

Ministries Collaborate to Fight Sex Trafficking, Help Victims

Buckner International has been committed to **transforming lives** by putting **Christ's love** in action for more than 130 years. But last week, the ministry sealed that commitment in writing for one marginalized group of people.

Buckner International and Refuge of Light signed a three-year agreement last week to work jointly serving female minors identified as victims of sex trafficking.

Refuge of Light, based in Tyler, Texas, hopes to start construction for the **safe home** early in 2013 to serve girls 17 years of age and under. Buckner will oversee the operations and provide staff members to work with Refuge of Light. Buckner staff will also assist in case management and therapy.

Refuge of Light, which formed in 2010, is dedicated to establishing a long-term safe home that provides physical, mental and spiritual healing in an effort to overcome the brutalization of modern-day slavery, or **sex trafficking**, in the lives of victimized girls in the United States.

"The beauty of this agreement is that it allows both ministries to work together to fulfill the core values of our separate missions," said Felipe Garza, vice president for expansion and development for Buckner. "We are committed to being the presence of Christ for the most vulnerable in our world, and no person is more vulnerable than a young female who is victimized by the **sex trade**."

Within the United States, there are an estimated 100,000 to 300,000 individuals trafficked annually. But there are few resources for these girls who have been forced into slavery.

There are only a handful of shelters for them. The majority of the victims are young girls who have fallen prey to the **commercial sex industry** at the hands of perpetrators, according to reports from the U.S. government.

This new partnership will be the beginning of restoring light into the lives of girls who have been smothered in darkness. Pray for the ministries as they start up this project, and pray for their future efforts to bring girl after girl to a **relationship with Christ**.