

Press Release

WILLOWBEND FARMS
- restoring human trafficking survivors

VISION
HOSPITALITY GROUP



Dr. Carol B. Berz
Family Justice Center
Pathways to Hope and Safety



Hamilton County Health Department

Web: health.hamiltontn.org

****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****

July 29th, 2025

The Health Department and Community Organizations will participate in the Red Sand Project to Raise Awareness of Human Trafficking.

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN – The Hamilton County Health Department, [WillowBend Farms](#), [The Family Justice Center](#), and [Vision Hospitality Group](#) partner with local organizations to participate in the Red Sand Project, raising awareness about human trafficking.

The [Red Sand Project](#) uses sand artwork as a way for people to come together and connect, raising awareness about human trafficking, modern slavery, and exploitation. The red sand symbolizes the human trafficking victims who fall through the cracks of our society every day. Despite ongoing efforts and improvements, human trafficking continues to be a significant public health issue in our community.

“The Red Sand Project is a powerful reminder that human trafficking happens here, and we can’t afford to look away. At the Dr. Carol B. Berz Family Justice Center, we stand in solidarity with the community to raise awareness and fulfill our mission of promoting safety, healing, and justice for all,” says Regina McDevitt, M.Ed. Executive Director. “We invite everyone to join us—learn the signs, speak out, and be part of the solution.”

According to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, human trafficking is a crime driven by demand that involves the exploitation of individuals for labor, services, or commercial sex acts. This crime affects men, women, and children alike. Human trafficking is one of the fastest-growing criminal industries in the United States, with cases reported in all 50 states. The [National Human Trafficking Hotline](#) reported that in 2024, Tennessee had 213 cases of human trafficking, involving a total of 446 victims, as each case can include multiple victims.

“The Health Department is dedicated to combating human trafficking and proudly partners with local leaders like WillowBend Farms and The Family Justice Center to support survivors. We urge Hamilton County residents to unite this week to raise awareness about this pressing issue that impacts our community. Together, we can show that human trafficking has no place in Hamilton County,” says Beka Bohannon, Administrator of Health and Social Services.

“This year's Red Sand is pivotal as the Chattanooga community has taken giant strides in both the efforts towards prevention of human trafficking and the restoration of survivors over the past twelve months, and we look forward to sharing those updates. Additionally, a significant announcement is forthcoming that will impact the Chattanooga and surrounding regions. Let us come together with One Voice to promote no survivors falling through the cracks!” says Sarah McKinnis, co-founder and CEO of WillowBend Farms.

If you know someone who needs help to escape trafficking, contact the **Tennessee Human Trafficking Hotline** at **1-855-558-6484**. If you suspect you have encountered a victim of human trafficking, you may call the **National Human Trafficking Hotline** at **1-888-373-7888** or text **233733**.

As part of outreach efforts regarding Human Trafficking Awareness, a Red Sand Project event will be held on Friday, August 1st, at 10 a.m. at the Aloft Hotel. Due to limited space, please RSVP. Event information and the RSVP link are available at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/red-sand-project-chattanooga-tickets-1399884094009?aff=oddtcreator>.

Additional resources

- For more information on human trafficking and the hotline, visit <https://humantraffickinghotline.org/>.
- To learn more about the indicators of human trafficking, visit: <https://bit.ly/3K1Vm1v>
- For a complete list of resources, visit the [Tennessee Department of Health's](#) webpage.
- To read this information in Spanish, visit the Health Department's Spanish Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/SaludHamiltonTN>