



# January 11th

## National Awareness Day:

### Human Trafficking — Modern Slavery

**Today the balls and chains of slavery are often incognito. Take the case of Maria Suarez. She came to California from Mexico seeking a job that would support her parents back home. In her search, she met a person on the street, who brought her to the home of an elderly man to do housework. Once inside the house, she was confined there for years, exploited, beaten and used. A locked door and messages of intimidation enslaved her.**

Worldwide, there are literally millions of women and children living as domestic servants — much like Maria. Their days may start at 4:00 AM and they work until midnight, 24/7.

Their ‘balls and chains’ include the threats of physical harm to their person or reprisals against their families.

Debbie, a 15 year old in a close-knit Air Force family from suburban Phoenix and a straight-A student, was kidnapped from the driveway of her home one evening.

Tied up, threatened and driven around Phoenix for hours, she was drugged and brought into a building where six men gang-raped her. She was beaten, fed dog biscuits and kept locked in a dog kennel. Her captors said they would pour acid on her 19 year old niece if she tried to escape.

They advertised her on Craigslist in a section entitled “Teen Love.” Men began coming for “services” and her captors got all the money.

On a tip, police searched the house where Debbie was kept and found her tied up, gagged, and hidden in a drawer under the bed.

Debbie’s family moved away from Phoenix, hoping Debbie would eventually heal.



### Parent alert!

Just as we have had to educate small children about strangers, we must educate young teens about the dangers of trafficking and the methods and manipulations of sexual predators.

- Nationally 450,000 children run-away from home annually. One out of every 3 teens on the street will be lured toward prostitution within 48 hours of leaving home.
- Become familiar with popular teen websites: Facebook, My Space, UTube and Craigslist. Discuss with teens how technology is being utilized by organized crime and pedophiles.
- The Internet leaves a detailed fingerprint. If you visit an illegal site or perform an illegal action online, you leave valuable electronic DNA on your computer. Teens need to be aware of this.
- To report suspicious behavior call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center 1-888-3737-888.

### How Traffickers Work:

Sophisticated criminals earn the children’s trust and then force them to participate in escort services, massage parlors, nude dancing, stripping, pornography and prostitution. They meet the basic needs of the children if they obey the controller’s demands.

Traffickers may take children across state lines to avoid detection and to follow major sporting, cultural and recreational events.

Cars, vans, SUVs, limos and buses transport these young victims to cities that attract large numbers of transient males including conventioners and military personnel.

Escape is often impossible!

### Teen Alert!

#### Watch out for the “balls and chains” of slavery!

- Know that malls are trolling places for traffickers looking for lone and vulnerable youth.
- Be alert to promises from strangers or “older friends”
  - with flashy cars and large amounts of cash;
  - who give you lots of attention;
  - who invite you to go away to a distant place far from your family;
  - who offer you a modeling career;
  - who promise good employment;
  - who take you on shopping sprees;
  - who offer a free place to stay.