

# Thistle Farms, Inc.



## General Information

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**Nonprofit  
Address  
Phone  
Web Site  
Facebook  
Twitter  
Email**

Thistle Farms, Inc.  
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615-298-1140  
[www.thistlefarms.org](http://www.thistlefarms.org)  
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## Mission & Impact

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### Statements

#### **Mission**

Thistle Farms is a nonprofit social enterprise, based in Nashville, TN, dedicated to helping women survivors recover and heal from trafficking, prostitution, and addiction. We provide a safe place to live, a meaningful job, and a lifelong sisterhood of support because we believe love is the most powerful force in the world.

#### **Background**

Women come to Thistle Farms after experiencing a continuous cycle of abuse, unemployment, poverty, and imprisonment due to past trauma, criminal histories, and addictions. Often this cycle is rooted in severe childhood abuse, traumatic loss and/or neglect. A majority of Thistle Farms residents experienced sexual abuse beginning between ages 7 and 11, and alcohol and drug usage by age 13. These early experiences gave way to homelessness, addiction, prostitution, trafficking, further abuse, and incarceration. Over 90% of residents have gone through short-term treatment programs only to relapse, return to the street, and be jailed again. At Thistle Farms we do not ask what you did, we ask what happened to you. It has taken broken systems for women to end up on the street, so we believe it will take loving communities to bring them into recovery. We seek to offer unconditional love without judgment and to end a culture that allows human beings to be bought and sold.

#### **Impact**

This year Thistle Farms Residential Program has housed 29 women and served 8 women inside prison walls. We are expecting our largest cohort of graduates this year with 9. Each woman will be able to move into her own apartment employed, sober, and able to live independently. Follow-up reports on women up to 12 to 24 months after graduation found that 88.5% are still sober, employed and successfully living on their own. Thistle Farms Social Enterprises sold over \$3.8 million in revenue in FY19, an increase over the previous fiscal year. Women survivors employed by Thistle Farms earned more than \$1.3m in income. Thistle Farms Global partnered with and supported 28 organizations in 20 countries. Sales of global products through Thistle Farms' channels contribute to the fair wages of 4,005 women around the world. The Cafe at Thistle Farms welcomed more than 70,000 guests through its doors last year. The Thistle National Network hosted over 300 guests for quarterly workshops designed to help leaders replicate our

housing-first model in their own community. We currently provide support to 43 sister organizations that provide over 300 beds across the country dedicated to supporting women survivors of trafficking, prostitution, and addiction. 22 more houses are under development. We continue to work toward goals that include: 75% of women completing phase one of Thistle Farms Residential will successfully graduate 20 months later clean, employed, reconnected with family, and ready to live independently. Thistle Farms has started its internal workforce development program called Ready Set Succeed and the first group of 9 women are weeks from completion. We have kicked off the second phase of our growth campaign that will increase the number of beds and services for survivors in Nashville. We are growing the National Network. Growing an aligned global network of survivor groups engaging in social enterprises designed to increase dignity and economic freedom for women survivors of sexual assault and trafficking. Employees will feel valued and understand how their role positively contributes to our mission. Volunteers will have opportunities for meaningful engagement when we are able to provide those again.

## **Needs**

**Local Collaboration:** Up to 20% of Thistle Farms' operating budget reimburses local partners who provide holistic care to residents at a reduced price. These partnerships are an integral part of Thistle Farms' promise to meet residents' needs at no cost to the women. Strong partnerships with local employers are vital to sustaining residents' and graduates' success. These employers offer women a sustainable means of employment, despite criminal records and mental health issues that are typically barriers to employment. **Affordable Housing:** Thistle Farms is committed to helping every graduate access safe and affordable housing upon completion of our two-year Residential program. Metro estimates that 3,800 new affordable housing units will need to be built each year to meet the needs of Nashville's growing population. With Thistle Farms' graduates competing against Nashville's burgeoning population for these affordable units, we do not expect housing to be fully attainable without cooperation from willing property owners and developers.

