








ANNUAL REPORT 2024

At a Glance

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Message from the Founder



Brandi Mitchell, Founder &
CEO

"By blending your personal journey with professional expertise, you forge a sanctuary for survivors of sexual exploitation and human trafficking, where their stories are not only heard but honored, laying the groundwork for justice."

This past year has marked a period of remarkable growth for Shadows of Strength, and I'm thrilled to see the vision for our organization coming to life. With the revamping of SoS Leadership, we have a dedicated all-female team of Officers and an impressive Board of Advisors. Our Board comprises of professionals with extensive experience in national security, military intelligence and operations, executive protection, and finance. Each member not only brings their remarkable expertise but also personal stories of resilience and survival that have shaped their career paths.

Throughout this year, Shadows of Strength paused fundraising activities to focus intently on serving our clients and tackling critical cases. We concentrated our efforts on supporting law enforcement and federal agencies with essential data on human trafficking. Our passionate volunteer team played a crucial role,

validating the stories of survivors and witnessing both the moments of triumph and the darker realities of human trafficking.

As we look ahead to 2025, our mission remains firmly centered on combating human trafficking. We're excited to renew our fundraising efforts and engage in upcoming speaking engagements. The commitment of our team is core to fulfilling our roles, but none of this would be possible without your invaluable support and generous donations. Thank you for standing with us as we continue to support survivors and wage the fight against human trafficking.

SoS Highlights



Highlight 1: Data Information Provided

In the past year, SoS has made significant progress in the fight against human trafficking across the tri-county region of Escambia, Okaloosa, and Santa Rosa County, FL. Through diligent information gathering of over 3000 hours worked by SoS Volunteers, and collaboration with local law enforcement, our organization has been able to identify 10 potential human traffickers and pinpoint 33 potential adult victims with 5 Survivors reporting to law enforcement.

This critical analysis has facilitated one successful prosecution, and highlighted the operational methods employed by these criminal networks. Our efforts provide law enforcement with invaluable insights needed to dismantle these operations, ultimately contributing to the safety and security of our communities.

Our work in combating human trafficking is centered around providing a reliable support system for victims, allowing them to reach out whenever they're ready to escape their circumstances. By maintaining open, confidential communication channels, we empower individuals to find help on their own terms and connect with someone they trust, thereby reinforcing their path to reclaiming freedom and dignity.

This year, our collaborative efforts have demonstrated the power of collaboration in transforming lives. Through our connections with local nonprofits and the Pensacola PD Community Service Providers, we helped three survivors journey to freedom with the support of Freedom Aviation Network and The Safe House Project. These collaborations provide necessary logistical and shelter services, ensuring a safe transition for those we assist.



Highlight 2: Journey to Freedom



Highlight 3: Speaking Engagement

In this past year, our Founder had the incredible opportunity to speak at the **2024 Florida Crime Prevention Conference** in Destin, FL. During her presentation, she shed light on the concerning issue of Human Trafficking Network Cells operating within the Florida Panhandle. She highlighted the intricate web of these networks and the urgent need for strategic community involvement and law enforcement collaboration to disrupt their operations.

Her insights not only brought necessary attention to this pressing matter but also reinforced our commitment to combat human trafficking and support affected communities through targeted initiatives and advocacy efforts.



Highlight 4: Attending Skull Games

Shadows of Strength was honored to be invited to Skull Games Austin in Austin, TX, an event that offered a remarkable opportunity to deepen our understanding of human trafficking networks. Our team actively participated in information-gathering efforts that focused on identifying and assisting victims of human trafficking. This collaborative environment not only allowed us to contribute to a larger, coordinated effort but also enhanced our methodologies through shared knowledge and innovative techniques in analyzing trafficking networks.

Through our previous work in learning from survivors, we had developed insights into how escort ads are manipulated by traffickers. The experience invigorated our mission, adding powerful tools and collaborations that bolster our ongoing fight against human exploitation.

Meet the Team



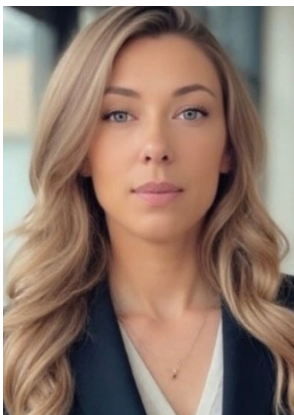
Brandi Mitchell
Former Special Agent, NBIB
Founder & CEO, SoS
Founder of Steel Arc Solutions

Over the past decade, Brandi has devoted her career to serving others. She embarked on her journey by earning her bachelor's degree in Psychology from UMUC. Following, this, she spent eight years as a Special Agent with the National Background Investigations Bureau (NBIB), refining her skills. For the last 6.5 years, she has served as an Independent Contract Investigator retained by the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency.

