

For Immediate Release



Media Contact: Nita Belles, Executive Director & Founder
541.948.6428; nita@inourbackyard.org

IN OUR BACKYARD Wins Telly Award for Short Film on Human Trafficking
Film Documents Success of 'Freedom Stickers' Campaign and Raises Awareness for Victims of Trafficking

May 23rd, 2019 (Bend, OR)—IN OUR BACKYARD (IOB), a nonprofit organization dedicated to fighting human trafficking, was awarded a Telly Award this week for a short film it helped produce earlier this year. The film, which is titled *Human Trafficking: A Lifeline*, focuses on the organization's Freedom Stickers campaign, its ensuing success and stories of victims who are helped. The award is a testament to the contributions IOB has made to combating human trafficking as well as the need to continue raising awareness about an issue that is often overlooked by the media and the public.

The Lifeline film, which was produced in January of this year by internationally known photographer and filmmaker Benjamin Edwards, was a shared vision between IOB and the survivors it works with. It focuses on the Freedom Stickers campaign, which was created in collaboration with trafficking survivors who directly contributed to their design and objective. Since their creation, more than 225,000 of these stickers have been placed in public restroom stalls in high-traffic areas such as convenience stores, restaurants, hospitals, schools, bars, rest areas and government buildings, which are some of the safest places for victims to call or text for help. They have documented cases of successful victim recoveries in multiple locations.

Every year, the Telly Awards showcase the best work created within television and across video, for all screens. The committee receives over 12,000 entries from all 50 states and 5 continents, and Award winners represent work from some of the most respected advertising agencies, television stations, production companies and publishers from around the world. *Human Trafficking: A Lifeline* was submitted under the General for Social Video category and was awarded the Silver Winner prize.

Filmmaker and producer Benjamin Edwards shared, "I chose to take this project on because it's a topic that needs more attention, in fact, it can't have enough attention. IOB's Freedom Stickers remind victims they are not alone. Priceless. My hope is this piece will be seen by many, inspiring them to get involved." He can be reached at info@benjamedwardsphotography.com.

Founder and Executive Director Nita Belles explains, "When we first decided to work on this project, our goal was to shed light on the importance of the Freedom Stickers campaign. Not in our wildest dreams did we think we'd end up receiving this level of recognition. I think the Telly is a testament to the importance of the work we do and the tremendous responsibility to continue speaking up for victims and survivors of human trafficking, who are so often voiceless."

About IN OUR BACKYARD

IN OUR BACKYARD (IOB) is a national leader with more than a decade of dedication to the fight against sex and labor trafficking. IOB links arms in the fight against human trafficking by empowering

communities to prevent this atrocity and creating access to freedom for victims of HT. Exposed to the devastating realities of HT, IOB Founder Nita Belles was driven to take action to stop the exploitation of children, women, and men. Her book, *In Our Backyard*, has been acclaimed as the primer on human trafficking in America. IOB is known for placing Freedom Stickers in all 50 states and working to eradicate sex trafficking surrounding the Super Bowl for 10 consecutive years. Our vision is a culture where all people are empowered to live in freedom because even one victim of human trafficking is too many.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.inourbackyard.org>

To watch the Lifeline film, please visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6l8nvMtRYo>

