



Human Trafficking Update

January 2018

EDITORIAL

Human Trafficking Month: The Numbers Game

A few days ago, I saw a new political ad on television. Like most political ads these days, this one wasn't designed to inspire, or build hope. It was designed to instill fear. Its argument was that the number of people in America who need help are growing – and growing – in what seems to be an overwhelming tidal wave that you, dear viewer, are facing down on your own. You're encouraged to wonder, what can one person possibly do alone against so many?

I can't help but imagine Jesus felt the same way. What was one person to do, when there are so many sick people who need healing? What was one person to do, when so many thousands of people are going hungry? What was one person to do, against so many who despair? What can one person say that will overcome the cacophony of voices raised in skepticism, mockery and doubt?

But Jesus understood that numbers can't be trusted. You see, numbers are created by turning a subject into a generic bead on an abacus. They strip away all nuance, meaning, and relevance. Isolated, numbers are meaningless.

Arguments are formed by giving that number a new context, by comparing it to another number. By comparing one abstraction to another. Choosing winners and losers is a simple matter of a counting game.

In creating numbers, we forget what they represent. People are not numbers. People who have their own individual stories, experiences, strengths, loves, hopes and dreams. Every one of us is far more than a tic on a chalkboard. Each individual life has meaning, purpose and abilities far beyond what abstractions give us credit for.

The millions of trafficking survivors have their own individual stories and strengths. Every one of them has their own immense value and worth. They have overcome traffickers who attempted to strip away their humanity to turn them into a product, a commodity. By focusing merely on their number – and using numbers as a reason to ration out support and service – attempts to dehumanize them again.

Reason for Hope

Even understanding that nearly 21 million trafficking survivors are hungry for restorative support and services, we draw inspiration and strength from knowing that none of us is in it alone. Any more than Jesus was alone, as he leaned on the support of 12 disciples; supporters like Mary, Martha and Lazarus; and countless nameless followers that helped him along his journey.

We are a strong and multifaceted force. We are organizations like Polaris, who connect survivors to the support they need. Like Just Ask, protecting teens from exploitation. Like Restoration 1:99 and Courtney's House, which offer shelter and services. Like state advocates and lawmakers who call for laws that bring justice to the exploiters, and a pathway to the future for the survivors. Like Annandale United Methodist Church and other churches of many denominations, who continue to raise awareness and offer their services where they are needed. Like survivors themselves, who raise their voices to remind us that they are not a statistic.

Celebrate Human Trafficking Awareness Month

January, which is Human Trafficking Awareness Month, brings us together as one. This issue includes a full calendar of events sponsored by many essential organizations in the DC metro area. I encourage you to attend an event. Because doing so is not merely supporting the cause. It is a restorative act for the spirit, as you come together with a community. It is a truism that together, we can achieve so much more than any of us can individually. Not just because we can accomplish more physical activities. But because we feed, encourage and inspire one another. Community is a force that should not be underestimated.

Too many political leaders today play simple number games to promote policies that put up barriers and walls, that are protective and isolationist. We are better than this. We have resources, strength and potential beyond measure. And together, we are a community, holding one another up as we march together to a better world.



President Proclaims January is Human Trafficking Month

Follow the precedent of previous years, President Trump has formally proclaimed January 2018 as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. This proclamation kicks off a month of awareness and education events conducted by federal agencies and community organizations across the nation.

[Read the President's proclamation here.](#)

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is participating in awareness activities with a new podcast explaining its engagement in battling trafficking. In the podcast, the FBI encourages citizens to contact them with any suspicions of trafficking activity. [Listen to the podcast here.](#)

The Department of Health and Human Services has also launched a toolkit and events calendar for the month. [Find these resources here.](#)

Human Trafficking Month Events

January 10: Traffickers: Who Are They and Where Do They Come From?

7:00 pm Sully Government Center, 4900 Stonecraft Blvd. in Chantilly.

Detective Bill Woolf of Just Ask will speak to the motivations and tactics of human traffickers in Fairfax County.

January 11: National Human Trafficking Awareness Day: Wear Blue

An all-day event.

The [Blue Campaign](#), part of the Department of Homeland Security, encourages you to wear something blue and post a photo of yourself on Twitter and Facebook. Use #WearBlueDay to tell the world that you're wearing blue to support survivors, and to stop traffickers from luring more victims. Include information about the National Human Trafficking Hotline: 888-3737-888.

