

VANTAGE POINT

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LETTER FROM ESTHER

Dear TAT Friends,

Have you ever considered what motivates or drives you in life? For some people, it's power, money, prestige or control. For others, it's winning and being the best, happiness, avoidance of pain or fear, or getting people to like or follow them. For others, the drive is a tenet like justice, freedom or equality. Still others have simply never thought about it and have no idea what feeds their passion.

In this issue of Vantage Point, we spotlight two women who know exactly what drives them. And instead of a self-centered drive, their motivating forces are others-centered. They each want to help people, make a difference in lives, ensure people have everything they need to do and be their best and to also help others escape the clutches of human trafficking. And because they're focused, they're extremely productive, both in their careers and in their efforts for TAT.

Their words and actions inspire. They create ripples, or maybe even waves, in the lives of the people in their circles and influence them in right ways for right things. Here at TAT, we celebrate that. Fighting human trafficking necessitates a drive fueled by a passion that is others-centered. That's a difference maker!

We're trying to move people from being passive bystanders to active disruptors in the fight by giving them the resources, knowledge and training to spot human trafficking and effectively report it. Every person who is trained, and who is then helping to get others trained, becomes a critical link in the chain that eventually results in a survivor of human trafficking being recovered or a perpetrator being found and prosecuted. And the more links in that chain that crisscrosses our nation, our roads, our communities, our businesses and our homes, the fewer places traffickers can hide, and the more visible victims become. From our vantage point, that's worth fighting for!

We hope you'll enjoy this issue of Vantage Point, including some of TAT's highlights from this third quarter and information on our new [Shut Out Human Trafficking resources](#) available this month for everyone to use as you prepare for the international soccer matches coming to North America next year, as well as for other major sporting events already occurring.



During National Truck Drivers Appreciation Week, (L to R) Esther Goetsch, TAT executive director, and Kylla Lanier, deputy director and senior director of External Affairs, joined TAT staff in personally appreciating truckers at 13 truck stop locations in 11 states.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, likely belonging to Esther Goetsch.



DEBRA HAMLIN

Senior Manager of Customer Operations and
ERS (Emergency Roadside Service), Bridgestone

Not wanting to sound cliché, but liking the artistry of the metaphor, Deb Hamlin thinks of herself as a ripple creator on a pond ... “spreading the influence of ideas and possibilities, hopefully inspiring others to think differently or act boldly.” And that metaphor holds true and gathers energy when it comes to her Bridgestone work in partnership with TAT to engage others in the fight against human trafficking.

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“I can’t begin to tell you how many connections TAT has made with Bridgestone teammates and other partners that have resulted in making a difference,” she stated. “I had one person reach back out a year after we did an event together, and she shared the impact the connection had made on her and on her organization.”

Hamlin, who started her career in an environmental consulting capacity, never considered the transportation industry as an arena for her career. But when Bridgestone brought an environmental remediation project to the firm she worked for, and she began working with the Bridgestone team, she became captivated by the people and made the move. And after 28 years with Bridgestone -- 20 of those years on the retail side of the business and the past eight supporting the commercial side of the business -- that hasn’t changed. She’s still fascinated by the people working in transportation.

Hamlin transitioned to her current Bridgestone role of customer operations support and emergency roadside service (ERS) dispatch two months ago. “I thrive in a fast-paced environment that is constantly evolving,” she explained. “I also love to create processes to improve experience. This role fits those key qualities that are a part of my corporate DNA. No day is the same for me, which also helps. Probably the most challenging part is ensuring I remain neutral and don’t jump to conclusions before gathering the facts.”

Hamlin first heard about TAT around 2017 when she started working for Bridgestone’s Commercial Tire Division. In 2021, former Bridgestone executive and TAT Board of Directors member Chris Ripani asked her to assume a more active role in helping TAT expand to a Bridgestone enterprise initiative as opposed to just a Commercial Tire initiative. The plan was created and strategically pushed forward from there.



TAT Executive Director Esther Goetsch describes Hamlin as an innovative implementer, with a ton of energy. “Deb and Josh Holland (TAT’s Board Chairman and Vice President of Dealer Operations and Mobility Deployment for Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations) are the heart of what happens at Bridgestone with TAT,” she said. “If Josh or I have an idea, Deb is the person who tracks down the right person or people within Bridgestone or externally and gets it moving. She’s definitely an engine behind so much of what we do at Bridgestone. She alone has made so many introductions to TAT with dealerships, companies in Canada, the Indy500, etc.”

