Providing Access for the Most Vulnerable

A donor leverages the Century Challenge, offering scholarship support to those who need it most / BY THEA SINGER

Lisa Williams has been called a “latter-day Harriet Tubman,” for good reason: she has made it her mission to counter child sex trafficking and exploitation.

To date, she has helped spare the lives of 230 girls and 14 boys through intensive rehabilitation programs supported by her not-for-profit, Circle of Friends: Celebrating Life, Inc., which she founded in 1999 “to bring women together to raise money and awareness and to dismantle the social injustices that render them more susceptible to violence and the criminal justice system.”

“The Century Challenge offered to double my impact for 100 years,” Williams says. “I said, ‘This must exist for that girl who will dare greatly, for that woman who has fought her entire life just for the right to believe in herself, and as a catalyst to unleash hope and unite humanity.’”

The words resonate with Crystal Williams, BU’s associate provost for diversity and inclusion, as she works to build a community where all can thrive and participate fully. “We change institutions by changing the circumstances on the ground,” she says. “We shift culture so that more people are able to bring their full brilliance to bear on behalf of the common endeavor. Gifts like Lisa Williams’ Century Challenge scholarship funds help us get there.”