January 17: Webinar: Responding to Foreign Minor Victims of Trafficking

2-4 p.m. Eastern [Register now.](#)

The Administration for Children & Families Office on Trafficking in Persons (OTIP) hosts a training to help you understand OTIP's role. Participants will learn about resources available and how OTIP assists foreign minor victims of trafficking. Participants also will receive an overview of the process to submit a case for OTIP review and an understanding of Interim Assistance Letters should a minor be identified as a potential victim of trafficking. Furthermore, participants will gain an understanding of the services and benefits available to a minor should the minor receive an Eligibility Letter and be determined as a victim of trafficking.

January 17, 2018: Teens are a Target for Sex Traffickers,

7:00 pm Sully Government Center, 4900 Stonecraft Blvd. in Chantilly.

Speaker Jodi O'Hern of Just Ask presents on how Fairfax County teens are vulnerable to traffickers.

January 18: Webinar: From Victim to Conqueror – A Mother's Experience With Human Trafficking

2-2:30 p.m. Eastern

No registration required. Audio Conferencing Information: Conference Toll Free Number: 1 (888) 790-3724; Participant Passcode: 7713149. Hosted by the Department of Health & Human Services.

January 20: STOP Sex-Human Trafficking Program

11 a.m.-1 p.m. Oxon Hill Library 6200 Oxon Hill Rd, Oxon Hill, MD

Faye Thomas is the author of "The Children of God: There is Life After the Cult." Come hear about her experiences with this system of exploitation. This event includes a book signing. You can pre-register by sending an email to churchonthehill@hotmail.com

January 23: Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Human Trafficking Awareness Month

8:30-9:30 a.m. Fairfax County Government Center, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, VA, conference room 8.

Proclamation of January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month at 9:30 Board of Supervisors meeting. Contact michelle.mueller@fairfaxcounty.gov for information.

January 27: STOP Sex-Human Trafficking Program

3-5 p.m. George Mason Regional Library, 7001 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA

Faye Thomas is the author of "The Children of God: There is Life After the Cult." Come hear about her experiences with this system of exploitation. This event includes a book signing. You can pre-register by sending an email to churchonthehill@hotmail.com

January 31: Webinar: Human Trafficking and the Opioid Crisis

1-2:30 p.m. Eastern [Register now.](#)

This webinar will highlight emerging trends, case studies, and research on human trafficking and substance use with a specific focus on the opioid crisis. Grantees from both OTIP and the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) will present trauma-informed approaches from providers, client-based, and research perspectives. Presenters will include Dr. Elizabeth Hopper (Project Director of REACH, the Trauma Center at the Justice Resource Institute), Audrey Morrissey (Associate Director of My Life My Choice), and Dr. Ginny Sprang (Professor in the College of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry at the University of Kentucky).

The United Methodist Church Stands Against Trafficking

The United Methodist Church encourages you to send photos and videos on January 11, with you and your colleagues dressed in red against human trafficking.

"Sharing members' #UMWRedZone photos and videos will be a great way to show our commitment to intercept human trafficking and will help raise awareness that this crime affects families and communities everywhere."

- Send your pictures to your conference communicators to share on conference websites and in newsletters.
- Share on social media. Tag United Methodist Women on Facebook or Twitter (@UMWomen) and use #UMWRedZone wherever you share.
- If you would prefer to e-mail your photos, send them as attachments to the United Methodist Women Flickr page: lead02whose@photos. Please include the caption and credit information in the body of your email.
- View the Red Zone album at www.flickr.com.



ArtWorks for Freedom Unveils Take Action Toolkit

ArtWorks for Freedom uses the power of art to raise awareness about modern day slavery and human trafficking. Working locally and globally and engaging art in all its forms to inspire action to put an end to slavery.

The organization encourages you to take 30 Actions for 30 Days with its new toolkit:

- Learn about trafficking.
- Respond through actions.
- Find resources.
- Develop your own action plan.

Visit 30actions30days.org to see the full toolkit and get started. Share your actions with your friends with our easy-to-share Facebook and Twitter cards using the hashtag [#ConfrontHumanTrafficking](#).