She demonstrates expertise in collecting critical human behavior dynamics across global cases and has a proven ability to build rapport and trust, eliciting sensitive information voluntarily. Brandi's impressive achievements include investigating and coordinating with federal agencies to facilitate the removal of both military and civilian personnel suspected of engaging in espionage, financial crimes, or abuses against minors. Notably, in 2016, one of her Counterintelligence Field Referrals was not only highlighted by the Director of OPM/NBIB in the Counterintelligence and Threat Coordination Activity's FY2016 Highlight Case Summary but was also employed as a field training case, along with a second case, by NBIB's Counterintelligence Department. Brandi's expertise in building rapport and evaluating critical data made her an ideal candidate to become a field trainer, evaluator, and assistant instructor at OPM's field training office in Slippery Rock, PA. Her dedication to maintaining the integrity and protection of sensitive information continues to influence and guide new investigators in the field.

Brandi's diverse background has equipped her with essential skills to provide dynamic and effective support to those in need, ensuring future success. In the challenging year of 2020, Brandi embarked on a personal journey of healing from the trauma of child exploitation and sexual assaults, an experience she endured from a young age until her college years. This transformative journey, coupled with her educational background and experience as a National Security Investigator, sparked, her interest in helping other survivors to feel they are believed. In 2022, driven by her passion and dedication, Brandi founded Shadows of Strength, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.. SoS is committed to combatting Human Trafficking through a comprehensive approach that includes the pillars of Collection, Identification, and Rebuilding the lives of Survivors.

With unwavering commitment to this cause, Brandi strives to bring light and strength to those affected by Human Trafficking, contributing to the eradication of this grave injustice.



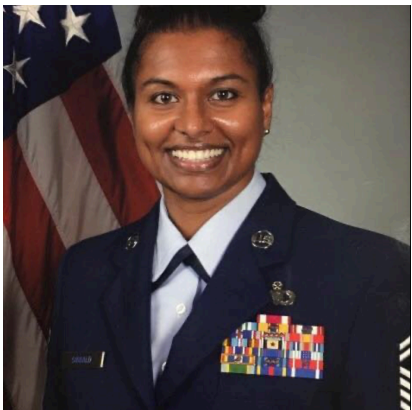
Sarah McManus
Retired First Sergeant, U.S. Army
Chief Operating Officer, SoS
Partner of Steel Arc Solutions
Executive Protection Team Member

For over twenty years, Sarah has devoted her professional life of serving others. Her journey began with enlisting in the U.S. Army, where she refined a broad range of skills in all source intelligence, including human, signal, imagery, open source, geospatial, and cyber intelligence. Her expertise contributed to the crafting of reports for national policymakers. Sarah also took on the role of Military Police, furthering her career through specialization in law enforcement investigations, advocacy for sexual assault and harassment cases, and holding various leadership roles. Presently, Sarah is the Chief Executive Officer, a Board of Advisor for Shadows of Strength, and spearheads the Security and Emergency Preparedness Team for a prominent environmentally-focused corporation.

Sarah's credentials paint a picture of a dedicated professional whose career is as diverse as it is profound. She has honed her investigative acumen in Special Victims Unit Investigations, sharpened her advocacy skills as a Department of Defense Sexual Assault Advocate, and expanded her analytical expertise in Intelligence Analytics-all under the auspices of the United States Department of Defense. Her resiliency is not just personal but also professional, certified in Master Resiliency, and she is adept in Crisis Management from the Emergency Management Institute, alongside being a qualified Behavioral Technician through MedCert.

Beyond her official capacities, Sarah's compassion, and commitment to service shines. She has been a Court Appointed Special Advocate for children, a brave Volunteer Firefighter, an Emergency Medical Technician, and a proactive Disaster Response Coordinator. Her influence extends globally as she educates and empowers others as a public speaker and trainer, sharing her insights on crucial issues such as human trafficking and public safety.

Sarah's extensive background in intelligence, law enforcement, and advocacy for victims of sexual assault has equipped her with a deep understanding of the complexities surrounding human trafficking. Her commitment to safeguarding the vulnerable is evident through her diligent efforts in training and response coordination. As a seasoned speaker and educator, she has shared her insights with diverse audiences worldwide, aiming to galvanize action and foster a collaborative approach to eradicate this global issue. With a heart dedicated to the service of those in need and a mind sharpened by years of tactical and analytical training, Sarah stands at the forefront of the fight against human trafficking, ready to empower others with her knowledge and experience.



