

MERCER COUNTY HUMAN TRAFFICKING COLLABORATIVE

NEWSLETTER

2024

JANUARY IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH



Visit the Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/mercercountyhumantraffickingcollaborative>

If you would like to be added to the Collaborative email listing to be notified of meetings and activities, contact: lolsen@merceraaware.org

What are the differences between Urban and Rural Human Trafficking?

Generally, media reports about human trafficking do not show many examples of rural human trafficking. There are differences between the urban experience, and what is real in rural communities like Mercer County.

- One of the biggest vulnerabilities of human trafficking in rural America involves geographical distances from those organizations that may be able to intervene on the behalf of people who are being trafficked. In big cities, typically, have larger police forces that provide more police presence.
- Big cities tend to have 'red light' areas. Rural communities do not.
- The lack of a police presence in rural areas, coupled with fewer witnesses to report suspicious activity, has led to more human trafficking cases in rural communities.
- In rural areas, it is difficult for victims to flee their captor. In cases where a victim is held in a home where human trafficking is conducted, there may be too great a distance for the victim to escape. In other circumstances, the trafficker may be a family member.
- Another vulnerability is that in rural areas, there are less employment opportunities. As a result, a person may feel forced into sex trafficking or forced labor to survive financially, or to help support the family.
- Rural areas also have fewer social services or medical providers trained to detect possible human trafficking conditions. A person ensnared in a trafficking condition would have limited opportunities for outside intervention.
- While crime rates may be low in some rural areas, this low crime rate can present a challenge in the detection of rural human trafficking victims. If ordinary citizens are not on the lookout for criminal activity within their communities, for instance, they could miss signs of human trafficking.
- Another challenge associated with rural areas is the stigma that may exist if someone comes forward about being a victim. Small towns typically have less anonymity than large cities.

...Helping the Hurting to Heal!

2024 Shine a Light Speaker series 6pm
Collage Coffee
221 South Broad St. Grove City

February 6
Darlene Santuzzi
Author of Coming Out Of Darkness

March 5
Ben Zimmer and Ginger VanDerhort
Hope Center ministries

April 2
Dan Ritenour
Christian Assistance Network

May 7
Robin Ace, Abba Counseling Center
Grooming, how to talk to kids, gender dysphoria

June 4
Lizette Olsen
Executive Director of Aware, Inc

What can I do?

1. **Learn the indicators of trafficking.**
2. **Join local efforts to combat trafficking**
3. **Meet or write to your elected officials about your concerns about trafficking.**
4. **Speak to local police and DA about efforts to combat trafficking**
5. **Learn about online efforts to reach children and teens.**

TOP 5 HUMAN TRAFFICKING RECRUITMENT TACTICS

1. **Intimate partner/marriage proposal**
2. **Family**
3. **Job offer/advertisement**
4. **Posing as a benefactor**
5. **False promise/fraud**

Role of the Church

- **Pray** for the ability to recognize human trafficking. Assess and **Act** on the situation.
- **Report** concerns to law enforcement or the State Police. Law enforcement has the power to investigate and arrest.
- Conduct **congregant education** about human trafficking. Learn the signs.
- Partner with other faith institutions and groups to educate and engage the community.
- **Be vigilant** in your community. Trafficking occurs in **every** zip code.
- Churches and other faith institutions have a powerful role to **denounce human trafficking** and advocate for trafficking survivors.

For more information visit

<https://adlaudatosi.org/religion-against-human-trafficking-religious-leadersimportant-role/>

Resources

National

- National Human Trafficking Hotline 1-888-373-7888
- Polaris Project polarisproject.org
- Homeland Security The Blue Campaign <https://www.dhs.gov/blue-campaign>

Faith

- Faith Alliance Against Slavery and Trafficking (FAST) <https://faastinternational.org/>

Pennsylvania

- Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency www.pccd.pa.gov

- Pennsylvania State Police-Mercer County **724-662-6162**

Mercer County

- AWARE www.merceraware.org **888-981-1457 24/7**
- Child Advocacy Center of Mercer County **724-662-1550**