Why Should We Care About Juvenile Sex Trafficking?

League of Women Voters Minneapolis
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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS MINNEAPOLIS ACTS

LWVMpls members voted to study sex trafficking during Program Planning and at the Annual Meeting in 2012. Members used a monthly meeting in the spring of 2013 to begin examining the topic and where LWVMpls could make an impact. Several other groups such as the Minnesota Women’s Foundation through their Minnesota Girls Are Not for Sale Campaign, were already raising awareness. What did LWVMpls bring to the table? Our long history of studying issues and taking action would serve to bring a new perspective to the issue. This report follows up on the activities LWVMpls chose to shed light on sex trafficking and the partners consulted about what we can all do next.

In the fall of 2013, LWVMpls partnered with the The Woman’s Club of Minneapolis and the Advocates for Human Rights presented a public forum entitled Sex Trafficking, Why Should I Care? The forum was moderated by the host of Morning Edition (MPR) and co-host of Almanac (TPT) Cathy Wurzer. The presenters were:

- **Suzanne Koeplinger**, Executive Director, Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center.
- **Joy Friedman**, Breaking Free. Primary Liaison between Breaking Free and the St. Paul Police/Vice Unit and FBI
- **Sgt. Grant Snyder**, Minneapolis Police Department. Lead investigator, human and sex trafficking cases, emphasizing juvenile sexual exploitation. Member, Minnesota Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force
- **Mark Kappelhoff**, Professor of Clinical Law, University of Minnesota Law School. Special Assistant, United States Attorney’s Office, to work with the FBI to investigate and prosecute human trafficking cases throughout Minnesota
- **Cordelia Anderson**, Sensibilities Prevention Services. Board Member, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; founding president, National Coalition to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

A second forum was held October 25 2013 in partnership with the Wayman AME Church. Kristin R Lauterbach’s film *Flesh* a documentary about the sex trade was shown. The reactor panel for this event was:

- **Kris Arneson**, Deputy Chief of the Patrol Division Minneapolis Police Department
- **Senator Bobby Joe Champion**, Attorney and District 59 State Senator
- **Pastor Alika Galloway**, Kwanzaa Community Church
- **Brenda Johnson**, Transition Specialist Stadium View School (serving offenders up to age 18)
- **Amy Stetzel**, Principal Aide to County Commissioner Gail Dorfman

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**LWV**

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of juvenile sex trafficking is foul, hidden and stigmatized. It does not easily fit within our ideas of who we are as a city, state and country. Too often we look for an easy answer for who is to blame. In the game of placing the ‘blame,’ if we believe the problem is rooted in a third-party, victimizing youth and selling them for sex in order to make a profit, then the problem is traffickers. If we believe the source of trafficking is the demand for sex with juveniles, it becomes a problem of purchasers. If we see sex trafficking as caused by poverty, then it is the problem of people living in poverty. In our search for blame, it makes it hard for the broader society to see sex trafficking as its problem. Therefore, as a society we do not easily “own” it and it becomes invisible; it is someone else’s problem.

Juvenile sex trafficking is a very dangerous business for people directly involved in it. The business uses violence, force, and emotional manipulation; it is associated with drug use and drug dealing; it is full of shame; and it is mostly underground. Juvenile sex trafficking thrives in this environment because, as a society, we turn away, blame the victims, and see these youth as dispensable. Our apathy is precisely why the buyers, facilitators, and traffickers are able to victimize our young people.

This document will first describe the market structure of the business of juvenile sex trafficking. Second, it will discuss the economic reasons why we should invest resources in prevention models. Third, it describes the environmental and personal characteristics that make the youth vulnerable to being sex trafficked. Finally, it concludes by listing reasons why we should care about sex trafficking of juveniles in our community.
Juvenile sex trafficking, also referred to as Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST), is a business of selling sex acts with juveniles. Actors in this business engage in it with a clear motive of exchanging money (or drugs, food, a place to stay, or anything of value) for sex. Like any other goods or service market, there is a demand side, a distribution system, and a supply side of the business. The demand side is customers, driven by the desire to have a sexual encounter with a young person (or a young person who is mistaken for an adult). The ‘goods or services’ supplied are the youth who are exploited by selling their bodies for a profit. The traffickers form the market organizations that make money by facilitating the supply.