Doreen Prasad
Retired Senior Master Sergeant, USAF
Director of Human Resources, SoS



Director of Finance, SoS
Military Spouse

Meet the Board of Advisors



Joshua Soles
Former U.S. Army
Director of Security, SoS
Human Intelligence Branch Chief, Hurlburt Field, FL

Joshua Soles enlisted in the Army in 1999 as a Counterintelligence Agent and served five years at Ft. Gordon, GA assigned to B Co, 202nd Military Intelligence Battalion, 513th Military Brigade, supporting US Army Central and the Army's Intelligence and Security Command. During this assignment, Mr. Soles deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Bright Star 2001 and several other deployments throughout the Middle East.

In 2004, Mr. Soles transitioned to the private sector as an intelligence instructor at Ft. Huachuca, AZ, and quickly rose to a senior instructor position, focusing on training Human Intelligence Specialists for the Advanced Individual Training course. His rapid career advancement saw him taking on a senior instructor role at the Regional Joint Education Training Facility under US Central Command at MacDill AFB, FL. By 2008, Mr. Soles was serving as a senior intelligence analyst and shift lead at the Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) at Hurlburt Field, FL. Currently, he holds the position of Human Intelligence Branch Chief for AFSOC's Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Directorate, where he supervises global intelligence initiatives and provides counsel to various Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Boards and Planning Teams.

Mr. Soles has a Bachelor of Science (Software Engineering) degree and a Master of Business Administration degree. Mr. Soles also serves as a volunteer Boys JV and Varsity Head Coach at East Hill Christian School, Board of Advisor for Shadows of Strength, and is the Founder / CEO of Costal Kings Athletics, a 501c3 organization dedicated to providing Pensacola's inner-city youth opportunities through sports and other activities.



Laramie Turner
Director of Intelligence, SoS
Forensic Investigator
Social Services/Law Enforcement



Carolina "Nina" Kallaus
Former U.S. Army
Director of Risk Management, SoS
Director of Security, Take Flight Survivor & SAFE in the Panhandle
Founder of Morningside Analytics



Former U.S. Army
Director of Emergency Protection, SoS

The Director of Emergency Protection began his military career in the Army National Guard before serving 13 years in the U.S. Army, where he led operations in Iraq and Afghanistan with remarkable success. His leadership in logistics and weapons training was complemented by advanced tactical training at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center, which honed his skills in planning, adaptability, and the training of multinational personnel. As a Squad Leader, he emphasized analytical intelligence and operational excellence, setting new standards in mission execution and the management of critical supplies.

After his military service, he transitioned to a Protective Security Specialist role with Diplomatic Security in Kabul, Afghanistan, where he provided executive protection for Diplomatic Embassy Personnel and implemented robust security protocols. He also served as a Static Security Officer, ensuring top-level physical security for U.S. Government facilities in high-risk areas. Prior to joining SoS, he was an Engineer Tech III at Reliance Test and Technology, coordinating range activities for the U.S. Army 7th Special Forces

Group. Additionally, he co-owns B3 Milsim and actively volunteers with Veterans for Airsoft, fostering a supportive community for fellow veterans.

In 2023, he became the Team Lead of Operations and in 2024 he was voted in as a Board of Advisor as the Director of Emergency Protection at Shadows of Strength, significantly contributing to the fight against human trafficking through his leadership in intelligence analysis and emergency protection procedures. His transition to a Board of Advisor marks a significant addition to the SoS team. His extensive background, leadership skills, and dedication to security and safety ensure that Survivors of Human Trafficking remain at the forefront of Shadows of Strength.

Collaborations



Shadows of Strength is built on a foundation of integrity, so when we look to collaborate with other organizations, the first thing we assess is their integrity and ethics. At SoS, we understand that combating Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation cannot be achieved by a single organization; it requires a community of organizations committed to their missions and visions. We are grateful for the collaboration and support we've received in 2024 from organizations that share our dedication. Their collaboration has been instrumental in advancing our causes and expanding our reach. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the following organizations for their invaluable collaboration this past year:

- Freedom Aviation
- The Safe House Project
- Rubies LV
- The Exodus Road
- Even for One
- New Roots Recovery
- Emerald Coast Victim Services
- Alpha Female Tactical
- Confidently Carry
- Pensacola PD Community Service Providers
- The Secret Place
- Nissi Project
- Uncommon Valor
- A&R Tinting

Together, we continue to make strides in creating a safer, more just world.

