



**LED BY SURVIVORS.
SUPPORTED BY ALLIES.**

Standing **United** Against Trafficking & Exploitation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Sparrow Freedom Project Welcomes Human Trafficking Survivors and Allies to Lead Organization Amidst Covid-19 Pandemic

Metro Detroit, Michigan, April 22, 2022 – Brought to the community by Verizon, Sparrow Freedom project will host the Sexual Violence Awareness Panel on Saturday, April 30, 2022 at the Oakland County Board of Commissioners Auditorium from 1:00pm-4:00pm.

Panel members include: Darren Cunningham, Channel 7/WXYZ Reporter, Sheriff Christopher Swanson, Genesee County, Undersheriff Mike Jaafar, Wayne County, LT. Wendy K. Reyes, Oakland County, Detective Thomas Carl Brown, Washtenaw County, Chrissy Hemphill, Chairperson, Sparrow Freedom Project and Professor David Manville, BSW, MSW, LMSW, ACSW, Lecturer, Eastern Michigan University, CEU Training Coordinator, Sparrow Freedom Project.

“At Verizon, we know we need to come together on behalf of those scared, silenced and abused. We need to amplify their calls for help, and it starts with taking action. We stand up for employees and victims in our communities,” said Brianna Ellison, Director, Community Engagement, Verizon.

One of only a handful of survivor led nonprofits dedicating to eradicating human trafficking and exploitation in Michigan, the new Sparrow Freedom Project leadership team has set their sights on providing human trafficking survivors with their most requested needs – housing and emergency services.

“There has been a 240% increase in assistance requests due to the pandemic,” said Chrissy Hemphill, Chairperson of the Board, Sparrow Freedom Project. “I accepted this role to ensure that survivors receive the lifesaving services and support they need most. I look forward to using my board position to build coalitions, educate the community and garner the financial resources necessary to support those we serve.”

At its core, Sparrow Freedom Project is led by survivors and supported by allies. “Before we engage with any victim or survivor of human trafficking or exploitation, we look for guidance and expertise from those on our team who have walked a similar path and now use their experiences to help others. It’s our privilege to welcome Chrissy to the Sparrow Freedom Project family,” said [Tracey Cooley](#), Executive Director, Sparrow Freedom Project.

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Founded November 2017, the Sparrow Freedom Project exists to build a survivor led community supporting and empowering exploited and trafficked individuals on their journey to achieving independence through services and prevention. www.sparrowfreedomproject.org