January 11, 2011: National Anti-Human Trafficking Awareness Day
DON'T LET THE INTERNET BECOME A DOORWAY INTO THE TRAFFICKING OF YOUR CHILDREN.
The commercial sexual exploitation of children under the age of 18 IS human trafficking.
(More information: www.sdssisters.org/slavery)

A 30-year old California man began an online relationship with a 15-year old girl from Australia. They exchanged pornographic photos over the Internet and engaged in sexual activity transmitted over a 3-D chat site, using webcams. Within the year he flew to Australia to begin a live-in relationship with the girl, who was then 16.

When he returned to the U.S. authorities in Nevada arrested him. He pled not guilty to charges of sexual exploitation of a child and possession of child pornography.

The man faces a maximum sentence of 40 years in prison and a $500,000 fine, if found guilty.
(www.justice.gov/usao/cae/press_releases/docs/2009/03-19-09Nelsonindictment.pdf)

Most young people use social networking sites to socialize with friends they already know. Therefore, most teens would ignore sexual solicitations from *'online friends'*. Some youth use these lists to look more popular and may accept any *'friend request'* that is offered, including a *'friend request'* from a potential predator.

Online predators seek youth willing to make these connections with people they don't know and willing to meet offline for sex. Privacy settings on social sites are not foolproof if youth don't use their discretion about whom they're accepting as a *'friend'*. 99% of offenders, arrested for Internet sex crimes against minors, were men.

Kids and teens should never give out personal information online.

'SEXTING': In addition to public humiliation teens, who have been caught *'sexting'*, have been taken off sports teams, suspended or expelled from school, and faced criminal charges for child pornography. Teens need to think about these consequences before hitting *'send' on their cell phones*. (To date, no one under age 18 has been convicted on child pornography charges and registered as a sex offender.)

THE LESSON: Never send a picture YOU would not want EVERYONE to see. Once sent there is no control over where an image may travel and how long it will remain on the Internet.

• The PBS *Frontline* documentary *'Growing Up Online'* is a compelling look at online youth behavior and gives some background into the psychology of youth today. Go to: http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/kidsonline
• The Pew *'Internet & American Life' Project* offers quality research focused on the Internet behavior of 12-17 year olds. It found most teenagers take steps to protect themselves online from the most obvious areas of risk. Go to: http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports2007Teens-Privacy-and-Online-Social-Networks.aspx
• *Youth Internet Safety Surveys* were conducted in 1999, 2000 and 2005. 20% of teens (13 - 17 year olds) reported that it is *'safe'*, *'somewhat safe'* or *'very safe'* to share personal information on Internet networking sites or blogs. 37% reported that they are *'not very concerned'* or *'not at all concerned'* about someone accessing personal information they have posted online. Since 2005, the Internet has changed dramatically. More young people have Internet access. Usage of social networking sites and cell phones is up, while usage of e-mail, instant messaging, and *'chat rooms'* is down. 47% of teens surveyed believed they had complete control of the content they posted online.
• How often teens encounter sexual solicitation, pornography, and harassment online needs further research. One such study is found at: https://www.cox.com/takecharge/includes/docs/2010-Online-Safety-Digital-Reputation-Survey.pdf

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS:
• **Common Sense Media** (www.commonsensemedia.org) and **NetSmartz Workshop** (www.NetSmartz.org) offer a wealth of resources to answer parent questions and provide advice about their children's online experiences. Additionally, NetSmartz offers resources geared specifically for 'tweensteens' that can be found at: www.NSTeens.org
• **Tips to Prevent 'Sexting'** (with discussion starters to use with children): www.NetSmartz.org/sexting
• **National Center for Missing & Exploited Children** has a new public service announcement on this issue. Go to: www.youtube.com/watch?vcBkZkf2Vmdw

HELP for TEENS:
• Videos featuring real teens talking about being victimized online: www.NetSmartz.org/resourcesreallife.htm
• If victimized online, kids can report at CyberTipline: www.cybertipline.com or at: 1-800-THE-LOST.

The Internet can be a global, yet anonymous means for making illegal money. But for its victims the Internet eternalizes their torture, shame, and exploitation.

Social Networking Sites and Safety: Most social networking sites have reporting mechanisms that allow users to report online solicitations. By law, the social networking sites are required to report these incidents to the *National Center for Missing & Exploited Children's CyberTipline*. These self-regulated online communities heavily rely on users to flag inappropriate content and contact. Virtual worlds for younger children have safety measures in place, including active monitoring and limited chat with pre-selected text.

How to Prevent Children from Being Victims Online: Educate children about the actual risks and empower them to make responsible decisions about their online behavior. Parent need to be involved and monitor their children's online behavior. More than installing filtering and monitoring software, it requires active parental supervision, by which parents establish guidelines for Internet use and have ongoing conversations with their children about their online activities.   *http://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ovcproviderforum/asp/Sub2.asp - 4867*