



2022-2023  
**Annual Report**

**FREEDOM FIRM**   
RESCUE | RESTORATION | JUSTICE

But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

Amos 5:24



As I look back at this year, my heart overflows with gratitude. This year I see unrelenting progress. Drop by drop, stream upon stream, the flood of justice is rising.

41 girls took their first steps into freedom, and places of deep corruption were exposed. Other girls took the stand and courageously testified, refusing to back down from their former oppressors. More survivors embraced new lives through education, employment or motherhood. These women are turning the current that would have swept them to destruction.

This year your partnership amazed and encouraged me. Your many gifts and talents flowed into this mission to end the exploitation of young girls in India. Sim ran 900 miles, his father biked even more, and over 300 participants and donors joined from around the world in a single month, all adding their strength to this stream. Together we honor and join each survivor on her journey to freedom and wholeness.

The river is rising. Together we witness injustice and oppression wash away. Today we rejoice in this journey and take hope for tomorrow.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leah Henck".

Leah Henck  
President, Freedom Firm USA

Can a number truly represent or capture the essence of our work? I have struggled with numbers being an indicator of success and failure for most of my professional life. When we work with real, living, walking people, is it really possible to reduce them to a number to be able to assess the work? I am reminded of who Freedom Firm is and what we stand for. We are strongly convinced that whatever the risk, we will treat each victimized girl and woman as a precious being. The rescue work, however challenging, has to go on for their sake. We will pursue every victim we see or get information about, even if she is a needle in a haystack. We will continue to fight to keep her safe. We will continue to fight to keep perpetrators in prison.



As we complete one more financial year, it is my privilege to thank each of you for supporting us. Whether financially as a donor, or as a volunteer raising awareness, every act of yours has taken us closer to our mission. God bless you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Catherine Raja".

Catherine Raja  
National Director, Freedom Firm India

## our mission

Freedom Firm seeks to eliminate child prostitution in India by **rescuing** minor girls, providing aftercare for effective **restoration** and bringing **justice** by prosecuting the perpetrators of sex trafficking.

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Since our beginning in 2006, Freedom Firm has rescued over 900 young women from commercial sexual exploitation. Today we operate from 6 offices located strategically in India's most needy states and regions where trafficking is a major industry.

## our pillars

### sacrifice

We lay aside the expectation of comfort in pursuit of this mission.

### dignity

We believe in the unique and intrinsic worth of each person.

### stewardship

We are grateful for every resource and steward them in service of others.

