



Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

Legislation Text

File #: RS2022-1821, **Version:** 1

A resolution honoring the 25th Anniversary of Thistle Farms.

WHEREAS, Nashville's own Thistle Farms is a nonprofit social enterprise dedicated to helping women survivors recover and heal from prostitution, trafficking, and addiction; and

WHEREAS, in 1997, Rev. Becca Stevens and a group of volunteers became what was then known as the Magdalene House - a residential program where women seeking safety and recovery from commercial sexual exploitation and addiction could learn; and

WHEREAS, the program concept that continues to this day is that residents do not have to pay to become a resident, which includes 2-years of housing and healing, with no authority living in the house, and a variety of classes including financial literacy and job readiness; and

WHEREAS, in the past 25 years, 156 women have graduated from the Thistle Farms program; and

WHEREAS, Thistle Farms now hosts 32 beds in 6 residential homes in Nashville for the two year program; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the residential homes, Thistle Farms opened the first safe house in Middle Tennessee with four beds dedicated to helping trafficking survivors find short-term, emergency housing; and

WHEREAS, Thistle Farms has inspired a network of direct service organizations across the country who help women in need in the spirit of our model; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, Thistle Farms started their first social enterprise in the basements of local churches, making candles and balms, thereby creating a path for residents of the program to achieve financial independence and a stable job history while in healing and recovery; and

WHEREAS, Thistle Farms' social enterprise has grown exponentially, with the organization moving into a new, 22,000+ square foot manufacturing facility in West Nashville in early 2022 and producing products that are now sold in 642 Wholesale locations across the county; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, Thistle Farms' social enterprises expanded to address commercial sexual exploitation and extreme poverty on a global scale through an aligned network of artisan enterprises supporting women's dignity and economic opportunity, and community programming, working with 1,400 survivor artisans in 21 countries; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, The Cafe at Thistle Farms opened, originally named the Thistle Stop Café, to welcome in the community with food to learn more about the organization's work.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. That the Metropolitan Council hereby goes on record as recognizing the 25th anniversary of Thistle Farms and its work to better Nashville, Middle Tennessee, the United States, and the world, showing it is

possible to lead with compassion, love, and second chances to change lives.

Section 2. That the Metropolitan Council further goes on record as honoring Thistle Farms and its founder Rev. Becca Stevens for their inspiring work and representation of Nashville.

Section 3. That this Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.