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Pest Management Industry Representing 14,000 Companies Working To Exterminate Trafficking in America

Pest Management Leaders and Safe House Project Partner to Launch Anti-Trafficking Training for Pest Technicians

CHARLOTTE, NC -The pest management industry is the latest industry to join in the fight against trafficking in America. Forshaw, a leading distributor in the pest management industry, has teamed up with Safe House Project, a national leader in the fight against Sex Trafficking in America to provide training to 160,000 pest management technicians, representing more than 14,000 companies, on how to spot, report, and prevent trafficking.

Hundreds of thousands of children are trafficked each year in the United States and trafficking reports have increased by over 40 percent during COVID-19, according to a [June report](#) from Polaris Project. Victim identification is only 1 percent.

According to Safe House Project, more than 40 percent of trafficking is done by a family member, often from the home. On the front lines of public health, pest technicians go into 20-30 percent of households annually, and are in a unique position to spot indicators of child trafficking.

Tom Forshaw, CEO of [Forshaw Inc.](#), a leading distributor to the pest management industry, led the initiative to take a stand against trafficking.

“Every day, pest management professionals service millions of homes and businesses. We are the eyes and ears of the community,” Forshaw said. “At Forshaw, we immediately realized that we could do more than donate to the cause. We could be part of the solution by educating and empowering our partners to know the signs of trafficking and speak out. Saving just one girl or boy would be a victory.”

Safe House Project’s CEO Kristi Wells is committed to their mission against trafficking to increase survivor identification above 1 percent through education of communities and industries, and to provide every victim of trafficking a place to heal by increasing safe house capacity for victims across America.

“By equipping the pest management industry to spot, report, and prevent trafficking as they work in areas where they will intersect victims, we are empowering a volunteer army to be part of the solution to a complex problem,” Wells added. “This partnership with Forshaw and the entire pest-management industry brings a one-two punch to trafficking by increasing survivor identification and being a lead funding partner to help launch safe houses for those victims identified across America.”

Fred Wingate, Chief Bug Man of Noosa Pest Management, expressed his support for this training.

“As with a lot of pest control firms, we are a family within our company. Our family takes care of the community and any time we can partner and be part of the solution to something as serious and heartbreaking as human trafficking, we are honored to participate.” Wingate said. “People let us into the most sensitive areas of their homes and that allows us to see things that most would not. What a great way to leverage that perspective to serve those without the opportunity to stand up for themselves.”

The pest management training is the first industry specific training created out of the OnWatch community-based training platform, launched in September 2020 by Safe House Project and the Malouf Foundation.

OnWatch™ is a free training program that shares the true experiences of several survivors and equips everyday citizens how to spot, report, and prevent trafficking where they live, work, and play.

“The pest management training was also written by survivors who saw in-home service providers during their time being trafficked. Those survivors shared their stories and the signs and indicators that were present, had the individuals only know what to look for,” Wells added.

Trafficking survivor Ria Story consulted on the new training and emphasized the importance of educating everyone about the signs and stories of trafficking.

“Since 2013 when I started publicly sharing my story of sexual abuse, and later trafficking, by my father, I've realized many people don't know what trafficking looks like. It doesn't always look like what we expect,” said Story. “In my case, I wish someone had gotten involved sooner, asked questions, and reported some of the symptoms that the situation wasn't normal. Child sex trafficking is an enormous problem leaving behind a trail of brokenness for millions. But even one is too many and not getting involved is not an option. That's why I'm excited about OnWatch, increasing awareness for thousands of people and equipping them to help put a stop to the evil of trafficking.”

About Forshaw

Family-owned and operated since 1961, FORSHAW is a premier distributor in the Pest Management Industry. With over 2,000 products and offices strategically placed across the country, the FORSHAW team of industry experts “supplies confidence” by elevating their partners’ businesses and their industry through personal relationships, unparalleled service, innovative/integrated technology, inventory forecasting, training opportunities, and peer networking. To share with the FORSHAW team what is important to you in a supplier, go to www.forshaw.com/contact-us.

About OnWatch

OnWatch is a joint venture between the Safe House Project and the Malouf Foundation. Initially launched in 2018 OnWatch™ has trained tens of thousands of people to recognize the signs of trafficking and how to respond when they see something. The new version of the free online community-based training, released in September 2020 provides survivor-informed content that will equip communities to spot, report and prevent trafficking where they live, work and play.

About Safe House Project

Established in 2017, Safe House Project is a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit uniting communities across America to end domestic sex trafficking and restore hope, freedom and a future to every survivor. Safe House Project’s mission is two-fold: increase survivor identification beyond one percent and ensure every survivor has access to safe housing and holistic care by accelerating safe house capacity and development across America. Safe housing and restorative care is critical to ending the cycle of victimization. To learn more about the Safe House Project, visit SafeHouseProject.org.

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