## **Statement from CEO/Executive Director**

The Thistle Farms community makes every effort to be a witness to the truth that love is the most powerful force for change in the world. That truth has been revealed to us in countless ways over the past two decades as we have watched and been part of the healing that occurs daily. We are grateful for this witness and for the opportunity we have had to grow one of the nation's most dynamic social enterprises as well as help more than 40 other communities replicate this model. Thistle Farms was founded not just to help a sub-culture of women, but to help change the culture itself. We stand in solidarity with women who are recovering from sexual abuse, violence, and life on the streets, and who have paid dearly for a culture that buys and sells women like commodities. Our statistical success has occurred because we provide a long-term, disciplined, and compassionate community, where very isolated women have the opportunity to heal from deep wounds that date back to childhood.

## **Statement from Board Chair**

From our former Board Chair- John Weisenseel. It has been an honor and privilege to be associated with Thistle Farms for the past 4 years as a volunteer, supporter, Board member, and now Board Chair. For the past 25 years, Thistle Farms has lit a pathway of healing and hope for women survivors of trafficking, prostitution, and addiction. We provide housing, case management, healthcare, counseling, education, and employment for two years free of charge. This is our mission! We are a complex social enterprise that manufactures, sells, and distributes body & home products, in addition to running a café and catering business. This social enterprise exists solely to support our mission in that it provides jobs for our women residents and graduates and assists in funding our mission-driven initiatives. Substantial donor funding is also required for Thistle Farms to successfully fulfill its mission. We have been excellent stewards of funding raised and have deployed efficiently to achieve amazing results! For example, our residential program currently provides 32 beds plus 4 safe house beds. It has provided over 10,000 nights of safe housing and over 3,000 medical and counseling appointments. Our social enterprise has provided over 127,000 hours of employment, and services to over 127,000 customers in over 640 wholesale locations. The café has become a way to welcome donors, volunteers, and supporters who are making their way to Thistle Farms from far and near, and to extend the reach of our social enterprise. It has served over 32,000 guests in the last year by using an employee base of

which 84% are in recovery. Our national network includes 92 sister organizations located throughout the United States which provide over 560 beds for women survivors. In addition, in 2014, we started our global trade program to address sexual exploitation, trafficking, and extreme poverty on a global scale. This program has since grown to include 1,400 survivor artisans from 21 different countries and provides a network for them to sell their products. Finally, we provide public policy initiatives and legislative advocacy around trafficking and prostitution issues at both the state and federal levels. Since its founding 25 years ago and its growth, Thistle Farms has always remained true to its mission and its motto, "Love Heals". Every volunteer, supporter, employee, women survivor, and Board member is extremely proud of this fact and the mission is core to all we do. With the recent hire of our new CEO, Tasha Kennard, we are well-positioned to continue to achieve and scale our mission for years to come.

## Service Categories

<b>Primary Category</b>	Human Services - Homeless Services/Centers
<b>Secondary Category</b>	Mental Health & Crisis Intervention - Substance Abuse Dependency, Prevention & Treatment
<b>Tertiary Category</b>	Employment - Sheltered Employment

## Areas Served

Although the majority of residents are from Middle Tennessee, Thistle Farms regularly get calls from across the United States about admittance to our Residential Program. Thistle Farms presence on a national level is bolstered by the Thistle National Network, fostering relationships with and supporting sister organizations across the country. Globally, Thistle Farms Global supports the employment of women in 21 different countries.

TN - Davidson, National

## Programs

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### Thistle Farms Body & Home

#### **Description**

Soon after Thistle Farms' residential program began, it became clear that survivors needed support to heal economically as well as for their physical healing. In 2001, residents and volunteers began pouring candles in a church basement, creating Thistle Farms' first social enterprise. Now known as Thistle Farms Body & Home, our flagship social enterprise employs 31 survivors and earned over \$2.4 million in sales last fiscal year. Body & Home products are made by hand by survivors, and use natural ingredients that are as healing for the earth as they are for the body. Body & Home products are sold direct to customers across the nation as well as to hundreds of wholesale retailers.

