

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
September 28, 2023

Aislinn Hinyup
WYES VP, Communications
504.460.2850 cell
ahinyup@wyes.org



TURNING THE TIDE: A STORY OF HELL, HEALING, AND HOPE

Documentary Spotlights the Complex Crisis of the Sex Trafficking Trade in Louisiana

New Orleans, LA — In a new documentary, WYES exposes the horror of the sex trafficking trade in Louisiana and identifies a growing team of perhaps unlikely warriors that has mobilized to fight it. They include First Lady Donna Edwards, a group of Catholic nuns running a secret healing center, and three heroic survivors turned advocates.

The WYES documentary **TURNING THE TIDE: A STORY OF HELL, HEALING, AND HOPE** premieres on Monday, October 23 at 8:00 p.m. The program will air on WYES-TV and stream on wyes.org/live, the WYES and PBS Apps and WYES' YouTube channel. It will also be rebroadcast on Wednesday, October 25 at 10:00 p.m. and Monday, October 30 at 9:00 p.m. on WYES.

The 30-minute program is produced, written and narrated by Emmy Award-winning journalist Karen Swensen and directed, photographed and edited by Peabody Award-winning photojournalist Aaron Brownlee.

In shocking transparency, survivors of sex trafficking share their journeys into the depths of depravity, explaining with the clarity of hindsight what made them vulnerable and the dangers that lurk in our own backyard.

"It's a lot easier to sell a human and make money than (to sell) drugs," says Trooper Amy Juneau, an investigator with the Louisiana State Police who is interviewed in the program. She also explains why Louisiana has become a battleground in the national fight, including an interstate system that provides easy access for many traffickers.

Mrs. Edwards, who has made the fight against human trafficking a key part of her work as First Lady, not only works to raise awareness and affect change nationwide, she also takes an active role in the survivors' healing process. "They deserve for us to stand up for them, to talk about what they're going through, to save them, to bring them back," she says in an interview.

And among the resources that does just that is Metanoia, a secret healing center run by five Hospitaler Sisters of Mercy – Catholic nuns who love the girls back to a place of well-being while also providing them an education, therapy and life skills. "We just welcome them and love them as they are when they come," said Sr. Norma Nunez of the Hospitaler Sisters of Mercy.

The documentary will be followed by a special 30-minute program, also hosted by Swensen and featuring guests discussing how Louisiana can better respond to the crisis of human trafficking, what resources are available and where more help is needed.

For more information on **TURNING THE TIDE: A STORY OF HELL, HEALING, AND HOPE**, visit wyes.org.

ABOUT WYES:

For 66 years, WYES has worked to inform, teach, illuminate, entertain and inspire our entire community. It is the oldest public television station serving southeast Louisiana and the Mississippi Gulf Coast, the 12th oldest in the nation, and the most utilized non-profit organization in our two states with as many as a half-million people using our broadcasts, outreach activities and website each week. We are proud to be part of the nation's largest classroom, the largest stage for the arts and a trusted window to the world. For more information, call (504) 486-5511 or visit wyes.org.