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Human Trafficking in the News

Everyday heroes - Truckers Against Trafficking

Human traffickers have discovered that American children are easier to recruit and sell than foreign victims, because there is no need to cross the border. American gangsters have found that prostituting minors is a source of prestige and income. Both innocent young males and females can be abducted right off the street. Victims can also be groomed or lured into forced prostitution. Threatened, doped, or duped, these young victims become sex slaves and income sources for these criminals. It happens every day here in America . . . and also right here in Washington.

Trafficking hits close to home

An ordinary trip to Target in West Des Moines took an alarming turn for a former Sheldon resident, who said she was targeted by suspected human traffickers. The 25-year-old former resident requested anonymity for this article, and will be referred to as "Jane."

Dallas-based men's coalition attacks sex trafficking by working to shift boys' perceptions of girls, women

Hands kept shooting up in the air. A group of about 25 men sat eagerly waiting to ask questions about sex trafficking, hoping to find answers to a problem prevalent in Dallas and cities around the nation. Maj. Jeoff Williams of the Texas Department of Public Safety sensed their good intentions, but he knows the complex issue won't have a simple solution.

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Polaris Project* launches new report on systems and industries



To highlight their new report *On-Ramps, Intersections, and Exit Routes: A Roadmap for Systems and Industries to Prevent and Disrupt Human Trafficking*, Polaris Project held a panel discussion with live social media stream on July 12 from Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., featuring a panel discussion with experts from the industries of social media, financial services and anti-money laundering, health care, hospitality, and

Panelists at the Polaris Project launch of their new report, L to R, were: Brad Miles, chief executive officer of Polaris Project; Cheryl Rosario, vice president of Corporate Social Responsibility at Wyndham Hotels and Resorts; Kendis Paris, executive director and co-founder of Truckers Against Trafficking; Angel Nguyen Swift, vice president of Compliance and Financial Crimes Solutions at Enigma; Wendy Barnes, program coordinator for Dignity Health's Human Trafficking Response Program; and K.D. Roche, field expert, author and survivor.

transportation. Kendis Paris, TAT executive director, was a member of the panel.

Human traffickers exploit legitimate systems within multiple business sectors for their own profits. From traffickers who use banks to store their earnings and buses to move their victims around, to the hotel rooms that are integral to the operations of some sex traffickers and the social media that are vital

recruitment tools, this [report](#) highlights the way industries can make fundamental shifts to their systems to prevent, detect and disrupt human trafficking. While it only looks at six specific business sectors, Polaris is in hopes the report will spur other business sectors to think through how trafficking criminals may be using them and what corrections they can make.

Bradley Miles, chief executive officer of Polaris Project, stated they spent time learning directly from survivors about the specific ways traffickers use these systems and industries to recruit and exploit victims, and how survivors interact with those same industries to break free and rebuild their lives.

"This report provides us with critical data to elevate our work ... especially within the bus industry. If you want a better understanding of how human trafficking intersects with transportation and the immediate action steps to combat it within your mode, this report is a must read," said Paris.

**Polaris Project is a leader in the global fight to eradicate modern slavery. Polaris works to systematically disrupt the human trafficking networks that rob human beings of their lives and freedom. Polaris runs the National Human Trafficking Hotline.*

Busing on the Lookout (BOTL) continues to educate, influence change

School bus drivers to be trained in Iowa

The Iowa Department of Education has announced that during the 2018/2019 school year, it will be training all 9,000 school bus drivers in Iowa with BOTL materials. (Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT) considers this a vital step to protecting children and encourages other states to follow Iowa's lead.) School bus

drivers see students almost every day as they transport them between home and school. As half of America's school children ride the bus daily - and some children may continue to attend school during the day, even while they are being trafficked or groomed at night - school bus drivers are uniquely positioned to notice red flags that a student on their bus may be at risk of or is being subjected to human trafficking as they observe changes in students' behavior, moods, physical appearance, and attendance. For more information, visit www.busingonthelookout.org.



Sovcik presents to FMCSA's Passenger Technical Assistance Group

Annie Sovcik, BOTL program director, presented to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) National Passenger Technical Assistance Group

(P-TAG) during their annual meeting in Baltimore, Maryland in July. P-TAG is a group of specialists from both the FMCSA and state regulatory agencies from around the country who provide subject matter expertise and support to the bus industry and the public in advancing passenger carrier safety.



Brodie Mack, safety operations program manager for the FMCSA's Eastern Service Center and Chair of the P-TAG said, "The FMCSA is committed to using its resources

and influence to help combat the human trafficking taking place on our nation's roadways, and the P-TAG has an important role to play in getting this information out to our investigators and partners throughout the country."

Sovcik commented, "While many participants were familiar with TAT and our truck industry training and outreach in their state, most were hearing about the BOTL program for the first time, and, as motor coach and passenger safety inspectors, were enthusiastic about having materials tailored to the bus industry and excited to explore opportunities for collaboration."

Nexus Global Summit addresses human trafficking



Laura Cyrus, TAT operations director, shared TAT's strategy at the Nexus Global Summit.

