#### VOLUME 15 | ISSUE 6 | jUNE 2024



### HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN THE NEWS

17-year-old girl trafficked into U.S. from Mexico rescued after texting 911 and describing landmarks

A 17-year-old girl has been rescued and a man arrested after the girl was allegedly trafficked into the United States from Mexico, authorities in Southern California said Thursday. The girl was able to text authorities asking for help and describe enough landmarks for police to find her. Click here to read more. 'They denied the victim's basic humanity': Man sentenced for sex trafficking a woman in Maine

A man from Boston was sentenced Monday to 30 years in prison for sex trafficking a young woman through force, fraud and coercion and obstruction in Maine. Click here to read more. Child labor trafficking is ensnaring both U.S.- and foreign-born, study finds

Child labor trafficking remains a "largely hidden" phenomenon that imperils economically and socially vulnerable youth in the US, encompassing 58% of youth who are from other countries and 42% who are American citizens, a new study conducted with support from the National Institute of Justice finds. Click here to read more.

### Two TAT staff present at National Judicial College Conference



In May, two TAT staff members presented at the National Judicial College (NJC) Conference in Reno, Nevada. Dylan Wecht, TAT Public Service Engagement specialist, spoke at a program titled *Managing Cases Involving Commercial Drivers Licenses*. This is the third time Wecht has been invited to present at this conference.

In this session, attended by 48 judges from 19 different states, as well as Puerto Rico and Guam, attendees learned the scope and trends of human trafficking, examined multiple case studies, reviewed human TAT's Dylan Wecht (far right) took part in an NJC podcast with (from left) Magistrate Judge Christopher Turner, NJC's Barbara Peck and CVSA's Jake Elovirta. trafficking laws and participated in group exercises reviewing a fictional human trafficking case and drafting a judgment.

Wecht included new information in this presentation, including demand reduction and how judges can make a difference, the difference between labor exploitation and labor trafficking, and misconceptions and biases they must dispel before hearing a human trafficking case or dealing with a human trafficking victim.

Two days later, Survivor-leader and TAT Training Specialist Liz Williamson presented virtually on how to create a trauma-informed and healing-centered environment in the courtroom for everyone from the bailiff, court clerk, attorneys, and judge, using best practices and personal insights from her story.

"Educating judges on human trafficking is extremely important," Wecht said, "because they hold an incredible amount of power in the legal process. Not only do judges hear cases that involve human trafficking or adjacent crimes, they're perfectly positioned to screen potential victims who come through their court for other reasons. They're also able to set precedent laws which could affect the prosecution of human trafficking crimes and create alternative programs through their position for victims."

Wecht stated participants were highly engaged and interested in implementing TAT materials and resources into their courts and respective jurisdictions.

Wecht also participated in the NJC's podcast, alongside Jake Elovirta, director of Enforcement Programs for the Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance, Magistrate Judge Christopher Turner of the Third Judicial District of Kansas and Barbara Peck, NJC director of Marketing and Communications.

### TAT expands presence in energy industry

The Williston Basin Petroleum Conference (WBPC) welcomed TAT to its biannual event in Bismarck, North Dakota in May. TAT Senior Director of Programs and Strategic Initiatives Annie Sovcik presented to an engaged crowd of more than 60 representatives from energy companies with operations in North Dakota and Saskatchewan, while TAT FDP Specialist Micah Larsen offered tours of TAT's Freedom Drivers Project (FDP). The WBPC donated the trade show space and Enbridge provided volunteers for the FDP. Sovcik and Larsen unveiled the new TAT energy materials and updated video. TAT appeared on two North Dakota radio shows and were featured in the local news.



TAT's Micah Larsen (right) chats with Doug Sparrow, Supreme Oilfield Services, Inc., at the table in the FDP displaying TAT's new energy materials.

"The Williston Basin Petroleum Conference is the largest gathering of energy companies operating in North Dakota and Saskatchewan," Sovcik shared. "Exhibiting the Freedom Drivers Project and presenting during the conference gave TAT an extraordinary platform to reach energy leaders in that region with our free human trafficking awareness resources. The



conference allowed us to connect with current partners to explore new opportunities together and to develop new relationships that will expand the reach and impact of TAT's energy initiative."

