

Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: 3/21/17

Is there a local shelter for domestic minor trafficking victims?

In the last 4 years, Colorado organizations seeking to open shelters for female minor victims have faced many hardships. Larimer County witnessed the 2.5+ year ramp up and fundraising for a 24 month-residential treatment home called Amy's House (Kairos Youth Services), finally opening and then closing again in just a few months. Another NGO (Charis House) has been fundraising for a year to open a respite home on this same property. In the Denver area, Wildflower Ranch (Restore Innocence) also opened and closed quite quickly. Avanti House (Extended Hands of Hope) opened after 2+ years of fundraising. Sarah's Home (outside of Colorado Springs) operated as a group home for foster placements and had a few girls for a short time before they too were brought to a stop and have been on hold for over a year, pursuing different licensing.

Why the struggle?

Some would say that because many victims are involved in child welfare, the State has custodial decision of where to place them. A current philosophy in Colorado is that congregant care (a home with 4 or more unrelated "clients") is not the best option for traumatized children. If DHS is unwilling to place kids in the shelters, then they can only rely on private pay residents. This has been financially and logistically unrealistic. See: <http://afacetoreframe.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/CSU-Social-Work-DHS-Report-1.pdf>.

DHS prefers treatment foster care: foster homes trained to handle trauma and committed to hosting one child at a time. In Larimer County, SAFY (Specialized Alternatives for Families and Youth) is one such agency.

Is there anything happening to educate students in public schools?

Yes. Our organization is focused on youth prevention. We have been developing a network of relationships among teachers, administrators, counselors, school resource officers, and student leaders to reach as many youth as possible. We have five 50-minute curricula we developed: Middle School, Freshman Seminar: Global Rights, Sophomore: Local Reality, Junior: History Then and Now, and Senior Capstone: Change the World.

In Poudre School District, we have presented in Rocky Mountain, Fort Collins, Fossil Ridge, Poudre, Poudre Community Academy, and Polaris High Schools and Colorado Early Colleges Middle School. In Thompson School District, we have presented in Thompson Valley and Resurrection Christian High Schools.

Our goal is to incorporate our lesson plans into classroom curriculum requirements to ensure all students receive a basic prevention education around human trafficking.

Do the local police know about human trafficking? What are they doing?

Yes. Please see the history section on our CCAHT page. For years, two dedicated officers at FCPD and one committed Lieutenant at the Sheriff's office carried the banner in Larimer County. In 2016, with local FBI initiative and a new Captain at LPD, a Northern Colorado Human Trafficking Law Enforcement Working Group formed to work multi-jurisdiction cases.

Where does sex trafficking occur in Larimer County?

Contrary to popular belief, Mulberry Corridor is not the only place where sex is bought and sold. Today, wherever there is internet, there will be a sex industry. See this Soapbox: <http://www.coloradoan.com/story/opinion/2015/06/15/soapbox-kudos-fcps-working-end-sex-trafficking/71263380/>

Law enforcement use online sites where sex is sold to meet potential buyers, traffickers, and recover victims. They have trained local hotel managers to recognize signs of trafficking and receive many tips from them. In our county, they have a demand reduction strategy (targeting buyers) and work Asian massage parlors where sexual services are offered.

How can I help?

The best thing any concerned citizen can do is educate themselves and then those in their sphere of influence. Here are some recommendations:

- Watch Films and Documentaries. *Taken* is a Hollywood version of the classic kidnap stereotype. This is useful to watch because so many teens have seen it and it will probably come up so you'll need to comment on why it's a dangerous stereotype. *Rape for Profit* is decent, though portrays police as heroes, which is sometimes, but not always the case. *Tricked* is decent too, though portrays the very stereotypical "john" or buyer, which again is rarely the case.
- Read memoirs and various accounts of trafficking in the U.S. *Walking Prey: How America's Youth are Vulnerable to Sex Slavery* by Holly Austin Smith and *Somebody's Daughter: The Hidden Story of America's Prostituted Children and the Battle to Save Them* by Julian Sher are two of the best.
- Look up relevant websites to find current and local information. The National Human Trafficking Resource Center (traffickingresourcecenter.org) has a variety of great tools. Shared Hope International (sharedhope.org) issues annual state report cards to assess legislative movement. Walk Free Foundation (walkfreefoundation.org) produces an annual Global Slavery Index. And the State Department (state.gov) releases the annual "Trafficking in Persons Report."

Consider your sphere of influence. Where do work, play, or worship? What groups or clubs are you a part of? How about your kids? Any of these places could be venues for hosting a book club, screening a documentary, or facilitating a discussion around this topic. You don't have to have a content expert come in and train your people. YOU CAN DO IT.

We need educated community members to recognize signs of trafficking among youth, in hotels, or neighborhood massage businesses. We need an informed jury pool for the next trafficking case. We need people to step up to become host families, foster families, or even mentors for at-risk youth.