



The Giving Common

An Initiative of the Boston Foundation

www.thegivingcommon.org

My Life My Choice - A Division of Justice Resource Institute

Current

General Information

989 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
(617) 779-2179

Website

www.fightingexploitation.org

Organization Contact

Lisa Goldblatt Grace lgrace@jri.iorg

Year of Incorporation

1973

Statements & Search Criteria

Mission Statement

The mission of My Life My Choice *is to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of adolescents through survivor-led programs that educate and empower youth to find their voice and create a positive life path.* We believe that children have a fundamental human right to live their lives free from exploitation—without fear that adults will prey on their vulnerabilities. We empower youth to be agents of change in their own lives and in the movement to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Background Statement

In 2001, a young Boston woman was brutally murdered while being commercially sexually exploited. She was 17 years old and living in a DCF funded group home. Unbeknownst to any of the caring adults in her life (her family, her DCF worker, the group home staff), she was being sold for sex. Following her death, city leaders came together to ask "was this an isolated incident or the tip of the iceberg?" We quickly learned it was the tip of the iceberg. Out of Latasha's death, My Life My Choice was born. Our program areas include:

Survivor Mentoring: We pair exploited adolescents, or youth at high risk with an adult female mentor who is a survivor of exploitation. The mentor's role is to support mentees in their recovery from the trauma of "the Life," and in finding safety and stability as they move forward. Serving 120-130 exploited and/or high risk girls annually. 143 youth served last year

Prevention Groups: Using our nationally acclaimed tensesion curriculum, Prevention Groups are designed to change girls' attitudes and perceptions of the commercial sex industry, as well as build self-esteem and personal empowerment. Serving 150 at risk girls annually

Training for Youth-Serving Professionals: We offer introductory and advanced workshops about the sex industry and its devastating impact. Trainings aim to increase victim identification and improve provider response to exploited youth. We also train organizations on our Prevention Curriculum and are in the process of creating a training program and toolkit for replicating our successful Survivor Mentoring Program. 2,000 people trained annually

Advocacy and Leadership Development: My Life My Choice is a thought leader and participates in public policy affecting victims' services and human trafficking. We also work to educate a broad community of supporters and harness our collective outrage to move the needle on this issue.

Through victim-centered programs, advocacy, and public awareness building, My Life My Choice is changing the local and national landscape – educating and empowering vulnerable youth to find a positive life path and become leaders in the fight to end exploitation.

Impact Statement

My Life My Choice is a leader in the fight to end commercial sexual exploitation and is the only anti-human trafficking organization in Massachusetts employing a survivor-led model proven effective in helping youth leave harmful situations and build new lives for themselves. My Life My Choice is a groundbreaking, nationally recognized initiative designed to stem the tide of commercial sexual exploitation of adolescent girls. The central goals of our work are:

- Empower youth to protect themselves from the commercial sex industry and its predators.
- Support survivors in rebuilding their lives, finding their voice, and becoming leaders.
- Educate and mobilize a powerful network of allies to prevent exploitation

We have successfully trained over 8,000 youth providers in Massachusetts and nationally, have provided prevention groups to more than 1,900 girls, and mentored over 350 girls in the Greater Boston area. We have trained facilitators on our Prevention Curriculum in 27 states.

In 2006, My Life My Choice was recognized by the United States Department of Justice as a national model for sex trafficking prevention and in 2010, My Life My Choice was named one of Root Cause's Social Innovators for the year. One of our most profound systemic accomplishments occurred in 2011 when My Life My Choice helped draft Massachusetts' anti-trafficking legislation. Enacted in February 2012, this legislation ensures that minors who have been exploited receive specialized services, not jail time. Under the new act, we have seen an enormous uptick in referrals, as more minors are being identified as victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Most recently, My Life My Choice was featured in a documentary by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn called "A Path Appears".

Needs Statement

MLMC's top five most pressing needs are:

- Additional funding to support increased staff time for mentors and prevention group facilitators to reach more girls in Massachusetts with potentially life-saving services and information.
- A larger facility to provide work space for our growing staff and allow us to offer onsite programming for exploited youth.
- Opportunities to increase our earned income through providing organizations/youth service providers with training and consultation around the issue of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.
- Additional in-kind donations to provide our mentees with real world experiences that allow them to bond with their mentors and experience positive, fun activities. Examples include: theater tickets, movie passes, museum passes, restaurant gift certificates, etc.
- Partnerships with foundations and corporations who are willing to help sponsor our annual event, Turn on the Light, which raises funds and awareness to support My Life My Choice programming.