Looking Ahead



As Shadows of Strength enters the year 2025, we are preparing for another impactful year of information gathering and strengthening trust between victims, survivors, and law enforcement. We recognize that building these foundational relationships is crucial in the fight against human trafficking. The following are a few of the additional initiatives we will be working on:

1. Our Founder is honored to speak at several key events this year, including the **2025 Human Trafficking Summit in Pensacola, FL, and the Emerald Coast Victims Services: Healing and Empowerment Summit**. Additionally, she will engage with young women in a homeschool program to discuss the importance of situational awareness, empowering the next generation with knowledge and confidence to navigate the world safely.
2. We are dedicated to renewing our efforts to help rebuild the lives of Survivors. Our recent pause in seeking donations temporarily impacted our self-defense course offerings. However, with the support of generous individuals like you, we aim to rejuvenate our Rebuilding initiative through partnerships with **Alpha Female Tactical and Confidently Carry**.
3. Shadows of Strength, with the help of Retired Lt. Colonial Carmen Reynolds, has begun proactively reaching out to Florida Representatives with proposed legislative amendments to Florida Statutes 627.748. Our goal is to address the role of Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) in the context of human trafficking, and we are eager to see these critical changes come to fruition.
4. Partnerships with local legal experts guide our efforts to establish a Human Trafficking Court, providing a tailored support system for Victims who find themselves entangled in legal troubles, ensuring they receive the justice and rehabilitation they deserve. Thank you to **Friends of Santa Rosa Veterans Treatment Court** for helping to guide us and work with us to establish this much needed court.
5. Shadows of Strength will be establishing a nonprofit initiative with a Veteran Organization in support of our Military Veterans. Many of our volunteers have been personally touched by veteran PTSD, motivating us to make impactful changes.

We are committed to making tangible contributions that not only combat human trafficking but also offer healing and hope to those who have served our nation, creating a comprehensive support network for all those affected.

Donors

THANK YOU



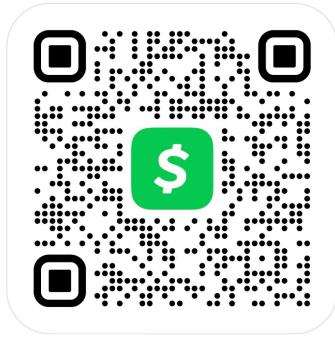
This year, we not only provided 50 hours of client services outside their own cases, but SoS was also able to provide an additional resource to law enforcement. We are truly grateful to receive over 30 hygiene bags generously donated by supporters including the **Hurlburt Spouses Club, East Bay Dog Spot, and Insight Global Pensacola**. These essential bags serve a dual purpose: they support the survivors we work with directly and equip our law enforcement officers with supplies to offer immediate assistance to victims they encounter.

Looking ahead, our ambitious goal for 2025 is to ensure that as many patrol vehicles as possible across Escambia, Santa Rosa, and Okaloosa counties are stocked with these vital resources, with plans to expand into Walton County, FL. By broadening this initiative, we aim to make a meaningful impact in the lives of many more individuals in need.



We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to **Fermata Discovery** for their generous donation of the VIXN software program to Shadows of Strengths. This invaluable tool has significantly enhanced our capabilities by streamlining research processes and reducing the time and effort required to compile complex data on network cells. By optimizing these tasks, VIXN allows our team to work more efficiently and focus resources on intervention and prevention efforts, crucial to our mission of combatting human trafficking.

Furthermore, the VIXN software empowers us to generate detailed and tailored reports for law enforcement, clients, and other stakeholders, ensuring that the information gathered is communicated effectively to those who need it most. This functionality not only aids in our collaboration with partners but also strengthens our advocacy by providing clear and actionable insights. Fermata Discovery's support through this cutting-edge technology is an instrumental asset in our fight against human trafficking, and we are deeply thankful for their partnership in this cause.



Shadows of Strength

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As we close out the successful year of 2024, we extend our deepest gratitude to all of you for your continued support of Shadows of Strength. It is your unwavering commitment that makes our success possible and fuels our mission as we look forward to an even more impactful 2025. We are thrilled to announce some exciting fundraising opportunities on the horizon and warmly invite your business to take part. Whether by hosting a fundraising event, sponsoring one of our self-defense courses for victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, or making a valuable donation, your involvement is crucial.

Your support not only aids in our efforts to combat human trafficking but also strengthens our ability to advocate for legislative changes and improve resources within the court system. Together, we can continue to make a meaningful difference in countless lives.

Contact Us

For further information, please reach out to us at info@shadowsofstrength.org.

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