



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### *Questions About Our Programs & Partners*

- 1) **In how many countries does Women At Risk, International (WAR, Int'l) work?**

WAR, Int'l has had projects and partnerships in over 50 different countries, some of which require "creative access." We currently partner with organizations and individuals in the United States and Canada, Central and South America, Africa, Asia, and Europe. Because we place a high value on cultural sensitivity and relevance, our programs and partnerships vary according to the unique culture and circumstances of each individual country or region.
- 2) **Is trafficking the only risk factor that WAR, Int'l works with? How do you define an at-risk woman?**

WAR, Int'l seeks to help women in a variety of risk areas. These include exploitation, slavery, abuse, substance abuse, loss, disease, natural disaster, war, and others. An at-risk person is one who is either living through one or more of these issues or experiencing circumstances that leave her highly vulnerable to them. Because risk factors affect emotional, physical, financial, and spiritual well-being, our partners go beyond simply addressing the issues, implementing a holistic approach to meeting each person's needs.
- 3) **Does WAR, Int'l help only women and girls? Do any of WAR, Int'l's partners work with at-risk men or boys?**

Several of WAR, Int'l's partnering safehouses and vocational training programs work with men and boys coming out of the sex industry. The educational programs and orphanages we partner with include both girls and boys. In addition, many of the women our partners work with have families that include men and children, and those families are positively impacted by the work we do.
- 4) **Does WAR, Int'l partner only with safehouses? What other kinds of organizations do you support?**

In addition to safehouses, WAR, Int'l works with several other types of programs, some of which may be closely associated with safehouses. For example, vocational training and microenterprise programs often operate from within safehouses or work hand-in-hand with them. We also partner with educational programs and orphanages, as well as programs focusing on outreach, medical/health services, or emergency intervention. Note that categories overlap, and most of our partners offer services in several of these areas.
- 5) **How are relationships with WAR, Int'l's partners developed? What criteria does WAR, Int'l use in deciding what organizations to partner with?**

Most of our partnerships are formed with pre-established ministries or organizations which have either sought the assistance of WAR, Int'l or come to our attention by other means. Other partnerships have come to us as the dreams of visionaries, needing assistance to help them launch. A few involve organizations begun by our founder, with leadership eventually turned over to nationals working in partnership with us. *(continued next page)*

WAR, Int'l partners with organizations based on a list of criteria approved and monitored by the board of directors. Our criteria for partnering with a program are as follows:

- Real risk: The program must target individuals, families, or communities that are truly at risk.
- Sustainability: The program must have a means of sustaining itself. This may be through micro-enterprise, product sales, donations, sponsorships, or other means.
- Empowerment: The program must go beyond rescue, providing those in its care with tools to aid them in moving forward into lives of independence and dignity—for example, life skills training, job skills training, counseling, and/or education. The empowerment criteria also encompasses programs focused on raising awareness and facilitating prevention.
- Culturally sensitive intervention: The program needs to operate with understanding of and respect for cultural values and norms.

While we do not require that our partners be faith-based, we make sure they fully understand that WAR, Int'l operates in the name of Christ. (*For related information and clarification of WAR, Int'l's Christian background, see [question 47](#).*)

**6) How do WAR, Int'l partnerships work? How does WAR, Int'l work with its partnering organizations?**

Partnerships take a variety of forms, depending on the culture, the risk, and the organization. Before we take on a partner, we assess the risk issue addressed, the empowerment model offered, and the organization's needs. Once a partnership is established, we come alongside the partner with relationship-based mentoring, which we consider an essential foundation of any partnership. From there, we work with our partners to help meet some of their specific needs. Because our passion is for our partners to be self-sustaining, we do not provide regular financial support but rather offer resources and assistance as projects and special needs arise.

For example, if a program is just getting off the ground, we may provide business consulting, staff training, or start-up funding. For established programs, we may help renovate or outfit facilities, provide needed items and equipment, or help to find new and creative means of sustainability. As special situations come to our attention, we may offer scholarships for educational or vocational pursuits or for medical care. Many partners create product which we sell in our stores, at home parties, and online, helping them to generate sustainable support. WAR, Int'l staff also visits our partners, whether overseas or in the U.S.

WAR, Int'l also forms networking partnerships with other local and national organizations working to assist at-risk populations. Within these partnerships, we may share resources and information or collaborate to help an individual needing services.

**7) How many women and children does WAR, Int'l help each year in partnering safehouses and other programs?**

The number changes from year to year. Exact figures are difficult to calculate due to the number of organizations we partner with, the various methods they use, and the influx of women in and out of programs.

For example, while residential safehouses in the U.S. generally house two to ten women at a given time, there may be ten to fifty residents in an African safehouse. Smaller programs in Central America and Asia may serve five to ten women at a time, whereas large programs may serve as many as 400 women. With each safehouse, numbers change as women graduate from programs and move back into the community and new women come in their places. With community outreaches (non-residential programs), women may come and go frequently, making it even more difficult to keep track of the number helped.

In light of these challenges, we are working to establish feasible methods to help our partners keep records, and we will update our statistics as figures are authenticated.

### 8) Why doesn't WAR, Int'l list the names of its partners?

It is the policy of WAR, Int'l to not publicize the names of our partners or the individuals they serve in order to protect their confidentiality. When we give partner updates or enlist prayer or financial support on their behalf, we use pseudonyms. We also use pseudonyms on our website and in our publications. This allows us to communicate our partners' needs and share their stories while respecting the privacy of those they serve, allowing wounded and at-risk individuals space to heal and grow in safety.