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While Hamlin's efforts on behalf of TAT are too numerous to list completely, a few include:

- She has made introductions for TAT to the top 10 dealerships this year, including Liberty Tire, Fountain Tire in Canada, and Breakthrough (a U.S. Venture Company).
- She has provided speaking opportunities for Goetsch to multiple stakeholder groups, including the Tire Industry Association in 2022 and again in 2025 at their annual conference in Puerto Rico, and to an SPP event through Breakthrough that led to more engagement on the shipping side of things.
- She is the current president of the Tire Industry Association and working to leverage that position for more exposure to TAT.
- She has driven Bridgestone Freedom Drivers Project (FDP) events every year towards engaging new dealership partners like McCarthy Tire.
- She has been involved in Bridgestone co-hosting a Coalition Build in Nashville and in Manitoba with Bridgestone Canada and is working on one with Haltec in Akron, Ohio with the Attorney General's office there.
- She has created a sustainability playbook for Bridgestone's dealer network and invited TAT to speak about labor trafficking.
- She was instrumental in Bridgestone's adoption of an anti-trafficking-in-persons policy across the enterprise reaching like 22k people!
- She has ensured that TAT training is part of orientation and is working on getting the corporate video added as well.

"Passion certainly fuels persistence, and, if there's one thing I am, it's persistent," Hamlin admitted. "What drives me is knowingly making a difference in a person's or peoples' lives. I'm incredibly proud of how Bridgestone teammates embrace this partnership and continue to show up to support it. TAT and its mission are a part of Bridgestone culture and DNA."

While Hamlin serves in leadership roles in multiple organizations and associations that align with her personal values and goals and her career roles at Bridgestone, she shared that she likes working the partnership with TAT "because like me, everyone I have met on the TAT team is open to turning ideas into action. You can tell that everyone within the TAT organization believes in the cause. Fighting human trafficking for me is about preserving human rights. When we treat people as a commodity, it undermines humanity at the highest level. I believe we can make a difference by educating one person ... essentially creating that ripple."

A transplanted Northerner now located in the heart of southern living in Nashville, Hamlin -- when she's not making ripples -- enjoys hiking, traveling throughout the U.S., and taking in the outdoors with her partner, Shelley, and their dog, Bear.

THIRD-QUARTER HIGHLIGHT

BUS INDUSTRY MOMENTUM

This quarter, bus partners registered over 2,575 new individuals as TAT Trained and provided refresh training to more than 1,300 individuals. Eleven new partners (two transit/motorcoach, nine school transportation) pledged to implement training.

In a prime example of systems change, in September, the National Congress on School Transportation (NCST) officially released the 2025 National School Transportation Specification and Procedures (NSTSP) manual, which now includes a resolution stating: "Training programs should be provided to all

transportation personnel on recognizing and reporting suspected or known human trafficking."

The NCST is comprised of official representatives from state departments of education, public safety, motor vehicles and police or other state agencies having state-wide responsibilities for the administration of student transportation. Every five years, they meet to update and adopt specifications and procedures recommendations for school buses and their operations nationwide.



NEW TAT NUMBERS

2,316,466

professionals trained

Since mid-July, the total number TAT Trained increased by 29,117 people to **2,316,466**. In Canada, the total increased by 878 to **38,489**. So far in 2025, there have been **6,031** downloads of the TAT app, **34 responses to our after-call survey** and 287 responses to our survey on the effectiveness of TAT training and materials.



JODI GODFREY

Senior Research Associate with the Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of Southern Florida

Jodi Godfrey's dad saw the fit before she did when he suggested she become an engineer. She blew him off, as her teenager's context for engineers was overall-wearing train drivers. But a few years later, after she lost her dad in a motorcycle accident, she recalled his words, did some research, and, in her words, "demoted myself from managing my local Domino's Pizza and went to school to become an engineer."

While working on her bachelor's and master's degrees in civil engineering at the University of South Florida (USF), she initially pictured herself as an engineer working for Disney, but once she took a class in transportation engineering, she was hooked. She found it logical, non-repetitive and exciting.

