

January Newsletter

Modern-Day Slavery



Slavery in the US is gone, right? Well, no, it's not. It has taken a different form than in years past, but is still a profitable business. Now it is called "human trafficking". January is nationally recognized as National Slavery & Human Trafficking Prevention Month, and because some of our clients may be victims of trafficking, we believe it is important to educate our supporters about it.

The definition of human trafficking is the use of force, fraud, or coercion to control victims for the purpose of engaging in commercial sex acts or labor against their will. Traffickers often look for people who are susceptible in some way; they prey on those who are experiencing economic hardship, mental health crises or emotional vulnerability, as well as those who have little social support, or questionable immigration status. Although populations such as these are more vulnerable to trafficking, it is important to note that anyone in any circumstance can be a victim of trafficking.

It is difficult to measure whether human trafficking is increasing in the US; reports are rising, but this can be attributed to a heightened awareness of the public, as well as intensified efforts by law enforcement agencies to address the problem. What we do know is that trafficking remains a very profitable and prevalent crime, due to two factors: low risk and high profits.

Low risk – although efforts to stop trafficking have increased in recent years, the risk of prosecution for the crime remains low. Several factors account for this, including a lack of governmental and law enforcement training, ineffective laws, scarce resources for victim recovery services, and social blaming of victims.

High Profits - Globally, the human trafficking business earns profits of around \$150 billion annually. As long as there is a market for commercial sex, and for products and services produced cheaply, there will be an incentive for traffickers to maximize their profits using slave labor.

What does human trafficking actually look like? The largest percentage of human trafficking cases involves **sex trafficking**. A common belief is that most victims are forced into sex trafficking by abduction; however, it is more likely that a trafficker lures a potential victim with promises of money, clothing, romance, drugs, educational opportunities, housing, etc. Traffickers often use social media, online ads, or newspaper ads to establish contact with potential victims.

An example of **labor trafficking** is when a person, (often from a vulnerable population such as the immigrant community), is promised a job working in someone's home, and then is underpaid and restricted from leaving the home or taking time off. Victims are often promised jobs in the agricultural industry, factories, or restaurants and hotels; they are then made to work off debt accrued from recruitment fees, (work visas, travel, housing, sign-on bonus, etc.) and exorbitant interest rates. Traffickers use isolation, threats, and psychological abuse to control the laborers and prevent them from seeking help.

As we can see, human trafficking is a complex social problem which has a devastating impact on its victims. To learn more, visit

<https://www.state.gov/domestic-trafficking-hotlines/>

Special Dates

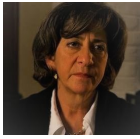
- Jan 5 Volunteer Mtg. - 3:30pm
- Jan 1-31 National Human Trafficking Prevention Month
- Jan 1-31 National Stalking Awareness Month

Current Needs

- Laundry detergent
- Dryer sheets
- Disinfectant spray (like Lysol)
- All purpose liquid cleaner (like PineSol)
- Twin size blankets

Survivor Story

A Parent of a Trafficking Victim



Jamie Chesman is something she never dreamed she would be - the mother of a teen sex trafficking victim. It has been a long road of recovery for both Jamie and her daughter, Danielle, taking years before they could talk about it and share Danielle's story with others.