## Questions About Trafficking and Rescue

### 9) What exactly is "human trafficking"?

The U.S. State Department defines human trafficking, also known as trafficking in persons, as "the exploitation of someone for the purposes of compelled labor or a commercial sex act through the use of force, fraud, or coercion." Exploitation of a minor for commercial sex purposes is considered a crime regardless of whether force, fraud, or coercion is involved ([2014 Trafficking In Persons Report](#)). Although the term "trafficking" seems to imply movement, transport may or may not be involved.

### 10) Globally, how many people are trafficked each year for sex or labor purposes?

- According to the [U.S. State Department](#), 600,000 to 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders every year. Of these, 80% are female and 50% are children.
- There are approximately 27 million slaves in the world today ([End It Movement](#)).
- Between 14,500 and 17,500 people are trafficked into the U.S. each year from other countries around the world (U.S. State Department).
- The [International Labour Organization](#) estimates that women and girls represent the largest share of forced labor victims with 11.4 million trafficked victims (55%), compared to 9.5 million (45%) men.

### 11) Does trafficking happen in the United States? Are children trafficked in the U.S.?

Human trafficking occurs in all 50 states ([Polaris Project](#)). While statistics vary widely and numbers are nearly impossible to verify, following are a few statistics from reliable sources:

- Sex trafficking in the United States is a \$32-billion-per-year industry ([United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime](#)). In comparison, it is estimated that Americans spend \$25.4 billion annually on professional sports ([WR Hambrecht](#)).
- According to the [U.S. State Dept.](#), there are currently more than 1.5 million people within North America who are victims of sex or labor trafficking. (This number does not include victims of drug trafficking.)
- [Data from The National Human Trafficking Resource Center](#) indicates that there were 5,544 human trafficking cases reported in 2015. Keep in mind that this is only the number of *reported* cases; it is likely that the majority of cases go unreported.
- Any child under the age of 18 who is engaged in a sex act which is exchanged for something of value (not necessarily money) is considered to be a victim of sex trafficking. Exotic dancing, escort services, massage services, pornography, and phone sex are just some of the venues through which minors can be forced into trafficking ([Trafficking Resource Center](#)/Covenant House, New York).

### 12) What is the government doing about trafficking in the U.S.? Are there other organizations working to stop trafficking in the United States?

- The U.S. government signed the [Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act](#) in 2000 and has reauthorized it several times since, most recently in 2013. This act emphasizes the prevention of human trafficking through education, awareness, and economic incentive; the prosecution of traffickers

through increased legal enforcement; and the protection and assistance of victims through increased services.

- The Dept. of Health and Human Services has established a Rescue and Restore campaign, which supports various local anti-trafficking coalitions and distributes materials in order to raise awareness.
- Homeland Security works closely with a number of anti-trafficking and victim support organizations—including Women At Risk, International (WAR, Int'l)—to follow up on leads, tips, and evidence that come to our attention through a number of ways.
- In addition to government activity, there are 30 to 40 national coalitions that have formed to fight trafficking nationwide and in communities. In addition to WAR, Int'l, these organizations include the Polaris Project, the Salvation Army, Shared Hope International, Standing Against Global Exploitation, and many others. (Please note that, while we do network with some of these organizations, we are less familiar with others, and a mention here does not constitute an endorsement by WAR, Int'l.)
- According to Shared Hope's Protected Innocence Challenge, which grades states according to how well they handle trafficking cases, fourteen states improved their grades in 2015. WAR, Int'l's home state of Michigan was the most improved, going from an F to a B!

### 13) Why would traffickers be interested in babies? Are rescued babies able to be adopted?

The newest trend in trafficking is the increasing demand for young children and even babies. These babies are being sold NOT for adoption but for slave labor or more commonly, for sexual slavery. Children are also trafficked to the black market to be used for their organs. This is a shocking and sad reality. Children are an appealing target for traffickers because they are easily obtained and bring a high price on the market. Most significantly, babies cannot fight back—they are defenseless, voiceless, and helpless.

Rescued babies are sometimes able to be adopted, giving them a chance at normal, happy lives. Adoption needs to be done through an agency or other appropriate legal means. While WAR, Int'l is unable to facilitate adoptions, we do rejoice when rescued babies are adopted into loving homes!

### 14) How does WAR, Int'l rescue women and children?

WAR, Int'l and our partners take a multi-faceted approach to rescue:

- The preferred method WAR, Int'l and our partners use is *outreach*. Many of our partners work in red-light districts and at-risk communities, building relationships with the women they meet there. As they get to know a woman, they talk with her about her life, her circumstances, her children, and her hopes and dreams. They dialogue with her about what she needs to support herself and her family and talk through options. They offer her alternative employment and a safe place to go when she is ready to leave the sex industry. This allows her to make a decision based not just on emotion but also on business sense. With this holistic, relationship-oriented approach, the percentage of women who return to the streets is much lower.
- Some of our partners also participate in or cooperate with *police raids*. These can be an effective means of rescuing women or children who are chained or closely guarded by their traffickers. A raid also often results in the apprehension and prosecution of the trafficker. However, a police raid does not ensure that the victims will receive post-traumatic care. This is where our partners most often come in, ensuring that victims rescued through raids receive the care, support, and resources they need.
- At times it is necessary to do *emergency interventions*. Our Emergency 911 Fund was established for situations where a woman or child is in imminent danger. This was the case with a baby sold at two weeks of age, who was rescued two weeks later by a partnering safehouse and has now been adopted into a loving home. Another example of WAR, Int'l assisting in an emergency intervention involved paying school fees for a teenage girl who was accepted into an academy in order to remove her from a dangerous situation.

