



2021

IMPACT REPORT





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YEAR AT A GLANCE

2020 IN REVIEW

2020 presented a storm of new difficulties for victims and survivors of human trafficking. The Dressemer community showed up with perseverance, selflessness, and generosity to charge forward and continue the fight toward dignity for all. We are humbled to report that between Dressemer World and Dressemer Canada, we raised over \$3 million USD to support freedom for victims and survivors via **fourteen programs in 9 countries.**

IMPACT MAP



*includes Dressemer World and Canada

2020/21 WAS A YEAR OF **UNPRECEDENTED PROGRESS**, THANK YOU FOR HELPING US RAISE **\$3MM USD*** TOWARD ANTI-TRAFFICKING WORK **DURING A GLOBAL CRISIS**

— a 14% increase from 2019/20 

A UNIQUE CRISIS

The **pandemic** created a surge of online exploitation and allowed traffickers to further exploit vulnerable individuals. From the early onset of COVID-19, we heard from Dressemer Network partners around the world about the immediate ways victims and survivors were and continue to be disproportionately impacted by the crisis.



JOB LOSS

Survivors of trafficking experienced high rates of job loss during the pandemic, increasing vulnerabilities for exploitation and the resurfacing of past trauma. **Through Dressemer's COVID-19 campaign, \$20,000 in cash assistance was allocated to support survivors' immediate economic needs.**



INCREASED ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (OSEC)

Since the pandemic, more children have become vulnerable to recruitment and victimization than ever before. **Dressemer continues to support OSEC prevention, intervention, and protection efforts in the Philippines.**



GLOBAL LOCKDOWN

Staff were required to be on lockdown in safe homes, increasing costs to care for children. **Dressemer allocated \$20,000 from the COVID-19 campaign to increased costs for child survivors and staff during lockdown.**

Despite COVID-19, each of the Dressemer Network partners pivoted and innovated to meet the needs of victims and survivors of trafficking during this worldwide crisis. As youthSpark, a Dressemer partner expressed, **"COVID-19 will limit our contact, not our impact!"** — Jennifer Swain, Executive Director

This year also brought forth critical conversations of racial justice as we all became further aware of systemic racism toward BIPOC. We learned more about the intersectionality of trafficking, especially related to racial justice. Trafficking is not an isolated occurrence; it is fueled by the vulnerabilities created by racial and gender identity inequities, among other disparities in our society. There is so much work to be done on this front and we are committed to doing everything we can to center marginalized voices and protect the communities most vulnerable to trafficking.

As we close the books on 2020, we are thrilled to look ahead at two new programs we launched in early 2021: **The Survivor Justice Initiative** to fight for incarcerated survivors and the **Dressemer Survivor Scholarship Program** to provide long-term economic empowerment opportunities to survivors. Stay tuned for more information and progress updates coming soon.

We hope you find encouragement through this report and that you are reminded just how vital **your voice**, commitment, and advocacy are in the fight against human trafficking— now more than ever.

2021 DRESSEMBER COMMUNITY



BRAND PARTNERS

We spotlighted and collaborated with 38 ethical and fair trade brands in 2020 and presented dozens of ethical brand partners to our community through our Ethical Fashion Directory.



SUPPORTERS

Supporters from 72 countries gave generously to DresseMBER 2020. We saw an 13% increase in average gift size toward the DresseMBER World campaign and a 43% increase in the number of donations toward the DresseMBER Canada campaign.



COLLECTIVE

The DresseMBER Collective is a group of passionate monthly donors on a mission to end trafficking. We saw a 31% increase in Collective membership in 2020. Together, this group gave enough to launch DresseMBER's Survivor Justice Initiative, bringing legal support to incarcerated victims of trafficking.



CORPORATE PARTNERS

We received our largest corporate donation to date —\$20,000— and strengthened existing partnerships. Additionally, 130 companies matched their employees' gifts to DresseMBER, totaling \$30,481 in matching funds.



WINTER STYLE CHALLENGE

Thousands of advocates worldwide registered and committed to wearing dresses and ties for the month of December.

We saw a 44% growth in the average amount raised per advocate for DresseMBER World and a 67% average increase for DresseMBER Canada.



