

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS DAY

1.11.11

Dear Boston Area Residents,

We are service providers, faith leaders, teachers, students, law enforcement, advocates, parishioners, civil servants, NGO leaders, business owners, and survivors from the Boston area. We work to combat human trafficking--what many call 'modern-day slavery.'

We are uniting today, on Human Trafficking Awareness Day 2011, to ask you to learn about and discuss human trafficking and modern-day slavery with your families, neighbors, churches, co-workers, friends, and fellow students.

Human trafficking is widespread throughout the United States today, including the greater Boston area. It is a hidden crime and often goes undetected by authorities and advocates. The lack of public awareness about human trafficking, together with a lack of understanding about trafficking survivors and the services they need, present major barriers to combating it.

Within the Boston area there have been numerous incidents of international sex and labor trafficking, as well as the sex trafficking of U.S. citizens. Sex trafficking of children is sometimes referred to as CSEC (the commercial sexual exploitation of children).

Survivor stories from the Boston area are diverse: a woman from Southeast Asia trafficked into years of domestic servitude, a young Eastern European woman looking for a better life but forced into sexual exploitation, a child from Latin America sent to the U.S. by her family who ended up being exploited for labor, and an American teenager who fled abuse at home and then relied on her "boyfriend" who prostituted her. Women, men, girls, and boys from a variety of backgrounds are being trafficked for sex and labor in our communities today. Many of these individuals can't see a way out of their situations, and are afraid to speak up for themselves due to threats, coercion, or violence.

Please join the anti-trafficking movement. Your involvement, voice, and skills can make a difference. Below are three things you can do. These action items all begin with educating yourself. Details are available at www.traumacenter.org/initiatives/necat.php.

- Talk about human trafficking in your communities and ask others to educate themselves
 - Invite a speaker from a local organization to talk to your group
 - Read a book, hold a documentary screening, write a blog or an editorial
 - Use Google alerts to send news about trafficking and slavery to your email
- Tell your legislators to take action - Massachusetts is currently one of five states that has failed to pass anti-trafficking legislation
 - Write your legislator
- Get involved with a local organization
 - Support, volunteer for, or spread the word about a local organization
 - Donate or fundraise to ensure the work continues

We, the undersigned, pledge to continue to fight human trafficking and modern-day slavery in greater Boston and beyond. Please join us.

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Abolitionist Network

Elizabeth Fragola
**American Association for University
Women, Massachusetts**

Reverend Bob Atherton
Amirah Safehouse

Barbara Anderson
All Hands In

Ryan Scott McDonnell
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