CEO/Executive Director Statement

When we founded My Life My Choice in 2002, there was so much darkness around the issue of commercial sexual exploitation. As a community, we called it teen prostitution. We imagined girls in stilettos, we saw runaways and throwaways. We didn't see their faces—their hopes, their dreams. They were "those girls". But as My Life My Choice formed, we had one primary belief: Girls deserve better. It is this continued belief that is central to all that we do.

Board Chair Statement

As a member of the My Life My Choice Governance it has been incredibly refreshing to work with an organization whose mission remains the immediate driver for all activities. In the past year I have watched the challenge for the Executive Director of balancing program and capacity – particularly given the emotional demand of services and client need. My Life My Choice has taken on a strong push to expand in multiple areas, all of which are necessary for a non-profit to succeed and sustain its work. We have explored donor expansion and diversification, board recruitment, strengthening client cultivation opportunities as well as potential for capacity growth. Attending the "Turn on the Light" Annual fundraiser renewed my passion and commitment. Young women who are exposed to the streets and their horrors deserve to move from being vulnerable and victims to successes and survivors.

Service Categories

Victims' Services

Geographic Areas Served

MLMC works predominantly in the Greater Boston area, an area that extends approximately an hour north, south, and west of the city.

Please review online profile for full list of selected areas served.

Programs

Survivor Mentoring

Description

We pair Survivor Mentors with exploited girls to encourage their use of existing supports and support their exit from the commercial sex industry and their pimp/trafficker. Girls are identified through a variety of sources, including law enforcement, child protective services, medical providers, clergy, etc. The Survivor Mentor's intervention seeks to stabilize a girl's situation shortly after identification, thereby decreasing the likelihood that she will run during this time; and provide support, motivation, and hope to the young woman consistently over time. Survivors are uniquely able to decrease a victim's sense of isolation and support her as she builds a new life for herself. With additional funding, we will be able to hire another Survivor Mentor and increase the hours of existing part-time staff to meet our growing need and ensure that every girl in crisis referred to us can be seen quickly

Budget

5000/girl/yr

Category

Human Services, General/Other Mentoring

Population Served

Females, Adolescents Only (13-19 years), Victims

Program Short Term Success

As a result of working with a MLMC Survivor Mentor:

- Approximately 60 girls who are victims of, or high risk for commercial sexual exploitation, will be paired with a mentor who sees them in person frequently and is constantly available by phone/text.
- Mentees form a relationship with their mentors and recognize this relationship as a key source of support in staying away from dangerous situations and/or negative behaviors.
- Mentees, in the safety of their mentoring relationship, share their stories with mentors, seek mentors' assistance in gaining access to resources (for addiction treatment, education, career opportunities, etc.), and develop healthy coping behaviors.

Program Long term Success

The long-term success of our mentoring initiative is measured by mentees' ability to avoid exploitative situations/relationships and navigate a path to safety and stability that may include education, employment, and the development of healthy coping behaviors, positive relationships with others, and a positive self-image.

Program Success Monitored By

We measure progress via:

- o Mentee retention rate over the course of the grant period
- o A new evaluation system which records the following indicators:
 - § The mentee's ability to build trust with her mentor,
 - § Development of a positive self-image,
 - § Use of multidisciplinary services,
 - § School attendance and progression,
 - § Stability (i.e. not running from home or programs, etc.)
 - § Sharing personal stories and history with mentors
 - § Inviting mentors to life events (graduations, birthdays, etc)
 - § Using mentor as a resource to get other services (mental health treatment, career and education support, substance abuse services)
- o Anecdotes, personal accounts and quotes from mentees

Examples of Program Success

Linda is sixteen years old, and has been paired with an MLMC mentor since she was twelve years old. With the ongoing support of her mentor for the past four years, Linda has been successful in prosecuting her pimp and leaving her mother's home to enter residential treatment. She is now living in a group home for girls, attending a public high school, and is very active in on the basketball and soccer teams. She has reached a new level of stability and was accepted into the MLMC Leadership Corps, through which she is learning to raise awareness of exploitation and reach out to other girls with struggles similar to hers. She credits the love and support of her mentor with much of her progress; with support from Foundations like the Krupp Family Foundation, we are able to give Linda the unconditional, transformational relationship that she needs to facilitate her recovery from exploitation and build a positive future.