## our promise

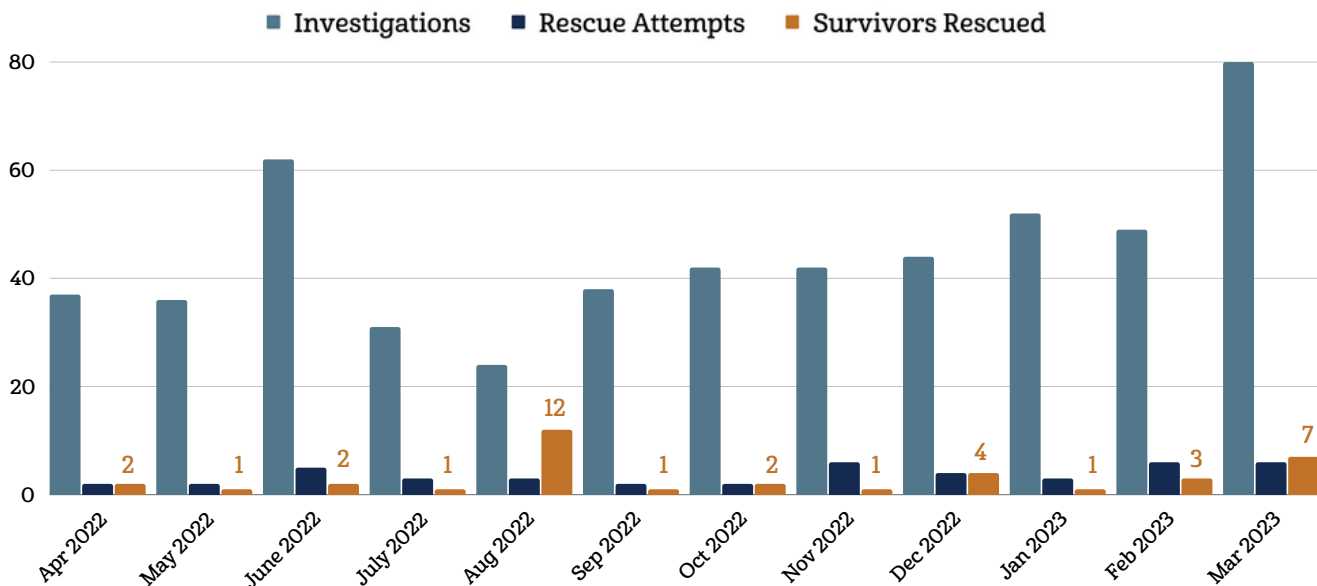
**Our ALL for every ONE**

# rescue

Freedom Firm undercover operatives locate minor girls in brothels and document the crime. Our team then partners with local police to raid brothels, rescue the girls and arrest perpetrators. The survivors are then placed in shelter homes.



## Persistent Searching Brings Freedom



## Rescuing Young Girls from Exploitation

In order to protect their lucrative and illegal trade, brothel keepers take greater precautions when offering young girls to customers. Our team conducts many investigations to locate minors, gather evidence, and persuade the police to intervene. During rescue operations, major girls, 18 years or older, can request to leave the brothel as well. Your donations brought rescue to 18 minors and 23 majors from April 2022 to March 2023.

Meera & Aneela



Meera and Aneela were rescued from these brothel rooms



Freedom Firm social worker (left) tries to encourage Meera and Aneela after the rescue

Meera and Aneela both grew up in Moradabad, a city where prostitution thrives. At 17 years old, Meera would arrive most days in the red light area to service customers from 10am to 5pm. Married as a young teenager, Aneela's own husband forced her into prostitution a year later. Aneela was only 15 years old when Freedom Firm rescued her and Meera on June 4th, 2022. The police arrested 5 people: the owner of the brothel, the brothel keeper and three customers.



Mahi and Koki (in head scarves) heading for medical testing with police and Freedom Firm staff