Follow 30 Actions 30 Days on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

New Law Steps Up Trafficking Prevention

Last month, the United States passed the Combating Human Trafficking in Commercial Vehicles Act. This law calls for the Secretary of Transportation to assign a human trafficking prevention coordinator to work with other departments to combat human trafficking within different modes of transportation. It also expands outreach and education programs and funding to support such programs. It also calls for the establishment of a Department of Transportation Advisory Committee on Human Trafficking, tasked with making recommendations to the Secretary of Transportation.

[Read the law here.](#)

A Bailiff Becomes an Advocate

Some stories told in the court room can be hard to listen to. One moved a South Florida bailiff to action.

Roger DeHart, a court bailiff in Broward County, heard testimony in a trial nearly 10 years ago that demonstrated how easily – and ruthlessly – traffickers will manipulate their victims. The memory of that trial made him seek out more information about human trafficking.

After attending meetings of various task forces, and understanding how any teen can be vulnerable to victimization, DeHart started his own non-profit, called First S.T.O.P. (Saving Teens and Others from Predators). This year, DeHart plans to walk from the Broward courthouse to the steps of the U.S. Capitol.

First S.T.O.P. will collect funds before and during the march. Those dollars will help establish education programs and events in South Florida. DeHart also hopes to have enough support to stage a rally when he arrives in Washington.

"I have kids," DeHart told Florida's Sun Sentinel newspaper. "They're 12 and 13. And that's normally the age when they're targeted."

[Learn more.](#)

New Resources for Understanding Childhood Trauma

In support of Human Trafficking Awareness Month, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network offers new resources to help educate child welfare professionals, families/caregivers, healthcare providers, justice system professionals, policy makers, school personnel, and survivors on the signs of trafficking and services for human trafficking survivors.

- [Facts for Policymakers: Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Youth](#) (2015) (PDF)
This policy brief discusses a study comparing the types of trauma exposure, trauma-related symptomatology, functional impairments, and problem behaviors of a clinical CSEC cohort (defined as youth in the CDC who reported involvement in prostitution) with a clinical group of youth who had no reported involvement in prostitution, but had a history of sexual abuse/assault.

[Policy Brief Understanding and Addressing Trauma and Child Sex Trafficking](#) (2017) (PDF)

This policy brief provides policymakers and other stakeholders with an overview of child sex trafficking and its relationship to child trauma, as well as policy-relevant and child trauma-focused recommendations to assist them in their response to child sex trafficking. This resource was developed by the NCCTS Policy Program and Dr. Kelly Kinnish (Georgia Center for Child Advocacy), with support from the NCTSN Policy Task Force.

NCTSN also has gathered resources on trafficking from federal, national, and professional organizations. To see the additional information, click [here](#).

Human Trafficking Update

A regular newsletter created by the

Human Trafficking Task Force of the Annandale United Methodist Church

Submit story ideas to Kristine Grow, Editor, krstngrow@gmail.com

HHS: How You Can Stop Human Trafficking

The [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#) offers the following advice for citizens who wish to thwart human trafficking and slavery:

Know The Signs

Learn the **red flags** of trafficking, and educate your friends and neighbors of the facts.

Report

Contact the **National Human Trafficking Hotline** if you have any concerns about a potential trafficking situation. Call 1-888-373-7888, text HELP to BEFREE (233733), or email help@humantraffickinghotline.org.

Spread the Word

Share and display **HHS Look Beneath the Surface** and **DHS Blue Campaign** awareness resources in your community.

Think Before You Shop

Consider how you **shop** and **eat**. Calculate your **Slavery Footprint**, and know which **goods may be produced by child or forced labor**. Demand fuels exploitation.

Volunteer Locally

Ask anti-trafficking organizations in your **community** how you can support them.

Stay Informed

Sign up for **DOJ human trafficking news alerts**, follow relevant organizations on social media, read **reports** as they are released, or **check out OTIP's newsfeed**.

Register for Training

OTIP's **National Human Trafficking Training and Technical Assistance Center** trains public health professionals and the **Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center** supports the criminal justice system.

Use Your Skills

Can you train or hire survivors? Reach out to **potential local partners**. Do you work in a school? Propose **anti-trafficking protocols**. Are you an attorney? Offer **pro-bono services**. Writing a story? Use **media best practices**. Work in hospitals or clinics? Encourage your colleagues to **SOAR (Stop. Observe. Ask. Respond to Human Trafficking.)**

Raise Your Voice

Ask **representatives** how they are addressing human trafficking. Let them know what your community needs.