5K/COVID CAMPAIGN

We created a 6-week COVID campaign to raise crisis funding for survivors of trafficking impacted by the pandemic. More than 230 people ran DresseMBER's virtual spring 5K to fundraise. DresseMBER supporters generously came together to provide \$20,000 in immediate cash assistance for survivors facing job loss in NYC and \$20,000 to cover increased expenses for online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) survivors and accompanying staff on lockdown in The Philippines.

MEET DRESSEMBER'S

TOP ADVOCATES IN 2020



BETH CARROL AUSTIN, TX

“Dressember is an opportunity for me to put my belief that all human lives are valuable and worthy of dignity into action through education and fundraising. Advocating in 2020 was a swirl of emotions – I recognize my privilege in getting to stay home to keep safe and knew that many others did not have this option. Knowing that traffickers take advantage of destabilizing circumstances and seeing the amount of misinformation about trafficking that was circulating in 2020 made me want to continue advocating, and I was grateful when Dressember created their COVID-19 relief fund so that I could leverage my pent-up energy to help in a tangible way.”

Beth raised \$27,990 in 2020. Since 2016, Beth has raised \$65,513.

STEPHANIE BRONFEIN BALTIMORE, MD

“I advocate with Dressember because I believe we have a collective responsibility to restore safety and autonomy to survivors of trafficking. The global pandemic has made the need for our support that much more urgent as instability and vulnerability continues to create a heightened risk of exploitation. Even in 2020, when all fundraising efforts had to live online, Dressember did what it does best: fortified grassroots advocacy for the freedom and dignity of survivors. I am always grateful to be a part of the Dressember community.”

Stephanie raised \$21,737 in 2020. Since 2016, Stephanie has raised \$53,238.



MEET DRESSEMBER CANADA TOP ADVOCATES (AND TWIN SISTERS): HANNAH AU & SARAH CHIN



decided to sew my first dress to bring beauty and enjoyment back into my hobby.

Sarah Chin wearing the dress she sewed (left) and Hannah Au (right).

However, as I ventured further into dress sewing, I could not help thinking about the plight of many garment workers who are trafficked or trapped in forced labour and unsafe conditions. I felt the immensity of my freedom and privilege as I sewed in the security and comfort of my own home. I decided to become a DresseMBER advocate to educate myself further about the issues of human trafficking and exploitation and to share what I learned with others. As a result, 2020 became a year not only to save lives through mask wearing and adherence to public health measures but through the funding of rescue missions and supporting the restoration of survivors.

While I am eager to resume “normal life” and leave the pandemic behind, the reality for many continues to be violence and injustice. What if freedom for all became the new normal? For DresseMBER and IJM, the work continues until all are free and I am grateful to have been a part of that in a small way.”

FROM A TEACHER’S HEART: HANNAH AU

“Wear a dress during a pandemic? I must admit that wearing a dress to teach kindergarten and grade one from home is something I wasn’t initially motivated to do. In a time of so many restrictions -- missing friends, family, and in-person teaching -- did I really want to restrict myself from wearing sweatpants during a Zoom meeting? But these do not compare to the restrictions victims of violence face every day. The precious five and six year olds that I teach are the same

age as children being exploited online every day. My students get online to see a familiar face, to learn, and to have fun. For children being exploited, meeting a customer online is not the connection they long for.

In 2016, my husband and I had the privilege of serving in the field with International Justice Mission (IJM), DresseMBER Canada’s partner, where I saw firsthand the dedicated individuals who worked tirelessly not only to rescue and restore victims, but also to ensure that perpetrators were convicted of their crimes. After returning to Canada a year later, I wondered whether I could still have an impact and stay connected with the work. I realized that I could use my platform as a teacher to raise a generation of justice seekers who could see the end of slavery in their lifetime.

When I participated in DresseMBER in 2019, I relied on visibility and daily interactions with people to raise awareness and support. This changed dramatically in 2020 when I was tasked with teaching students at home and had little contact with people except over Zoom. Feeling isolated and discouraged, I was humbled and grateful at the amazing response I received when I started reaching out to friends that I hadn’t seen in months. Their generous support of my campaign was overwhelming and encouraging. I am so thankful to be part of a community of advocates and donors that seeks to bring hope and make freedom a reality.”

Sarah raised CA\$6,770.24 in 2020, bringing her cumulative fundraising for DresseMBER Canada to CA\$12,144 since 2019.

