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Maria Estes, Marketing and Communications Director

440-360-7356

Maria.Estes@cwfc.org

Community West Foundation and Collaborative to End Human Trafficking Bring Awareness Sculpture to Public Square

[Cleveland, Ohio] – Community West Foundation and Collaborative to End Human Trafficking have teamed up to bring the latest sculpture by Timothy Schmalz, *Let the Oppressed Go Free*, to Cleveland to be displayed on the north side of Public Square from October – March for free public viewing. The massive piece measuring 22.5’ long is traveling the United States before it is permanently installed at Catholic University of America in Washington D.C. The only other copy of this sculpture is installed in Schio, Italy and the artist has no plans to replicate it further.

Let the Oppressed Go Free is a bronze sculpture created by world-renowned artist, Timothy Schmalz, that depicts human trafficking slaves being released from captivity in order to bring attention to this societal issue. The sculpture contains 100 figures representing the different faces of human trafficking including sex exploitation, forced labor, debt bondage and more. Men, women, and children can become victims of human trafficking, particularly those from vulnerable communities.

“Community West Foundation finished installing the [Matthew 25 Collection](#) in Cleveland just last year. When the artist called us about this opportunity, we knew how powerful this could be for awareness,” commented Marty Uhle, President and CEO of Community West Foundation.

Kirsti Mouncey, President and CEO of Collaborative to End Human Trafficking said, “Raising awareness about human trafficking is at the heart of our mission to lead, empower and connect our community to eradicate this human rights violation. No organization or individual can do that alone, collaboration and collective action is the answer. Partnering with the Community West Foundation and bringing this statue to the heart of our city is an incredible opportunity to elevate knowledge and conversation around this issue.”

The artist found inspiration from Isaiah 58:6 where scripture talks about ‘setting free the oppressed’. The sculpture purposefully includes figures that span history to demonstrate that human trafficking has been a societal issue for generations.

According to the Collaborative, human trafficking happens here in Cleveland. It is one of the fastest growing criminal enterprises in the U.S., and we know that traffickers target minors and marginalized populations because they are easier to manipulate and control. In Cleveland, these vulnerability indicators are higher compared to state and national indicator data making children and youths in our community more susceptible to human trafficking, long into their adulthood.

Visit www.communitywestfoundation.org/LettheOppressedGoFree to learn more.

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Sculpture Arrival:

The *Let the Oppressed Go Free* sculpture will be unloaded at **Public Square at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, September 26th**. LAND Studio will be onsite to assist with this process. Public viewing will begin on Wednesday, September 27 and last through March.

Interviews available upon request with:

- Marty Uhle, President and CEO of Community West Foundation
- Kirsti Mouncey, President and CEO of Collaborative to End Human Trafficking

About Community West Foundation:

The mission of Community West Foundation is to advance the health and well-being of our community. The staff and Board of Directors are guided by the words in Matthew 25:35-40. While their grantmaking is based on these teachings, they are not affiliated with any particular religion. Their grantees, friends and donors come from diverse faiths and practices.

For more information, contact Community West Foundation at 440-360-7370 or visit www.communitywestfoundation.org

About the Collaborative:

The mission of Collaborative to End Human Trafficking is to lead, empower, and connect our community to eradicate human trafficking. Their vision is a world without human trafficking, one community at a time. They provide leadership and expertise to empower a systemic, community-wide response to human trafficking. As the backbone organization of Cuyahoga Counties 75+ anti-human trafficking coalition called "Greater Cleveland Coordinated Response to Human Trafficking", they provide strategic leadership to create social change.

For more information, contact Collaborative to End Human Trafficking at 440- 872-6500 or visit www.collabtoendht.org