



# VANTAGE POINT

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ISSUE NO. 11

*April - June 2024*

# LETTER FROM ESTHER

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## *Dear TAT Friends,*

Have you ever thought about the people who've had a major influence in your life? Maybe their influence was through things they said, actions they took or the overall example of values, lifestyle ... the model they provided? I know we hear a lot these days about cultural influencers, people on social media, television or entertainment, who try to influence our choices for dress, food, politics, vacation spots or what have you, but I'm more interested in those you credit with helping you become the person you are today, who influenced your thought processes, values, major choices in life. Who are they and why did they carry weight with you?

Some influencers are negative ... they impact your life in ways that make you steer clear of anything they said, did or believed, because of the negative emotions, or even scars, they left you with. Their influence made you determined to be different.

Positive influencers, however, impact our lives for long-lasting good. The investments they make in us to teach or mentor us, show us the way forward, increase our capacity for thinking through things or reasoning, gaining insight, motivating us to action, inspiring us to live unselfishly and with great purpose ... those are the influencers who drive long-lasting change in us and in the world. Who are those people in your life?



In this issue of Vantage Point, the two people we spotlight each identify their parents as having had great influence on some of the choices they've made. From our vantage point, the results in their lives and the lives of those they've touched has made and continues to make a huge difference.

Here at TAT, we work to be effective in influencing people to join the fight against one of the greatest human rights abuses of our time – human trafficking. When they do, we know they leave an indelible impact on the lives of recovered survivors -- even if they never meet them -- and they become the embodiment of words and values like freedom, justice, mercy and love. That's the kind of influence the world needs in spades!



# IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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**Jake Elovirta**

*Director of Enforcement Programs,  
Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA)*

*Jake Elovirta spoke at the Operation Safe Driver Program meeting at the 2024 CVSA Workshop in Louisville, Kentucky.*

# JAKE ELOVIRTA

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Jake Elovirta credits his parents for exemplifying the importance of community service. “My first exposure to both trucking and being an emergency first responder was through them,” he explained. “In Western Massachusetts where I grew up, my father had a small excavation business before being hired as our town’s road superintendent. Then, while he was road superintendent, he received an appointment as a part-time municipal police officer with the town. Both of my parents were volunteer firefighters, and my mother was an EMT.”

So, it was kind of a natural transition for Elovirta, upon graduating from Norwich University’s Military College of Vermont (the birthplace of ROTC) with a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice, that he began a career in Vermont law enforcement at the Burlington Police Department. In his first decade, his varied assignments included patrol, sex assault first responder, airport operations, traffic safety, community policing, commercial vehicle enforcement and domestic violence investigations. But while there, he also attended the New England regional Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP) training academy to become the department’s only Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA-certified) Level I inspector. He said that enabled him to recognize his strength and interest in traffic safety.

In 1998, he became the first Chief of Safety for the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles, with a goal of utilizing “my experiences in community policing to help improve DMV’s outreach to Vermont’s commercial vehicle/motor carrier industry.”

His DMV role led to increased participation in CVSA programs, committees and events, which culminated in leadership positions, including Region I vice president and president, as well as chair of the Information Systems Committee. And both his DMV position and CVSA membership

assisted him “in helping the industry improve commercial motor vehicle safety in Vermont and through CVSA oversight. The ability to educate and collaborate with industry and the public provides better opportunities for improving safety than just enforcement alone.”

When Elovirta retired from Vermont DMV after 22 years, he was the colonel/director of the Enforcement and Safety Division and had accumulated 32 years in Vermont law enforcement. A man whose guiding principles in life have been purpose and trust -- and believing he still had more to give -- he joined the CVSA in



***Jake Elovirta (left) conferred with Capt Chris Barr of the Indiana State Police and CVSA Driver Traffic Enforcement Committee Chair at the 2022 CVSA Annual Conference in Rapid City, South Dakota.***

2021 as its new director of enforcement programs, giving him the opportunity to continue working to improve commercial motor vehicle safety at a national and international level. He shared, “Working with the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), National Sheriffs Association (NSA), American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA) and the Transport Research Board (TRB) has allowed me to highlight CVSA’s highway safety initiatives and create new opportunities to work together.”