Hannah raised CA\$14,709 in 2020, bringing her cumulative fundraising for DresseMBER Canada to CA\$24,852 since 2019.

SEWING HOPE: SARAH CHIN

“It was my honour to participate for the second year in DresseMBER Canada and to support the work of International Justice Mission. I was humbled by the generosity of so many donors and by the efforts of my DresseMBER teammates; this truly brought hope in a time of global uncertainty, fear, and loss.

This year, I decided to sew my own dresses to wear for DresseMBER, completing a total of 8. Sewing had been a casual hobby of mine but I had not previously attempted to sew my own clothes. Throughout the pandemic, I had applied my sewing skills to sew countless face masks for family and friends but I became fatigued over the intense focus on protecting ourselves and others. I

OUR IMPACT

WE MOBILIZE PASSIONATE PEOPLE TO CREATE AN IMPACT

Since 2013, over 40,000 people have participated in Dressember's annual campaign to introduce, educate, and bring awareness of human trafficking to hundreds of thousands of people.

WE INVITE ORGANIZATIONS WITH PROVEN EFFICACY TO APPLY FOR PARTNERSHIP

We carefully strategize where and how we can maximize our impact, and **when we see gaps in services, we initiate strategic efforts.**



TOGETHER WE ARE DISRUPTING A GLOBAL CRIMINAL INDUSTRY

By holistically approaching the intersectionality of the issue and resourcing diverse programs from every angle, we are dismantling trafficking.

WE VET PROSPECTIVE AND RETURNING PARTNERS ANNUALLY, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EXPERTS, INDUSTRY LEADERS, AND SURVIVOR ADVISORS

We listen to those with lived experiences to ensure that we are following trends in trafficking and centering survivor voices in our program strategy.

YOU CAN COUNT ON US TO:



MOBILIZE THE PUBLIC TO LEARN, STIR PUBLIC INTEREST, AND DEMAND CHANGE.

We provide reliable data for ongoing learning, followed by action steps and campaigns to stir change and raise vital funding.



EXAMINE INTERSECTIONAL ISSUES AND COMMON RISK FACTORS AS WE RESOURCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS.

We look upstream to address factors and systems that make certain groups more vulnerable to trafficking.



CENTER SURVIVORS AS WE RESOURCE INDIVIDUALIZED CARE AND LONG-TERM ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT.

We value long-term individual capacity building and economic empowerment for survivors of trafficking, leading to their sustained liberation.



BUILD A NETWORK OF IMPACTFUL AND CULTURALLY SENSITIVE PARTNERS WORKING LOCALLY AND GLOBALLY.

We work with local organizations to remove child victims of trafficking from exploitative situations and provide support through exit pathways for trafficked adults.



STAND AGAINST EXPLOITATION IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY AND HIGHLIGHT ALTERNATIVES TO FAST FASHION.

We bring awareness to consumers and encourage them to be conscious of their purchases. We work with businesses to prevent exploitation in supply chains.

DRESSEMBER-LED PROJECTS

SURIVOR JUSTICE INITIATIVE

In April 2021, Dressemer launched the Survivor Justice Initiative in partnership with Karana Rising, a survivor-led organization committed to supporting survivors for life from incarceration to healing and wellness.

Through Dressemer 2021 5K fundraising and throughout this ongoing initiative, we are advocating for currently incarcerated survivors and educating the public on how we can influence policy changes. By circulating petitions, spreading awareness about the criminalization of survivors, and putting pressure on policymakers, we can change the way our justice system recognizes and treats victims.



MEET TIFFANY

Tiffany Simpson is a 27-year-old survivor of child sex trafficking serving a 30-year prison sentence. At the age of 17, Tiffany was charged with child sex trafficking after her trafficker sold another teenage girl for sex. In the last nine years in prison, Tiffany has obtained her GED and become a professional advocate with Karana Rising. Tiffany is currently working with her attorney to be released from prison with the Dressemer community supporting her through the Survivor Justice Initiative.

“When I am free, I am going to make sure I use my past to help other girls coming up behind me. That is what women do. We lead.” — Tiffany Simpson



SURVIVOR SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Many anti-trafficking programs measure impact based on how many individuals have moved from situations of exploitation to freedom, but the hardship a survivor faces doesn't end the moment they become physically free. True freedom can only exist when a person has control over their choices and financial security. At Dressemer, we believe in empowering survivors long-term by providing the resources necessary to sustain freedom and achieve financial security.

