



My Life My Choice Prospectus



overview

FOUNDED 2002

CURRENT REVENUE \$170,000

DESCRIPTION: The My Life My Choice Project is a nationally recognized, groundbreaking initiative designed to stem the tide of commercial sexual exploitation of adolescent girls. A program of the Justice Resource Institute, MLMC provides a unique continuum of services, including prevention programs, service provider trainings, and case coordination and mentoring for victims of exploitation. The My Life My Choice Project is able to have a significant impact on a hard-to-reach population by employing survivors as group leaders, trainers, and mentors. Their first-hand accounts of victimization have informed group and training curricula and are the voice of authenticity to girls entrapped in a life of abuse. Through its victim-centered programs, advocacy, and public awareness building, MLMC hopes to change the landscape—educating and empowering adolescent girls to find a positive life path and eliminating the marketplace for sexual exploitation.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY: My Life My Choice is seeking to raise \$210,000 over two years to expand service delivery capacity to reach 380 girls and 1,800 providers directly and build the organizational infrastructure to support continued growth, network expansion, and drive public awareness. This \$210,000 would be added to the expected earned income and grants already secured to meet the two-year program goals defined in this prospectus.

THE NEED

Nationally, an estimated 240,000 – 325,000 youth are at risk for sex trafficking annually. Adolescent girls, particularly those abused, neglected, or exposed to violence and family addiction, are easy targets for recruitment.

- The average age range of girls recruited into prostitution is between 12 and 15 years old.
- Thirty-four task forces nationally, operating as part of the FBI’s Innocence Lost initiative, have recovered nearly 900 children from sexual exploitation since 2003.
- Annual victim identification locally has grown from seven girls in 2003 to 90 girls in 2008.
- The SEEN (Support to End Exploitation Now) Coalition database in Suffolk County grew to 300 exploited girls between 2005 and 2009. As victims are so hard to identify, victim totals are likely undercounts.

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR SOCIAL IMPACT

Since 2002, MLMC has reached over 950 girls and over 3,000 service providers in a variety of settings. MLMC made accessible to providers for the first time the risk factors and red flags signaling exploitation. This information underpins their programs and has been used locally and nationally by service providers.

- In 2006, MLMC received a two-year Department of Justice demonstration grant and was recognized as a national model for sex trafficking prevention.
- MLMC’s prevention group model has been replicated in several states, including Minnesota, Connecticut, and California; additional jurisdictions seek to adopt the model.
- Recognized as a promising program to prevent violence, MLMC received a 2008 Executive Office of Public Safety Byrne Grant to expand survivor mentoring and provide case coordination in Suffolk County.

TWO-YEAR GOALS

- Increase direct service capacity in each program area
- Expand survivor leadership development program, preparing 10–15 girls to be speakers and group facilitators
- Implement data collection and program measurement protocols to support evidence-based practice
- Expand grant writing and donor cultivation capacity in order to grow and diversify revenue streams
- Maximize fees for service and reimbursement
- Establish an Advisory Board of thought leaders, fundraisers, practitioners, and survivors to advance MLMC’s public awareness and advocacy strategy

WAYS TO INVEST

Financial

- \$50,000 – Awareness training for an additional 1,000 service providers and community members
- \$5,000 – One 10-week prevention group for 20 girls
- \$1,000 – Weekly mentoring visits with one girl for the three critical months after a survivor exits “the Life”

In-kind

- Advisory Board members
- Host an awareness event to educate and involve your community
- Cell phones and service plans for mentors

“The My Life My Choice Project is a national model for effective sexual exploitation preventative education.”

–Rachel Durschlag, Executive Director

CHICAGO ALLIANCE AGAINST SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CAASE)

SOCIAL INNOVATION IN ACTION – THE MY LIFE MY CHOICE MODEL

Between 2002 and 2004, what was a local response to a tragic event became a national model for the prevention of sex trafficking of adolescent girls. In 2001, 17-year-old Latasha Cannon was murdered. At the time of her death, none of the caring adults in her life knew that she was under the control of a pimp and being exploited through prostitution. In response, several organizations joined forces to investigate the issue. With initial funding from the Department of Children and Families, and under the umbrella of The Home for Little Wanderers, My Life My Choice was founded. Within two years, Lisa Goldblatt Grace, in collaboration with survivors, had researched exploitation nationally, tapped the social service community locally, borrowed best practices from other public health prevention protocols, and cultivated the experience of survivors, synthesizing disparate information into a *nationally recognized sexual exploitation prevention and intervention program*.

