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## **SAMARITAN HOUSE’S NEW SHELTER FOR TRAFFICKED YOUTH TO BE LANDSCAPED BY VIRGINIA WESLEYAN STUDENTS AS PART OF STATEWIDE ‘HEAT WATCH’ PROJECT**

*This project coincides with Human Trafficking Awareness Month and will highlight ‘The Hallow’ the only shelter of its kind in the Mid-Atlantic Region as it nears completion.*

**VIRGINIA BEACH, VA** – On Saturday, January 14, over 50 volunteers from Virginia Wesleyan University, Samaritan House and Lynnhaven River Now will come together to plant more than 60 trees at “The Hallow,” Samaritan House’s new shelter for trafficked youth and at the nearby Church of the Holy Apostles as part of the Heat Watch project.

“The Hallow” is unique to Hampton Roads as it will be the only shelter built specifically to house minor survivors of human trafficking. The shelter is located in an area of Virginia Beach that is susceptible to extreme heat as identified as part of the ‘Heat Watch’ project conducted statewide by students in 2021. The study revealed that “The Hallow” is in an urban heat island where there is more pavement and less green space, making the site eligible for a community tree planting project funded by the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges via a grant from the Virginia Department of Forestry.

“We are excited to receive this generous donation of trees that will provide shade and comfort to some of the most vulnerable we serve, young survivors of human trafficking,” said Robin Gauthier, Executive Director of Samaritan House. “Additionally, it is inspiring to have so many students and other members of the community come together to not only make our new shelter a refuge for healing, but will also help the environment,” said Gauthier.

‘The Hallow’ is located on two acres in the Lynnhaven area of Virginia Beach and will initially be able to accommodate up to eight individuals. The facility will be licensed by the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and will be staffed 24/7. In addition, the facility will incorporate trauma informed design and includes classroom space, a recreation room, individual bedrooms and access to all of Samaritan House’s services that include counseling, advocacy, case management and unique services such as equine therapy.

In the interest of privacy, we are not publicizing the exact address of the facility, please contact Andrew Roberts for the shelter address.

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**ABOUT SAMARITAN HOUSE:** Since 1984, Samaritan House has sought to foster personal safety, growth and self-sufficiency in adults and their children through freedom from sexual and domestic violence, human trafficking and homelessness in Hampton Roads by providing emergency and permanent housing, support services and community outreach to victims. For additional information, visit: [www.samaritanhouseva.org](http://www.samaritanhouseva.org)