**Budget** \$2,839,129.00

**Population Served** Women and girls  
People with substance use disorder  
Victims

## The Cafe at Thistle Farms

### **Description**

The Cafe at Thistle Farms is a local cafe built by the community, for the community. Thistle Farms opened the Cafe in 2013, creating a home to anyone who walks through the doors, whether for a cup of coffee or to join a movement. The Cafe features a wide variety of breakfast and lunch foods as well as specialty drinks. At the Cafe, residents and graduates learn culinary skills and gain experience in customer service that are applicable to a wide variety of jobs outside of Thistle Farms.

**Budget** \$1,105,209.00

### **Population Served**

## Thistle Farms National Network

### **Description**

In 2009, Thistle Farms began its National Education & Outreach Initiative to meet demand from organizations around the nation hoping to replicate Thistle Farms' best practice model. The Initiative now offers free consultation and comprehensive education workshops to individuals and organizations who contact and/or visit Thistle Farms. To date, Thistle Farms has welcomed 2,500+ individuals from 40 different states through either workshops or national conferences. There are currently 43 organizations with open homes modeled after Thistle Farms that can house over 300 survivors across the nation.

**Budget** \$248,001.00

### **Population Served**

## Thistle Farms Residential Program - Magdalene

### **Description**

Thistle Farms' holistic recovery program offers survivors housing, individual case management, mental and physical healthcare, education, transportation, job skills training, and employment for two full years-all free of charge. Thistle Farms owns five homes that together house up to 28 women. Each home operates without 24 hour live-in staff, and relies on residents to create a supportive community, maintain recovery, and share household tasks. While in the program, Thistle Farms matches \$1 for \$1 any savings residents accumulate while employed up to \$1,200. The residential program has proven successful, as follow up with survivors 5 years after graduation found that 75% continue to live healthy, financially independent lives. The continued need for our residential program is clear as our waiting list - capped at 100 women - is consistently full.

**Budget** \$1,015,891.00

### **Population Served**

## Thistle Farms Global

### **Description**

Thistle Farms Global was created to support women survivors of addiction, trafficking, violence, and poverty around the world through a Shared Trade marketplace. Shared Trade increases the share of profit margins for women in a variety of trades, offering women a space to experience economic opportunity and healing community. As Thistle Farms' founder Becca Stevens says, "We are acting globally so women experience freedom locally."

**Budget** \$572,209.00

### **Population Served**

## CEO/Executive Director/Board Comments

This is an incredibly exciting time to be a Thistle Farmer. What started in

2001 with a powerful vision and a pot of melted candle wax has grown into one of the nation's premier social enterprises with over 30,000 customers in 50 states and 6 countries. Over the past four years, revenue generated from Thistle Farms social enterprises revenue has grown more than 140%, and in 2017, we passed the \$2,000,000 mark in sales. Every sale made represents a job opportunity for another survivor. In the past year, Thistle Farms has distributed over \$1,150,000 in wages to residents and graduates of our program. In our model, the road to permanent recovery for women begins with a key to a beautiful, safe home, a renewed sense of community, physical and mental health, and the opportunity to work towards economic independence. With a waiting list of more than 100 women seeking hope in our program, we will work diligently during the upcoming year to expand the number of beds we offer. We are also committed to investing the resources necessary for our social enterprises to grow. After many renovations, Thistle Farms now has a full-service kitchen for our cafe as well as a manufacturing facility that gives us twice the amount of space to hire more residents and produce/ship more products.

## Governance

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<b>Board Chair</b>	Jennifer Hutcheson
<b>Company Affiliation</b>	Ryman Hospitalities Profile
<b>Term</b>	July 2024 to June 2025
<b>Email</b>	jlhutcheson@gmail.com