Laura Cyrus, TAT operations director, took part in a panel discussion titled #EndSlaveryNow: Alternatives to Recovery & Rehabilitation from Human Trafficking at the Nexus Global Summit July 27-29 in New York City.

In addition to Cyrus, the panel featured Craig Dershowitz, founder of Artist 4 Israel's Healing Ink program and Survivor-leader Anneke Lucas, founder of Liberation Prison Yoga. Curated and moderated by Dr. Melissa Jane Kronfeld, co-chair of the human

trafficking and modern slavery working group at Nexus, panelists shared details about the work of their organization and engaged the audience in meaningful discussion about best practices, new ideas, successes and challenges and how to get involved in the work.

Cyrus gave an overview of TAT and spoke about the innovative systems' change TAT is after as it seeks to mobilize bystander intervention and empower the transportation industry to recognize and report instances of human trafficking. She highlighted TAT's [Shipping Partners Program](#) as a way for any companies shipping goods to get involved in the fight against human trafficking by taking action steps that would ultimately help them accomplish the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals and enable them to then report on their work with TAT in their sustainability reporting.

"I was honored to bring the TAT message to the Nexus community," said Cyrus. "Thank you to Dr. Kronfeld and her colleagues on the human trafficking and modern slavery working group for inviting us to be a part of the discussion. The Nexus community is full of change-makers and those looking for effective ways to make the most good in the world. We are grateful for the chance to provide information about our programs to this community, and, hopefully, we have inspired and engaged new folks to get involved."

Nexus is an international network of more than 4000 next generation philanthropists, impact investors and social entrepreneurs representing more than 70 countries. The network works to catalyze new leadership and accelerate solutions to global problems with the vision of a "just and sustainable world that celebrates diversity and governs by the paradigm that 'we're all in this together.'"

TAT provides statewide law enforcement trainings in Oregon

Traveling from Roseburg, to Bend, Salem and Portland, TAT Deputy Director Kylla Lanier and Survivor-Leader Annika Huff provided training on human trafficking and the victim-centered approach to more than 80 Oregon State Patrol (OSP), Oregon DOT and other law enforcement officers during the week of July 24-27.

Providing feedback on the training, Officer Jeff Johnson of the OSP, said, "I thought it was a powerful presentation which opened my eyes to a different/new understanding about the sex/slave trafficking industry. I was blown away by her (Huff's) story and am grateful she was willing and able to share it with us to help us be better police officers. Looking back, I think I may have encountered at least one situation like this on a traffic stop, and I believe this training just improved my chances of not missing one again."



Survivor-leader Annika Huff provided training tips to law enforcement in Oregon.

Lanier stated that feedback was so positive overall that Oregon is now investigating the possibility of having TAT back to cover the eastern and southern portions of the state.

Huff, who partnered with TAT on the training video for Busing on the Lookout (BOTL), survived the crime of human trafficking and was a runaway youth. After testifying against her trafficker, he was convicted and sentenced to life without the possibility of parole. He was the first person in the state of Nevada to be found guilty of sex trafficking in a court of law.



Huff speaks publicly to educate the community on the issue of human trafficking. She has spoken in juvenile halls to youth, works as an advocate at a direct service provider for human trafficking survivors and has trained various hospitals, tattoo shops, police departments, fire departments, and hotels to notice the signs of human trafficking and know what they can do to prevent this crime. Huff has served as a keynote speaker or presenter at conferences throughout the country, including Shared Hope Conference, Dignity Health Security Summit, Saratoga Springs 2nd Annual CSEC Conference and the Arizona Fire Chief Association Conference. She has also spoken for statewide

programs such as Victims of Crime and has testified for state wide human trafficking bills.

Upcoming Events

Aug. 1 - Southern Colorado Student Transportation In-service, Alamosa, CO, Annie Sovcik, BOTL director, presenting

Aug. 2 - Association of Energy Service Companies panel presentation, Lake Tahoe, NV, Ashley Smith, TAT oil and gas program manager, presenting

Aug. 8 - The Blue Bench (sexual assault and prevention care center), Denver, CO, Molly Griffiths, TAT administrative specialist, presenting

Aug. 9-10 - Iowa State Fair, Des Moines, IA, the FDP (which will be open for tours) and Helen Van Dam, FDP director, attending

Aug. 14-16 - Midwest Bus and Motor Coach Association Annual Meeting, Lake Ozark, MO, Annie Sovcik, BOTL program director, presenting

Aug. 23-25 - Great American Trucking Show, Dallas, TX, FDP and TAT staff attending

Aug. 24 - National Association of Women Highway Safety Leaders, Atlanta, GA, Kylla Lanier, TAT deputy director, presenting

Aug. 26-27 - Mid-America Association of State Transportation Officials annual conference, Grand Traverse, MI, Laura Cyrus, TAT operations director, presenting

Aug. 27-28 - USA Truck Event, Van Buren, AR, FDP, Helen Van Dam, FDP director, and Kylla Lanier, TAT deputy director, presenting



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