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Human Trafficking in the News

82 arrested in massive, multistate child exploitation sting

A high school band director. A youth group leader. A fireman. A county leader. All are among the 82 people, including 31 in Georgia, who have been arrested and accused of sexually exploiting children in a multistate sting. The sting, dubbed Operation Southern Impact III, was spread over three days recently and across eight southern states from Florida to West Virginia.

Florida House passes bill on teaching human trafficking

Children in Florida public schools would be taught about the dangers and warning signs of human trafficking under a bill passed by the state House.

Woman sentenced to 18 years for repeatedly taking girl from school to be raped in motel

On Friday, a jury in Travis County convicted a woman on two counts of trafficking a person and one count of indecency with a child following an outcry of child sex abuse. In April of 2018, an 11-year-old child said Maria Miranda-Aguirre, a trusted family friend, would remove her from her school and take her to a motel where she was repeatedly sexually abused by Miranda-Aguirre's boyfriend.

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Lakefront Lines Bus Team in Ohio receives TAT Harriet Tubman Award presented by Protective Insurance

Larren Tarver, Lakefront Lines bus driver, and Lauren Gnall, district safety director for Lakefront Lines and Coach USA, have received



Lauren Gnall, district safety director for Lakefront Lines and Coach USA (left), and Larren Tarver, Lakefront Lines bus driver

the 2019 TAT Harriet Tubman Award presented by Protective Insurance.

The award, which carries with it a \$2500 check, is named in honor of famed abolitionist Harriet Tubman, whose courageous personal actions resulted in the transportation of 300 slaves to freedom through the Underground Railroad and whose overall role in the freedom movement was instrumental in the freeing of thousands more. Born into slavery in 1820, Miss Tubman was the first African American woman buried with full military honors and the first to have the inaugural Liberty ship named after her - the SS Harriet Tubman - by the US Maritime Commission.

When the Lakefront Lines Bus Team in Ohio, which had recently completed the Busing on the Lookout (BOTL) training, was notified that a female passenger on one of their buses was allegedly being held against her will and forced into prostitution by a male passenger on the same bus, they immediately sprang

into action. As Tarver calmly stopped the bus, he reassured the other passengers, while being as inconspicuous as possible about the reasons for the delay. He notified dispatch and triggered an internal response system within the Lakefront Lines Safety Team that swiftly communicated with law enforcement and ensured police were on the scene as quickly as possible. Gnall and a colleague met the bus on the side of the highway almost immediately. Before the bus got back on the road - and safely transported the other passengers to their destination - the suspect was arrested; the alleged victim was recovered; and the case was referred for further investigation.

"TAT provides excellent training through their BOTL video," said Gnall. "It opened the eyes of all the employees here at Lakefront Lines and Coach USA. We did not think this would happen in our area, but being aware of what is going on around us at all times and knowing what to look for really is the key. To say that the Award Ceremony and weekend getaway were astounding would be an understatement. We were treated like royalty, and I cannot say thank you enough. The award itself is also very important, because it helps to get people talking about these types of situations that would not have been a topic of conversation otherwise. I hope this keeps the conversation going in the future and opens up more opportunities for training in other industries."

Tarver declared, "The training really helped me in feeling aware and alert of my surroundings. It really opened my senses to be on the look-out for possible dangers to myself and other people. I felt empowered



by thinking of the family members of the victim, and if I wouldn't have acted in the way I did, I would have probably never had a chance later, and the victim could still be in danger til this day. I can say in my three years of professional driving, I thought I would never encounter a situation like this, although I knew the possibilities were high especially after driving through major cities such as New York and Las Vegas. Some red flags that are imprinted in my mind for future situations like this one are to have a sense of all your passengers, look for any discomfort, nervousness, or anything that may seem odd in people acting strangely on my bus. I believe if everyone steps up to the plate and does the right thing, together, we can make a huge difference in the society we live in. I, too, have a daughter. She's three years of age now but will eventually ride public transportation, and I care for my daughter's safety 100 percent. I'm honored to be this year's winner for the award, and I want to thank my colleagues and Lauren for making that moment in my life possible by their quick responses as well."

Tarver and Gnall received their award from Laura Cyrus, TAT corporate engagement director, at the Protective Insurance Protective 500 Event in Indianapolis, IN, on May 25. Protective Insurance partners with TAT.

"As an organization, we know that it's the men and women of the transportation industry -- truck drivers and bus drivers -- the folks out on the road day in and day out, that are the real heroes of this work," said Cyrus. "It was an incredible honor to get to award Larren Tarver and Lauren Gnall as our joint winners of the 2019 Harriet Tubman Award presented by Protective Insurance. I must also thank Protective Insurance for supporting our work and this award and providing the platform and lovely venue from which we were able to honor Larren and Lauren. The entire team at Protective is thoughtful and fully engaged in supporting the work of TAT. We are grateful to have them as partners in this work!"