Exploitation Prevention Initiative

Description	Using our nationally acclaimed tension curriculum, MLMC Prevention Groups provide a concrete, well-researched method for preventing commercial sexual exploitation among vulnerable adolescent girls. These groups are offered weekly to groups of 8-12 girls in schools, group homes and other community settings. Groups teach at-risk girls how to recognize and avoid the recruitment tactics of pimps and find a path out of exploitation if they are already involved. The groups are designed to change girls' attitudes and perceptions of the commercial sex industry, as well as build self-esteem and personal empowerment; our curriculum includes interactive activities, journaling, and education on healthy relationships. With additional funding, we will increase staff hours (see above), allowing them to facilitate groups in previously underserved communities where we know girls are disproportionately at risk for exploitation.
Budget	75000/yr
Category	Education, General/Other Education, General/Other
Population Served	Adolescents Only (13-19 years), Females,
Program Short Term Success	Please see the program success above.
Program Long term Success	<p>As a result of participation in MLMC's 10-week Exploitation Prevention Group:</p> <p>100% of group participants participate in group exercises that educate them on the realities of exploitation, foster healthy self-esteem and promote healthy relationships, and create a safe space where girls can freely express themselves.</p> <p>100% of participants demonstrate increased knowledge of the realities of prostitution, how to identify potentially exploitative situations, and where to access help if needed.</p> <p>Approximately 100% of group participants build skills to avoid the recruitment tactics of pimps.</p> <p>Approximately 100% of group participants report feeling equipped to share what they have learned about exploitation with friends, sisters, and peers.</p>
Program Success Monitored By	MLMC uses pre- and post- surveys' of group participants to evaluate group participants' progress over the course of 10 weeks. These surveys assess the curriculum's relevance and effectiveness in changing girls' attitudes and knowledge of the commercial sex industry and skills developed to avoid being recruited. Additionally, MLMC records attendance records, qualitative evaluation data from journal entries, and demographics of participants reached. MLMC is also currently working with Public Service Economics on a pro-bono basis to improve our evaluation strategies and tools for our prevention work.

Examples of Program Success

Prevention group quotes from one of our middle school groups:

"Today's group made me realize that I could easily fall for tricks like that for the way that I feel about myself. I also am working on learning to accept and love myself. Thank you for being brave and providing us with these groups. Even though we joke around the groups really help."

"Well, I'm glad you think I'm not a hoe. Now I know I was not. Thank you so much."

"This group help me a lot cuz I know its bad people in the streets. This group makes me happy and it makes me think and make good decisions. But it's not that I'm making bad decisions, but it makes me think more."

"I'm proud of myself."

Training for youth service providers

Description	MLMC offers introductory and advanced workshops about the sex industry and its devastating impact. Each training is tailored to an organization's needs and its role in the lives of adolescent girls. Audiences include but are not limited to law enforcement, school personnel, and medical providers. Full day trainings focus on explaining the risk factors for sex trafficking, red flags indicating exploitation, and how to support exploited girls.
Budget	30% staff time
Category	Civil Rights, Social Action & Advocacy, General/Other Children's Rights
Population Served	Adults, ,
Program Short Term Success	90% of training participants report in a training evaluation that they are now able to identify resources for exploited youth and connect youth in need with those services.
Program Long term Success	As a result of our trainings, countless youth across the state and beyond will connect with service providers who know how to spot exploitation and intervene on a young person's behalf. Additionally, trainings result in a greater number of referrals of girls in crisis to our programs and to other services (mental health, substance abuse, medical care, etc.)
Program Success Monitored By	Training participants fill out a satisfaction survey at the end of each training listing key learnings and gauging what they perceive to be the value of the training.
Examples of Program Success	<p>This is the text of an email received from a recent MLMC training participant:</p> <p>First of all let me say that i attended you training at Center Board (AKA SPIN) in Lynn last year and it was by far the best training I have attended. As a clinician, I am often very protective and often uncomfortable with people sharing their stories in a public manner (I just don't want them further harmed or taken advantage of). But when the women with whom you work shared their stories, I felt inspired and awestruck by their strength and passion for helping others. For an all day training on what was a beautiful day, I just did not want it to end.I was so impressed that I want to share it with my colleagues at the court and possibly more of the community as well.</p>

Management

CEO/Executive Director

Executive Director	Ms. Lisa Goldblatt Grace
Term Start	Jan 2002
Email	lgrace@jri.org

