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Place of Hope's Oct. 12 golf tournament to raise money to combat human trafficking



(Photo: Robert Perez/For Luminaries)

Human trafficking is happening right here in Central and South Florida.

“People think human trafficking is something that happens only overseas or in big cities far away. Nobody thinks it happens in our beautiful gated communities,” said Laura MacFarland, Human Trafficking Education & Prevention coordinator for Place of Hope.

Youth, who are in vulnerable positions, are being sold into forced servitude and prostitution, also known as "modern-day slavery," throughout Florida. Florida is ranked third highest in the nation for human trafficking, MacFarland said.

Place of Hope, South Florida's largest children's organization serving Palm Beach County and the Treasure Coast, has been serving victims of exploitation and trafficking for over a decade.

“Not only are we responding to the need for more care for those who escape their captors, but also working alongside law enforcement and the community to prevent 'at-risk' youth from being groomed,” said Charles L. Bender III, founding CEO of Place of Hope.

According to Bender, a great way to help support Place of Hope's efforts in fighting this crime is to get involved in its second annual Heroes For Freedom Golf Tournament. This two-day, multi-county golf tournament challenges golfers to share their support of Place of Hope through a crowd-funding campaign leading up to the actual day of play.

“Human Trafficking is our generation's version of slavery. Place of Hope provides the victims of this tragedy to climb out of bondage and regain their freedom,” said Port St. Lucie Chief of Police John Bolduc.

The golf tournament will take place 8 a.m. Oct. 12 at PGA Golf Club, Port St. Lucie.

Place of Hope is asking supporters – old and new – to get involved in one of three ways: be a sponsor, form a foursome or make a donation.

There is no cost to play, only a minimum fundraising goal of \$500 per person or \$2,000 per foursome. Each player will receive a personal fundraising link to share with friends and family. Prizes will be given out to the top fundraiser and top foursome.

The format is being called One Best Ball Shamble. Registration and breakfast be be at 8 a.m., with a shotgun start at 9 a.m. An awards lunch to follow. Snacks and a beverage cart will be on the course for golfers.

For more information, contact Jamie Bond at jamiieb@placeofhope.com or call 561-775-7195.

About Place of Hope

Place of Hope is a local children’s organization recruiting, training and licensing foster families throughout Martin, Indian River, St. Lucie, and Okeechobee counties. Through a comprehensive, high quality traditional foster care model, Place of Hope is dedicated to providing a stable and loving environment for the children of each community.

Place of Hope is a unique, faith-based, state-licensed children’s organization providing family-style foster care (emergency and long-term); family outreach and intervention; maternity care; safety for victims of domestic minor sex trafficking; transitional housing and support services for youth aging out of foster care; housing and support services for homeless families; foster care recruitment and support; hope and healing opportunities for children and families who have been traumatized by abuse and neglect through our region.

Place of Hope is ranked No. 1 in the nation for “Youth Development, Crisis Services and Shelter” from the nation’s largest charity rating service, Charity Navigator, for three consecutive years; and has received Guidestar’s Platinum Seal of Transparency. For more information, visit www.placeofhope.com.



Golfers raised awareness and funds for Place of Hope's fight against human trafficking in 2017. Pictured are, from left, Tom Munhollen, Steve Sarkin, Jay Chapman and Steve Corson. (Photo: Robert Perez/For Luminaries)



Kevin Wilson, left, Seth Ray, Travis O'Neal and Andy Glass play in the 2017 Heroes For Freedom Golf Tournament. (Photo: Robert Perez/For Luminaries)