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Human trafficking in the news

Demand Forum, popular tool to curb sex buying, comes to NCOSE!

Men who buy people for sex provide the revenue stream — and thus the economic motivation — for all prostitution and sex trafficking. Their choice to engage in sex buying is the root of sexual exploitation. Without consumer-level demand, there would be no need for pimps and traffickers. Supply (victims) and distribution (sex traffickers) are symptoms. Demand is the cause.

Upgrades to TAT's Freedom Drivers Project include virtual tours

Truckers Against Trafficking is taking advantage of mandated time away from the public circuit to upgrade their Freedom Drivers Project show trailer. "While we would rather be on the road educating the public, we're excited to have the opportunity to update our training material panel," TAT Systems Administrator Susan Dold said.

9 arrested, charged federally in connection to human trafficking operation involving drugs exchanged for sexual access to children

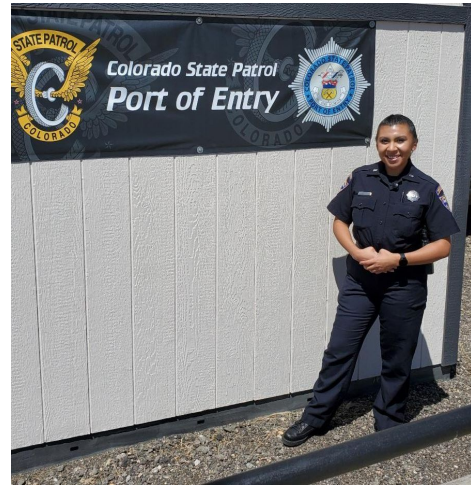
A federal grand jury has indicted a Scioto County man and several of his family members and associates with charges related to a child sex trafficking operation. The man allegedly exchanged drugs obtained in Columbus and elsewhere for sexual access to the children of drug-addicted mothers.

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Officer credits TAT training for helping her recognize potential human trafficking

When the 18-wheeler rolled over the scale in mid-June at the Fort Collins, Colorado Port of Entry, Officer Jeanay Angel began what turned out to be anything but a routine inspection stop.

Almost immediately, she noticed the passenger in the truck looked significantly younger than the driver. Having recently completed the Truckers Against Trafficking (TAT) in-depth law enforcement human trafficking training, she took this as a suspicious sign and pulled the truck in to verify the passenger authorization required by the Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration and to talk to both parties in the truck.



"In addition to the age difference between the passenger and driver," she explained, "I parked the truck, because the girl appeared to be no visible relation to the driver and the tattoo on her neck, from a distance, looked like a barcode ... like you typically find on food."

The driver, who came into the office, had the necessary authorization and stated that the girl, who was almost 30 years younger, was his girlfriend of a few months. Angel asked if she could talk to the girl and was given permission.

"I typically do my interviews one on one," Angel said, "so I have practice there, but, with this contact, she said everything that's taught in the human trafficking classes about what survivors go through or what the traffickers use against them or prey on to convince the survivor to stay." The girl, who was covered in tattoos, stated she was an out-of-work model, was broke and had cut all her own hair off, because she was depressed following her dog's death. Angel asked her several times if she was okay, felt safe and wanted help, and the girl declined to give a clear answer.

The IDs of both the driver and passenger were clean in Colorado's law enforcement database, so Angel told them they could go. The driver brought up human trafficking in conversation and said he thought it was a theory and scam, that he had a party bus in Oklahoma and had never been in trouble.

After they left, Angel still believed "none of it felt or sounded right," so she ran their IDs through a national database and found an outstanding arrest warrant from Oklahoma on the driver for child sexual abuse.

"It was very hard to have the knowledge and training I've had and not be able to do anything about it without the help of the passenger," Angel recalled. "It was also emotional for me to have had the attitude the driver displayed, the indicators from the passenger, and then to find out about his warrant after they left."

She continued, "After learning about the warrant, my first step was to contact the first port they would be in contact with next in Wyoming, even though, based on the time, they most likely had passed already. I had no idea they would take my information so seriously to put out a BOLO for the truck. I hated to have to admit my mistake that I let them go, but if I wouldn't have, he would have gotten away and she would still have been in the truck."