- **Prevention** is a key means of rescuing women and children *before* they are trafficked. Orphanages are one means of preventive rescue. Preventive programs for at-risk women include vocational training, scholarships, micro-grants, and support for microenterprises. These provide means for women to support themselves with dignity, lessening the likelihood that they will be tricked into slavery or resort to prostitution to support themselves and their families. Preventative programs focus on women and children who are highly vulnerable to exploitation, such as children whose siblings have already been sold and women who have been raped, abandoned, or widowed.

**15) Is there danger to partners and staff when they rescue women?**

WAR, Int'l partners and staff are not in danger when using the outreach method to rescue women because when a woman leaves the streets, it is most likely of her own volition. Although certain countries and situations are more dangerous than others, our staff and partners are trained to avoid conflict with traffickers. Because WAR, Int'l's partners are familiar with both the macro-culture of the countries they work in and the micro-culture of the red-light areas, they are able to use rescue strategies that minimize or eliminate danger.

**16) When women are rescued, do they go straight to a safehouse?**

This depends on each woman's situation. Utmost care is given to ensure safety. If her trafficker is looking for her, a woman will most likely be hidden in a separate location before going to a safehouse. (*See [question 17](#) for more information on safehouses*).

**17) What exactly is a safehouse? How can a safehouse be non-residential? Are safehouses really safe?**

A safehouse is just that—a safe place where survivors can begin the journey toward renewal and restoration. More than just a home, a safehouse is a place of healing, support, and liberation. WAR, Int'l's partnering safehouses provide a variety of services, which may include counseling, therapy, medical services, personal and spiritual mentoring, job training, education, and/or employment.

Many of our partnering safehouses are residential, providing shelter for rescued women or children (or in a few cases, rescued men). Others function as non-residential centers, offering vocational training programs and other services within a safe and secure setting. Non-residential safehouses may serve rescued or at-risk women or men living in group homes or within the community.

Our partners take great care to ensure the safety of those they serve. For example, women's safehouses in patriarchal or predatory cultures may include male staff members to give a visible authority presence and ward off men visiting for the wrong reasons. In cultures where it would be dangerous for women to walk to and from work, our partners make it a priority to provide them with bicycles or other forms of transportation. In most areas, homes and centers blend in with their surroundings and are known as "businesses," which is essentially what they are: businesses that exist to help survivors regain their lives, heal, and work with dignity. Sometimes they are known as businesses that help women, and a woman may be referred by locals who know that she is in trouble.

**18) Does WAR, Int'l partner with any safehouses in the United States?**

Yes, WAR, Int'l has ongoing relationships with multiple safehouses throughout the United States, and the number grows each year.

**19) Do rescued women ever return to the streets?**

While there will always be attrition, WAR, Int'l has found this happens far less frequently with women rescued through outreach than with those rescued through police raids. There are several reasons for this, including the fact that a woman rescued through outreach has made her own decision to seek help. Because outreach builds trust and healthy relationships, a woman rescued this way knows she has caring friends to come alongside her in her journey. These relationships often make the difference in a woman's ability to

obtain shelter and employment, achieve healing, and pursue opportunities—all of which are essential elements to rewriting her story and beginning a new life.

If a woman does return to the streets, the relationships she has built—whether through an outreach program or a safehouse—may eventually serve to draw her back to safety. The goal of a safehouse is to be a safe place both for those who are there and for those who have left. A woman who leaves to go back to the streets knows there is a safe place to which she can return—and often, she does. Our partners have seen this happen time and again.

## **20) Does WAR, Int'l pursue the prosecution of the trafficker?**

WAR, Int'l concentrates on caring for victims, leaving the prosecution of perpetrators in the capable hands of those who have made that their mission. If a survivor we are working with chooses to press charges against his or her trafficker, we and our partners provide emotional and practical support, helping with needed connections and coming alongside during the process. WAR, Int'l recognizes prosecution as an essential aspect of structural change, and we are grateful for the wonderful organizations (such as International Justice Mission) who excel at going after traffickers and bringing them to justice. The crucial work they do in this area enables us to focus on our mission of rescue, restoration, and empowerment for the victim.

## **21) Is rescue enough?**

Absolutely NOT. Rescue is only the first step. Once someone leaves the streets, many questions follow: *What can I do? Where can I go? Who can I trust? Who will help me?* Rescued individuals have an incredible amount of healing to do as they deal with issues such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and injuries from physical assault. They struggle with the way they view themselves and the way they are viewed in their culture. Addressing all these issues requires holistic healing and support services that include shelter, counseling, medical care, childcare, and more. Vocational training is also an essential piece of the puzzle, as it offers a rescued woman way to support herself, greatly reducing her chances of being resold. Typically, rescue is the easiest task we face, while the long-term goals of healing and self-support are more difficult to achieve.