### Board of Directors

<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Status</b>
Jeffrey Brown	Dollar General	Voting
Ingrid Cockhren	TSU	Voting
Kathleen Flaherty	K21 Communications	Voting
Jenny Ford	JF Government Strategies	Voting
Ms. Rachel Goldszweig Graduate Liaison	Village Real Estate	Voting
Carlana Harwell	Community Leader	NonVoting
Heidi Hayne	Nashville Diaper Connection	NonVoting
Mr. David Hutchens	Author/Leadership Development Consultant	Voting
Ms. Jennifer Hutcheson	Ryman Hospitality	Voting
Chris Lewis	Greenwich Capital Group	Voting
Peter MacDonald	Retired District Judge of Kentucky	Voting
Maeve McConville	Retired	Voting
Heather Meshell	Capitol Hill Advocacy LLC	Voting
Ms. Annie Ortmeier	Universal Music Group	Voting
Samantha Pyle	Green Apple	Voting
Brooke Schiferle	US Attorney's Office, Middle TN	
Willie Sims	Fellavison	Voting
Daina Storey	Fischer Storey Consulting	Voting
David Thompson	Neal & Harwell PLC	Voting
Karen Thompson	HCA Healthcare	Voting
Kathryn Walker	Bass, Berry, and Sims	NonVoting
Mr. John Weisenseel	Alliance Bernstein	Voting
Kathi Whalen	HCA Healthcare	Voting

### Board Demographics - Ethnicity

<b>African American/Black</b>	6
<b>Asian American/Pacific Islander</b>	2
<b>Caucasian</b>	14

<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	0
<b>Native American/American Indian</b>	0
<b>Other</b>	0

## Board Demographics - Gender

<b>Male</b>	6
<b>Female</b>	17
<b>Unspecified</b>	0

## Governance

<b>Board Term Lengths</b>	3.00
<b>Board Term Limits</b>	2
<b>Board Meeting Attendance</b>	72%
<b>Does the Organization have written Board Selection Criteria?</b>	No
<b>Does the Organization have a Written Conflict of Interest Policy?</b>	Yes
<b>Percentage Making Monetary Contributions</b>	100%
<b>Percentage Of Board Members Making In Kind Contributions</b>	100%
<b>Does the Board include Client Representation?</b>	Yes
<b>Number of Full Board Meetings Annually</b>	6

## Standing Committees

Executive  
 Finance  
 Human Resources / Personnel  
 Marketing  
 Program  
 Advisory Board / Advisory Council

## Risk Provisions

Commercial General Liability  
 Directors and Officers Policy  
 General Property Coverage and Professional Liability  
 Life Insurance  
 Medical Health Insurance  
 Workers Compensation and Employers' Liability

# Management

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### **Executive Director**

Mrs. Tasha Kennard

### **Email**

tasha.kennard@thistlefarms.org

### **Term Start**

September 2022

**Tasha's Experience:** Tasha is a native Nashvillian who brings a wealth of both nonprofit and for-profit leadership experience to the Thistle Farms CEO role. Most recently, Tasha was the Farm Program Manager for the Southall Farms resort property and start-up hospitality company. Prior to Southall Farms, Tasha served as the Executive Director of the Nashville Farmers Market for over seven years where she was responsible for strategic planning, budgeting, financial management, merchant, board and community relations, facility and program operations, tenant and management, marketing, small business and agribusiness resource development, government relations, revenue development, and personnel management.

## Staff

<b>Number of Full Time Staff</b>	95
<b>Number of Part Time Staff</b>	25
<b>Volunteers</b>	1,200
<b>Contractors</b>	6
<b>Staff Retention Rate</b>	90%

## Plans & Policies

<b>Fundraising Plan?</b>	Yes
<b>Strategic Plan?</b>	Under Development
<b>Years Strategic Plan Considers When Strategic Plan Adopted?</b>	N/A
<b>Management Succession Plan?</b>	No
<b>Policy and Procedures Plan?</b>	Yes
<b>Nondiscrimination Policy?</b>	Yes
<b>Whistle Blower Policy?</b>	Yes
<b>Document Destruction Policy?</b>	Yes

## Senior Staff

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>
Becca Stevens	Founder & President
Courtney Sobieralski	Director of Human Resources
Katrina Robertson	National Sales Director
Kenny Corbett	Director of Logistics
Melissa Wert	Director of Innovation and Training
Sally Anne Harrell	Global Shared Trade Director
Shelia McClain	Director of Residential Services
Tara Hamilton	Director of Development & Community Relations
Val Holden	Senior Director of Marketing
Scott Ryder	CFO
Cyndi Demick	Sr. Director of Manufacturing Operations
Alisa Bernard	Director of Public Policy and Advocacy
Ty Johnson	Director of Manufacturing
Kyle Matheny	Director of Information Technology
Sherri Roddick	Director of Business Development
Dana Wronski	Director of Cafe and Hospitality
Tasha Kennard	CEO