The purchasers are not a homogeneous group, they represent all ages (from 18 years old to 75 years old), races, social classes, and are predominantly men (Ricardo & Barker, 2008). Purchasers of sex represent all ethnicities; men in a particular area may resemble the demographics of that area (Monto, 2004). Depending on financial resources, personal preferences and willingness/ability to take the risk of visibility, purchasers make a decision of how and where they choose to purchase a youth. The venues purchasers use include online ads, street-based strolls, promotion by a friend or acquaintance, bars, strip clubs, cabs and hotels.

The supply of victims is made up of young people perceived to be vulnerable primarily for their youth and trusting nature. In addition, environmental factors such as poverty, chemical dependency, homelessness, history of abuse, lack of resources or support systems, and lack of legal immigration status make victims easier targets to be coerced into sex work. These youth are approached and recruited at their homes, in juvenile facilities, public places, schools, shelters and group homes.

The distribution, managed by the traffickers, is a critical link in the sex industry that connects victims to purchasers. They see a business opportunity where there are men willing to purchase sex with youth (demand) and a group of youth vulnerable and desperate enough to be forced or persuaded to sell their body for sex (supply). Traffickers control the sourcing and distribution of supply by identifying vulnerable youth, persuading/forcing them to sell sex for money, controlling them, advertising them in the right places and selling them to willing customers (Williamson & Cluse-Tolar, 2002).

Traffickers are masters of deceiving the youth into exploitation because they target youth where they are – schools, malls, parks, public libraries, shelters and group homes and attend to any need the young victim might yearn for. For example, if the young person needs parental attention, the trafficker acts like a parent. If the young person needs a place to sleep, they provide housing. If the young person needs love and affection, they are the boyfriend, their best friend and the only one who “understands” them (L. A. Smith & Snow, 2009).

These strategies create dependency and a false sense of familial bonding in the victims towards traffickers. Traffickers can play different roles. The role of the pimp is to work a relationship with a youth and manipulate them; or to physically kidnap and sell them. Sometimes trafficking is facilitated by friends and peers who introduce their friends (or recruit them) to online advertising, pimps and others. Other facilitators are cab drivers, bartenders, hotel workers or anyone else who helps to connect buyers to a victim.

Victims are showcased and advertised from many venues where the purchasers can approach them. A study, Garden of Truth, describes the “systems of prostitution” to include “exchange of sex acts for food and shelter and other needs (also called survival sex); outcall/escort/ cell phone; Internet advertised prostitution; massage parlors; pornography of children and adults; strip club prostitution; sauna-or nail parlor-based prostitution; live sex shows; street prostitution; peep shows; phone sex; international and domestic trafficking; mail order bride or servile marriages; and prostitution tourism.” (Farley, Matthews, Deer, & Lopez, 2011) Street corners, strolls, and designated areas of brothels are some of the oldest venues and the most visible ones. Word of mouth in private circles has comparatively low visibility. Print media like newspapers and flyers also serve as a popular advertisement venue. Nonetheless, the Internet is the most common and preferred venue used for selling and purchasing.
The Internet and other technological advancements have opened an avenue to commercial sexual exploitation previously unattainable by most people. Individuals use websites to advertise, schedule, and purchase sex with minors. Traffickers with big or small operations depend on Internet-based advertising. Posting an advertisement on a website like Backpage.com requires very little money and minimal knowledge of technology. The traffickers take pictures of their victims and upload them using their phones or computers. The ad contains a phone number that may belong to the trafficker or the victim. Once the advertisement is uploaded and a room is rented, the business is on. Smartphones also allow traffickers to expand their clientele and use the same avenues to check on victims. The Department of Justice has identified web-based avenues of sex trafficking as a growing threat (The United States Department of Justice, 2013).

