

COALITION TO ABOLISH
SLAVERY AND TRAFFICKING

C E L E B R A T I N G

YEARS

FALL | 23



At 25 Years, Survivors Are Still Leading the Way at Cast

This year marks a quarter century since Cast was founded, in response to a labor trafficking case in El Monte, California, that shocked the country.

Just last year we provided direct service to more than 1,625 people, fielded over 2,210 calls to our hotline, and trained 14,091 people to recognize, report, and prevent human trafficking. We also launched the learning hub that advances the anti-trafficking movement to be data-driven to focus on better practices and prevention. Before that, we helped pass the landmark Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, and in 2014 became the first nonprofit to be given the Presidential Award for Extraordinary Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

We've made so much progress. But human trafficking (both sex and labor) remains all too common in the United States.

Cast is ready to meet this challenge. In collaboration with our community, our partners, and people like you, we are building a response to human trafficking that sees it as a public health issue, that approaches the issue from a prevention and community-based solution.

This approach provides support at every point in a survivor's journey, including emergency response, counseling and skills training, shelter, legal advocacy, and survivor leadership. And crucially, Cast looks to survivors to lead our outreach, advocacy, and education efforts. Together we are fighting not just to support victims of trafficking but dismantle the systems that enable it.

Together with our community, and fueled by the courage of those we serve, Cast will continue to lead the movement to end human trafficking, until every person is free and thriving. ■

Revisiting El Monte: A Case of Modern Slavery in Suburban America



Workers at the El Monte sweatshop watch as officials raid the apartment complex where they were held captive.

In August 1995, authorities raided a seemingly ordinary apartment complex in a Los Angeles suburb called El Monte. What they found was horrifying: a makeshift garment factory and dormitory where 72 Thai nationals were enslaved.

El Monte shocked the nation. It was the first time many Americans came face to face with the reality of modern slavery — not overseas, but right in their backyards. And sadly, labor trafficking is still all too common in the United States.

The workers at El Monte labored for 16 hours a day, seven days a week to produce clothing for well-known retailers such as Robinsons-May, Mervyn's and Miller's Outpost. They slept in rooms of wall-to-wall makeshift mattresses they had to sew themselves. And they were never allowed to leave the building.

Recruiters had lured the workers to the United States from Thailand with promises of a work visa, good pay, safe working conditions, and weekends off. They'd even suggested there were company parties and trips to Disneyland.

But when the workers arrived, they learned the truth.

Maliwan Radamphon was enslaved at El Monte for over a year and a half. She remembers her horror when she first saw the building where she would live. "I saw the barbed-wire and the compound, and the guards who would tell us that we could never leave the compound," she said. "I spent the whole week crying, desperate and not knowing what to do."



Some of the workers rescued from El Monte in 2008 — a decade after the end of their captivity.

The workers were also trapped by poverty. Almost every penny they made — their wages averaged 68 cents an hour — went to paying for necessities marked up by the owners at a company store. Even calling home was costly: \$50 for a 5-to-10-minute call, which the owners closely monitored.

The El Monte sweatshop had been in operation for at least seven years before it was finally shut down. The raid drew national attention to the issue of labor trafficking and led to the creation of Cast by Dr. Kathryn McMahon, the Thai Community Development Center and a group of community activists. Dr. McMahon envisioned an organization that would use data to make evidence-based progress to end human trafficking.

Maliwan and the other workers, aware of the publicity their case had drawn, were hopeful that it would spark change in the United States. "I would like people to know about El Monte and the grave and serious violations that were committed to us," Maliwan said in an interview two years after she was freed. "I don't want history to repeat itself ... People should know and learn from this."

But the reality is that 25 years later, labor trafficking is still widespread in Los Angeles and across the United States — and people like Maliwan continue to suffer behind closed doors or in plain sight.

Cast is committed to supporting survivors of human trafficking and better understanding the prevalence of this crime. Together we can ensure that El Monte never happens again. ■

Information and quotes from this story were sourced from *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: A History of American Sweatshops, 1820-Present* by Peter Liebold and Harry R. Rubenstein

"I don't want history to repeat itself. I want people to remember what happened because I will forever remember what happened to us and how I was treated. People should know and learn from this."

Maliwan Radamphon

Making History: 25 Years of Progress

Our journey has been long. This year we are celebrating 25 years of progress towards a world without slavery and human trafficking.