Elovirta admits his knowledge of human trafficking was limited before connecting with TAT through a CVSA conference when he was still with Vermont DMV. But, after that initial introduction, he was ready to train his DMV staff. And, in his current position with CVSA, his knowledge base continues growing. “Over the past three and half years, working as the Human Trafficking Prevention Program liaison has really expanded my knowledge of the issue of human trafficking and how important it is to expand training and awareness to law enforcement and the

***Elovirta admits his knowledge of human trafficking was limited before connecting with TAT through a CVSA conference when he was still with Vermont DMV. But, after that initial introduction, he was ready to train his DMV staff. And, in his current position with CVSA, his knowledge base continues growing.***

public,” he stated. “Most recently, I’ve been learning of the development of labor trafficking within the ‘hot shot’ transportation community.”

He appreciates the collaboration TAT provides CVSA enforcement and industry membership with

information and training resources, including the work the two organizations did to develop a national digital public service announcement (PSA) campaign with CBS/Paramount+ through grant funding from the Federal Motor Carriers Safety Administration (FMCSA) that reached over 15 million viewers this year.

When discussing challenges to fighting human trafficking, Elovirta believes the continuing challenge remains raising awareness. “Once someone receives the initial information, the greater the chance that you have created another set of eyes watching out for human trafficking in their community or on the road,” he said. “But for law enforcement, there’s the additional challenge of incorporating human trafficking prevention training into their existing training curriculums. Often times, jurisdictions are already challenged with meeting existing training mandates and are limited as to what additional training can be incorporated.”

## **TAT’s Newest Dealership Partner**

Thanks to Bridgestone’s engagement, McCarthy Tire Service, the fifth largest independent tire dealer in the U.S., has become a TAT dealership partner. On their website, McCarthy pledges to amplify TAT’s message and support their training programs for truck drivers, educate their employees on the signs of human trafficking and use their 70+ tire stores as platforms to raise awareness about human trafficking through informational materials and customer outreach. They’re also placing decals on all their company vehicles featuring the TAT logo and the National Human Trafficking Hotline number and hosting the Freedom Drivers Project July 25.

# IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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Renee Amar

*President of the Louisiana Motor  
Transport Association (LMTA)*



# RENEE AMAR

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Often times, the lessons we learn in childhood shape our lives. For Renee Amar, they've helped shape her career as well.

Born to parents who ran a small business out of their home, Renee and her four siblings grew up working alongside their folks in the business in a variety of ways.

“This is where I first started learning about debits and credits, because I helped with bookkeeping and payroll,” she said. “But I also learned about the impact of the government on my dad’s business. I heard up close and personal about the difficulties my parents experienced from running that business out of our home. That has been the impetus for my interest in the intersection of government, business and policy.”

A resident of Louisiana for most of her life, Amar’s career has included a variety of roles with escalating responsibilities as she’s worked and advocated for the business community, including a couple decades as a legislative lobbyist. Almost four years ago, a bit “by happenstance,” she admitted, she assumed her present role as president of the Louisiana Motor Transport Association (LMTA).

A passionate advocate for her state -- *“The joy of living in Louisiana is the culture. We have the happiest and hardiest of people. We absolutely have the best food, great music and festivals. There is a love and giving spirit that emanates from our citizens you just don’t experience in other states.”* -- Amar’s guiding principles at work encapsulate some of that Louisiana spirit she describes. She seeks to assess people’s personalities as she interacts with them, so she can “meet them where they’re at” and treat them with the respect and individuality they desire. She also works to build alliances to navigate tricky issues and situations and listens to people’s concerns so they can be addressed.

***“I want to build the influence of the truckers, so it permeates every corner of the state of Louisiana. I strive to be their best advocate, ensuring their story is told and lawmakers understand their plight. Literally, these people are the backbone of the economy. As we always say, there’s nothing without trucking.”***

**-Renee Amar, President of the LMTA**

Her vision for the trucking industry drives her work as well. “I want to build the influence of the truckers, so it permeates every corner of the state of Louisiana,” she shared. “I strive to be their best advocate, ensuring their story is told and lawmakers understand their plight. Literally, these people are the backbone of the economy. As we always say, there’s nothing without trucking. And trucking also gives people the ability to move into the middle class, which, ultimately, should be the goal of any public policy initiative.”

Amar learned about TAT soon after she took over leadership of the LMTA, including that TAT provides training for CDL holders to recognize the red flags of trafficking. Until then, her knowledge of human trafficking was cursory. In the years since, she’s learned “how difficult it is to



*Renee Amar, president of the Louisiana Motor Transport Association (LMTA) (far right) is a frequent panel member and/or moderator in her present position.*

stamp out, but even bigger than that, that it takes each and every one of us to be fully aware of the issue and understand how to stop it. I didn't realize all the people involved in trying to prevent and eradicate human trafficking -- policy makers, district attorneys, law enforcement, truckers. It's truly all hands on-deck. It still keeps me awake at night that this is a form of trade and that there are humans who find this acceptable."