Mahi and Koki after rescue, both 13 years old

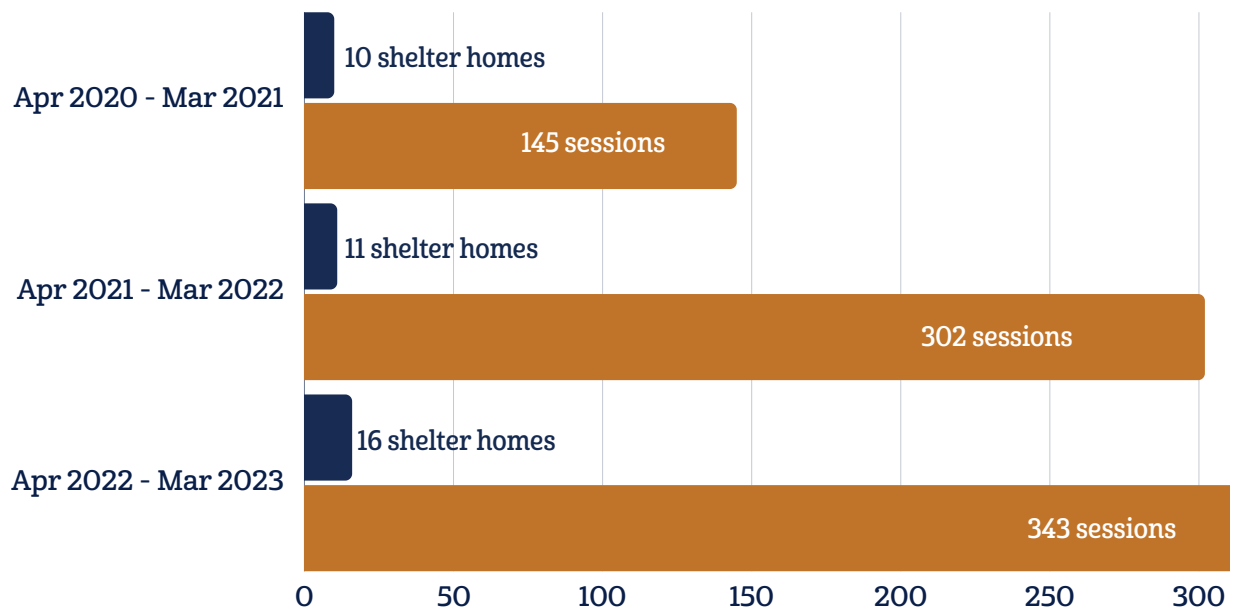
Mahi & Koki

After receiving a lead about one minor forced into prostitution in Moradabad, our team worked quickly to verify her location. We pursued various local government agencies before finding police who would partner with us for rescue. During the raid on August 20th, 2022, we found another minor in a different room of the brothel. At the police station, we learned that Mahi was sold into prostitution at age 9, and Koki when she was 10.

# restoration

After a survivor is rescued, she begins a journey of restoration. Our social workers often walk with her for years to come. In partnership with shelter homes across the country, Freedom Firm provides rescued girls with counseling, job training, education and health care. Even after survivors return to their villages, our social workers visit and connect with them to offer resources and encouragement.

## Government Shelter Homes Partnering with Freedom Firm to Offer Survivors Life Skills



Creating these lanterns gave survivors a boost in confidence as they realized they could quickly learn to make something new.



Our social workers taught 9 girls in a shelter home how to bake a cake. The girls enjoyed baking & eating it!

# Connecting Jeeva with Critical Healthcare

Jeeva's family suffered many forms of abuse from a couple who claimed her parents owed them money. Jeeva was raped by their son and became pregnant at the age of 15. The couple forced her to have an abortion. Jeeva became very ill after the abortion and was diagnosed with diabetes.

Freedom Firm coordinated with the police to rescue Jeeva, her sister and her mother in March 2022. Traveling and paying for Jeeva's diabetes treatment became a heavy burden for her mom. Our team of social workers visited Jeeva four months after the rescue. We took Jeeva and her mom to meet a local doctor who listened carefully to Jeeva's medical history, performed tests and promised that he would provide the treatment she needed. Jeeva and her mom are thrilled to have affordable treatment only ten minutes from where they live!



Jeeva has been learning to read and write in English!

# Local Newspaper Celebrates Survivors' Good Grades!



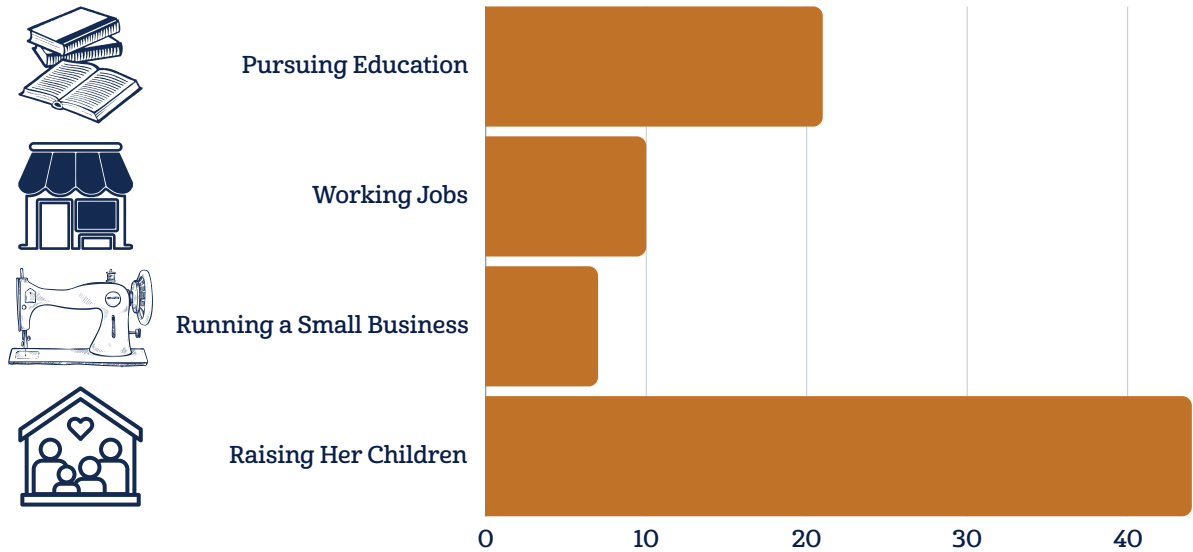
On June 23, 2022, the headline read: "Rescued from the sex trade and desiring to become a doctor"

