

About Stop Traffic Walk:

The Stop Traffic Walk funds the nation's largest human trafficking rescue & rehabilitation program at the Phoenix Dream Center and StreetLightUSA. The money you raise will help rescue trafficked individuals & give them the skills necessary to build a strong and vibrant life.

Did you know:

- The Phoenix Dream Center and StreetLightUSA is home to the nation's largest human trafficking rescue and recovery program: Where Hope Lives.
- In Arizona, the average age a child is first trafficked is just 11-14 years old.
 - The average age of a trafficked girl is 12 years old (ASU Human Trafficking Research Unit, 2022)
 - The average age of a trafficked boy is 11-13 years old (Arizona Attorney General)
 - The average age for both genders in Arizona is 13 years old (YES Study Arizona 2020)
- Only 1 out of every 100 individuals trafficked will be rescued.
- Arizona is the main destination and transit point for labor & sex trafficking, both nationally & internationally, according to the US State Department.
- The average lifespan of a trafficked individual is 7 years.
- There are an estimated 40 million victims of human trafficking, globally.
- Our 2017 Quality Assurance Report shows that our program graduates had a 92% success rate for at least one year after completion of the program.
- Human trafficking, believed to be the third-largest criminal activity in the world
- The economic reality is that human trafficking is driven by profits. If nobody paid for sex, sex trafficking would not exist.
- Child trafficking victims, whether for labor, sex or organ trafficking, come from all backgrounds, including both boys and girls. They span a wide age range from 1 to 18 years old. Sex trafficking victims up to roughly 25 years old most often started as young as 12. Children are trafficked out of, or into the United States from all regions of the world and represent a variety of different races, ethnic groups and religions. They may be brought to the U.S. legally or smuggled in.
- Trafficked children can be lured to the U.S. through the promise of school or work and promised the opportunity to send money back to their families. Children are also vulnerable to kidnappers, pimps, and professional brokers. Some children are even sold to traffickers by their families

The impact:

- Human trafficking has surpassed the illegal sale of arms
- Trafficking will surpass the illegal sale of drugs in the next few years
- Drugs are used once and they are gone. Victims of child trafficking can be used and abused over and over

- A \$32 billion-a-year industry, human trafficking is on the rise and is in all 50 states (U.S. Government)
- 4.5 Million of trafficked persons are sexually exploited
- Up to 300,000 Americans under 18 are lured into the commercial sex trade every year
- From 14,500 - 17,500 of those victims are trafficked into the United States each year
- Average life span of a victim is reported to be 7 years (found dead from attack, abuse, HIV and other STD's, malnutrition, overdose or suicide)
- The largest group of at-risk children are runaway, thrown away, or homeless American children who use survival sex to acquire food, shelter, clothing, and other things needed to survive on America's streets.
- Children are often targeted by traffickers as they are deemed easier to manipulate than adults. More money can be earned by younger girls and boys exploited in sexual exploitation, especially virgins. Pre-pubescent girls are reported to be injected with hormones to bring on puberty. Younger girls are expected to have a greater earning potential, and as such are in greater demand.

Trafficking Victims:

- The sexual exploitation of children is not limited to particular racial, ethnic or socioeconomic groups.
- People are recruited in several different ways such as through fake employment agencies, acquaintances, newspaper ads, front businesses, word of mouth or abduction.
- Traffickers may be neighbors, friends, returnees, agricultural operators, owners of small businesses, diplomats and even families.
- Increasingly, however, the traffickers are organized crime syndicates, often in collaboration with corrupt law enforcement entities, government officials or employers.
- Many victims are kept under lock and key or in isolation from the public and from their family members or support networks, confiscate their passports or identification documents, use the threat of violence against the enslaved person or their families, threaten them with shame, fear of imprisonment or deportation, and control their money.
- The psychological effects of torture are helplessness, shame and humiliation, shock, denial and disbelief, disorientation and confusion, and anxiety disorders including post-traumatic stress disorder, phobias, panic attacks and depression. Victims may experience Traumatic Bonding (Stockholm Syndrome) – a form of coercive control in which the perpetrator instills in the victim fear as well as gratitude for being allowed to live or for any other perceived favors, however small.

Learn the warning signs

Can YOU recognize the warning signs of human trafficking?

- Living with employer
- Poor living conditions
- Multiple people in cramped space
- Inability to speak to individual alone
- Answers appear to be scripted and rehearsed
- Employer is holding identity documents
- Signs of physical abuse
- Submissive or fearful
- Unpaid or paid very little
- Under 18 and in prostitution

How do individuals become victims of trafficking?

-Vulnerable youth can be lured into trafficking and other forms of sexual exploitation using promises, psychological manipulations, provision of drugs and alcohol, and violence.

Human trafficking victims are often exploited through:

- Recruitment by “Romeo/boyfriend” traffickers who convince them that they love and care for them. Online recruitment through social media is one of the primary ways of making initial contact.
- Kidnapping by “gorilla pimp” and forced into the life.
- Gang related prostitution.
- A parent or family member pimps their child for drugs or money.
- Running away and living on the streets and are forced to exchange sex for survival.

Understanding the mindset of the victim:

By understanding the mindset of a victim, we can be better equipped to identify and assist victims.

Victims often do not see themselves as victims

Victims may feel shame, self-blame and feelings of unworthiness of a better life

Victims may be coached to lie to nurses and other health professionals and often give fabricated histories with scripted stories.

Victims are often fearful and distrust law enforcement and government services due to fear of arrest.

Victims often fear for their own safety and the safety of their loved ones due to threats of violence.

Victims may have formed a trauma bond with their exploiter and may have deep loyalties and positive feelings for their abuser.

Drugs often play a role in sex trafficking situations – sometimes as a way to cope or

--Victims sometimes enter “the life” to support a drug habit.