WE ALL PAY FOR JUVENILE SEX TRAFFICKING

Purchasers pay for sex directly with money or in-kind payments, but we, as a society, pay for sex trafficking through increased public spending, reduced income tax revenues, and lost human capital. Even though we may regard sex trafficking as a private matter, as an immoral activity, or as irrelevant until it happens close to home – we all pay for it.

Sex trafficking happens in our state, our city and our communities. A 2010 report on Human Trafficking in Minnesota prepared for the Minnesota Legislature by the Minnesota Office of Justice Programs and the Minnesota Statistical Analysis Center stated that over a three-year period, service providers identified 731 victims of sex trafficking. The same report also stated that in 2009, approximately 300 individuals were convicted under prostitution-related charges. In addition, as part of a nationwide FBI operation over a 3-week period in July 2013, the Minneapolis Police Department arrested 53 purchasers within its jurisdiction, which was more than any other agency anywhere in the U.S. (PRNewswire, 2013).

Public service agencies such as law enforcement agencies, healthcare providers, service providers, and other first responders encounter DMST (Rittenberry, 2010). The harm caused to youth because of their engagement in sex trade results in increased use of public services such as treatment for drug and alcohol addictions, criminal justice and health systems, income assistance and housing support.

In 2012, a cost-benefit study was commissioned by the Minnesota Indian Women’s Resource Center and conducted by researchers from the University of Minnesota and Indiana State University. The study finds that public funds paying for the harm caused by DMST will spend $34 less for every $1 spent on prevention models. Taxpayer dollars pay for issues of public health such as violence, pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, chemical dependency and other mental health problems; law enforcement such as arrests, court proceedings, and corrections, including probation; and for social welfare programs such as child protection, medical assistance, and income support (Martin, Lotspeich, & Stark, 2012).

With the help of existing research, the cost-benefit study establishes that some harm in the life of vulnerable youth is intensified with exposure to sex trafficking. Violence is a common practice against women who trade sex. Trading sex is a high-risk behavior that increases the likelihood of contracting sexually transmitted infections. Mental health issues also have a direct correlation with DMST as runaway youth and victims of child sexual abuse experience much higher rates of mental health problems. In addition, if the mental health issue is coupled with issues of substance abuse, the treatment is more comprehensive and expensive, increasing the burden on the state budget.

Similarly, law enforcement costs related to the arrest, trial and corrections for prostitution charges are borne by the average citizen. When the criminal justice system identified prostituted minors as ‘criminals,’ it allowed traffickers and purchasers to avoid incarceration.
by being invisible. They continued exploiting more victims, the cycle of victimization continued and law enforcement continued incurring costs for arrest, trial and corrections. With changes in the law, juvenile victims are not now charged for prostitution in Minnesota. Instead, traffickers and purchasers will be prosecuted, which, in long run, will reduce law enforcement spending (Martin, et al., 2012; “No wrong door,” 2013).

The burden on social welfare programs also increases as more and more victims get exposed to sex trade. Many adolescent girls in sex work are mothers of young children. Increased rates of pregnancy have ramifications in the child welfare system because costs associated with pregnancy are high and access to prenatal care is poor. Public intervention in the interest of child protection will cost government in foster care and adoption programs (Martin, et al., 2012).

In addition to causing the state to spend money on public services, the sex trafficking industry also affects the public budget by reducing revenues. The financial transactions are underground and, therefore, not in the purview of income tax or any other taxes. Along the same lines, earnings in legitimate employment during the victims’ employable years will not contribute to the mainstream economy and will impact the overall stability and quality of life of the victim. Therefore, diminished earnings also impose an increased need for government-funded income support as Social Security, Medicare or pension funds don’t exist for them (Martin, et al., 2012).

