



Hope **UNITED**
United Way of East Central Alabama's
Anti-trafficking Initiative

PREVENTION

HopeUNITED highlights awareness by

- Collaborating with community partners
- Participating in vendor fairs and other community events
- Hosting quarterly “Introduction to Online Exploitation and Human Trafficking” classes
- Providing prevention education for nonprofits, businesses, and other community organizations
- Providing digital safety education for parents/caregivers
- Providing digital safety education for school staff and students

INTERVENTION

HopeUNITED provides advocacy for victim survivors who have been exploited through commercial sex, online exploitation, sex trafficking, or labor trafficking.

HopeUNITED connects victim survivors to resources, including short and long-term services, that promote healing.

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Why HopeUNITED?

Shayna (not her real name) reached out to United Way of East Central Alabama's HopeUNITED with an urgent plea: "I need help; I am in a hotel, and my trafficker may kill me." This call marked the beginning of Shayna's journey to safety and healing. Shayna is a victim-survivor of sex trafficking. Through a collaborative effort with others, HopeUNITED was able to transport Shayna, who had to leave the hotel with only the clothes on her back, to a safe location where she was offered services to begin healing. Like many others, Shayna was sexually abused as a teenager but was not believed when she told. This led to her keeping things to herself even when other abuses took place. After a while, she fell in love with a man who "understood" her only to discover he had told her lies to force her to sell herself for his profit and his gain. The relationship became violent, and for a long time, Shayna did not think she could ever leave, but someone reached out to let her know she was not alone and that others were willing to help. She was given the telephone number for HopeUNITED. Thankfully, she made that important, life-altering, phone call for help. Not only does HopeUNITED help meet basic needs, but they also walk alongside the survivor for however long she needs. They advocate for the best care available for all survivors they serve, including Shayna. As one survivor shared, HopeUNITED "kept the light shining on [her] darkest of days and spoke hope when [she] was sure there was none." Every individual deserves a life filled with hope, and through the HopeUNITED initiative, we strive to make that a reality.

**Together, we can combat human trafficking
and bring light to those trapped in darkness.
Every action counts. Every life matters.**

**Our
Community
Partners**

