



Volume 13 | Issue 2  
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## Human trafficking in the news

### Fayetteville man sentenced for sex trafficking teens online

FAYETTEVILLE -- A local man received 40 years in prison with 20 years suspended Tuesday in Washington County Circuit Court after pleading guilty to sex trafficking of minors. Lexus DeShawn Hobbs, 23, of Fayetteville was arrested in February in connection with an online prostitution operation involving teen girls that ranged from Washington County to Springfield, Mo.

### Agricultural labor trafficking growing problem in Illinois

In Illinois, farming is big business as one of America's leading producers of soybeans, corn and pork. The Illinois Farm Bureau estimates that Illinois's agricultural industry and related activity contribute more than \$50 billion dollars to the state's economy. But the nature of farm work and the structure of our nation's migrant labor program make the people who perform long hours of labor in Illinois' more than 72,000 farms vulnerable to abuse and the COVID-19 pandemic has only exacerbated an already alarming situation.

### Combating human trafficking: Awareness campaign set to begin

WASHINGTON — Mexico is joining the U.S. and Canada for this year's Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance's (CVSA) three-day Human Trafficking Awareness Initiative. The initiative is designed to raise awareness and is an outreach effort to educate commercial motor vehicle drivers, motor carriers, law enforcement officers and the general public about the crime of human trafficking, along with the signs to look for and what drivers should do if they suspect someone is being trafficked.

[Click here to read these articles on our website](#)

## Gang cops learn victim-centered approach

Because street gangs and human trafficking intersect, TAT Deputy Director Kylla Lanier and Survivor-Leader Kelley Alsobrook conducted a four-hour law enforcement training for 150 law enforcement officers from across Texas at the 2022 Gang Intelligence and Supervision Conference in Galveston, Texas in mid-January.

Officers learned more about how gangs intersect with domestic sex trafficking and labor trafficking, the different tactics they use to control their victims and best practices for engaging with victims using a victim-centered approach. One officer commented, "We need more of this type of training, because this crime is literally happening everywhere. This was eye-opening."



Street gangs have increasingly moved into sex trafficking for a number of reasons:

- Girls get arrested---not them
- They can use them as well
- Very lucrative
- They have easy access to drugs to keep them subdued and to recruit new victims as gangs almost always sell drugs as well
- Their violent reputation is well established and keeps victims and their families compliant

Street gangs can and do "turn out" some females wanting to jump into the gang ... making them "pay their dues." These girls think this is showing their loyalty to the gang and will acquiesce to earn favor. Or they may traffick out of convenience if they have a girl they can control and someone who's willing to pay for sex. Well-organized gangs with large numbers may operate brothels out of a home or apartment or may run large groups of girls out to agricultural fields/factories to "service" the workers. Gangs that also smuggle people will traffick them to pay off smuggling debt as well as any other daily living expenses (always at inflated rates).

And street gangs can also compel people into labor trafficking. Lanier, who worked with gangs in El Salvador for two years, shared that there, gangs have kids begging on the street, and then collect the money by force from them. In the U.S., gangs sometimes make victims sell drugs or harvest marijuana through force, fraud or coercion and keep all the money earned for themselves.



*TAT Deputy Director Kylla Lanier shared some of her own background working with gangs as part of the law enforcement training she conducted in Galveston.*

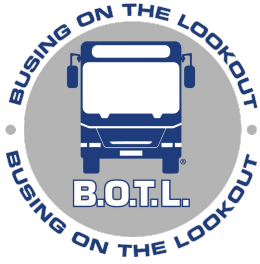


*Kelly Alsobrook, survivor-advocate, spoke one-on-one with police in addition to her presentation.*

## **BOTL focuses on building partnerships to combat human trafficking**

Diving rapidly into the new year, the Busing on the Lookout (BOTL) team planned or participated in a series of events to commemorate National Human





Trafficking Awareness Month. The two virtual events BOTL co-hosted/co-planned focused on building partnerships to combat human trafficking. The first, held in partnership with the American Public Transportation Association, drew over 80 representatives from public transit agencies throughout the United States. During this session, participants heard about anti-trafficking efforts underway at the transit agencies in Miami-Dade County, Florida and the Dallas-Fort Worth Metropolitan Area, Texas. They also learned about partnership opportunities with BOTL, the National Safe Place Network and Elerts, as well as received updates from the Federal Transit Administration.

