

January 11, 2011

National Anti-Human Trafficking Awareness Day

Will Modern-Day Slavery Become the Future for Our Children?

Human trafficking involves making money off the force, fraud and/or coercion of vulnerable women, men and children in exploitative labor or sexual settings. As one of the fastest-growing global enterprises, human trafficking is big business to the perpetrator. To the user it is just convenient or pleasure providing. But for the victim, who loses personal freedom, being trafficked is HELL.

ABUSE: A Kansas man used four girls, ages 16-17, in a prostitution ring. He took photos of the girls with his cell phone camera and posted the images with their online ads on *Craigslist* and another Internet site so 'they could meet men in nice hotels, not on the rough streets,' he testified. He also solicited a 13-year-old girl to work for him, but she refused. The girls paid about 20% of their earnings to him. He was found guilty and sentenced to 22 years in federal prison. (www.kansascity.com/2010/10/06/2285309/man-gets-22-year-sentence-for.html)

"This is a defendant who sought out young, lost girls. He exploited them in a sexual manner, but he also took their pictures and put them on the Internet. That's a whole different level of victimization." Prosecuting attorney. "Prostituting young girls is a reprehensible act. It is a terrible thing to do. Because you describe yourself as a nice pimp doesn't make you less of a pimp." Judge in the case.

CULPABILITY: A man caught with pornographic images of a girl being sexually abused by her uncle has been ordered to pay restitution of nearly \$50,000 to the victim, even though the defendant was a viewer of illegal images collected from the Internet, who has never met the uncle or the girl. The Northern District of New York Judge decided that a mere 'consumer' of child pornography is culpable to some degree for the emotional and psychological damage suffered by sex abuse victims under 18 U.S.C. §2259(b)(1), which allows awarding compensation for the "care required to address the long term effects of their [victims'] abuse."

(www.law.com/jsp/article.jsp?id=1202464457742&rss=newswire)

Foster Kids Lured by Traffickers

70% of child prostitution or domestic minor trafficking victims in Florida are runaways from foster care. Some girls said they ran away from foster care to see their boyfriends. Because these children are desperate for love and attention, pimps are ready to exploit their vulnerability. Whether they runaway to prostitute themselves or to see their pimp 'boyfriends', this is a win-win situation for pimps and traffickers. (www.examiner.com/human-rights-in-national/u-s-high-percentage-of-minor-sex-trafficking-victims-are-foster-children)

FACTS

- Between 100,000 and 300,000 children in America are victims of sex trafficking each year. On average, girls are first exploited for commercial sex between the ages of 12 and 14. For boys the average age is even younger — between 11 and 13. (www.cnn.com/2009/OPINION/11/25/carr.human.trafficking/)
- Young girls are recruited at home, or on their way to school, by pimps' girlfriends, who lure them with promises of manicures, pedicures, haircuts, and clothing.
- In a November 2010 3-day, nationwide FBI sting, 'Operation Cross Country V' resulted in the recovery of 69 children and the arrest of 884 persons, including 99 pimps from 40 cities in 30 states. (www.msnbc.msn.com/id/40084045/from/RSS/?qt1=43001)
- The involvement of U.S. street children in commercial sex activity is of epidemic proportion. Approximately 55% of street girls engage in formal prostitution, with most working for a pimp. Pimp-controlled commercial sexual exploitation of children is linked to escort and massage services, private dancing, drinking and photographic clubs, major sporting and recreational events, major cultural events, conventions, and tourist destinations. 20% of these children become entangled in nationally organized crime networks and are trafficked nationally. They are transported around the U.S. by a variety of means – cars, buses, vans, trucks or planes – and are often provided counterfeit identification to use in the event of arrest. (www.justice.gov/criminal/ceos/prostitution.html)
- A conservative estimate shows nearly 4,000 child sex trafficking victims in New York City alone. Once snapped up by human traffickers, victims are subjected to starvation, confinement, physical abuse and rape as a means of "keeping them in line."
- The only 'bottom line': **profit**.

How Does Human Trafficking Affect Our Schools?

Trafficking can involve school-age children, especially those not living with their parents. Sex traffickers target children because of their vulnerability and gullibility, as well as the market demand for young victims. Those who recruit minors into prostitution violate federal anti-trafficking laws, even if there is no coercion or movement across state lines. The children at risk are not just high school students. Pimps prey on victims as young as 12. Traffickers target their minor victims through telephone chat-lines, clubs, on the street, through friends, and at malls, as well as by using girls to recruit other girls at schools and in after-school programs.

How Do I Identify a Victim of Human Trafficking? If a child...

- Has unexplained absences from school and is truant
- Demonstrates an inability to attend school on a regular basis
- Chronically runs away from home
- Refers to frequent travel to other cities
- Exhibits physical trauma, withdrawn behavior, depression, or fear
- Lacks control over her or his schedule or identification documents
- Is hungry, malnourished or inappropriately dressed (based on weather conditions or surroundings)
- Shows signs of drug addiction
- Demonstrates a sudden change in attire, behavior, or material possessions (e.g., has expensive items)
- Makes references to sexual situations that are beyond age-specific norms
- Has a "boyfriend" who is noticeably older (10+ years)
- Makes references to sexual terminology beyond age specific norms
- Engages in promiscuous behavior and may be labeled "fast" by peers (See: www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osedfs/factsheet.html)

How Do I Report a Suspected Incidence of Human Trafficking?

- In emergencies, call local police. Otherwise, call the national 24/7 toll-free **Human Trafficking Resource Center** at: [1-888-373-7888](tel:1-888-373-7888).
- For sexually exploited or abused minors, call the **National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's** (NCMEC) hotline at: [1-800-THE-LOST](tel:1-800-THE-LOST) or report incidents on the Cybertip line at: www.cybertipline.org
- For suspected instances of trafficking or worker exploitation, call the **U.S. Dept. of Justice's Human Trafficking Office** at [1-888-428-7581](tel:1-888-428-7581) or find the FBI field office nearest you at: www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field/listing_by_state



Information: www.sdssisters.org/slavery