## **22) Why is WAR, Int'l so passionate about job training? What kinds of job training do WAR, Int'l's partners offer? How do you decide what job training works?**

WAR, Int'l is passionate about job training because simply removing someone from a bad situation is not enough. If the circumstances that led her into the situation are not fixed, she is likely to fall back into the system. These root causes, which often include financial need and lack of employment, are usually compounded by a belief that she lacks the ability to provide for herself outside of a life on the streets. Thus, it is essential that a rescued individual have a means by which she can support herself with honor and dignity. To this end, WAR, Int'l and our partners train rescued and at-risk women and men in a variety of jobs, depending on the local culture and need. These jobs include baking, jewelry making, sewing, cake decorating, dress rental, animal husbandry, and more. The goal is to train them in work that is culturally appropriate and self-sustaining, and the jobs that fit those criteria have been predetermined by our established partners within each country.

## **23) Are individuals rescued overseas brought to the United States?**

With very few exceptions, those rescued from other countries are not brought to the U.S. They remain in their home cultures or—in the case of those trafficked across international borders—as close to them as they can be. Those trafficked into the United States may be able to remain in the United States under refugee status or the T-Visa. Those trafficked illegally across borders are given the chance to return to their homelands through our Safely Home program. Ultimately, the goals are to re-integrate them into society,

help them find dignity in their communities, and when possible, re-unite them with their families. (*For more information on Safely Home, see question 24.*)

In the case of the domestically trafficked, WAR, Int'l does partner with multiple safehouses in the U.S. The goal of these safehouses is to create circles of protection and healing while at the same time preparing those they serve to re-integrate into society and re-enter the workforce. We have also started our own non-residential program in West Michigan, the U.S. Training Center ([warinternational.org/program/us-training-center](http://warinternational.org/program/us-training-center)), which provides counseling and vocational training within a safe and nurturing environment.

**24) How does WAR, Int'l return rescued women to their homes?**

When it is safe for an internationally trafficked woman to return to her native country, WAR, Int'l is often able to provide assistance through our Safely Home program ([warinternational.org/program/safely-home](http://warinternational.org/program/safely-home)). Before she returns home, we ensure that she has received or will receive the education and job skills she needs in order to protect and support herself. If she needs extensive dental work or surgery before she can return home, we may provide a medical scholarship for her care. Coming alongside the partners working to facilitate her trip home, we may provide funds for a plane ticket, clothing, or other needs. At times, we provide protection from traffickers who have been known to wait at the airport or in the woman's home town to exact revenge. When possible, we set her up with a partner in her native country who will help her transition back into her culture.

Some women are unable to return home, as they would likely face rejection from their families and communities—or worse, be slain in an “honor killing.” We make every effort to return these women to safe places within their native countries, with the help of our partners working in those countries. If a woman cannot return to her native country, we work with our partners to ensure her safety within the country of rescue.

**25) How does WAR, Int'l work with at-risk women in Islamic countries?**

Cultural norms in Islamic lands can make it difficult to reach out directly to wounded women. To create bridges into the lives of women with needs, we must first connect with the men in their lives. WAR, Int'l accomplishes this in a variety of ways; one example is seen in our business affiliations with Middle East craftsmen. These business owners respect the fact that we are “women helping women” and that their products are supporting this cause. By selling their products, WAR, Int'l creates relationships with the artisans, which in turn opens the door for us to meet and build relationships with their wives and daughters. As we build these relationships, we connect these women to scholarships, opportunities, and local partners who follow up and deal with the risk issues in each woman's life.

WAR, Int'l also provides job training for at-risk women in Islamic countries. This can protect them by giving them value in the eyes of their families or allowing them to leave a dangerous home situation.

**26) When it is difficult or impossible to safely remove the victim from the situation, how does WAR, Int'l work with the abuser?**

This can be an issue when cultural, emotional, or economic obstacles prevent a victim from leaving an abusive situation. The key to helping a victim in this situation is to work within the culture or value system, no matter how unjustifiable it may seem to us.

In some cases, the abuser has real or perceived authority over the victim—for example, a male relative in a patriarchal culture—and she is unable to leave without permission. She may also lose rights to her children if she leaves. In this situation, we can sometimes help by offering a scholarship for training in a skill that the abuser values and will allow the victim to learn. This training enables her to earn an income from home, making her an economic asset and giving her abuser an incentive to treat her well and keep her healthy. Although this may not seem like the best scenario within our western mindset, it can be an effective means of preventing or stopping abuse when removing the victim from the situation is not an option.

Another scenario could involve a victim who is in debt bondage to a bar or brothel owner. In this instance, our partners will work to establish a relationship with the owner, who may then allow them to develop a rapport with the workers. This enables our partners to talk with the victim about his or her rights, discuss other employment options, and help develop a safe exit strategy.

Yet another type of situation involves an abuser who has fostered an emotional or economic dependence—this may be the case with a pimp who has fathered the victim’s child, a controlling spouse or partner, or a trafficker who acts as a boyfriend or parent figure. The victim may be unable to leave the situation without permission, or she may be afraid to leave due to threats of further abuse, fear of losing her children, or lack of a place to go and a means to support herself. In this sort of setting, we work to educate the victim about her rights and the rights of her children and talk with her about shelter and employment options. If she is unable or unwilling to leave, we attempt to work with the abuser to ensure her safety and maintain our influence.