'Everyday Heroes' Kenworth T680 sold to Stewart Transport; net proceeds of \$167,000 going to TAT



Following the auction, Collin Stewart (left) of Stewart Transport and new owner of the 2019 Everyday Heroes truck, posed for photos with Don Blake of Inland Kenworth (center) and Mike Jimenez of J&L Transportation, who purchased the 2017 Everyday Heroes truck.

Collin Stewart, owner of Stewart Transport, submitted the winning bid of \$137,500 for the "Everyday Heroes" Kenworth T680 auctioned May 17 at Ritchie Bros. in Phoenix. Coupled with additional donations raised by Don Blake, new truck sales manager at Inland Kenworth - Phoenix, and Inland Kenworth, his bid helped net more than \$167,000 in support of Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT).

Stewart Transport, a Phoenix-based company specializing in delivering refrigerated and dry van freight, is a long-time supporter of TAT and its mission to end human trafficking. Stewart attended and placed the winning bid at the live auction. For Stewart, it was hard to pass up the opportunity to place a bid on a truck that supports an organization he believes in. "Our new Everyday Heroes Kenworth T680 will allow us to help support and promote TAT's efforts in the fight against human trafficking," he said. "Our drivers are TAT trained, so they're knowledgeable about the program and know how to help identify human trafficking on the road. This Kenworth T680 will be a great addition to our fleet."

"The Everyday Heroes Kenworth T680 auction was a fantastic success, thanks to our incredible sponsors, who generously donated parts and money to build this special truck," said Blake, a TAT board member and the driving force behind this year's auction. "Two years ago, our first Everyday Heroes Kenworth T680 auction netted \$83,000 for Truckers Against Trafficking, and served as a stepping-stone to increase the trucking industry's awareness of human trafficking. That effort helped us to achieve this year's even larger donation."

The \$167,000 donation is the largest one-time gift in TAT's history, according to Kendis Paris, TAT executive director. "We are so grateful to have Collin and Stewart Transport submit the winning bid. Not only will Collin's generous purchase help us fund our programs, but they obtain a high-performing Kenworth T680 that will serve as a great addition to its fleet," Paris said. "The industry again showed its generosity by coming together to support TAT and its important work. The funds will be used to expand our work within the trucking industry, and further our partnerships with law enforcement, additional modes of transportation and multiple countries, in the fight against human trafficking. Special thanks to Kenworth and Ritchie Bros., as well as all of our amazing sponsors. And, I can't say enough about Don Blake's contributions to TAT. This major fundraising project required a tremendous amount of time and effort, and illustrates his dedication to our cause."

According to Kurt Swihart, Kenworth marketing director, Blake's dedication to TAT and the ultimate goal of ending human trafficking is admirable. "Don is an excellent example of making a difference by putting his heart into something he cares about," he said. "He had the idea to auction off an Everyday Heroes Kenworth T680 two years ago, and it's great for Kenworth to help him do it again this year. He is truly an inspiration to all of us, and an excellent representative of Inland Kenworth and the Kenworth dealer network. This auction showed how the industry can pull together to make a difference and support the fight against human trafficking."

To make the Everyday Heroes Kenworth T680 truck possible, sponsors at the platinum, gold, silver and bronze levels donated parts and money to help in the assembly process. Providing industry support for the Everyday Heroes Kenworth T680 are: Platinum Level : Kenworth Truck Company, Inland Kenworth and Ritchie Bros; Gold Level: PACCAR Engine, SEG Automotive, and Swift Charities; Silver Level : Bendix, Bridgestone, Eaton, FlowBelow, Horton, Jost, Meritor, PACCAR Financial, PACCAR Parts, Trimble, Utility Trailer Sales of Arizona, and WABCO; Bronze Level: Alcoa, Arizona Rock Product Association, Arizona Trucking Association, Beaver Stripes and Molding, Chevron, ConMet, Davco, East Penn, Ex-Guard®, National Seats, PrePass / Help Inc, Sheppard, and Tectran.

TAT presents first-ever Champion Award in the state agency category

The Iowa Motor Vehicle Enforcement unit (MVE) received TAT's first-ever Champion Award in the state agency category, for their unparalleled work in combating the crime of human trafficking. "We designed this award to honor an organization, state agency and association on an annual basis whose creative, innovative, generous and dedicated efforts have significantly furthered TAT's work in engaging more sectors in the fight to end this crime," explained Kendis Paris, TAT executive director. "We're looking forward to honoring our winners in the organization and association categories later in the year!"