Pallavi, Suchi and Tanvi overcame many challenges to achieve this academic milestone! Pallavi's father died of cancer in 2018. Suchi's parents separated and remarried. Tanvi's father was an alcoholic and abandoned her at age four. Without anyone to protect or provide for them, they were desperate and vulnerable when friends introduced them to prostitution.

Freedom Firm rescued the girls in 2021 when Pallavi was 17, Tanvi was 16 and Suchi was only 15 years old. Before they landed in the brothel, the girls were enrolled in 10th grade and wanted to continue studying. Over the past year, a teacher came to the shelter home to help prepare them for their exams. The girls are proud of their test results and feel hopeful about the future! Suchi and Tanvi want to go to college; Pallavi wants to become a doctor and will study hard to achieve her goal.

# Different Paths of Restoration

## Survivors' Next Steps from April 2022 - March 2023



Our social workers travel many miles to support survivors who are rebuilding their lives in villages and cities across India. We conducted a total of 60 home visits during the year with trips ranging from two to five days. In July 2022, social workers Archana, Nitendri, and Bharti visited survivors in Rajasthan, a state in northern India that covers roughly 10% of the country's total geographic area.

## Day 1

Archana and Nitendri traveled to two villages to meet nine survivors. They met five of them, but four were not at home. One survivor is happily married, and two were ecstatic about their upcoming marriages - they can't wait to run their own homes! The other survivors are earning an income working in agriculture.

Archana and Nitendri (left) visit 22 year old Mila (right) for the first time since she returned home.





## Day 2

Social workers delivered a sewing machine to Radha (below) so she can take orders from home and support herself and her family with the income. Two other survivors are also tailoring.



Ruchi (left) works on a farm and lives happily with her family.

Rina (in pink) invested 2000 Rupees (roughly \$25) to start a small shop. She sells chocolates, snacks, soap, and other goods.



## Day 3



Soha's entire family watched with excitement as she opened her new sewing machine!

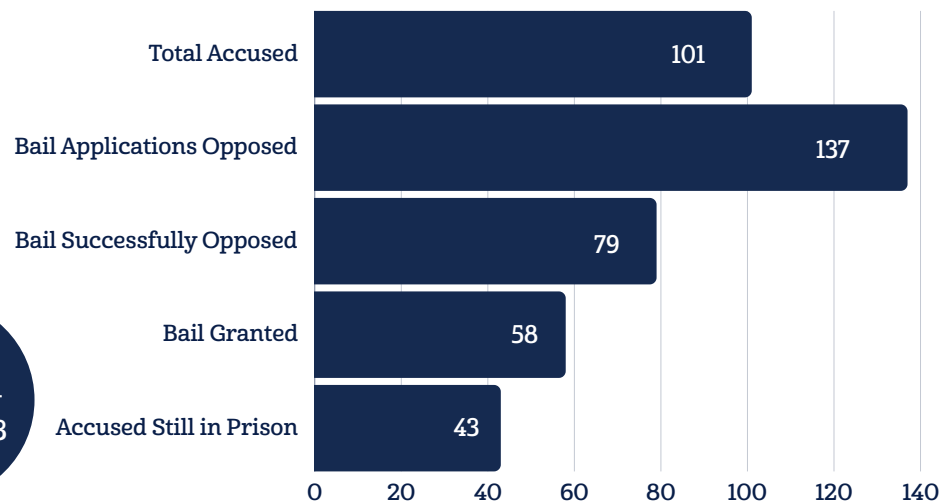
Rosa's door was locked, but a neighbor (left) shared that she was traveling with her mother. Our social workers will follow up again to make sure Rosa is safe.