## ***Questions About Our Products***

**27) Where do the materials used in Women At Risk, International’s (WAR, Int’l’s) products come from?**

Our partners make every effort to create all or most of their products with locally sourced materials. This benefits the surrounding communities and helps to ensure program sustainability. To help facilitate this, WAR, Int’l has sent professional experts and consultants overseas to locate and identify regional products, evaluate local markets, and fine-tune ways to make the products marketable locally or abroad.

**28) How much of the money from product sales goes into programs? How much goes back to the women who make the products? How are the women paid?**

As mandated by the WAR, Int’l board, ninety percent of the profit from product sales goes back into our programs (*see question 48*).

The women making the products are paid one hundred percent of what they are promised. Pay varies from one program to the next, as each program is adjusted to the needs of the women it serves and the values of the culture. Many of our partners calculate wages based on the average salary of local elementary school teachers, placing the women’s income level well above what is normally earned by similar artisans and crafters in their countries.

Women in safehouses are generally paid by the hour. Part of a woman’s paid work day may actually be spent studying and caring for her children. In addition, she receives “benefits” such as childcare, medical care, and vocational scholarships. Women in community-based and microenterprise programs often receive the same benefits and are usually paid per piece, which gives them the potential to make even more money than they would make if paid per hour. Whatever the method of pay, the important thing is that rescued and at-risk women are earning a living and supporting themselves with dignity.

**29) Do all of WAR, Int’l’s partners make and sell product?**

Not all of our partnerships involve product. Product comes primarily from three types of programs: microenterprises, vocational training centers, and safehouses. Micro-enterprises and vocational training centers are generally formed around product creation, providing employment and skills training for those at risk. Some of these programs export their product, while others sell only locally. (The latter group includes cafés and bakeries as well as programs which, for various reasons, find it more cost-effective to focus on the local market.) Many of our safehouses also create product, which provides training and employment for their residents and also serves as a means of financial sustainability for the safehouses.

However, selling product is only one aspect of our multi-faceted approach to helping those at risk. Many of our partners do not create product at all. These include a few vocational programs and safehouses, along



with programs focusing on orphan care, education, medical care, and outreach. We support these partners in a variety of other ways, many of which are detailed in [question 6](#).

### 30) What kinds of products does WAR, Int'l sell? Do you have a catalog? How can I purchase your products?

Our products include jewelry, bags, clothing, spa products, candles, cards, and much more. Because our product line is continually changing and growing, we do not publish a print catalog. However, we provide several great ways for you to view and purchase WAR, Int'l product:

- Visit the WAR Chest Boutique website at [warchestboutique.com](http://warchestboutique.com). Our site is regularly updated to reflect new product, and sometimes you'll even find online specials. You'll also enjoy paging through the website's virtual "look book," which we update seasonally.
- If you live in or are visiting West Michigan, please stop into one of our local shops:
  - WAR Chest Boutique, Rockford, MI – 25 Squires St. in beautiful downtown Rockford. 616-863-0100.
  - WAR Chest Boutique & Tea Trade Café, Wyoming, MI – in front of our headquarters at 2790 44<sup>th</sup> St. 616-530-1234.

For directions and current hours, please call the number listed, or visit [warchestboutique.com/store-locations](http://warchestboutique.com/store-locations).

- You may also purchase products at WAR, Int'l speaking events. (To find events in your area, visit [warinternational.org/events/calendar](http://warinternational.org/events/calendar).)
- Finally, a fun way to view and purchase our product is by hosting or attending a WAR, Int'l pop-up boutique! (For more information on hosting, call our Party Central staff at (616) 855-0796 or visit [warinternational.org/host-a-party](http://warinternational.org/host-a-party).)

If you have a flair for fashion and would like to help us decide which products to carry, consider joining our style committee! For more information, email [style@warinternational.org](mailto:style@warinternational.org). If you simply have a suggestion for a product you would like to see WAR, Int'l carry in the future, feel free to email it to us at this address.

### 31) Are all of WAR, Int'l's products made by rescued women?

No. Some are made by rescued women and some by at-risk women. Some are even made by rescued or at-risk men. We also carry a few items that are not made by those at risk but are sold in support of them. Our products fall into three categories based on the [types of programs](#) that produce them:

- **Curative Programs** provide therapeutic communities in which those who were once trafficked, abused, or abandoned can find safety, comfort, and healing. Curative products are made by women and men who have been rescued from trafficking and other risk situations and are now learning sought-after and sustainable skills within the safety of their programs.
- **Preventive Programs** focus on those at risk, striving to "rescue" vulnerable women and children from exploitation and abuse before it ever happens. Many of our preventative programs provide employment for at-risk individuals. Creating and selling products gives these individuals a means of supporting themselves and their families, safeguarding them against exploitation and empowering them toward futures of dignity and promise.
- **Supportive Programs** help to maintain and expand WAR, Int'l's projects, allowing us to reach more women, men, and children worldwide. Supportive products may be educational, such as books, or they may supplement our curative and preventative products; an example of the latter would be silver chains for our pearl pendants, earring and brooch converters, and necklace extenders. Supportive product also includes items sold in support of our partners and programs, such as our Pray 4 War Babies bracelets.

The profit from supportive product sales is used in the area of greatest need: for example, new programs or emergency funds.