Experience

Lisa Goldblatt Grace has been working with vulnerable young people in a variety of capacities for twenty years. Her professional experience includes running a long term shelter for homeless teen parents, developing a diversion program for violent youth offenders, and working in outpatient mental health, health promotion, and residential treatment settings. Lisa is the Co-Founder and Director of the My Life My Choice Project since 2002. Lisa has served as a consultant to the Massachusetts Administrative Office of the Trial Court's "Redesigning the Court's Response to Prostitution" project and as a primary researcher on the U.S. Health and Human Services study of programs serving human trafficking victims. Lisa has written in a variety of publications regarding commercial sexual exploitation. In addition, Lisa is Adjunct Faculty at the Boston University School of Social Work. Lisa is a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker and holds masters degrees in both social work and public health.

Senior Staff

Audrey Porter

Title	Associate Director
Experience/Biography	Audrey Porter is the Associate Director of My Life My Choice. Audrey has been an integral part of MLMC since 2003 and was the first survivor in Massachusetts to begin mentoring exploited girls. Drawing from her personal experience in "the Life", Audrey seeks to help vulnerable girls avoid prostitution and/or leave exploitation behind them. In addition to mentoring and prevention work, Audrey leads all of MLMC's training and public awareness initiatives in conjunction with the MLMC Director. She has served as a consultant to the Administrative Office of the Trial Court's "Redesigning the Court's Response to Prostitution" project and was recently appointed to the Massachusetts Human Trafficking Task Force chaired by Attorney General Martha Coakley. Audrey is a 2008 recipient of the prestigious Petra Foundation Fellowship and a 2012 Boston Neighborhood Fellow.

Staff Information

Full Time Staff	14
Part Time Staff	2
Volunteers	60
Contractors	0
Retention Rate	100%

Staff Demographics - Ethnicity

African American/Black	6
Asian American/Pacific Islander	1
Caucasian	8
Hispanic/Latino	1
Native American/American Indian	0
Other	0

Staff Demographics - Gender

Male	0
Female	16
Unspecified	0

Formal Evaluations

CEO Formal Evaluation	Yes
CEO/Executive Formal Evaluation Frequency	Annually
Senior Management Formal Evaluation	No
Senior Management Formal Evaluation Frequency	N/A
NonManagement Formal Evaluation	No
Non Management Formal Evaluation Frequency	N/A

Plans & Policies

Organization has a Fundraising Plan?	Under Development
Organization has a Strategic Plan?	Yes
Does your organization have a Business Continuity of Operations Plan?	No
Management Succession Plan?	Under Development
Organization Policy and Procedures	Yes
Nondiscrimination Policy	Yes
Whistleblower Policy	No
Document Destruction Policy	Yes
Directors and Officers Insurance Policy	Yes
Is your organization licensed by the Government?	No
Permit?	No

Collaborations

In order to weave a safety net around our most vulnerable girls, we work with a variety of youth service providers who help us connect girls with multidisciplinary services. We are currently working with JRI's Hope for Youth initiative to engage mentees in mental health and substance abuse services. This year, we were able to place a mentee who had aged out of her residential program in a small group home specifically for adult women survivors of exploitation. This opportunity, which prevented this young woman from returning to the community without sufficient resources to secure stable housing, came about through our relationship with The Josephine Bakhita House, run by the Sisters of Notre Dame. Through a partnership with Tufts University's Institute for Global Leadership a group of seven of our mentees are working with a professional photographer to learn photography technique and use photojournalism to illustrate the impact of exploitation on their lives and perspectives. These are just two of many examples of how MLMC has leveraged our relationships to provide opportunities for our girls; the SEEN Coalition and the Boston Police Department's Human Trafficking Unit continue to be our number one source of referrals for girls in crisis and strong allies in our work.

Board & Governance

Board Chair

Board Chair	Ms. Carolina Avellaneda
Company Affiliation	Fisher College
Term	Jan 2004 to 0
Email	cavellaneda@fisher.edu

Board Members

Name	Affiliation	Status
Carolina Avellaneda	McCarter & English LLP	
Joan Barry	joanbarry design	
Jennifer Borggaard	Affiliated Managers Group	
Natanja Craig	The Boston Foundation	
Ziba Cranmer	Demand Abolition	
Bob Guttentag	Retired - JRI Governing Board Member	
Phillip Hernandez MD	Carney Hospital	
Jennifer Morales	Tatum, LLC	
Andy Offit	Harvard University - John F. Kennedy School of Government	
Ayanna Pressley	Boston City Councilor At-Large	
Robert Vail	Boston Beer Company	
Chrismaldi Vasquez	Family Independence Initiative	