Freedom Firm actively pursues the conviction of those responsible for trafficking minor girls. Freedom Firm lawyers assist public prosecutors at each stage of the criminal trial. Rescued girls are empowered to testify against their abusers and bring them to justice. Every trial and every conviction creates a deterrent and raises the cost of sex trafficking in India.

Fighting  
to Keep  
Traffickers  
Behind Bars

Data from  
April 2022-  
March 2023



## Justice for Tani

While many cases can take a year or more to go to trial, Tani's case went to trial in less than 3 months thanks to a special court in Kolkata that deals exclusively with crimes against women and children.

When Freedom Firm rescued Tani, the police arrested six suspects including the brothel managers, brothel owner, trafficker, agent and pimp. Though two were granted bail, the other four remain in police custody. They have applied for bail multiple times, but we continue to fight these applications.

During her testimony, Tani was cross examined by a panel of 8 defense lawyers. We were concerned that these lawyers may try to intimidate and confuse Tani as she shared her testimony. However, Tani stood strong, and bravely gave a clear statement against the accused.

The Freedom Firm team will continue working to keep these criminals behind bars and secure justice for Tani.

*"We are witnessing a heightened sense of accountability from the judicial and legal fraternity towards delivering justice speedily to this victim."*

Ashwin Rathod,  
Freedom Firm Program  
Associate

## The Importance of Bail Denied

"How does opposing bail help in stopping trafficking? The longer a perpetrator is in custody, the longer he/she cannot operate. The brothel bleeds money when it isn't operational, a clear and loud message that there is a direct consequence of abusing women and children. Once in jail, they are unable to intimidate survivors or their parents, which normally results in the disposal of cases, hostile victims in court, and re-trafficking of the victims."

*-Catherine Raja, Freedom Firm National Director*

### *Simi*

Simi's brothel keeper was out on bail with pending cases but continued to exploit minors. After rescuing Simi, Freedom Firm has fought his bail applications even up to the High Court so that he will be held accountable for his crimes. As long as he is in custody, he cannot exploit other victims.

### *Meera*

After rescue, Meera was ready to testify against those who exploited her. However, when the accused was released on bail, he declared his undying love to Meera. She believed herself again in love, and despite the counsel of her parents and Freedom Firm's social worker she is now refusing to testify. Unfortunately, Meera still buys the lies of her abuser. We will continue to do all we can to protect her and help her experience true love that doesn't come at the price of exploitation.



Freedom Firm social worker (left) encouraged Simi before her testimony



Anju hugs the police inspector the day before she testified

*"Do not grant bail to him. If you do so, he will exploit and spoil many more lives as he did to me. And other such perpetrators will also live fearlessly if it happens."*

Anju testified against her accused  
July 14, 2022

# Journey for Freedom

In March 2023, Sim Bates chose to run 900 miles to honor the women and girls rescued by Freedom Firm. In his journey Sim faced physical, mental and emotional challenges, but he refused to stop. He pressed forward and accomplished an incredible physical feat. Even more than that, Sim gave us a visual reminder of the challenges trafficking survivors face on their journey to healing.