1998	1999	2000	2002	2003	2011	2014	2015	2018	2020	2021	2022	In the last year, alone, Cast:
In response to the El Monte case, Cast becomes one of the first organizations established in the United States dedicated exclusively to serving survivors of human trafficking.	Cast designed the first social services model that paved the way to a prevention, community based model that holds up the rights and wellbeing of survivors.	Cast collaborated with national coalition partners to pass the TVPA-Trafficking Victim Protection Act.	Cast establishes its Legal Services Program, which later assists the first recipient of a visa for victims of trafficking (T-visa) and forms Resilient Voices, a local community of survivors of trafficking.	Cast opens Mariposa Haven, the first shelter in the United States exclusively for survivors of trafficking, and forms Resilient Voices, a local community of survivors of trafficking.	The National Survivor Network was launched to build a national anti-trafficking movement in which survivors are at the forefront and recognized as leaders.	Cast started the Youth Program in 2014, and becomes the first nonprofit to receive the Presidential Award for Extraordinary Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons from President Barack Obama.	Training and Technical Assistance, the first of a kind national training program to legal and social service providers, started.	Recognizing the continued need for housing and mental health services for survivors, Cast opens a second shelter, Hummingbird Haven. Cast was awarded the LA County Child Protection Training contract.	The COVID-19 pandemic forces human trafficking survivors into crisis. Cast successfully relocated survivors to safe housing in partnership with the City of Los Angeles.	Cast is selected by the Department of Children and Family Services to provide training county-wide on human trafficking.	Cast hires its first researcher, taking a huge step toward realizing our founder's vision of a data-driven movement to end slavery and human trafficking.	<p>Provided direct services to more than 1,625 people</p> <p>Fielded over 2,210 calls to our hotline</p> <p>Trained 14,091 people to recognize, report, and prevent human trafficking.</p>

Your Impact: Amy's Story

Amy grew up very poor in Ghana. She wanted to help her family as soon as she could — so when she was old enough, she began to look for a job. Amy found an organization that promised her work in Israel as a housekeeper, with good wages and eight-hour days.

The reality was very different. On the plane, Amy found out she was going to Jordan instead of Israel. And when they landed, her employer took away her passport. Amy was alone in a foreign country with nowhere to turn.

Amy's employers forced her to work 19-hour days, cooking, cleaning, and caring for their children. They deprived her of food so she was always hungry and locked her in the house so she couldn't escape. They abused her physically and verbally.

Amy endured more than five years of forced labor before she managed to escape. Her traffickers brought her with them on vacation to the United States, forcing Amy to cook and clean for them in the hotel where they stayed. When a family member accidentally left the door open, she took advantage of the opportunity and fled.

Uncertain of where to go, Amy slept on the street for five days until she worked up the courage to ask someone for help. She was united with Cast, who immediately moved her into a shelter and began providing social and legal help. Cast supported her when she was interviewed by the FBI and applied for her T Visa on her behalf. All of this transformative support was made possible by the generosity of our donors.

Today, Amy has learned English and is working in the nursing industry. She loves her job and is looking forward to visiting her family in Ghana for the first time in years. Amy's journey was supported by people like you, who invest in Cast and our vision of a future without human trafficking.

On Labor Day, Cast commemorates the fight for free and dignified work for people like Amy. You can help others get the resources they need to escape oppression, heal from their trauma, and rebuild their lives. ■

Letter from Kay Buck, CEO



Over the past decade, more Americans have become familiar with the horrors of human trafficking. But the bulk of the attention has been focused on sex trafficking, with labor trafficking often minimized or forgotten.

Unfortunately, labor trafficking victims are often isolated from society. Many don't speak English, have no understanding of U.S. labor laws, and live in constant fear. So instead, they suffer.

Like victims of sex trafficking, victims of forced labor are often victimized all over again by a criminal legal system that treats them as criminals instead of survivors. That's why Cast advocates a human rights approach to human trafficking, and sees the unique identity in everyone who has been trafficked.

It might seem obvious, but this idea is surprisingly

controversial for some who would rather maintain the status quo than make the changes needed to end trafficking for good.

Change won't be easy. But we can't back down. And Cast has shown time and time again that we can win progress by supporting, empowering, and listening to survivors.

I'm proud of the work we've done — providing counseling, legal resources, housing, educational and leadership training, and more. But the system that exploits people who have been trafficked in this country remains as powerful as ever, and we need your help to dismantle it.

Your support for Cast will bring us closer to that goal. Make a gift to Cast today and together we can make the promise of Labor Day real — so that every person can be free, paid fairly, have safe working conditions, and lead a life of dignity.