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THE SPOTLIGHT

Her favorite professor encouraged her to apply for an open position at the Center for Urban Transportation Research at USF, where she was hired as an undergraduate research assistant. After completing her master's degree, she was hired on as faculty and just celebrated her 10-year anniversary in May this year.

Self-describing her life's mission as being helpful, Godfrey says she's "always the person with an extra pen, the person with a Band Aid, the person with the charger you need, etc. I've grown my hair long since I was 18, and never dyed it, so I can donate it every few years to organizations that make wigs for kids. I want to be the reason someone smiles."

In her work, which is primarily transit industry research, this character quality of helpfulness is displayed in her love for problem solving. "I love to listen to people's needs and then propose solutions in an iterative manner until the proposed mitigations result in the most applicable and appropriate solution options. There are many political and environmental considerations that must be weighed in every potential solution. The challenges are endless and never repetitive, so I never get bored," she explained.

Godfrey first learned about human trafficking at a Transportation Research Board Workshop in 2015. A survivor presented, giving detailed specifics about how training professionals in the transportation industry could have helped her find a way "out of the life" earlier. As Godfrey listened, she recognized a tremendous opportunity to fill a gap that existed in the industry. She began researching and sharing with people everything she was learning related to human trafficking. She had no idea how prevalent human trafficking really was. "I was dumbfounded," she recalled.



TAT Director of Industry Engagement Lexi Higgins (left) and Godfrey took a selfie at the International Bus Rodeo this year.

She made a connection with TAT and Senior Director of Programs and Strategic Initiatives Annie Sovcik when she heard Sovcik present at a different event. Godfrey then began promoting the use of all TAT materials throughout the state of Florida through her activity in the Florida Transit Safety and Operations Network, a statewide network that gathered representatives from across the state for quarterly discussions about safety and operational topics. "I harped on the importance of requiring all front-line employees be trained to recognize human trafficking," she declared.

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In 2022, Godfrey worked with TAT to help inspire the creation of the Transit Reporting Protocol Template after she did research and surveying that indicated transit agencies didn't have an effective trafficking reporting protocol in place. She was also instrumental in helping to secure grant funding from the Florida DOT to create the template. Since then, she has presented solo and co-presented with TAT countless times at transit conferences and events across the country to promote TAT resources and, particularly, the protocol template.

Lexi Higgins, TAT's director of Industry Engagement for transit, motorcoach and school transportation, credits Godfrey with helping launch TAT's peer-to-peer learning sessions with the transit industry this year and co-facilitating the first session at the Florida Transit Safety and Operations Network conference in June. She added that Godfrey not only sits on the TAT Advisory Committee but is currently working as a researcher on a National Cooperative Research Program project to create a toolkit for state DOTs to support training, policy and collaboration related to combating human trafficking.

"Aside from the strategic and collaborative lens she brings to the work," Higgins opined, "her biggest asset is the heart she has for the mission. She believes in the work we're doing together, because she knows that even if it helps just one person, it's worth it; she goes above and beyond to spread the word and make a difference."

A native Floridian who loves a range of outdoor activities including challenging treetop ropes courses, Godfrey finds people to be the determining factor for enjoying her work in human trafficking. "I thoroughly enjoy the relationships I've fostered over the past decade of researching and working to combat human trafficking," she said. "The friendships are one of the strongest motivating factors when I'm struggling to face the world. Secondly, I'm positive that the work I'm doing, the number of transit operators I've trained, the policy template I helped develop ... all those things have undoubtedly already saved someone's life. At least one someone. And I know as I continue to impact transportation professionals and continue to spread all the information I learn like a contagion, I will continue to impact lives. Lives I will never meet. Lives that matter. I love knowing that the work I do saves lives."

Energetic, optimistic, driven to help, save lives and make people smile, Godfrey says she also lives for sunrises and sunsets. "You know the way the sky lights up with unfathomable, hypnotizing colors?" she enthused. "The best part about living near the coast is that I can drive to the beach to fully appreciate the sunset with the scent of salt in the air. It's the time of the day when I can just pause and appreciate the beauty that surrounds me. It's a reminder that even endings can be beautiful. Sunsets are soothing."