In light of this, we are excited to announce the launch of a new initiative in summer 2021 to help close the gap between physical freedom and long-term economic empowerment for trafficking survivors: Dressemer's Survivor Scholarship Program. In the upcoming years, this program will reduce barriers as a result of economic hardship and improve the pathway to high-demand, sustainable, and steady careers for more survivors.

ONGOING IMPACT

Our 2019/2020 annual report highlighted the building of the brand new Bulgaria Freedom Center that was made possible by Dressember. In the last year, the Bulgaria Freedom Center has:

- Cared for 14 survivors
- 8 survivors have graduated from job readiness
- 5 survivors are currently working
- 3 survivors have been supported through independent housing
- The Bulgaria Freedom Center has seen 0% re-victimization



The Bulgaria drop-in Freedom Center continues to reach survivors and walk alongside them as they transition into a life of independence. **Because of the impact of the Bulgaria Freedom Center, Dressember partnered with A2I to build yet another Freedom Center in South Africa. The South Africa Freedom Center opened in December 2020 and has since:**

- Cared for 13 survivors
- Engaged 9 survivors in sewing classes
- 5 survivors indicated they would like to pursue a career and sewing and sew designer make-up bags for a well-known brand.
- The South Africa Freedom Center will graduate its first survivor in June 2021, less than a year after opening. The survivor was given a sewing machine for her business that she will be operating in her local community in the Eastern Cape.
- The South Africa Freedom Center has seen 0% re-victimization





IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS



MORE THAN 20

human trafficking trainings were held to train thousands of industry-specific employees including truck drivers, casino, and hotel employees.



143 TRANSITIONAL AGE FOSTER YOUTH

and 464 staff were provided with Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) Awareness training in California.



187 RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH

experiencing sexual exploitation are now being supported in safety and stability.

FINANCIALS

Because we exceeded our 2020 fundraising goal, we were able to fully fund all projects and launch two Dressember-led programs, as well as meet a long-held goal to establish a program reserve that will be used in the future to participate in even more impactful anti-trafficking projects throughout the year.

ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES

81%

PROGRAM

13%

FUNDRAISING

6%

ADMIN

PROGRAM EXPENSES

PREVENTION ●

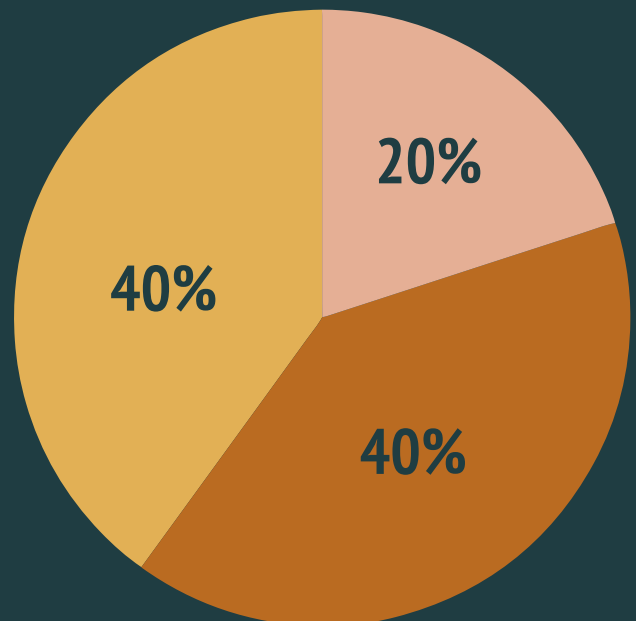
Prevention approaches the root causes of trafficking by addressing the link between systemic issues and vulnerability to trafficking. Prevention efforts target populations that are historically at-risk of being marginalized including homeless, runaway, foster, LGBTQ+, and youth with criminal history. Our prevention efforts also resource supply chain policies and training to decrease labor exploitation.

SURVIVOR EMPOWERMENT ●

Intervention involves working with local organizations to remove child victims of trafficking from exploitative situations, as well as provide supportive exit pathways for trafficked adults. Local Dressember Network leaders spearhead these initiatives through culturally sensitive and appropriate methods. Our intervention work also resources training of the private sector to identify and report trafficking.

