



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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THE RETREAT JOINS SUFFOLK COUNTY INITIATIVE TO ADDRESS CHILD TRAFFICKING ON LONG ISLAND

EAST HAMPTON, NY (February 11, 2025) The Retreat, a nonprofit that supports victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault, and human trafficking throughout Suffolk County, is proud to be part of Suffolk County's new initiative, "Operation Safe and Lasting Return," which aims to address missing and exploited children and combat the sexual exploitation of children on Long Island. Suffolk County has one of the highest rates of human trafficking in the nation.

This initiative, announced by County Executive Edward Romaine on February 6, is a powerful collaboration between state and federal law enforcement, county agencies, and community organizations. The Retreat is honored to be selected as one of three local nonprofits that will support the children and their families. ECLIVIBES, EAC Network and The Retreat will work together to provide holistic services. This initiative focuses not just on locating missing children but also helping them heal from the trauma they have endured. With this partnership, The Retreat will continue to provide counseling and case management services but will be able to support survivors as soon as they are identified, helping them find a safe path forward toward healing and hope. The Retreat has an 18-bed shelter and we are looking into further supporting youth with additional emergency housing.

"Human trafficking has a devastating impact on neighborhoods, communities, and children. It thrives in areas where individuals are vulnerable, often targeting children who are at risk due to factors like poverty, neglect, or instability. These children, once exploited, endure physical, emotional, and psychological trauma that can last a lifetime," said Cate Carbonaro, Executive Director. "The Retreat understands the crucial role we play in addressing the needs of survivors. We are committed to working with Suffolk County and the Erin Court to bring this issue to light and provide life-changing services to aid those affected. We want to show people there is a way out." Erin Court in Suffolk County Family Court is the first and only court created to address the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and at-risk youth in New York State.

The Retreat is a direct service agency that provides safety, shelter and support for children, adults and families affected by domestic/intimate partner violence, abuse, sexual assault and human trafficking. The Retreat's free and confidential services include a 24-hour bilingual hotline, counseling, legal advocacy, emergency shelter, and extensive prevention education programming.



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About the Retreat: The Retreat is a safe haven for families in crisis across Suffolk County. The not-for-profit agency provides comprehensive domestic violence support services for children and adults, as well as violence prevention programming. If you or someone you know needs help, call The Retreat's 24-hour hotline at (631) 329-2200. For more information, visit allagainstabuse.org or follow [@allagainstabuse](https://www.instagram.com/allagainstabuse) on Instagram and Facebook.