



## NEWS RELEASE

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### *Willow Tree Missions Welcomes Spring Intern*

**Monticello, IL** – Willow Tree Missions is pleased to announce that Serenity Aguilera has been selected as its Spring Intern. Aguilera is a senior at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign on track to graduate with her Bachelor of Social Work in May 2026. Following graduation, Aguilera will begin her Master's program at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign to obtain a Master's in social work with the goal of later obtaining her LCSW. She has a strong interest in working with survivors of domestic violence with interests in supporting children and families. Aguilera will work closely with Willow Tree Missions' Director of Services, Andrea Kocher, providing guidance to those served by the organization.

"Our interns are a valuable piece of the Willow Tree Missions picture, and we are happy to welcome Serenity to the team! We work closely with the School of Social Work at The U of I in creating opportunities for students to give them "real life" experience in domestic violence initiatives. Internships are a great opportunity for both Willow Tree Missions and those in the social work field", Andrea Kocher, Director of Services at Willow Tree Missions.

**ABOUT WILLOW TREE MISSIONS:** Established in 2007 first in Cisco and now in located in Monticello, Willow Tree Missions is a Christ centered non-profit corporation that operates resale shops that fund services for victims of domestic abuse. Family Service Center staff assist clients determined to escape abusive situations and create healthier, safer environments for themselves and their children. For victims in imminent situations, Willow Tree Missions provides emergency shelter and assistance with food, clothing, transportation, and household needs. The organization partners with law enforcement officials and community advocates to obtain orders of protection, safety planning, and legal referrals. To help clients move forward, Willow Tree Missions also provides ongoing crisis and spiritual counseling. Recognizing the interaction between education, substance abuse, and emotional/physical trauma, Willow Tree Missions has instituted Christ centered support programs and proactive educational outreach initiatives.



Serenity Aguilera

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