Chief David Lorenzen (left) accepted the TAT Champion Award from TAT Deputy Director Kylla Lanier on behalf of the Iowa Motor Vehicle Enforcement Agency.

At the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance meeting in St. Louis on April 1, TAT Deputy Director Kylla Lanier presented the award to Chief David Lorenzen of the Iowa MVE. In presenting the award, she said, "The Chief and his office are exemplars of what it means to be a TAT Champion. The Chief is the creator of the Iowa MVE model that 43 states have now adopted, in part or in whole, with more states working to adopt this year. His leadership and example in determining new ways to maximize awareness and help identify pathways for engagement for state agencies and officers resulted with the Chief being appointed to participate on the US DOT Advisory Committee.

"The Iowa MVE agency is fully engaged in the fight against human trafficking and lead by example," she continued. "Iowa MVE officers have been tireless advocates within their sphere of influence. MVE officers have visited every truck stop and nearly every trucking company in the state of Iowa with TAT information. The Chief and many of his officers train a variety of sectors and audiences about the realities of human trafficking across Iowa and beyond. Through their influence, school bus drivers in Iowa are in the process of receiving TAT's busing-specific training as well -- that's over 11,000 professional bus drivers who will know what signs to look for as they transport our nation's children to and from school."

"It's a very humbling honor for the men and women of Iowa Motor Vehicle Enforcement to receive this award," Chief Lorenzen stated. "MVE staff understand the scope of this criminal activity and are committed to marshal the needed resources to educate, inform and collaborate with the trucking community, along with other government and law enforcement personnel, in efforts to attack this crime. We will never forget the victims and will continue to seek ways to make an impact."

Upcoming Events



June 2 - Truckload Carriers Association Conference, Memphis, TN, Louie Greek, TAT training specialist, presenting

June 3 - United Road Manager Meeting, Detroit, MI, Laura Cyrus, TAT corporate engagement director, presenting

June 5 - Ryder Carrier Quality Awards, Chicago, IL, FDP and Laura Cyrus, TAT corporate engagement director, presenting

June 7 - Law enforcement training, Kenedy, TX, Kylla Lanier, TAT deputy director, and Annika Huff, TAT field trainer, presenting

June 10 - Schneider Associates Appreciation Week, Green Bay, WI, FDP and Helen Van Dam, FDP director, presenting

June 10 - Louisiana Office of Tobacco and Alcohol Control, Baton Rouge, LA, Louie Greek, TAT training specialist, presenting

June 10 - New Jersey Narcotics Enforcement Officers Association Conference, Atlantic City, NJ, Kylla Lanier, TAT deputy director, presenting

June 10 - Student Transportation News Expo, Indianapolis, IN, Annie Sovcik, BOTL director, presenting

June 11 - Schneider Associates Appreciation Week, Gary, IN, FDP and Susan Dold, TAT systems administrator, attending

June 12 - Schneider Associates Appreciation Week, Indianapolis, IN, FDP and Susan Dold, TAT systems administrator, attending

June 12 - Corporate training event with Trinity Insurance, Clarkson, KY, Laura Cyrus, TAT corporate engagement director, presenting

June 13 - Nissan North America Supply Chain Management Logistics Conference, Nashville, TN, Laura Cyrus, TAT corporate engagement director, presenting

June 13 - Community Transportation of the Northwest Annual Conference, Seattle, WA, Annie Sovcik, BOTL director, presenting

June 13 - Schneider Associates Appreciation Week, West Memphis, TN, FDP and Helen Van Dam, FDP director, attending

June 14 - UPS Memphis All Star Driver training, Memphis, TN, FDP and Helen Van Dam, FDP director, presenting

June 17-18 - National District Attorneys Association Basic CDL course, Orlando, FL, Louie Greek, presenting

June 17 - Illinois School Bus train the trainer, East Peoria, IL, Annie Sovcik, BOTL director, presenting

June 18 - Automotive Industry Action Group Supply Chain Summit, Livonia, MI, Laura Cyrus, TAT corporate engagement director, attending

June 19 - Wisconsin School Bus Association Convention, LaCrosse, WI, Annie Sovcik, BOTL director, presenting

June 19 - Nevada law enforcement training, Reno, NV, Kylla Lanier, TAT deputy director, and Annika Huff, TAT field trainer, presenting

June 20 - First Group Safety Meeting, Chicago, IL, Annie Sovcik, BOTL director, presenting

June 21-22 - Western States Trucking Association Summer Conference, Ogden, UT, Louie Greek, TAT training specialist, presenting

June 22 - Volvo Powertrain Power Day Employee Recognition, Hagerstown, MD, FDP and Helen Van Dam, FDP director, attending

June 26 - Coach USA Safety Managers Meeting, Dallas, TX, Annie Sovcik, BOTL director, presenting

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