## *Questions About Getting Involved*

### **32) Do you send out newsletters? Can I receive them via email?**

Women At Risk, International sends out bimonthly newsletters via mail and email. To be added to our mailing list, please send your name, address, and email address to [info@warinternational.org](mailto:info@warinternational.org) or call us at 616-855-0796. If you do not have an email address and want to receive the printed version, please indicate that and provide your mailing address.

### **33) How can I get involved?**

While WAR, Int'l is based in West Michigan, our reach spreads far and wide. Wherever you live, there are many ways to donate your time, talent, and resources on behalf of WAR, Int'l and our programs. These include hosting a party or event, giving financially, donating professional or creative services, working at our Volunteer Center, and many other options. For more information, contact us at 616-855-0796 to request a "Take Action" brochure, or go to [warinternational.org/get-involved](http://warinternational.org/get-involved). *(For additional details, continue reading below.)*

### **34) How can I use my home, my family, and my circle of influence here to raise awareness about human trafficking and help WAR, Int'l create circles of protection and hope around at-risk women?**

WAR, Int'l offers a myriad of ways for you to touch the lives of women here in the U.S. and abroad right from your own home and community. Begin in your home, creating a safe place that promotes love and acceptance. Reach out to your family, your neighbors, and your friends, raising awareness about trafficking. Host a party or event at your home, church, or organization where other women can learn about WAR, Int'l's programs and purchase jewelry and accessories made by at-risk women (*see question 35*). Consider becoming a consultant and representing WAR, Int'l's products in your home state. For more details about these opportunities, contact us at 616-855-0796 to request a "Take Action" brochure, or go to [warinternational.org/get-involved](http://warinternational.org/get-involved).

### **35) How do I host a WAR event or pop-up boutique? Will it cost me anything to host?**

Hosting a product event is a wonderful way to support WAR, Int'l and our partners as we create circles of protection and hope around wounded and at-risk women. Product sales are essential to the work of rescuing and restoring those at-risk. Every \$300 dollars in sales supports a woman in a safehouse for one month! Hosting product requires no financial outlay on your part—we even pay shipping costs—and our friendly and helpful Party Central staff will assist you every step of the way. They can be reached at (616) 855-0796, or you may visit [warinternational.org/host-a-party](http://warinternational.org/host-a-party) for more information.

### **36) How can I use my business or my professional skills to assist WAR, Int'l in the fight against trafficking?**

There are many ways for businesses to get involved in the war on trafficking. For more information on any of the following opportunities, please contact us at [volunteer@warinternational.org](mailto:volunteer@warinternational.org) or 616-855-0796.

- Host our product and/or brochures. Stores, doctors' offices, spas, school stores, and camps have hosted our product on a wholesale basis.
- Shop for corporate gifts for your employees at one of our [boutiques](#) or our [online store](#).
- Put together a corporate team to walk, bike, or run for WAR, Int'l.
- Contribute a portion of your profits to WAR, Int'l.
- Offer corporate sponsorships or provide scholarships for survivors and at-risk women.

- Host a Christmas tree at your business with WAR, Int'l's hand-blown glass ornaments. We make it easy for you by providing the tree, set-up, ornaments, and order forms. For more information, please contact our office at [party@warinternational.org](mailto:party@warinternational.org).
- Donate your professional skill. We have called upon lawyers, accountants, engineers, and other business professionals to help with planning and implementing projects. We have also used the services of photographers, videographers, web designers, writers, and editors who are able to work with WAR, Int'l from their own homes and offices. In addition, a variety of specialists have donated services overseas or within the U.S. to assist our partners on-site. These include medical and dental professionals, building trade professionals, teachers, jewelry designers, cake decorators, cosmetologists, and many others.
- Provide an "internship" in the form of on-the-job training for an at-risk woman from our U.S. Training Center or one of our partnering organizations, taking her under wing and nurturing her in vocational skills and business etiquette. While this will require an extra measure of grace not needed for a typical intern, it carries with it the potential reward of making a crucial difference in someone's life. For more information, please contact our programming department at [programs@warinternational.org](mailto:programs@warinternational.org).

### **37) How can men be involved in the organization?**

WAR, Int'l recognizes that the risks women face cannot be eliminated without the help of the husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers whom we love and respect, and we are grateful for their efforts. Men regularly join us at our volunteer center, offer their professional and vocational skills, and attend educational events. Men are also encouraged to shop at our WAR Chest Boutiques, where they will find an increasing number of men's products along with plenty of gift ideas for the women in their lives.

Some men have expressed a desire to be more directly involved in outreach and rescue. For various reasons, including survivor trust issues, there are few roles for men when it comes to outreach, rescue, and aftercare involving at-risk women. However, there are many potential outreach opportunities awaiting men to step up and lead them. These may include outreach to male trafficking victims, support for men leaving the sex industry, support groups for men struggling with pornography, prayer groups, and events to raise awareness of trafficking and other risk issues.

### **38) How can I have WAR, Int'l's president come and speak at my event? Does WAR, Int'l send other speakers to parties, conferences, or church and organizational presentations?**

If you would like our president, Rebecca (Becky) McDonald, to speak to or at your church, business, organization, or conference, please contact our office at 616-855-0796 or [info@warinternational.org](mailto:info@warinternational.org). We prefer that the event be attended by at least 100-150 people, and we request that the person or organization cover Becky's speaking fees and travel expenses. If an event conflicts with Becky's schedule, a board member or consultant may be available and willing to speak.