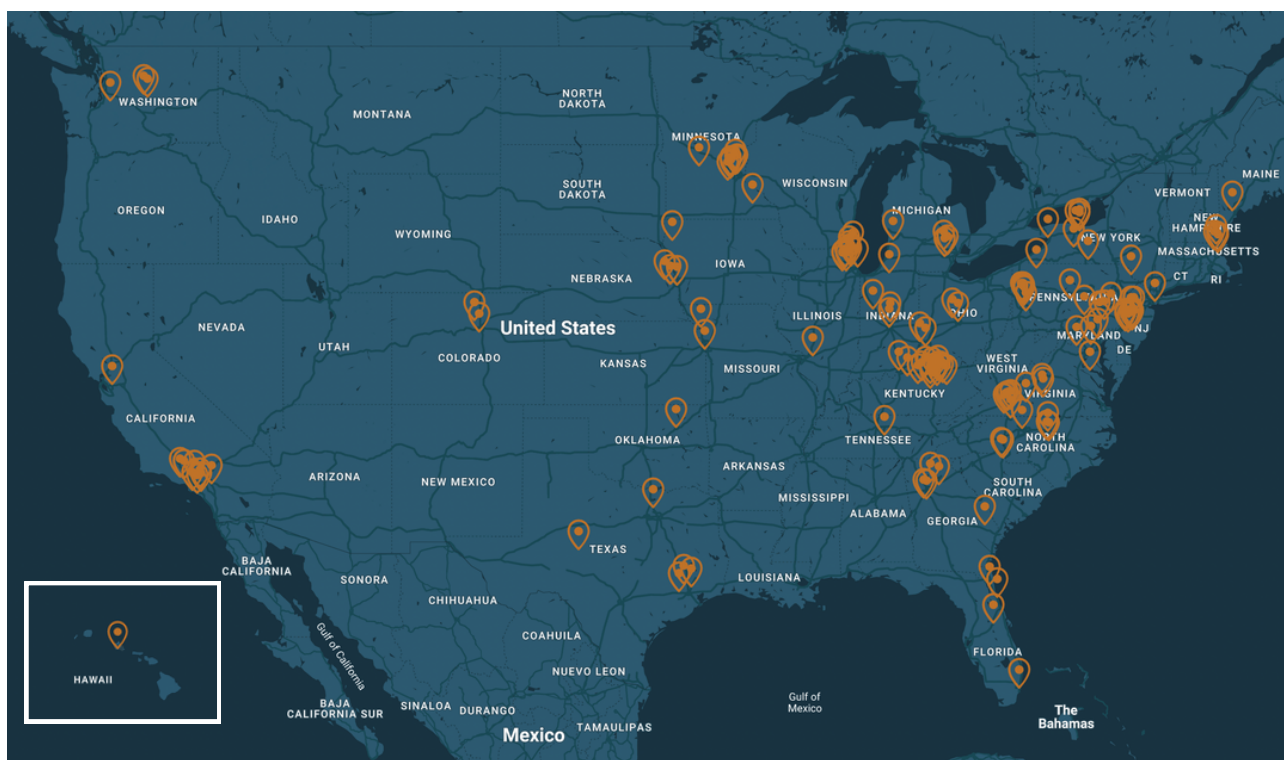
We are so thankful that Sim did not journey alone. His community rallied around him, participants across the world joined him, and an astounding number of individuals donated so that more girls will be set free. Community makes difficult journeys possible, and together you came alongside rescued girls as they pursue restoration.



4 Countries

159 Cities

29 U.S. States

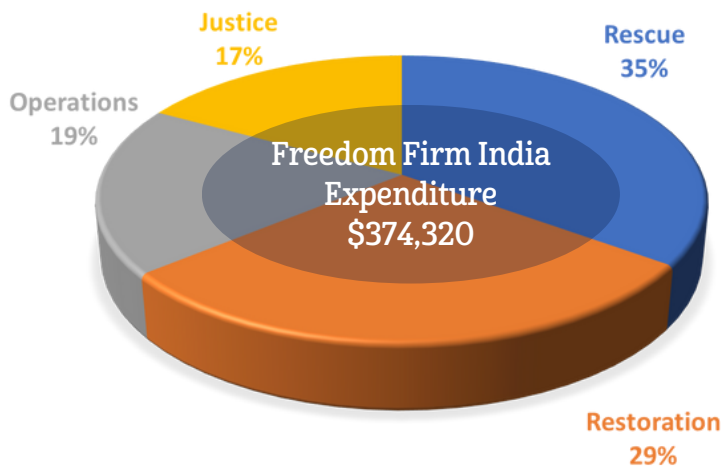
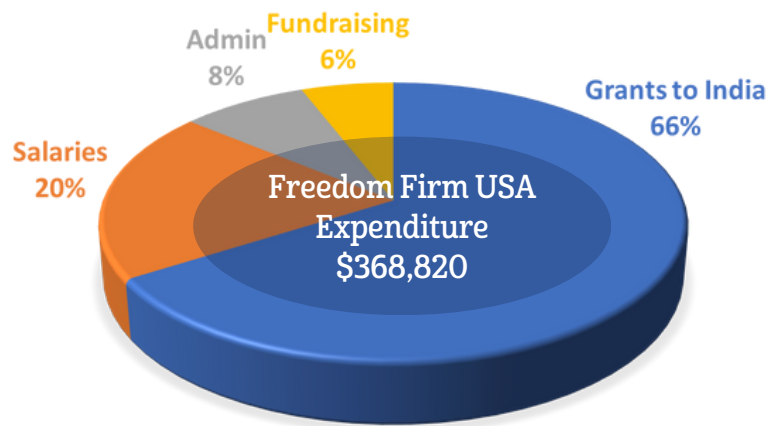