INTERVENTION ●

Survivor Empowerment prioritizes sustained liberation for survivors of trafficking through capacity-building initiatives to create long-term stability. Resources include holistic aftercare, job skills training and placement, trauma-informed therapy, and access to education to ensure survivors are empowered to make their own choices.



BOARD & TEAM

DRESSEMBER TEAM

Blythe Hill

CEO + Founder

Michelle Chavez

Director of Operations

Marissa Peden

Director of Strategic Partnerships

Tori Schaulis

Communications Manager



DRESSEMBER BOARD

Talitha Baker

Board Chair, Sr. Manager Communications
Children's Miracle Network Hospitals

Eric Lattin

Treasurer, Director of Finance & Operations
TimeZoneOne, Inc

Arianna Harrison

Board Secretary, Virtual Administrator
Belay Solutions

Blythe Hill

CEO/Founder
DresseMBER Foundation

Rachel Repko

Founder and Grant Consultant
Repko Grants

Dahn Elle Dior Ballard

Actor/Writer; Founder
The Yummy Factor by Dior

Lisa LaMattina

Producer
No Sudden Movements

Amanda Thyden

Executive Director
Family Legal Assistance at CHOC

Joy Brodt

SoCal Advocacy Director
International Justice Mission
Former COO of Treasures

LETTER FROM OUR
**CEO/
FOUNDER**

Dear Friends,

When I look back on 2020, I am overcome with awe and gratitude. So many of you showed up to advocate and support those living in or vulnerable to trafficking and, by doing so, you turned a challenging year into a triumph of compassion and generosity. Thank you for making 2020 a year of monumental local and global impact.

While 2020 was a difficult year for anti-trafficking, we've been reminded that there is no downtime, there is no downtime in this fight. At the heart of the injustice of trafficking are racism, sexism, classism, and a host of other evils that make it possible for one human to justify the exploitation of another. If we hope to truly dismantle human trafficking globally, we must acknowledge the intersectional nature of the issue and address the root causes and compounding vulnerabilities of victims. From 2021 onwards, we are committed to continued learning and educating our community, advocating for marginalized individuals and communities, and providing resources to survivors who continue to come up against the systems that keep them vulnerable to re-exploitation.

This report is a testament to the many victories your support has made possible in 2020--and why we look at the year ahead with hope and expectation. Every changed life shows us what is possible for millions more.

On behalf of the many lives who have been impacted by your generosity, thank you.

In community,
Blythe Hill
CEO + Founder



MEET DRESSEMBER'S

TOP 50 ADVOCATES

- ELIZABETH CARROLL
- STEPHANIE BRONFEIN
- RUTHANN DEVENEY
- KATIE PERKINS
- ERIKA ANDERSON
- HANNAH AU
- MEGAN MONTOYA
- RUTH BETHANY
- COREEN GALLAGHER
- PETER YEE
- JENNIFER WILLIAMS
- JAMIE BESHEARS
- TYLER FIDANZO
- TAMARA MINER
- DEK + MARY
- ELIZABETH HAMPTON
- JEN AND RYAN MUIR
- ANGELA WATTS
- STL SPARK
- TERRA BRIMBERRY
- JESSICA GRAHAM
- CHRIS D'ORSO
- CAROLYN HECK
- LAUREN PRESSLEY
- SYMMONE ANDERSON
- KELLY HONEA
- LILY MOE
- ELIZABETH HAFNER
- PEYTON MANNING
- KEARCI MOIR
- NICOLE TAN
- TAYLOR TRENCHARD
- JULIA ROGG
- RACHEL ENSIGN
- AUBREY PAGE
- CASEY MORRIS WADSACK
- ANNIE VARBERG
- JOY CHOW
- EAGLEROCK 4
- SARAH CHIN
- T & ME
- CHRIS GARCIA
- INTER-COMMUNITY SCHOOL
- OF ZURICH
- JON CLINE
- EMMA BEAVINS
- ALISE MCCOY
- VALERIE ALVIAR
- EUGENE AU
- ELISE MANCE
- GINGER NAVARRETE

*includes DresseMBER World and DresseMBER Canada advocates

WHERE TO FIND US



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