A Continuum of Services

PREVENTION: Exploitation Prevention Groups

A 10-session curriculum in which a clinical social worker and a survivor meet weekly with a group of 10 girls to build their skills and knowledge around recruitment and the options available to them to avoid exploitation.

IDENTIFICATION: Provider Trainings

Full-day sessions delivered to social workers, police, court staff, and others in youth service to explain the risk factors for sex trafficking, the red flags indicating a girl may be a victim, and how to understand and support commercially sexually exploited girls.

INTERVENTION: Case Coordination and Survivor Mentoring

Coordination among service providers and consultation to every girl identified as having been commercially sexually exploited in Suffolk County. Survivor mentoring pairs an adult woman who has survived commercial sexual exploitation in her adolescence with a girl who has been exploited. Survivors are uniquely able to decrease a victim’s sense of isolation, increase her hope for a life outside of exploitation, and support her as she builds a new life for herself.



SEEN Database of Victims (March 2009)

- 46% African American
- 31% Caucasian
- 18% Hispanic
- 80% have a history of running way
- 90% have a history of sexual abuse and neglect



Harnessing Girls' Power, Resilience, and Outrage

“My mentor, Audrey, talked about her experiences in “the Life,” which made me feel more comfortable in my skin knowing I wasn’t alone. She has spoken to me in ways that others may not have the courage to do so. Audrey has been the person I have counted on as my support system, and if I had a problem, I know that I could always go to her because she would be caring and understanding in every situation I brought to her. She taught me how to love myself.”

– MLMC Mentoring Participant

AWARENESS AND ADVOCACY

Through public speaking and writing, MLMC transforms public understanding of commercial sexual exploitation of adolescent girls, draws attention to effective intervention and, ultimately, eliminates the market for exploitation. Through MLMC’s survivor leadership development program, girls with experience in “the Life” and who have participated in a prevention group are trained to serve as guest speakers, group co-facilitators, and to advocate on behalf of exploited youth.

TEAM AND GOVERNANCE

My Life My Choice is comprised of a small but extremely dynamic and effective team. MLMC Director Lisa Goldblatt Grace, a licensed clinical social worker with an additional master’s degree in public health, co-founded My Life My Choice in 2002. She has worked with vulnerable young people in a variety of capacities for the last 20 years. Her professional experience includes running a long-term residential program for homeless teen parents; working nationally on developing teen parent housing; developing a diversion program for violent youth offenders; and working in outpatient mental health, health promotion, and residential treatment settings.

In 2003, survivor Audrey Porter joined the organization as assistant director and coordinator of Survivor Services. Drawing from her personal experience as a victim of commercial sexual exploitation, Audrey delivers provider training, facilitates prevention groups, and serves as a mentor to exploited girls referred to MLMC. She has received national recognition through an award from the Petra Foundation for her groundbreaking work. In 2006, MLMC brought on survivor Ann Wilkinson as a mentor and group facilitator, and Megan Pulvermacher serves as case coordinator, a position created with funding from the Executive Office of Public Safety in 2008.

In 2009, MLMC transitioned from The Home for Little Wanderers to Justice Resource Institute, where it operates as part of JRI’s Behavioral Health and Trauma Services. Though a program of JRI, MLMC is responsible for all programs and services it offers and for generating revenue to support and grow its operations. In order to expand its network and gain the support of new communities, MLMC intends to build an Advisory Board over the next two years.