**SEX TRAFFICKING IS A SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUE**

A number of economic, social and cultural factors create push and pull environments that result in forming both the supply and distribution side of the sex industry (United Nations Office on Drug and Crime, 2012). *Push* factors are described as external environments and circumstances that push people into the sex industry. Those factors include: poverty; economic and social discrimination based on race and ethnicity; homelessness; lack of comprehensive immigration policies; lack of viable and good education; and lack of healthy social and family networks. *Pull* factors are factors of the industry that attract the youth into it. Such factors include money, power; the promise of a better future, the false pretenses of love and security, and the industry presenting itself as a viable resource. Children born into or exposed to multiple push and pull factors are constantly navigating these forces to the best of their ability based on their understanding of their world / reality.

**Sex Trafficking is Rooted in Poverty**

Research shows a strong relationship between children’s socioeconomic status and their vulnerability to exploitation. Poverty, a strong push factor, plays an important role in exploitation by creating the scarcity of basic needs such as food, shelter, water and security (Bang, Baker, Carpinteri & Van Hasselt, 2014). Poverty is not only the lack of income. People who live in poverty receive poor access to healthcare, food, housing, and resources. They often live lives characterized by family instability, poor education, political invisibility, and unemployment (Sen, 2001). It is poverty and its consequences that make these children the most vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

Children may be coerced, manipulated, forced, kidnapped and drugged into sex work, but it is never their choice (Bang et al., 2014). Sex work is a direct result of the lack of options. The lack of options for legitimate opportunities to succeed in mainstream society may lead youth to believe sex work is a viable option for financially supporting themselves (Rosen & Venkatesh, 2008). Sex work may seem as a viable option because:

- survival sex, the exchange of sexual favors for basic needs such as food or shelter, is often the last resource for homeless youth with no resources or support;
- sex work is the only option since it’s what people around them do, it’s part of their environment; and

1Race and ethnicity, in itself, is not a risk factor. Rather, racism, structural racism, and economic and social discrimination shape vulnerability for youth of color.
for impoverished youth, sex work can provide a sense of autonomy and security that an abusive or neglectful home could not provide (Bang et al., 2014)

Rosen and Venkatesh define the sex industry as a constituent part of the overall low-wage economy and as an employment solution for the urban poor. They find in the struggle to “make ends meet,” with limited resources and job opportunities, that sex work is both a viable option for income generation and is preferable to other opportunities such as in the fast-food industry. Therefore, sex trafficking can be seen as an outcome of economic, social and cultural problems, making youth victims of the circumstances as well as of their perpetrators (Rosen et al., 2008).

Sex Trafficking Feeds on Racial marginalization

Race and ethnicity play a critical role in determining who is more vulnerable and susceptible to being sex trafficked. The consequences of racism and sexism have shaped the experience of women of color in Minnesota. A 2007 study of women on probation for prostitution in Minneapolis “found that American Indian women accounted for 24% of the probationers, while African-American women accounted for over 39%.” There is an overrepresentation of women of color in sex trafficking as “these groups respectively represent only 2.2% and 18% of the Minneapolis population” (Martin and Rudd, 2007).

It is not a coincidence that race and poverty are interrelated. Minorities not only face higher percentages of poverty and homelessness, but the mere color of their skin positions them at a disadvantage because of the discrimination in finding employment, housing, and pursuing their education (Holger-Ambrose, Langmade, Edinburgh, & Saewyc, 2013). This discrimination, in turn, increases proximity of the youth to gangs and pimps who recruit them for sex work and other illegal activities (Holger-Ambrose et al., 2013). In addition, pornography, prostitution, and trafficking are racialized. Farley observes that women in prostitution are purchased for their appearance, including skin color and characteristics based on ethnic stereotyping, driven by purchasers’ demand for “something different” (Farley, 2006).