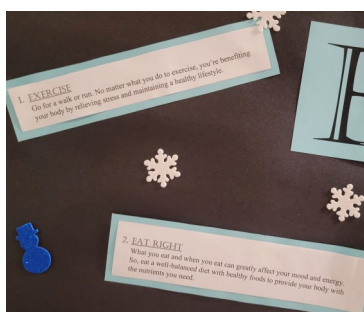
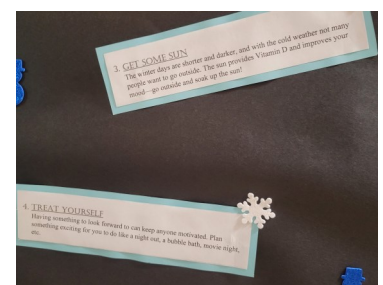
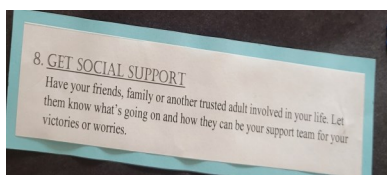
Danielle was a freshman at Northeastern University when she was invited to a party; when she got to the address, the man who answered the door said that she must have gotten the wrong address or day, but he invited her to go out to dinner with him. He seemed very kind and sincere, giving her a lot of attention over the next few days. Although about 20 years her senior, he did not pressure her or seem intimidating in any way. They became closer throughout the following weeks, until one night he pushed her out of the car in an unfamiliar part of the city and told her to go make money for him. Her two-year-long nightmare of being trafficked for sex had begun.

Jamie says that she lost touch with Danielle within a few months of the beginning of college. She recalls that they had what she thought was a close mother/daughter relationship, with the average amount of angst between them, but knew that Danielle felt ready to be on her own. What Jamie didn't know was that by then her daughter was working 18-hour days, sometimes as an escort, and often on the streets. Jamie later learned that Danielle was terrified to try to leave the situation, believing that her pimp would kill her if she didn't do what he told her to. She had been hit, thrown across the room, and strangled if she didn't comply, so she knew that he was capable of violence. The intense psychological manipulation caused her to believe that no one else would ever want her.

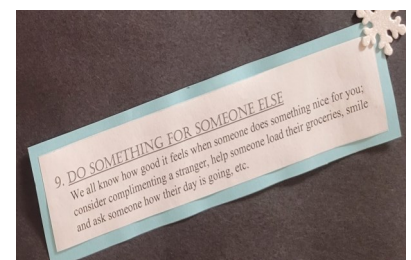
With the help of her family, Danielle was finally able to escape her situation, but it has taken many years for the family to be able to talk publicly about her experience. Jamie's message to other parents is that it can happen to any family, even an average family from suburbia; please educate yourselves and pay attention to any warning signs before it is too late.

Around the Shelter

Our bulletin board



Although most people look forward to the holidays, not everyone does. And the post-holiday letdown is also real. So, if you are feeling a little blue, our December bulletin board gives some suggestions of how to get yourself out of that funk. Check it out!



Recap of Events

Holiday Parades



What a great reception we had at the Woodstock and New Market parades! Every year we are amazed by the number of spectators in Woodstock, and this year we got numerous "Thank-you's" and applause from the crowd! New Market's drive-thru event was very well attended as well, and again, the participants thanked us for what we do and showed appreciation that Response was represented in the parade. Thanks to all who helped!



Upcoming Events

Spring Fashion Show



No details yet, but keep an eye out for news about our Annual Spring Fashion Show! We're hoping for a date soon, probably in April or May. Last year's event was so much fun, you won't want to miss this event! Check out next month's newsletter and stay tuned to social media for updates.



Moving Beyond Support Group

MOVING BEYOND

An 8-week support group for survivors of sexual and domestic violence.

- Coping
- Boundaries
- Safety
- Support
- And more!

Wednesday, Feb. 9, 2022
6:00-7:30PM
540-459-5599
sarahh@responseva.org

All Response, Inc. services are confidential and free of charge

A new support group for survivors of sexual and domestic violence is starting next month! Beginning Feb 9th and continuing every Wednesday evening from 6-7:30, this Moving Beyond group will benefit anyone who has experienced this type of violence.

Do you know someone who would like to talk with other survivors, in a confidential, caring environment? In addition to the support found in this group, there will be specific information and resources provided for those survivors as well.

Please help us share this group, whether on social media, in your church or civic organization, in your workplace, etc. If you would like flyers to share or post around your community just email sarahh@responseva.org or call the office at 540-459-5599. Thanks for your help!