For smaller gatherings, we will be happy to look into the possibility of sending a board member or a trained volunteer from your area. To inquire, please contact our office.

### **39) Are internships available with WAR, Int'l? Can I work in the U.S. or overseas? Can I serve in a safehouse or orphanage as a short-term missionary?**

WAR, Int'l is not a mission agency and does not facilitate missions trips or internships with our overseas and domestic partners. We do, however, offer numerous internship opportunities at our headquarters in Wyoming, MI. Whatever your area of gifting, interest, or study, we likely have a place for you! Students have interned in areas such as marketing, business planning, research, writing, administration, communication, media, public relations, computer technology, and sales. To inquire about internships, contact our office at 616-855-0796 or [intern@warinternational.org](mailto:intern@warinternational.org).

#### **41) How can I give to WAR, Int'l?**

There are two ways to make a financial donation to WAR, Int'l:

- online at [warinternational.org/donate](http://warinternational.org/donate)
- by mail – please make out checks to WAR, Int'l or Women At Risk, International and mail to:  
Women At Risk, International | 2790 44<sup>th</sup> St. SW | Wyoming, MI 49519

We also have Creative Gifting opportunities that allow you to give scholarships for education and skills training, contribute toward medical care, help fund business start-ups for at-risk individuals, sponsor rescued women at a banquet, support outreach programs and emergency rescue, and more. For more information, visit [warchestboutique.com/pages/charitable-giving](http://warchestboutique.com/pages/charitable-giving).

In addition, WAR, Int'l often has need of specific material donations, which vary throughout the year according to program needs. These include consumable items such as paper products and cleaning supplies, new craft and office supplies, and small gift items. To make the most of your giving, please contact us at 616-855-0796 or [info@warinternational.org](mailto:info@warinternational.org) for a list of current needs.

#### **42) What are Circle Tours? How often do they happen? Are Circle Tours safe? Who can go on a Circle Tour? How do I sign up?**

A Circle Tour, which takes place every other February (even-numbered years), is an 11-to-14-day trip abroad with WAR, Int'l staff and supporters and other interested individuals. Circle Tour travel is primarily in Thailand, a global hotspot for trafficking that is nonetheless very safe for tourists. Participants are never in any physical danger. Circle Tour participants visit safehouses and orphanages, fellowship with rescued women, hear from program directors around the world, go on outreach, visit cultural sites, and learn from uplifting and encouraging speakers. Participants raise their own funds for the trip, and anyone with interest, male or female, may apply. Contact our office at 616-855-0796 or [programs@warinternational.org](mailto:programs@warinternational.org). More information can be found online at [warinternational.org/circle-tour](http://warinternational.org/circle-tour).

#### **43) Is my story of wounding and restoration of any help to WAR, Int'l?**

Yes, your experiences may serve to encourage, inspire, or lift up others. If you are willing to share your story, please contact us at [programs@warinternational.org](mailto:programs@warinternational.org) or 616-855-0796.

### ***Questions About the Organization***

#### **44) What is the passion behind the founding of Women At Risk, International (WAR, Int'l)?**

Women At Risk, International grew out of Founder and President Rebecca (Becky) McDonald's heart for wounded and at-risk women and her desire to see them protected, restored, and nurtured back to wholeness. Growing up in Bangladesh (then called West Pakistan), Becky lived among at-risk women and children from an early age. Her passion for their plight was ignited at the young age of fourteen when her Pakistani friend, resisting rape, had acid poured down her throat to silence her cries. Her suffering, Becky says, "burned a hole in my heart and set me on a course of action." The path of her action became evident as she later ministered overseas with her husband, living in the midst of hurting women and families and stepping into their lives. Wrapping arms of love around wounded women became her passion, confronting the risks they faced became her mission, and creating circles of protection around them eventually became her life's work.

#### **45) When and how did WAR, Int'l start?**

WAR, Int'l traces its informal beginnings back more than three decades to the overseas kitchen of Founder and President Rebecca (Becky) McDonald. There she would sit with wounded women, hearing their stories, listening to their hearts, and whispering words of encouragement into their lives. As she began looking for ways to help them, informal programs began to take shape. Originally under the umbrella of another humanitarian ministry, these programs consisted primarily of partnering with orphanages and providing

job skill training to at-risk women, with an emphasis on self-sustainability. As the programs expanded to reach more women and children, it became apparent that “Women At Risk,” as it was known, needed to incorporate as a separate organization.

In October 2006, a separate board was formed and Women At Risk, International was established as a 501(c)(3) entity, with representation in 16 states and projects in 14 countries. In the years since, the breadth of reach has continued to expand as the number of projects has multiplied. Now in its second decade, WAR, Int’l continues to move forward in its mission to empower at-risk women and children by creating circles of protection and hope around them.

**46) Has WAR, Int’l staff witnessed the problems you address first-hand? Do staff members visit WAR, Int’l’s partners?**

Yes, a number of WAR, Int'l's staff members have been involved in outreach here in the U.S. or abroad. Staff and board members have participated in our overseas Circle Tours, where they interact with partners, visit safehouses, and do outreach in red-light districts. A few have even accompanied Founder and President Rebecca (Becky) McDonald to various parts of the world to meet with our partners. Becky, whose heart is in missions and program development, has traveled extensively to visit the programs and partners with whom we work. Journeying to Central American barrios, African villages, and Asian cities, she experiences each program within its cultural context and witnesses first-hand the issues each seeks to address.

