



# SMALL CHANGE BIG IMPACT

Meet the Greenville Nonprofit Providing Water & Freedom Globally—with Help from Your Lunch

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PHOTOGRAPHY SET FREE ALLIANCE

**H**ere in the Upstate, we *love* our stories. We celebrate them in our food, in our gatherings, and in the quiet, generous moments that define our community. But just a few miles from downtown, another story is unfolding—one that starts right here in Greenville and arcs across oceans, changing the lives of children on the other side of the world.

Set Free Alliance is that story. A nonprofit born in the Upstate, fueled by local families, churches, and businesses, and laser-focused on a bold mission: to end child slavery in our lifetime. And the best part? You're already part of it. From scooping ice cream in Simpsonville to sipping wine in Pelzer, local partners are proving that small choices add up to global freedom.

## FROM CLEAN WATER TO A MOVEMENT

Set Free's journey began in 2002, when founder Roland Bergeron, a former luxury home builder, went on a mission trip to Central America and found himself drawn to the global water crisis. Water of Life was born—a drilling ministry that would eventually focus on the hardest-to-reach corners of India and West Africa.

But as drill crews worked, they uncovered something darker. In India, families trapped in cycles of poverty were losing their children to slavery. Unclean water and slavery are actually more connected than one might realize: someone drinks contaminated water and falls ill. They need a doctor, but can't afford the bill. They borrow money from a loan shark and when they can't pay the loan back, the solution is to work it off.





Loan sharks prey on desperate parents, offering tiny sums in exchange for a child's labor. *"The parent is led to believe that it will only be a couple weeks or maybe a month,"* Set Free's Alison Storm explains. *"But in reality, they're never going to see their child again."* In 2011, Set Free Alliance was launched to rescue, reunite, and care for these children, and in 2019, the organization merged with Water of Life to deliver a holistic solution: clean water, rescue, medical care, education, and the love of Jesus rolled into one.

**83% LOCAL. 100% IMPACT.**

Since then, the numbers have become staggering—and every digit carries a name, a face, a future restored.

**100,000**  
children rescued  
from slavery.  
That milestone was  
reached in 2025.

**16,345**  
children  
prevented  
from entering  
slavery through  
a grassroots  
Child Slavery  
Prevention  
Program  
that pays off  
predatory loans,  
with an average  
balance of just  
**\$72.51.**

**20,000**  
rescued children  
enrolled in school,  
many going on to  
college, vocational  
training, & careers.

**627**  
children have  
started their  
own businesses,  
and many give  
back to help the  
next child.

**1,000**  
wells drilled.  
Another  
milestone  
reached in  
2025, bringing  
clean water to  
entire villages.



And here's the number that will stop you: **83% of Set Free's funding comes directly from the Upstate.** That means you, your neighbor, your favorite coffee shop—you're not just supporting a charity. You're powering a movement.

**SMALL CHANGE, BIG WELLS**

The good news is that joining the mission is as simple as finishing your lunch.



**Tropical Grille: Round Up for a Well**

Laz, the owner of Tropical Grille, started his first restaurant with very little—so he knows what it means to need a hand up. Now, all 12 Tropical Grille locations are teaming up with Set Free for the Charit-a-Bowl campaign. When you round up your check, that spare change is pooled to drill wells in communities desperate for clean water. In just three months, spare change added up to nearly \$11,000—enough to drill a well that can serve thousands of people.

But it's more than numbers. A well costs just \$5,000 to \$10,000. A medical clinic: \$1,000. And a child's meal: just 39 cents. *"These are attainable for people in our community,"* Alison says. *"You don't have to sponsor a whole well. You can give a child a few meals."*



**Ice Cream Station: Scoops That Save**

In Simpsonville, the Ice Cream Station has turned summer's sweetest treat into a lifeline. They donate 39 cents per order—the exact cost to feed a rescued child—each June and July. This summer, they'll cross a monumental milestone: 100,000 meals donated to children who once didn't know where their next bite would come from.



And they do it without flashy marketing. *"They don't even have social accounts,"* Alison says. *"Word of mouth, a great product, and a community that loves them."* That's the Upstate way.

### CityScape Winery: Wine to Water

The Wine to Water partnership through CityScape Winery in Pelzer ensures \$5 from every bottle of their custom blend sold is donated to give a person clean water. 1,624 people have been given clean water through this partnership so far.

### Spill the Beans, Canvas Coffee + Art, and More: The Wella Elephants

Over the holidays, 29 local businesses—including Spill the Beans, Canvas Coffee + Art, and Bella Latte—host Set Free Christmas trees. The ornaments? Handmade elephants stitched by young ladies rescued from slavery in Set Free's tailoring program.

*"I love seeing the look on people's faces when they realize something so small can be part of something so big,"* Alison says.

## BEYOND THE DOLLAR

Maybe you're ready to serve? Set Free offers plenty of ways to jump in:

- **Prayer Group:** Sign up for weekly emails with insider stories, updates, and much more.
- **Volunteer:** Help tag Wella elephants or staff a craft fair booth.
- **Cornerstone Monthly Giving:** \$68 a month cares for one rescued child's holistic needs—food, shelter, medical care, and education.
- **Crowdsourcing Kids:** Kids sell a box of Wella elephants, raise \$130, and receive the exact coordinates of the well they helped drill. *"They can literally plug it into Google and know that babies aren't dying because of what they did,"* Alison says.
- **Corporate sponsorships.** More businesses are joining every year. Visit [setfreealliance.org](http://setfreealliance.org) to find out how.

## YOUR SPARE CHANGE. THEIR FUTURE.

The Set Free Alliance story is about what happens when a community decides that 8,000 miles away isn't too far to reach. When a scoop of ice cream or a round-up at lunch becomes a well. When a handmade elephant becomes medical care. When 39 cents becomes a meal that changes the world.

Alison's parting words sum it up best: *"You can't solve everything. But everybody can do a little something."*

So here's your chance. Grab a cone at the Ice Cream Station. Round up at Tropical Grille. Uncork a bottle from CityScape. Grab a Wella ornament at Spill the Beans. Or, Alison invites you to visit [setfreealliance.org](http://setfreealliance.org), to dream big, and discover ways to become a part of a child's story.

**Because the Upstate doesn't just talk about making a difference.  
We go out for lunch and drill a well.  
We order ice cream and set a child free.**

Follow the journey on Facebook and Instagram: @setfreealliance. \$

