

Inaugural Human Trafficking Awareness Walk

Sept. 26, 2009

Human trafficking is a modern day form of slavery, widespread throughout the United States today. Trafficking of humans is the second largest criminal industry in the world after drug dealing, and is the fastest growing.*

The Northeast Florida Human Trafficking Task Force has scheduled the Inaugural Human Trafficking Awareness Walk to focus attention on this crime and to make current or potential victims aware of help that is available.

JSO Lt. Mike Eason, co-chair (with Attorney Crystal Freed) of the NFHTTF, says that while trafficking is not known to be prevalent in Jacksonville, the group wants to be pro-active and make sure plans are in place to provide services to victims if they are found in our community.

Eason referred to the recent arrest and prosecution of Marvin Madkins who brought two young girls from Virginia and prostituted them out at a local hotel. An alert security guard became suspicious when he noticed men going in and out of the room and notified authorities. Madkins was sentenced in July to a term of 25 years to life.

"Human trafficking is a very covert crime and is so lucrative because it is a renewable 'product' source - victims keep getting victimized over and over and over," Eason says. "When a piece of crack cocaine is sold, the deal is over. When traffickers feel like the usefulness of their 'product' is over, they trade with others and have a new resource. We want to make sure it is not happening in our backyard."

Members of the task force are working hard to train law enforcement and victim services personnel about what to look for and what to do if trafficked victims are discovered. They want potential victims to know there are people who care, who want to help, and that there is a mechanism in place for them to receive the help they need.

The information below tells how to identify possible trafficked victims; if you think you've found one, call JSO at 630-0500 or CrimeStoppers at 866-845-TIPS.

*For more information about Human Trafficking, go www.justicecoalition.org, Newspaper archives, April 06 edition.

Identifying Victims of Human Trafficking

Victims of trafficking may look like many of the people coming to your organization for assistance every day. Victims are young children, teenagers, men and women. By looking beneath the surface and asking yourself these questions, you can help identify potential victims.

- Is the person accompanied by another person who seems controlling (possibly the trafficker)?
- Is the person rarely allowed in public (except for work)?
- Can you detect any physical or psychological abuse?
- Does the person seem submissive or fearful?
- Does the person have difficulty communicating because of language or cultural barriers?
- Does the person lack identification or documentation?
- Is someone else collecting the

person's pay or holding their money for "safekeeping"? Gaining the trust of a victim of human trafficking is an important first step in providing assistance.

Sample questions to ask potential victims of human trafficking

If you get the opportunity to speak to or question the person alone, asking the following questions can help you determine if you are dealing with a victim:

- Can you leave your job or situation if you want?
- Can you come and go as you please?
- Have you been threatened if you try to leave?
- Has anyone threatened your family?
- What are your working or living conditions like?
- Where do you sleep and eat?
- Do you have to ask permission to eat, sleep or go to the bathroom?
- Is there a lock on your door so you cannot get out?
- Does someone prohibit you from socializing or attending religious services?

Before questioning a person who may be a victim of human trafficking, discreetly separate the person from the individual accompanying her/him, since this person could be the trafficker posing as a spouse, other family member or employer.

From the brochure Look Beneath the Surface, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families

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We need your help



At a press conference on July 15, JSO asked the public's assistance in finding the killer of Bilaal "Blair" Shaw, 19, murdered while waiting to catch a city bus on Jan. 8 at 5:00 a.m. CrimeStoppers reports only one tip has been received in the six months since the young man's death.

If you know anything about this murder, please come notify police at 630-0500, or you can call CrimeStoppers at 866-845-TIPS and possibly receive a cash reward. You can, of course, remain anonymous.

JBPD looking for mugger

Jacksonville Beach Police Department is still searching for an unknown black male, late 20s to early 30s, 5' 9" to 6' tall, between 180-210 lbs., who mugged and injured a 60-year-old woman and stole her purse. He escaped in a late model (possibly 1980s) Mercury Grand Marquis, either black or dark blue with a dirty white top, with a Florida specialty handicap tag with first characters "YIN" and back window has "In Loving Memory" in white lettering and a bumper sticker saying "Chillin."

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If you have information about this crime, please contact the JBPD at 270-1667.



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What We Do

Services offered by the



- Provide immediate crisis intervention by assessing the victims' needs and implementing an appropriate plan of action.
- Educate victims regarding their rights as a victim of crime and criminal justice proceedings.
- Network our resources to provide the victim counseling and/or support groups, if needed.
- Accompany victims to court proceedings. This includes pretrial hearings, trials, depositions, meetings with prosecutors and injunction hearings.
- Act as a liaison between victims and prosecutors, law enforcement and the media.
- Assist victims in creating an effective impact statement to the court.
- Assist victims in applying for victims' compensation.
- Assist victims in publicizing rewards for unsolved murders and missing persons.
- Publish a monthly newspaper that prints crime victims' stories, pictures of unsolved murder victims, missing persons, wanted criminals and much more.

Volunteer Opportunities

- Delivering our *Victims' Advocate* newspaper
- Court watching
- Clerical assistance
- Research and newspaper writing
- Fundraisers
- Posting flyers for missing persons and unsolved murders
- Special events