Whether meeting them on their home soil or speaking with them from afar, WAR, Int’l program staff continue to keep contact with our partners—staying abreast of the issues they face, finding out their needs, encouraging and mentoring them, and learning how we can best continue to help them.

**47) Is WAR, Int’l a “religious” organization?**

WAR, Int’l was founded and continues to operate in the name of Christ. However, our mission is to address risk issues and give voice to the silenced regardless of religious background or belief. Our partners understand our values. Most are also Christian-based; however, they work with and serve Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, animists, and atheists, without requiring them to conform to Christian beliefs and practices.

Most of our partnering residential safehouses and orphanages are Christian-based and offer worship services, Bible studies, and spiritual mentoring. While participation requirements vary, no one is forced to sign a statement of faith. Many of our faith-based vocational training, education, and microenterprise partners offer non-compulsory Bible studies and worship services as part of their programs.

WAR, Int'l is passionate about creating circles of protection around those at risk. In so doing, we see an opportunity to be “Christ with skin on”—to lift up the wounded and bring hope to the hopeless, as we believe God commands us to do.

**48) How are monies raised and delegated within WAR, Int’l? To whom is WAR, Int’l financially accountable?**

WAR, Int’l has three revenue streams: donations, grants, and profits generated from product sales. Monies received from these three streams are delegated as follows:

- **Designated donations and grants:** WAR, Int’l is committed to using designated donations and grants for their stated purposes whenever possible. However, to be consistent with legal standards as required by the IRS, WAR, Int’l maintains control and discretion in the use and disposition of all gifts, whether designated or not.
- **Undesignated donations and grants:** WAR, Int’l directs undesignated donations and grants to the most pressing or urgent needs. An undesignated donation may help to fund an emergency intervention, provide a medical scholarship, repair a safehouse roof or well, buy sewing machines for a training center, send an at-risk child to school, or fill any number of other compelling needs. Undesignated donations also help to cover WAR, Int’l’s administrative and overhead costs.

- **Profit from product sales:** As mandated by the WAR, Int'l board, ninety percent of the profit from product sales goes back into programs, with ten percent covering handling charges and overhead costs. When possible, we go above and beyond that mandate. Some years we have been able to cover all of our administrative costs through donations and grants, enabling us to funnel one hundred percent of the money from product sales back into programs. (*For more information on profit from product sales, refer to [question 28.](#)*)

**Please note:** Many people believe that because an organization qualifies for tax-exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service, it is also exempt from sales tax obligations. However, the IRS exemption applies only to income tax. WAR, Int'l adheres to the sales tax laws of each individual state, and any sales tax collected is remitted to the state in which it was collected.

WAR, Int'l is financially accountable to the Board of Directors and to its individual, church, and foundation donors. WAR, Int'l maintains its financial credibility by the following means:

- We are accredited by the [Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability \(ECFA\)](#).
- In accordance with ECFA standards, we submit to annual third-party audits.
- Our 990 form (a 20-30-page line-item document required by the IRS for all 501c3 organizations) is available upon request.

If you have more questions regarding WAR, Int'l's financial policies, please contact us at [info@warinternational.org](mailto:info@warinternational.org).

#### **49) How is WAR, Int'l organized?**

WAR, Int'l is a non-profit 501c3 organization governed by and responsible to a board of directors. We employ a small staff and rely heavily on volunteer efforts. WAR, Int'l does not send out missionaries; rather, the majority of our work is done through established partnerships. We function primarily as an administrative hub, offering resources and assistance to our partners as needs arise.

(*For more details on how we serve our partners, see [question 6.](#)*)

#### **50) How many people does WAR, Int'l employ? Do you employ staff overseas?**

WAR, Int'l, currently employs a small staff of full- and part-time employees at our headquarters and boutiques. In addition, we have many active volunteers in West Michigan alone who serve in a variety of ways. Local volunteers donate around 17,000 hours of time and talent each year, saving us an estimated \$135,000-140,000 in administrative costs! When our volunteer consultants and speakers across the nation are factored in, the number of hours given and money saved is even greater.

Although we are an international organization, WAR, Int'l does not generally employ staff overseas. Our passion is for our partners to be self-sustaining, independent organizations that run their own budgets and employ their own staff members. Rather than pay staff salaries for our partners, we work with them to increase and maintain their own sustainability. Most of our partners rely on both paid and volunteer staff.

#### **51) Where is WAR, Int'l located? How can I contact you?**

WAR, Int'l's headquarters are based in West Michigan at 2790 44<sup>th</sup> St. SW in Wyoming, in the Greater Grand Rapids area. We currently have two [WAR Chest Boutiques](#): one at headquarters and the other in nearby Rockford, MI (*see [question 30.](#)*). WAR, Int'l's partnering organizations are located in over 40 different countries, including the United States. We can be contacted via phone, email, or mail:

- 616-855-0796 | [info@warinternational.org](mailto:info@warinternational.org)
- Women At Risk, International | 2790 44<sup>th</sup> St. SW | Wyoming, MI 49519

*Do you have a question that was not answered? Call WAR, Int'l at 616-855-0796, email us at [info@warinternational.org](mailto:info@warinternational.org), or visit [www.warinternational.org](http://www.warinternational.org).*