



Howard County Task Force on Human Trafficking

Minutes (draft)

May 21, 2014

9:00 a.m.

C. Vernon Gray Conference Room

Members Present: C. Vernon Gray; Capt. Ellsworth Jones, Howard County Department of Police; Lt. Glenn Case, Howard County Department of Police; Heather Graham, Howard County Public School System; James Fitzgerald, Howard County Sheriff; Lois Mikkila, Howard County Department of Citizen Services; Sara Cochran, HoCo AGAST; Suellen Seigel, Howard County Commission for Women; Martin Brooks, Bethany United Methodist Church; Sharon Hadsell, Howard General Hospital; Andrea Ingram, Grassroots.

Staff Present: Mary Toth, Office of Human Rights; Meredith Beach, Howard County County Council

The Chair opened the meeting at 9:06 a.m. in the C. Vernon Gray Conference Room.

Kate Reilly, Special Agent, Homeland Security:

- Social Media has enabled traffickers easier access to victims
- Homeland Security has found that traffickers use women to lure victims in because women respond better to other women
- Predators use fear and intimidation
- Traffickers “fish” on Facebook
- Homeland Security can subpoena records from Google and Yahoo, but the user is notified that records have been subpoenaed.

Alexis Flanagan, Assistant Director, HopeWorks

- HopeWorks provides comprehensive services to victims of sexual violence
- Has a staff of 45 individuals, and provides a 24 hour help line, individual and group therapy, transitional housing, and accompaniment to court for victims;
- Also has an abuser intervention program that provides cognitive therapy in a 20 week program, offering both group and individual therapy;
- Involved in community engagement to help train people to identify abuse;
- Has a sexual assault response team that coordinates efforts and training for response protocols;

Jeanne Allert, Founder & Executive Director, The Samaritan Women.

- The Samaritan Women provides long term living space for adult victims of sex trafficking;
- Accepts survivors from all of the country and handles only stabilized survivors;
- It provides a long term restoration program for adult women;
- The program lasts 2 years, with the first 90 days treated as an assessment phase to make sure that the survivor is committed to the program;
- The facility has the capacity for 14 women and costs approximately \$26,000 per woman per year;
- Average intake is 21-26 years old, having been trafficked for 4-8 years;
- Survivors are approximately 60% Caucasian, 30% African American, and 10% other;
- Most of the survivors have no family ties, 70% have been incarcerated;
- Ms. Allert recommends sensitivity training in the emergency room to help identify and work with victims.

Denene Yates, Founder and Executive Director, Safe House of Hope

- Opened in 2010 and conducts street and internet outreach;
- Offer support and services (food and showers) for victims by appointment or drop by Monday through Friday;
- In life of victims domestic violence is seen as a normal part of life;
- Safe House of Hope offers self esteem classes, 24/7 hotline, and host families;
- Age range that they have seen is 12-68 years;
- Want to expand services by adding drop in center in Howard County.

Moniquika, Survivor

- She was drug addict, and has been drug free since 4/16/2013—13 months. She wanted to change her life.
 - 28-day treatment for drugs
- Went to CCBC and became a case manager
 - Haunted by her life on the street
 - Got her record expunged
 - Has CPS charge
 - 2 prostitution charges
- Has now been clean for 13 months.
- Background:
 - Came from a two-parent household
 - Had a child which she lost—now about 11 years old
 - Uses a “life coach” --much more effective—for her—that a psychologist
 - Focus in on “What can you do now?”
 - Important immediate question for the victim
 - Safe House of Hope Made a commitment to her—the MOST important thing to a recovering victim

Susan Ritter, Victim Specialist, Homeland Security

- Serves U.S. and foreign national victims;
- For foreign national victims need a diversity of providers and resources that are comprehensive and coordinated with local, state, and national resources;
- Sees primarily women as victims;
- Has seen situations where the family does not reach out to seek help intervening in child's behavior that leave him/her susceptible to trafficking because the parents are here illegally;
- When establishing serves for victims need to understand the culture of the victim so s/he can be approached appropriately;
- There is a special visa status to allow victim who is not here legally to remain in the country for up to a year;
- There are gaps emergency housing for minors who are victims.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.