In the second virtual briefing, BOTL partnered with the Nevada Resort Association, the Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada, the Las Vegas Metro Police Department, the Department of Homeland Security / Homeland Security Investigations, and the Southern Nevada Human Trafficking Task Force to focus on creating local partnerships to end human trafficking in Las Vegas. The event, with 161 attendees, brought together representatives from the resort/casino and passenger transportation industries with law enforcement training and sharing best practices and local coordination. Of attendees who completed the survey, 96.7 percent reported feeling better equipped to recognize and report human trafficking after attending the briefing.

In addition to these BOTL co-hosted webinars, in the month of January, BOTL reached industry leaders through presentations to the National Bus Traffic Association, the American Bus Association's Bus Industry Safety Council and Allied Universal Security. BOTL also presented to school administrators and school transportation supervisors from across Kansas at the Kansas Safe & Supportive Schools Virtual Conference, hosted by the Kansas Department of Education. BOTL also distributed its School Transportation Outreach Toolkit through the National Junior League and other NGO partners.



## **TAT to speak at the 2022 TravelCenters of America Leadership Conference**

Continuing to work on deepening relationships into the critical travel plaza/truck stop industry, TAT will be speaking at the 2022 Travel Centers of America (TA) Leadership Expo in Sandusky, Ohio Feb. 16. This is the third time TAT has participated in this event, having presented in both 2018 and 2020.

TAT counts TA as one of its earliest partners in the travel center/truck stop industry, with TA beginning training for all employees in 2011. Barry Richards, TA president, recorded a personal message at the beginning of the TAT training video, emphasizing the organization's passion for combating the crime of



human trafficking. Over the years, hundreds of store managers and employees have attended TAT Coalition Builds nationwide, and TAT materials are displayed at many TA stores. A longtime TAT corporate sponsor, TA has also sponsored multiple product promotions in its stores to support TAT's mission.

The TAT Board of Directors elected Richards to join the board in 2018, and in 2020, TA received the TAT Champion Award in the Organization Category. TA employees have received the Harriet Tubman Award, TAT's highest award, twice, because of their efforts in aiding in the prevention and recovery of victims of human trafficking.

*"TA's leadership in fighting human trafficking and the importance of this partnership speaks for itself through the number of victims that have been recovered, in part by the efforts of countless TA employees. To all those front-line workers that never receive an award or are recognized for their seemingly small acts of kindness towards victims of human trafficking, thank you!"*

- Esther Goetsch, TAT director of strategic partnerships

*Trafficking victims can and do come from all racial and ethnic groups. Data from across the US and Canada shows that native women and girls are disproportionately victimized by traffickers. In a 2015 NCAI Policy Research Center report, for example, four sites were surveyed in the US and Canada, and an average of 40 percent of the women involved in sex trafficking identified as Native American or First Nations.*

*The more we know about what human trafficking really looks like, the better we'll be able to recognize a victim and make the call.*

**Native and First Nations females are disproportionately harmed by sex trafficking.**



Hennepin Cty, MN 25%

Anchorage, AK 32%

Winnipeg, MB 50%

Vancouver, BC 52%

NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH

**Source:** National Congress of American Indians Policy Research Center  
<https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/BTB24-4L-6.pdf>

## February 2022 Calendar of Events

**Feb. 2-4** – Hiring Veterans Summit, New Orleans, LA, Susan Dold, TAT systems administrator, presenting and attending

**Feb. 6-9** – Annual Pipeline Steward School & Business Agent Officer's Conference, Mt. Pleasant, SC, Ashley Smith, TAT Energy Operations director, presenting

**Feb. 7** – Coalition Build, Indianapolis, IN, Louie Greek, TAT training specialist, and Beth Jacobs, survivor-leader and TAT training specialist, presenting



**Feb. 8** – True Justice webinar presentation, Kylla Lanier, TAT deputy director, presenting

**Feb. 13** – Illinois Sheriffs' Association Winter Training, East Peoria, IL, Kylla Lanier, TAT deputy director, and Annika Huff, survivor-leader and TAT training specialist, presenting

**Feb. 16** – World Game Protection Conference (WGPC), Las Vegas, NV, Annie Sovcik, BOTL director, presenting

**Feb. 22** – Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association webinar, Kylla Lanier, TAT deputy director, presenting

**Feb. 23** – Landstar BCO Days, Memphis, TN, Laura Cyrus, TAT Corporate Engagement director, presenting

**Feb. 23** – Truck Training Schools Association of Ontario (TTSAO) webinar, Esther Goetsch, TAT Strategic Partnerships director, presenting

**Feb. 24** – Rotary Club of Temple, Temple, TX, James Moore, TAT Ambassador and professional driver for Saia LTL Freight, presenting

**Feb. 26** – FDP at UPS truck rodeo, Ontario, CA, Susan Dold, TAT systems administrator, attending



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