Jenny Williamson
Courage Worldwide

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I have always considered myself to be a reasonably aware and connected person. I’ve posted, pinned, tweeted, and tagged. I’ve Skyped and Face Timed. I enjoy beautiful documentaries and corny Hallmark premiere movies. I immerse myself in good books, and enjoy good conversation. But somewhere along the way, I became so complacent in my Pollyanna-like existence that I seemed to have forgotten that this is a mighty big world with some mighty big problems. Into my life walks Jenny Williamson.

On my way to meet Jenny for the first time, I must say I was feeling more than a little intimidated. She is, after all, a professionally trained life coach and an international motivational speaker. She is an author and a successful businesswoman. “What more can this woman do?” I thought to myself. Little did I know just how much more she had done.

Walking into the office space occupied by Jenny and her team, I could feel the energy swirling around the room like a growing tornado. Positive energy on a mission. Walking up the stairs to Jenny’s office, that energy became stronger and more palpable. I immediately knew I was in a place where faith was strong and courage ran deep. Having been raised by my Alabama-born and Kentucky-raised momma, as soon as I heard the sweet Mississippi twang of Jenny’s voice, I felt right at home. Don’t let this honeysuckle description fool you, though. This is one strong, southern woman.

Sex trafficking. An appalling and deviant world filled with despicable acts of horror reining down on young and innocent children. Jenny was sitting in church one day in 2007, when she learned about this horrific form of evil. As the mother of three children, her heart ached to think that this was happening somewhere in the world. Then Jenny learned it was happening right here at home. Right in her own backyard. “Why isn’t someone doing something about this?” Jenny remembers asking God. “Then I heard God’s voice asking me why I wasn’t doing something.” That was it. She took the bull by the horns and has never looked back.
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Jenny began her journey by researching sex trafficking on the internet. She read stories and articles written by experts in the field. She then began to send emails to local police departments and the FBI, and placed telephone calls to the experts listed in the articles. Soon, she began to receive responses and was surprised to learn how eager these people were to share information with her. She contacted the Office of the Attorney General to find out how she could help fight this horrendous crime that affected so many of our children. "I just kept asking questions and putting all of the answers together until I came up with the solution. Build them a home, and call them family, just as God had instructed," Jenny says.

In order to understand Jenny’s tireless battle against this monster known as sex trafficking, one has to take the road that Jenny took that day in 2007. Almost afraid to see it in black and white, she learned that the sheer numbers of children sold into this barbaric and cruel world are staggering. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, human trafficking has become the second fastest growing criminal industry — just behind drug trafficking — with children accounting for roughly half of all victims. With an estimated 4.5 million victims being used in sex trafficking around the world, 98% of whom are women and young girls, the number of children involved is sickening. Let's remember, these numbers are merely estimates. Because this crime is so clandestine in nature, it is difficult to exactly pinpoint the numbers. A University of Pennsylvania study concluded that children at risk of being domestically trafficked within the United States is roughly 300,000 per year. In Sacramento County alone, 300 young girls have been rescued from this life of savagery. Do I have your attention?

Within this great country of ours where freedom reigns, our children are being captured and sold into sex slavery. This captivity includes mental, emotional, and physical torture, including sodomy and rape. Many of the young victims are sold to traffickers by their own parents and grandparents when they are as young as 5 years old. However, the average age of children forced into this life of horror is between 12 to 14 years of age. Victims, who have been exploited in this manner, have reported that their traffickers or pimps would require a quota of 10 to 15 "buyers" per night. Conservatively calculating the numbers, a young girl forced into the world of sex trafficking and prostitution would be actively raped over 6000 times during the course of her victimization. If I didn't have your attention before, I certainly hope I have it now.
Jenny believes each and every one of us is created on purpose for a purpose. Her journey of purpose, detailed in her new book *Do you Have the Courage to Be You*, led her to a group of vulnerable children - Jenny wonders where yours will lead you.

Ever the doer, ever the giver, ever the problem solver, Jenny Williamson put into motion that tornado of energy and faith with a large sprinkling of love. In 2005, Jenny founded Courage Worldwide, an organization where employees and volunteers are encouraged to pursue their own unique purpose while contributing to the organization’s efforts to change the world, one individual at a time.

This heinous industry is growing. Because of technological advances in cellular phones, and the internet, sex trafficking is running rampant allowing buyers to connect with both perpetrators and victims in a matter of seconds. This also enables the perpetrators to remain undetected for the most part, and allows them time to exploit even more victims. Sex trafficking is a $32 billion dollar per year industry. While law enforcement continues its quest to terminate this activity, much frustration is felt because of the lack of facilities able to house these victims, as well as a lack of resources to support them once they are extracted from captivity. According to the California Office of the Attorney General, as late as 2009, there were only three homes for minor victims of sex trafficking in the United States with a total of 32 beds. Today, that number has grown to approximately ten homes totaling over 150 available beds, which doesn’t even begin to address the number of beds necessary for the children rescued in just the Sacramento area.

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Because of her valiant and selfless efforts, Jenny was the 2014 recipient of the prestigious Loreal Women of Worth Award. Her new book, *Do You Have The Courage To Be You?* Hits the bookstores on April 7th and is also available on Amazon and on her website jennytwilliamson.com. Jenny’s vision is to engage 1,000,000 “somebodies” to build 1,000 homes in 100 countries over the next ten years to house, protect, educate, and illuminate these rescued children. It all began with a mother’s heart and a whisper from God. Will you be that somebody?