Native American Women and Girls

Native American women and children “are among the most economically, socially, and politically disenfranchised groups in the United States (M Farley et al., 2011).” Forced marriages to other tribes and forced attendance of Native children to Christian schools (boarding schools) are cited in the study, Garden of Truth, as the origins of historical trauma in the Native community. Boarding schools were not only used to alienate American Indians from their language and culture, but to inflict brutal physical and sexual abuse on them. These abuses were direct contributors to bringing sexual violence into the community as these victims later became perpetrators themselves (M Farley et al., 2011). An Amnesty International report cited that one in three American Indian women will be

Entrepreneurial Aspects of Sex Trafficking

The traffickers may be products of the same systemic inequalities as victims, such as poverty, child abuse and/or homelessness (Smith & Christou, 2009.) Smith and Christou offer us some insight into the contextual / cultural settings of the traffickers. Many young men who become traffickers witness the success of members of their community who are traffickers, con-men or gangsters. On the other hand, institutions such as education, welfare, law enforcement, and even private organizations see them as future criminals, setting them up for failure in the mainstream economy. As a result, traffickers have limited choices and opportunities for legitimate employment (Smith et al., 2009). Legitimate means for achieving success are inadequate but illegal avenues to prosperity exist, such as prostitution, gambling and illegal drugs (Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, to realize the “dream of material success and being your own boss,” criminal opportunities often serve as pull factors towards the business of sex trafficking.

Sex trafficking can be seen as an outcome of economic, social and cultural problems, making youth victims of the circumstances as well as of their perpetrators (Rosen et al., 2008).
raped during her lifetime, this ratio declines to one in five women for all women in the U.S. (M. Farley et al., 2011).

The Garden of Truth study interviewed 105 Native women who had been prostituted and found about half of the women met the legal definition of sex trafficking as it pertains to adults [Please refer to Appendix I for definitions]. Statistics uncovered by the study are startling (Farley et al., 2011):

• 86% of the interviewees had no knowledge of what they were getting into when they began prostituting. 48% had been used by more than 200 sex buyers and 16% had been used by at least 900 sex buyers during their involvement in sex trafficking.

• 84% women reported to having been physically assaulted in prostitution.

• 72% suffered traumatic brain injuries in prostitution.

• 79% had been sexually abused as children by an average of four perpetrators. More than two-thirds had family members who had attended boarding schools.

• 92% had been raped.

• 98% were currently or previously homeless

American Indians are significantly overrepresented in the homeless population in Minnesota (Koepplinger, 2009; Wilder Research, 2010; Farley et al., 2011). Even though Native American adults constitute only 1% and Native youth 2% of the general population, they constitute 11% of homeless adults and 20% of homeless youth (Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless, 2008). Housing instability at the reservations forces Native women to migrate to urban areas, increasing their vulnerability to be trafficked – housing is a priority need for prostituted women. When state and private institutions fail to offer women and children shelter, traffickers are quick to provide housing. (Farley et al., 2011).

**African American Women and Girls**

Vednita Carter, founder of Breaking Free, describes how African American women have internalized sexual exploitation through the long history dating back to slavery. Women were brought to this country against their will and sold to farms as goods. Their femininity was exploited by the master or overseer by raping them or using them to “breed” more slaves. Their daughters were raped and assaulted or sold to brothels (Whisnant & Stark, 2007).

According to Carter, the generational abuse by white men, as masters and owners before to purchasers today, has been internalized by grandmother to mother to daughter and is seen as inevitable. This systemic abuse, degradation, racism and exploitation, has shaped how African American women think about themselves and how they see their role/place in society.

A 2010 community-based study of adults involved in sex trading found several parallels of the experiences of Native women in the experiences of African American women in North Minneapolis (Martin, 2010):

• The majority of participants in the study were African-American (82%) women (87%) those with children (76%).

• 53% of participants reported first trading or selling sex before the age of eighteen; the average age was 13.

• 90% were unemployed in legal employment at the time of the survey.

• 84% had been victims of a major violence incident.

• Sex trafficking feeds on gender-based bias.
Sex Trafficking Has a Gender-Based Bias

Sex trafficking and prostitution are gender issues (Ricardo & Barker, 2008). Society defines men as strong, tough, competitive and in control, and women as care giving, compassionate, passive and to be controlled. The social norms constructed around each gender definition inherently create unequal power dynamics between men and women, promoting violence and discrimination. By portraying men as violent and heroes for using force, society tends to recognize this masculinity as a cultural norm (Katz, 2000).

