

# Former Chicago trafficking victim Brenda Myers-Powell to speak at Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center

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*Free Film & Discussion on January 12, 6:30 – 8:30 pm at Illinois Holocaust Museum,  
9603 Woods Drive, Skokie*

**Skokie, Ill.** – January is National Human Trafficking Awareness Month. On January 12, Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center and YWCA Evanston/North Shore in partnership with Illinois DCFS and other local organizations, will host a film screening of the Sundance Film Festival award-winning documentary, “Dreamcatcher,” an unflinching exposé that follows **Brenda Myers-Powell**, who grew up in one of the poorest neighborhoods of Chicago and eventually fell into the dark world of prostitution.

The United States is considered one of the world's major transit points for human trafficking, and Chicago ranks third in the country for the highest volume of sex trafficking.

"Modern day slavery is happening in our own backyard," said Myers-Powell. "I am honored to speak at Illinois Holocaust Museum to share what inspired me to change my life and about my current work mentoring women and girls who feel that prostitution is their only option to survive."

The film screening is one of two final programs being held in conjunction with the Museum's *Women Hold Up Half to Sky* special exhibition (closing January 22) co-presented by YWCA Evanston/North Shore. Inspired by the book *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression Into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, by Pulitzer-Prize winning author Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, the exhibition is a powerful look at women's and girls' equality in the United States and around the world, with information on how to combat sexual trafficking, domestic abuse, poverty and homelessness.

"We all have a role to play in stopping the exploitation of our children and youth," said Illinois DCFS Director George Sheldon. "It's important for the public to know the signs of human trafficking and get involved by calling 911 and the DCFS Abuse and Neglect hotline. Any child involved in forced prostitution is a victim worthy of our protection."

Other local organizations supporting this important program include CAASE; U.S. Fund for UNICEF; Women in Film Chicago.

The final exhibition program "Slavery Today: Sex Trafficking in Illinois" takes place Sunday, January 15 from 2 – 3 pm. Experts will address the myths about local sex trafficking and the demand that keeps it going; and challenges the audience to work to end sexual exploitation in our state.

*Women Hold Up Half the Sky* programs are free to the public and require reservations at [ilholocaustmuseum.org/standup4women](http://ilholocaustmuseum.org/standup4women).

*Women Hold Up Half the Sky* is organized and circulated by the Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles, California.

**Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center** transforms the lessons of the Holocaust into current, relevant, and universal lessons in humanity. The Museum is open daily from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.; Thursday evenings until 8:00 p.m.; and Saturdays and Sundays from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. For more information visit [www.ilholocaustmuseum.org](http://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org).

**YWCA Evanston/North Shore** works to eliminate racism, empower women, stand up for social justice, help families and strengthen local communities. For more information, go to [www.ywca.org/evanston](http://www.ywca.org/evanston).

**DCFS** receives, investigates and acts upon a report of child abuse or neglect every five minutes. Tens of thousands of children are safer thanks to those who call our Child Abuse hotline, 1-800-25-ABUSE (252-2873) each year. Working together, we can ensure a safe, loving home and brighter future for every child.