Over 300 people  
honored survivors and  
raised \$84,803 to rescue more!



# funding

Freedom Firm USA exists to support Freedom Firm in India by raising awareness and financial support for their work of rescue, restoration, and justice for victims of sex-trafficking. Freedom Firm USA's total revenue in our 2022-2023 fiscal year was \$428,483. Our net assets ended the year at \$441,492. We steward these funds seriously, striving to accomplish our mission efficiently and effectively.



Freedom Firm India's total revenue from April 2022 to March 2023 was \$253,807. Freedom Firm USA contributed \$106,600 (42%) of those funds. Other revenue was granted by international donors (35%) and from within India (23%). Many children and young women experienced hope and healing this year because of generous donations from individuals and foundations in the U.S., India and around the world. Thank you.

## Funds received through Freedom Firm USA

Browncroft	Mary Lynn Richardson Foundation
Cornerstone Community	Naperville PC
Crossroads	Operation Blessing Intl
Emmanuel	Operation Mobilisation
Freedom 4/24	Redeemer Community
Girls Rights Project	Tru Needs, Inc
Jernigan Foundation	WoodsEdge
Memorial Park	Generous individual donors

To access Independent Auditor Reports and IRS Tax Forms 990, please visit [www.freedomfirm.org/annual-reports](http://www.freedomfirm.org/annual-reports)

Freedom Firm USA is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.  
Tax ID: 20-5280075.  
All donations are tax-deductible for U.S. taxpayers.

To contribute online, please visit

[www.freedomfirm.org/give](http://www.freedomfirm.org/give)

Donations by check can be mailed to:

**Freedom Firm USA**  
214 Cherry Street  
Galax, Virginia 24333

This annual report reflects the activities and financial details of Freedom Firm from April 2022 to March 2023. Freedom Firm is a charitable trust registered in Udthagamandalam, Tamil Nadu. Freedom Firm USA is a nonprofit organization incorporated in the state of Minnesota, USA. Their fiscal year is from July to June. Freedom Firm and Freedom Firm USA are independent, legally distinct entities with two separate Board of Trustees.

# who we are

## Freedom Firm USA Staff

- Leah Henck, President
- Anne Walters, Grants Coordinator
- Sarah Mulley, Communication and Development Associate Director

## Freedom Firm India Staff



- Catherine Raja, National Director
- Ashwin Rathod, Program Associate India
- 5 Regional Program Associates
- 5 Administrators
- 5 Liaison Officers
- 12 Social Workers
- 11 Investigators (faces blurred for their protection)

## Freedom Firm USA Board Members

- Roger Rumer, Chairman
- Brian Rightler, Vice Chair
- Margie Gardner, Secretary
- Gaye Shepherd, Member
- Amy Swanson, Member
- Raghu Velaga, Member
- Anne Walters, Member

## Freedom Firm India Board of Trustees

- Shirley Aaron
- Pamela Clark
- Stephen George
- Richard Samuel
- Nirmala Stephen
- Augustine Williams



Shining light on the horrors of sex trafficking; Susheela was rescued from this brothel room on March 13th, 2023 during Freedom Firm's first operation in the state of Odisha.

Front Cover: Keona was rescued from forced prostitution in a hotel on January 17th, 2023. She now lives in a shelter home and wants to enroll in school.



**FREEDOM FIRM**  
RESCUE | RESTORATION | JUSTICE

214 Cherry Street  
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[freedomfirm.org](http://freedomfirm.org)

Platinum  
Transparency  
2022

Candid.

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