

# Human Trafficking – It does happen here!

It's a \$32+ billion a year form of modern slavery, and one of the fastest growing crimes worldwide

## What is it?

- Human trafficking is the use of force, fraud or coercion to compel someone to engage in commercial sex, forced labor or service. However, minors who are made to engage in commercial sex are automatically considered victims of human trafficking, even if the use of force, fraud or coercion is not present.
- A commercial sex act can be a sex act traded for anything of value: money, food, shelter, drugs, among others
- In labor trafficking cases, force, fraud & coercion still need to be used by the trafficker if the victim is under the age of 18

## Who is most at risk?

- Anyone can be a victim of human trafficking however, those most at risk include:
  - Homeless & Runaway youth
  - Foreign Nationals
  - Individuals with a history of trauma or abuse
  - Minors in the Child Welfare System
  - Individuals with certain physical and/or social disabilities

## Become Aware ~ Know the Signs ~ What You Can Do

### **Pay attention if a person:**

- Appears submissive, afraid or nervous
- Tells a well-rehearsed or inconsistent story
- Is not in control of his/her identification papers
- Shows signs of physical or mental abuse
- Is not able to come and go as he/she pleases
- Does not want to tell you about a tattoo which may be a trafficker's branding

### **Be alert if a young person:**

- Has a much older "boyfriend"/"girlfriend"
- Has new jewelry, new hairdo or polished nails (not paid for by the youth's parents or guardians"
- Has sporadic or poor school attendance
- Possesses multiple hotel cards or cell phones
- Wears clothing inappropriate for his/her age or for weather

### **Signs a friend or someone you know may be experiencing human trafficking:**

- Someone has isolated your friend from you and other loving & supportive people
- Someone makes decisions for your friend about when he/she is free; where they can go, or who they can hang out with
- Your friend left town suddenly or they disappear from time to time with little or no explanation
- Your friend is highly secretive about a new relationship or their whereabouts
- Your friend has received expensive gifts
- You never see your friend anymore or you can never get time alone with them
- Your friend seems frightened or nervous
- Your friend seems malnourished or ill and isn't allowed to get the treatment they need

### **Tips for Staying Safe ~ For Kids & Adults:**

- ❖ Don't share passwords (social media, bank PIN #'s, email, etc.) and avoid posting your location on-line
- ❖ Keep an eye on your ID documents, if someone asks to hold them for you say "NO"
- ❖ Identify friend, community members and family that you trust
- ❖ Remember that you deserve to be safe
- ❖ Remind yourself that your worth is not determined by another person
- ❖ Be careful on social media – traffickers often use social media as recruiting grounds
- ❖ Come up with a safety plan – think about who you would call, where you would go, and how you would get there if you found yourself in a situation that felt unsafe

**Memorize the National Human Trafficking Hotline #: 1.800.373.7888 and/or the number of a safe adult you trust**

Source: *The Polaris Project* [www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org)