ADDITIONAL Q3 HIGHLIGHTS

Canadian Blood Services

Canadian Blood Services (CBS), which has trained approximately 200 couriers using TAT's local driver video, added a section about TAT in their sustainability report, shining a light on the employee who initiated their TAT involvement. The report points out that CBS now promotes TAT's educational resources and online training to all drivers and interested employees.



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A record crowd of over 1200 toured the FDP at the Chicago UPS CACH facility.



UPS Chicago 2025

More than 1200 UPS drivers and employees toured the Freedom Drivers Project (FDP) when the exhibit, along with TAT Mobile Exhibit Specialist Micah Larsen, spent the day at the UPS CACH facility in Chicago on Aug. 14. This is the largest number ever to tour the FDP at a partner facility. UPSers Carlos Huezo, Ryan Burton and Jim Alvarez, coordinators for the event, promoted it for several months internally through flyers and a short video they created on TAT, human trafficking statistics and information on the FDP. Additionally, they lined up numerous UPS volunteers for the event to talk to each person entering and exiting the exhibit, to cook and pass out food and to man the TAT resource and merchandise table with Larsen. Huezo, from the UPS Foundation, commented, "Truckers Against Trafficking transforms highways into lifelines, empowering drivers to be the eyes and ears that rescue lives and restore hope." While Alvarez, the UPS Comprehensive Health and Safety Process co-chair, emphasized, "Traffickers may reach farther than we can see, but together, we'll reach farther still to end their hold. We must prevail."

OPPORTUNITIES

Help us get the Driving Change Project (DCP) on the road

TAT created both the internal and external designs for its newest mobile exhibit, the Driving Change Project (DCP), and now has the final rendering for the trailer. TAT staff are working to secure the remaining \$116,000 needed to pay for the buildout. According to the design firm, ATS, the DCP should be completed sometime in December. If you're interested in helping TAT raise the money and would like to sponsor the DCP, please contact info@tatnonprofit.org.

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New resources to help prevent human trafficking during natural disasters

Due to the increased risk of human trafficking during and after natural disasters, TAT has developed resources for public and private sector partners to help them integrate human trafficking awareness, prevention and identification efforts into disaster preparedness and response plans. These include a Natural Disasters Awareness Plan for the public and private sectors, as well as two victim-centered posters. On Sept. 17, TAT presented virtually to human trafficking task force members, outlining the ways task forces can close loopholes that traffickers exploit to profit from individuals in the wake of natural disasters.



Check out [these resources](#) now to help prevent human trafficking during natural disasters.

Check out the anti-trafficking resources created by TAT for international soccer games and other sporting events

In preparation for the international soccer tournament coming to North America from May-July 2026, TAT launched a series of soccer-themed resources, including social media graphics/sample captions, posters, a “game plan” for the transportation industry, and a new webpage that points the public in the direction of TAT materials to help enhance their awareness about human trafficking during major sports events. See www.tatnonprofit.org/soccer and www.tatnonprofit.org/soccer-resources for the *Shut Out Human Trafficking* materials. TAT also sketched out a multi-phased distribution plan and tracking systems for staff to use during the next nine months.

In addition to research TAT has conducted on host cities for games and the corridor between them, staff have prepared a series of strategically timed communications to be sent to our partners in trucking, truck stop, bus, energy and the private sector, the Attorney Generals, law enforcement and human trafficking task forces in every state. Other resources available include:

- Targeted webinars for host cities, bus-related associations, state trucking associations with host cities in their states, and public sector employees, such as law enforcement and government agencies, located in or working in and around host cities
- Push notifications on the TAT app about international soccer matches during and before they kick off
- Colorful posters and social media graphics with sample captions, which can be downloaded as is or co-branded with your organization’s logo to prepare your employees and customers with the training they need
- TAT’s corporate training video, *You’ve Seen Us Before*



Be sure to take advantage of these resources so everyone you share them with is better prepared to possibly save a life in addition to enjoy the games.

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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.

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Ruan Transportation hosted the Freedom Drivers Project (FDP) and Director of Mobile Exhibits Brandy Belton at its Ankeny Operating Center on July 9. Pictured here are participants at the event touring the FDP.

(Photo credit: Ruan Transportation)