maitland, Executive Director of MAP.

Due to the recent Eugene Miller Fellowship sponsored by the McGregor fund, Aufdemberge was able to research best practice trainings and advocacy nationally and globally. The new partnership will allow us to deliver greater social impact. Maitland states that, "Ultimately by joining forces we have created a strategy that will help us better achieve our goals and objectives. MAP's mission to prevent and end trafficking directly impacts Vista Maria's mission to keep youth safe, to make them strong and to find new ways to bring wholeness and possibility to those who need it most."

MAP programs, staff and volunteers will continue and will be supported by Vista Maria's board, leadership and infrastructure. Vista Maria plans in partnership with Kathy Maitland to expand MAP's high impact services to train and educate more professionals as well as advocate for heroic survivors across the state.

About Michigan Abolitionist Project (MAP):

Our Mission: We are growing the movement of people and organizations working to prevent and end human trafficking in Michigan and beyond.

Our Focus: We aim to educate, engage and eradicate human trafficking.

Visit www.michiganabolitionistproject.org for additional information.

About Vista Maria:

Our Mission: We foster restorative relationships and deliver innovative care, treatment, and education so that vulnerable youth and families believe in their worth, heal and build the skills for success.

Our Vision: All children, families and communities achieve success through continuous learning and relationships that promote personal, professional and family well-being.

Visit www.vistamaria.org for additional information.

About The Emeritus Eugene Miller Fellowship:

Sponsored by the McGregor Fund, launched in 2009 and honoring Trustee Emeritus Eugene Miller for his years of distinguished leadership, this program honors outstanding, experienced leaders of McGregor-Funded nonprofit organizations in metropolitan Detroit.

Visit www.mcgregorfund.org for additional information.

For more information or to schedule an interview with Vista Maria's President and CEO contact: Mary Vogt, Chief Development Officer at (313) 520-1482 or mvogt@vistamaria.org.