## Formal Evaluations

<b>Is there a formal evaluation for...</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>CEO/Executive Director</b> Yes	Annually
<b>Senior Management</b> Yes	Annually
<b>Non-Management</b> Yes	Annually

## Affiliations

<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Year</b>
Center for Nonprofit Management Excellence Network	1998
Community Resource Center - Nashville	2003
Tennessee Association of Alcohol, Drug and other Addiction Services (TAADAS)	2003
United Way Member Agency	1999

## Awards

<b>Award/Recognition</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Year</b>
Champion of Change (Domestic Violence Prevention)	White House	2011
CNM Salute to Excellence	Innovation in Action	1999
Entrepreneur of the Year	Nashville Chamber of Commerce	2011
Humanitarian of the Year	Small Business Association of America	2014

National Episcopal Church  
 Next Award for Growth  
 (Social Enterprise &  
 Sustainability)  
 Tennessean of the Year  
 Top Ten CNN Hero

Jubilee Center  
 Nashville Entrepreneurship Center &  
 Nashville Chamber of Commerce  
 Tennessean  
 CNN

2001  
 2015  
 2005  
 2016

## Financials

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### Financials

**Fiscal Year Start**

**Fiscal Year End**

**Projected Revenue**

**Projected Expenses**

### Detailed Financials

#### Revenue and Expenses

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Total Revenue		\$13,479,393.00	\$13,532,502.00
Total Expenses		\$12,000,301.00	\$10,334,583.00
Revenue Less Expense	(\$-0.00)	\$1,479,092.00	\$3,197,919.00

#### Revenue Sources

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>
Foundation and Corporation Contributions		\$627,750.00	\$0.00
Government - Federal		\$0.00	\$0.00
Government - State		\$0.00	\$0.00
Government - Local		\$0.00	\$0.00
Government - Unspecified		\$406,600.00	\$893,041.00
Individual Contributions		\$6,436,710.00	\$7,462,147.00
Indirect Public Support		\$0.00	\$0.00
Earned		\$5,311,980.00	\$4,910,794.00



Revenue		0	0
Investment Income, Net of Losses		\$0.00	\$0.00
Membership Dues		\$0.00	\$0.00
Special Events		\$0.00	\$0.00
Revenue In-Kind		\$85,988.00	\$121,467.00
Other		\$610,365.00	\$145,053.00

### Expense Allocation

Fiscal Year	2024	2023	2022
Program Expense		\$10,238,565.00	\$8,753,639.00
Administrative Expense		\$1,866,742.00	\$1,588,382.00
Fundraising Expense		\$703,752.00	\$788,620.00
Total Revenue/Total Expenses		105%	122%
Program Expense/Total Expenses		80%	79%
Fundraising Expense/Contributed Revenue		5%	7%

### Top Funding Sources

Fiscal Year	2024	2023	2022
Top Funding Source & Dollar Amount	\$0.00	Contributions, Gifts, and Grants - \$6,436,710.00	Contributions, Gifts, and Grants - \$7,462,147.00
Second Highest Funding Source & Dollar Amount	\$0.00	Program Revenue - \$5,311,980.00	Program Revenue - \$4,910,794.00
Third Highest Funding Source & Dollar Amount	\$0.00	Foundations and Corporations - \$627,750.00	Government Grants - \$893,041.00

### Assets and Liabilities

Fiscal Year	2024	2023	2022
Total Assets		\$14,869,715.	\$11,563,179.

		00	00
Current Assets		\$5,789,231.00	\$3,005,163.00
Long-Term Liabilities		\$2,020,299.00	\$20,000.00
Current Liabilities		\$1,354,524.00	\$898,539.00
Total Net Assets		\$11,494,892.00	\$10,664,640.00

### Endowment Info

**Do you have an endowment?**

Yes

**Endowment Value**

\$94,424.00

**Spending Policy**

Percentage

**Percentage (if selected)**

5%

### Capital Campaign Info

**Currently in a Capital Campaign?**

No

### Solicitation Permit Info

**State Charitable Solicitations Permit**

Yes