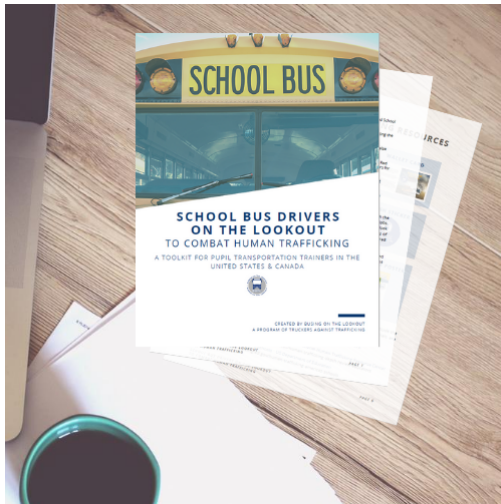
After contacting Wyoming troopers, Angel alerted TAT. TAT confirmed the arrest warrant in Oklahoma and also spoke with Wyoming Highway Patrol, who stopped the truck, arrested the driver and worked with Oklahoma to extradite him. Additionally, TAT made a number of other contacts to law enforcement and trucking entities to alert the driver's company in another state of what was occurring.

“Once getting out the information to both Wyoming and TAT,” Angel stated, “finding out how many agencies were contacted from there was honestly so relieving and heartwarming. Also, getting updates frequently from different officers so I wasn’t left hanging showed they know what it’s like to have a situation like this and never getting updates.”

Using a victim-centered approach, the Wyoming State Patrol paid for a hotel room for the girl for the night, and while she said the driver hadn’t harmed her, both TAT Deputy Director Kylla Lanier, who provides law enforcement training, as well as members of law enforcement involved in the case, believe the girl was being groomed for trafficking. Lanier counseled the girl regarding warning signs and future involvement with “her boyfriend.”

Angel credits TAT training for knowing what she was looking at and what to do. “Without the law enforcement training and seminars put on by TAT,” she said, “I wouldn’t have been able to identify a potential victim and exploiter. Everything TAT teaches on what a victim says or does was exactly what I experienced with this young lady. With TAT’s input, we were able to contact a total of four agencies to help get her out of the situation and hopefully change her life.”

Tennessee completes school bus driver training with BOTL; Kentucky working on same



Using the recently completed digital school bus drivers training kit, supplied through Busing on the Lookout (BOTL), Tennessee has finished training all school bus drivers and daycare front-line workers statewide.

“The addition of the School Bus Drivers on the Lookout for Human Trafficking training has been a great experience,” said Tennessee Highway Patrol Lieutenant Ray Robinson, director of Commercial Vehicle Enforcement/Pupil Transportation. “This course has empowered almost 15,000 school bus and daycare front-line workers to help Tennessee’s most valuable resource at what could be their most vulnerable time. The course had excellent reviews throughout Tennessee. The most telling of all reviews are the school districts who have made this training part of their local curriculum.”

Tennessee will continue using the training as a part of their curriculum during the 2020-21 school year. Kentucky has set a goal of training 14,000 pupil transportation staff, including directors of transportation, driver trainers, and inspectors, statewide by the end of the summer. So far, approximately 10 percent have reported training completion. Many districts are still in the process of training, while schools are opening a bit later than normal this year.

Elisa Hanley, branch manager of Pupil Transportation at the Kentucky Department of Education, commented, “This training is important, because our drivers are the first people to see these students in the morning and the last to see them in the afternoon. Unlike many of the school staff, bus drivers know the living conditions of so many students. They know when something doesn’t look right, and they know who belongs at the bus stops. As mandated reporters for the state, it’s important for them to know and understand what to look for. Human trafficking is happening in our state, just like every other state in the nation. These drivers may see something and may just save a life in a way they never thought of.”

Energy industry continues to train to fight human trafficking

With Covid-19 curtailing in-person presentations, members of the energy industry have hosted TAT in the past few weeks for online presentations on fighting human trafficking. Whiting Petroleum made TAT's Empower Freedom program the topic of a safety moment presentation for 193 employees with Ashley Smith, TAT's director of energy operations, providing a recap of what human trafficking is and detailing how Covid-19 is impacting the issue. Smith also provided actionable tips to parents for keeping children safe online.



Smith gave a full Empower Freedom webinar to Ovintiv Oil and Gas employees in both Canada and the U.S., training those who attended training about human trafficking, TAT's mission and the particulars of the Empower Freedom program. The webinar was posted to Ovintiv's corporate intranet.

Smith also presented at the ConocoPhillips Bakken Employee Forum July 22 to more than 90 attendees. At this forum, similar to a townhall, she talked about what human trafficking is, the means traffickers use, the impact of Covid-19 on trafficking and the Empower Freedom training. She said attendees showed strong interest in the topic and training throughout the following Q&A session.

"While we may not be traveling, we're still able to reach a wide cross section of industry employees through these virtual presentations," Smith stated. "Online, I have provided critical information to industry members in Texas, Colorado, Montana, North Dakota and Canada. I believe the questions and discussions coming out of these presentations show great interest in engaging in the fight and this is exciting for the growth of the Empower Freedom program."

**Vulnerable populations
are at risk ...
*now, more than ever.***

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