Kylla Lanier, TAT's deputy director and senior director of External Affairs, credits Amar with spearheading the CDL legislation bill requiring TAT training for first-time CDL holders that just passed the Louisiana Senate unanimously. "I will tell you," Lanier enthused, "that this was the smoothest bill passage I have ever been a part of, and that's because Renee talked to every CDL school and got their buy-in; she spoke to legislators on the House and Senate committees ahead of time. It was so easy, because she had done so much work; she even got the right legislator, Representative Schlegel, to sponsor the bill."

This year, Amar and the LMTA will co-host two Coalition Builds in Louisiana, ensuring trucking is well represented. "The fact that TAT has such a profound effect on people's lives and that education and action can save someone's life is motivating," she concluded. "I still have so much to learn, and TAT offers me the resources I need, so I can be the best advocate possible for stopping this horrible practice."



## NEW TAT-TRAINED TOTAL:

# 1,824,807

- The total number trained increased by **44,108** people since April 1, 2024.
- The total trained in Canada is **30,873**.



# ADDITIONAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## Events

- Day & Ross sponsored TAT at the Truck World 2024 show in Mississauga, Ontario, which resulted in many new connections as well as re-engagement with companies TAT has worked with in the past. The seven Day & Ross employees who volunteered at the TAT booth provided TAT with a number of important introductions.



*Heather Fry, TAT director of Industry Training (left front) worked TAT's booth with Day & Ross volunteers, including Roxana Donan (right front), Access Management coordinator, Russell Polack, vice president for U.S. Sales (left rear), and Marie Del Corvo, Digital Content specialist (right rear).*



**EDUCATE  
EQUIP  
EMPOWER  
MOBILIZE**



*Antoine Sadler, Walmart Road Team Captain and TAT Board Member (white shirt on right), spoke to many groups of people who toured the FDP during the event.*

- Walmart/Sam's Club hosted the Freedom Drivers Project (FDP) and Tribal Voices, one of their associate resource groups (ARG), at their headquarters in Bentonville, Arkansas. Walmart Road Team Captains Antoine Sadler, Robert Kelley, Kim Wilson and Manny Lopez volunteered 20 hours of service to the FDP, as 105 guests toured. Walmart wanted to do this event leading up to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women's (MMIW) Day, May 5, as part of their initiative to bring awareness to human trafficking and those who are vulnerable. Several of the guests who toured the FDP asked questions about human trafficking, including a woman who had been trafficked in the past. She shared her story with Sadler and Wilson, toured the trailer, and then walked out in tears, thanking TAT for what we were doing.

# ADDITIONAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (cont.)

- The Williston Basin Petroleum Conference (WBPC), the largest gathering of oil and gas companies operating in North Dakota and Saskatchewan, welcomed TAT to its biannual event in Bismarck, North Dakota in May. TAT Senior Director 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 the FDP. The WBPC donated the trade show space to TAT, and Enbridge provided volunteers. The TAT team made appearances on two North Dakota radio shows and were featured in the [local news](#).



*One of the media opportunities TAT had at the Williston Basin CB was for TAT Senior Director of Programs and Strategic Initiatives Annie Sovcik to talk with Scott Hennan of the *What's on Your Mind* radio show.*



*KCMO radio broadcasted live from the Sapp Bros. employee appreciation event directly outside the FDP doorway.*

- Sapp Bros. hosted the FDP in Harrisonville, Illinois to highlight their annual employee appreciation/human trafficking awareness campaign. As part of that campaign, they hung TAT posters at 42 locations, including travel centers, petroleum sites and corporate offices and displayed TAT's truck stop brochures; they added TAT's updated OTR (Over-The-Road) and Local Driver training to their LMS and launched training for all their employees. Additionally, they raised \$74,000 for TAT.