Board Demographics - Ethnicity

African American/Black	2
Asian American/Pacific Islander	0
Caucasian	6
Hispanic/Latino	4
Native American/American Indian	0
Other	0

Board Demographics - Gender

Male	3
Female	8
Unspecified	0

Board Information

Number of Full Board Meetings Annually	4
Board Meeting Attendance %	75%
Written Board Selection Criteria?	No
Written Conflict of Interest Policy?	Yes
Percentage Making Monetary Contributions	91%
Percentage Making In-Kind Contributions	100%
Constituency Includes Client Representation	No

Impact

Goals

As referrals keep coming in, we are working tirelessly to ensure youth in need have access to our services and that our services are meeting the needs of their complex lives. During fiscal year 2014/2015 My Life My Choice provided mentoring to 140 girls, two boys, and one transgender adolescent. This is 20 more youth served than in the year prior. We are working to expand and enhance all four of our key program areas: Survivor Mentoring, Prevention Education, Professional Training, and Advocacy/Leadership Development. Grant funding will support us as we grow responsibly, sustainably, and strategically to address the growing needs of our community and expand our reach and impact across the country. We will measure the effectiveness of activities based on our abilities to offer responsive, sustainable programming that meets the needs of exploited and at risk youth.

Financials

Fiscal Year

Fiscal Year Start	July 01, 2015
Fiscal Year End	June 30, 2016
Projected Revenue	\$1,247,549.00
Projected Expenses	\$1,247,549.00
Endowment?	No
Spending Policy	N/A
Credit Line?	No
Reserve Fund?	Yes
Months Reserve Fund Covers	3

Detailed Financials

Revenue and Expenses

Fiscal Year	2014	2013	2012
Total Revenue	\$1,067,546	\$636,107	\$563,373
Total Expenses	\$977,637	\$639,315	\$490,464

Revenue Sources

Fiscal Year	2014	2013	2012
Foundation and Corporation Contributions	\$272,000	\$160,922	\$210,746
Government Contributions	\$379,415	\$180,228	\$149,737
Federal	\$336,915	\$180,228	\$120,620
State	\$42,500	--	\$29,117
Local	--	--	--
Unspecified	--	--	--
Individual Contributions	\$169,531	\$125,635	\$128,761
Indirect Public Support	--	--	--
Earned Revenue	\$246,600	\$165,812	\$74,129
Investment Income, Net of Losses	--	--	--
Membership Dues	--	--	--
Special Events	--	--	--
Revenue In-Kind	--	--	--
Other	--	\$3,510	--

Expense Allocation

Fiscal Year	2014	2013	2012
Program Expense	\$782,618	\$587,948	\$450,778
Administration Expense	\$80,019	\$51,367	\$39,686
Fundraising Expense	\$115,000	--	--
Payments to Affiliates	--	--	--
Total Revenue/Total Expenses	1.09	0.99	1.15
Program Expense/Total Expenses	80%	92%	92%
Fundraising Expense/Contributed Revenue	14%	0%	0%

Assets and Liabilities

Fiscal Year	2014	2013	2012
Total Assets	--	--	--
Current Assets	--	--	--
Long-Term Liabilities	--	--	--
Current Liabilities	--	--	--
Total Net Assets	--	--	--

Short Term Solvency

Fiscal Year	2014	2013	2012
Current Ratio: Current Assets/Current Liabilities	--	--	--

Long Term Solvency

Fiscal Year	2014	2013	2012
Long-Term Liabilities/Total Assets	--	--	--

Top Funding Sources

Fiscal Year	2014	2013	2012
Top Funding Source & Dollar Amount	--	--	--
Second Highest Funding Source & Dollar Amount	--	--	--
Third Highest Funding Source & Dollar Amount	--	--	--

Capital Campaign

Currently in a Capital Campaign?

No

Comments

CEO Comments

Please note that any program surplus in a particular year is temporarily restricted for MLMC use in future years and is kept absolutely separate from the rest of JRI's balances and assets.

Foundation Staff Comments

The financial summary data in the charts and graphs above is per My Life My Choice.

The IRS Form 990's and Audited Financials posted above cover the entirety of Justice Resource Institute, of which My Life My Choice is a division. There are no assets and liabilities listed for My Life My Choice, the division of Justice Resource Institute, the assets and liabilities are calculated on an organizational level.