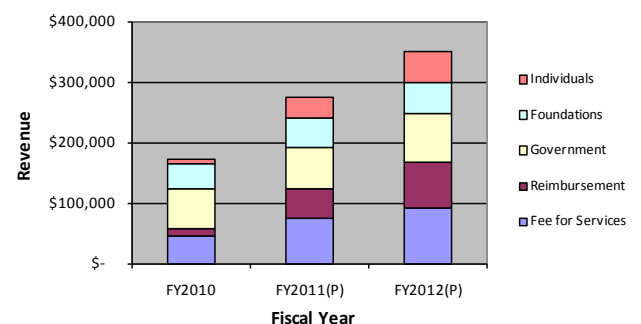
KEY SOCIAL IMPACT INVESTORS

- U.S. Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
- MA Department of Children and Families
- MA Executive Office of Public Safety (Byrne Grant)
- Boston Police (Shannon Grant)
- Anna B. Stearns Foundation
- Jack Forte Foundation
- Campbell and Hall Charity Fund

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

MLMC has a history of strong backing from government and foundations but realizes the importance of diversifying its revenue streams to ensure financial sustainability. To this end, MLMC will utilize administrative support at JRI to receive reimbursement revenue for its mentoring services. By FY 2012, MLMC earned income from training fees and reimbursement should total 48% of revenue, as compared to 34% in FY 2010. MLMC will also hire a part-time development professional to increase support from individuals and continue to grow foundation support. Investment from private sources is critical to MLMC’s success. MLMC anticipates having to subsidize some provider trainings and prevention groups, as organizations in need of these programs are often unable to pay the full fee. Private support, combined with significant earned revenue, will provide the resources needed for MLMC to achieve its goals.

Revenue Sources and Projections



“My Life My Choice is the gold standard in prevention and mentoring programs for commercially sexually exploited and trafficked girls.”

–Rachel Lloyd, Executive Director

GIRLS EDUCATIONAL AND MENTORING SERVICES (GEMS)

PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Program Performance and Organizational Health: Below is a summary of the key measures that MLMC will be tracking to demonstrate progress, capture lessons learned, and make course corrections as needed. *Note: Fiscal year is July 1 – June 30.*

	FY 2010	FY 2011 (P)	FY 2012 (P)
Program Performance – Direct Service			
Number of prevention groups	7	15	20
Number of prevention group participants	68	150	200
Number of provider trainings	10	20	25
Number of providers trained	332	800	1,000
Number of girls mentored	26	30	35
Number of girls trained and active as survivor leaders	4	5–7	5–8
Organizational Health/Capacity Building			
Grow earned income	\$55,000	\$125,000	\$165,000
Pursue individual gifts	-	\$35,000	\$50,000
Engage a part-time development professional	-	15% increase in government and foundation grants	25% increase in government and foundation grants
Recruit Advisory Board	-	4 members	8 members
Expand training and mentoring capacity	-	Increase current staff hours	Hire 2 new staff
Enhance program measurement	Review current measurement tools	Track training and group outcomes	Track mentoring outcomes
Total revenue	\$170,000	\$240,000	\$340,000

Social Impact: MLMC uses information gathered through pre- and post-training and prevention group questionnaires to understand participant experience in order to continuously improving their programs. MLMC plans to increase program measurement rigor to better quantify program impact and pursue longitudinal studies to understand long-term outcomes, particularly in the area of survivor mentoring. MLMC’s programs also have significant indirect impact. Girls attending prevention groups are trained to share the knowledge they gain with their peers informally and through peer-to-peer presentations. Similarly, 25% of provider trainings are designed as train-the-trainer sessions, out of which those providers are trained to facilitate prevention groups. Virtually all providers surveyed report that training fundamentally changed their approach to helping at-risk girls and victims. In this way, MLMC leverages its modest direct service capacity for extended reach.

Near-Term Outcomes	Intermediate-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
Education and Empowerment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Girls are empowered to avoid recruitment and educate their peers. Providers attain knowledge and techniques to identify and help victims. 	Lives Transformed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victims are supported to build a life after exploitation, some becoming leaders in the movement and mentors themselves. 	Communities Transformed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploitation’s cost to, and impact on, communities is reduced. Public awareness and national training extends the safety net for at-risk girls and victims.



Success Story

“Today was great in girls’ group; I remembered all the memories, and how strong I am, and how I keep my head up. I know it’s not my fault and I’m not alone.”

– Journal entry of a Prevention Group participant