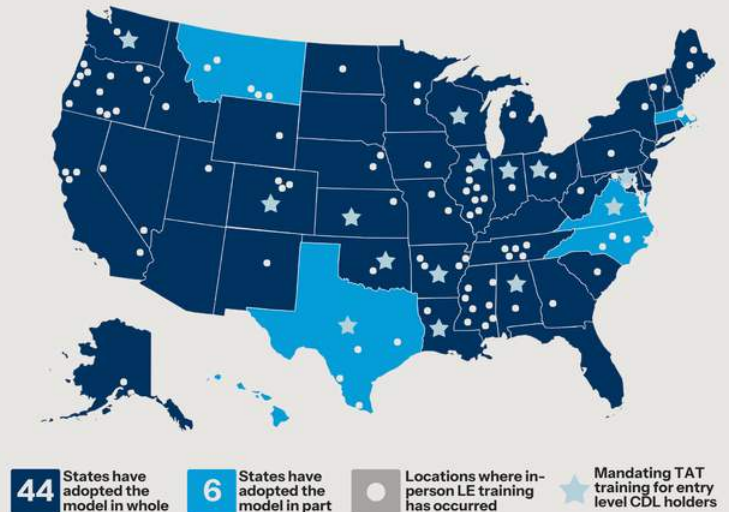
**EVERYDAY  
HEROES  
NEEDED!**

# ADDITIONAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (cont.)

## Milestones

- With Texas coming on board, all 50 states have now adopted TAT's Iowa MVE model! Forty-four states have adopted the model in full, and six have adopted in part. Created in 2013 by the Iowa DOT's Office of Motor Vehicle Enforcement (MVE), in conjunction with TAT, the Iowa MVE model activates law enforcement and government agencies to spread human trafficking awareness. There are six core elements state law enforcement must achieve for full implementation, and some states have opted to pursue that, while others have opted partial implementation.
- The Louisiana State Legislature has unanimously passed the requirement for first-time CDL drivers to receive TAT training prior to licensing. The bill was signed into law by Governor Landry in a public ceremony. Fifty-four congressmen signed on as co-authors of this bill in addition to Representative Schlegel, the bill's sponsor. The new law will go into effect in 2025, requiring all CDL/Tech schools that have driver training to include TAT's free training as part of their curriculum.

## IOWA MVE MODEL IMPLEMENTATION



- Mexico's Secretary of Labour has certified the Guardianes del Asfalto (GdelA) training for truck drivers, marking a major milestone for TAT's model replication in Mexico. CANACAR (Mexico's National Chamber of Freight Transport) will now host the training, and it will be among the different annual trainings trucking companies can give their drivers counting toward their annual ongoing education requirements. Kylla Lanier, TAT's deputy director and senior director of External Affairs, stated TAT will now begin the process of "introducing our Mexican counterparts to our trucking partners who have Mexican operations, with the goal of training their drivers and expanding the use of the GdelA training."



In January, Newfoundland and Labrador became the first province to implement all six steps of the Canadian Commercial Vehicle Enforcement (CVE) Model. Newfoundland continues to train all highway enforcement officers, stock all driver testing centers with TAT materials, lead awareness campaigns that target commercial trucking and bus/coach operators, implement TAT training into their entry level training for Class 1 drivers, display signage at their ferry terminals and on the ferries, and plan on training all new counter staff, work with dealerships, and update their driver handbook.

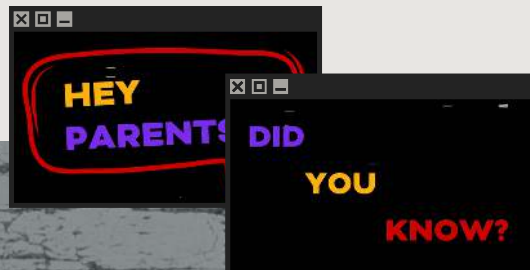
# OPPORTUNITIES



Need a SCORM version of TAT's training videos? Please contact TAT at [info@tatnonprofit.org](mailto:info@tatnonprofit.org). A SCORM version of the OTR (Over-The-Road) video and the updated course is available and has already been sent to several TAT partners. TAT now has the ability to create and send this much-requested SCORM file resource for inclusion on our partners' own internally managed LMS platforms. A SCORM version of all available courses will be available in Q3.



If you're looking for materials to share with youth about staying safe from human trafficking, including when using public transportation, TAT's Youth on Transportation (YOT) initiative has finalized a suite of materials, including videos, websites, poster designs, social media graphics, stickers, flyers and postcards. Check it out. For more information on YOT, contact [info@tatnonprofit.org](mailto:info@tatnonprofit.org).



# TAT SPONSORS

While TAT is extremely thankful to all of our supporters, we want to give special recognition to our Driving Force, North Star, Freedom Driver, Diamond+, Diamond, Platinum, Gold+, Gold and Silver+ sponsors.

## Driving Force



## North Star



## Freedom Driver



## Diamond+



## Diamond



Rental | Leasing | Logistics

# Platinum



# Gold+



# Gold



# Silver+





## TAT BOOTCAMP 2024

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*Photo: TAT staff gathered in Denver, Colorado in June for bi-annual strategic meetings.*