Annie Sovcik

She said they received positive feedback and interest at the event and that TAT's planning a Coalition Build in Dickinson, North Dakota in late October, and she has tentative invitations to speak to two oil and gas associations in the Rocky Mountain region and one company later this year.

Year to date, TAT has reached over 2,400 people at 12 energy industry events, and, in total, over 30,000 employees from 42 companies are registered as TAT trained.

# Combination Coalition Build and community event build awareness in Southern Arizona

Responding to a need identified by the Arizona Anti-Trafficking Network (AATN) and the Arizona Transit Association (AzTA) to target the transit/transportation sector in Southern Arizona, TAT held its third Coalition Build (CB) in the state, this time in Tucson at the Tucson Police Department.

The Tucson CB drew more than 70 professionals and highlighted the intersections between human trafficking and transit, as well as the importance of building partnerships between transit and law enforcement. The event was co-hosted with Love's Travel Stops and Country Stores, the Arizona Transit Association, the Arizona Department of Public Safety/Arizona Counter Terrorism Information Center, Arizona State University-Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research, and the Arizona Anti-Trafficking Network. TAT's Freedom Drivers Project (FDP) offered on-site tours to attendees.



In addition to her presentation at the Coalition Build, (Left to Right) Survivor-leader and TAT Training Specialist Kelley Alsobrook enjoyed time for good conversation with Becky Miller, executive director of the Arizona Transit Association.

"The TAT Southern Arizona Coalition Build successfully brought together multiple disciplines to learn how to identify and report human trafficking," commented Stacey Sutherland, TRUST program director at the AATN. "It's crucial for the community to dispel the myths surrounding human trafficking and to ensure that victims know they can seek help without fear or shame. No one person, agency or organization can do this work alone, and building partnerships and collaboration is vital to anti-trafficking work."

The Arizona human trafficking hotline/tipline is included on the TAT app, and hotline stickers were passed out at the CB.TAT has also recently co-branded awareness materials with the AATN and

AzTA to promote the hotline.



*This is one design of hotline stickers Coalition Build attendees received.* 

The following day, the FDP traveled down the road to help build awareness of human trafficking with the Indigenous population at the Love's Gila River Indian Reservation Truck Stop Community Outreach Event, hosted by Love's Travel Stops and Country Stores. Love's chose this location, because it's on the I-80 corridor from Mexico, located on the reservation and across from a large casino. The FDP hosted tours for drivers and local community, with TAT staff and volunteers from the AATN and hotline presenting on human trafficking and passing out wallet cards.

Following the events, TAT Training Specialist Louie Greek stopped at a convenience store/gas station on his way to the airport, was solicited by a trafficker and reported the man

attempting to sell a young woman for sex. "I have worked a lot of human trafficking investigations in my early career, but I have never seen such brazen solicitation at a gas station like that," Greek shared. "I hope the call I made enabled authorities to locate the girl and offer her help and resources."

TAT held CBs in Florence in 2015 and Phoenix in 2018.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 3 – InCompass Logistics FDP Event, Houston, TX June 3 – Boulder County, CO Human Trafficking Multi-Disciplinary Team guarterly meeting, virtual June 5 - Frito Lay/Pepsico Grand Opening (FDP), Plano, TX June 7 – Greater New Orleans Human Trafficking Task Force, New Orleans, LA June 14 – Grace Haven (victim service provider) Over the Edge Event, Columbus, OH June 18 – Day & Ross Facility (FDP), Cincinnati, OH June 19 – Oregon Pupil Transportation Association Annual Conference, Bend, OR June 20 - New Brunswick law enforcement training, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada June 24 – Texas Association for Pupil Transportation Annual Conference, Corpus Christi, TX June 25 – Day & Ross Facility (FDP), Calgary, Canada June 25 – Covenant Logistics Group webinar,

virtual

June 25-27 – AAMVA Region 2 Conference, New Orleans, LA

June 26 – Access Services Learning and Development Program Human Trafficking Awareness Training, Los Angeles, CA June 26-27 – UPS Facility (FDP), Calgary, Canada

June 30-July 2 – National Emergency Number Association Annual Conference, Orlando, FL



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