Sexual exploitation, which includes trafficking and prostitution, disproportionally includes men and boys as the perpetrators, and women and girls as the victims (Ricardo & Barker, 2008). Men and boys are raised to be strong, tough and in control, especially “in their intimate and sexual relationships (Ricardo et al., 2008).” For example, once a boy comes “of age,” sexual experience becomes the boy’s initiation to manhood. This initiation is perceived by other men, and our societal norms, as an accomplishment rather than intimacy (Ricardo et al., 2008). Linking manhood to sexual pleasure establishes gender roles and privileges men exert over women by defining women as submissive, desirable, and attainable for men’s pleasure and satisfaction (Nikolic-Ristanovic, 2003; Ricardo et al., 2008).

Forceful sexuality continues to be praised as normal and natural for men, while a restrained and reserved sexuality is normalized for women. In many areas of the world and in different cultural contexts, women’s and girls’ sexuality is controlled by “placing a premium on girls’ virginity, basing family honor on the sexual control of daughters and wives, exacting severe punishment on women for adultery, preventing equal access to divorce, and segregating girls and women from boys and men” (Ricardo et al., 2008). Globally, we use women’s bodies to advertise consumer products and services and in the fashion industry we use younger and younger girls to model as adult women “sexualizing young femininity” (Ricardo et al., 2008). This objectification reinforces the particular standards of what men and women find attractive in women’s bodies (Ricardo et al., 2008). In some areas around the world, being a woman or a girl may be the single characteristic needed to be chosen for prostitution. Factors such as sex discrimination, poverty, race, abandonment, sexual and verbal abuse, poor or no education, and low-wage jobs push and pull women into sex work (Farley, 2006).

MEN IN OUR COMMUNITY ARE PURCHASING SEX

Demand is one of the strongest driving forces of the sex industry. As long as demand for a product is strong, the industry develops itself, seeking out supply and distribution to satisfy the needs of demand. In the case of juvenile sex trafficking, demand is any adult person seeking to have sex with a minor in exchange for money, food and/or shelter. The majority of demand is described as men purchasing girls, but there are also men and women purchasing boys and LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning) youth. There is a wide range of venues for purchasing sex (online, street-based, bars, strip clubs, parties, etc.), and an equally wide range of men who purchase sex in these different venues.

Men who purchase sex are not a homogeneous group. They represent all ages, nationalities, races and social classes (Monto & Milrod, 2013; Ricardo et al., 2008). The Garden of Truth, a study about prostitution and trafficking of Native women in Minnesota, asked women about the ethnicity of their sex purchasers. The study found the most common ethnicity for purchasers was White/European American followed by African-American, then by Latinos, Native American and Asian (Farley et al., 2011).

A recent study of demand states in each metropolitan area there is, on average, one out of 20 males over the age of 18 soliciting online sex advertisements. The findings ranged from one in every five males in Houston, TX, to one in every 166 males in San Francisco. The city of Minneapolis falls in the average range, where one out of every 20 males over the age of 18 is estimated to be looking to purchase sex online. (Roe-Sepowitz, Hickle, & Gallagher, 2013)

2The research tends to focus on either online venues or men arrested by police in “sting” operations. In addition, there has been little research on men who specifically seek to purchase (or coerce) sex from juveniles.
Monto and Milrod (2013) analyzed the different studies on demand and argued that recent attention to sex trafficking categorizes the purchase of sex as “ordinary” or “peculiar.” Ordinary, means prostitution seeking is viewed as widespread and normalized; an “ordinary aspect of masculine sexual behavior.” Peculiar, means men who seek prostitution present certain perversions, behaviors or psychological impairments. Monto and Milrod find that prostitution in the U.S. is relatively uncommon and believe it is not a conventional aspect of masculinity. They conclude that only 14% of men over the age of 18 reported ever paying for sex and only 1% reported having paid for it in the past year. While acknowledging that 1% of the adult male population is a large number of customers, the low percentage indicates prostitution does not necessarily become a pattern for men who have purchased sex.

However, Monto and Milrod also analyzed men arrested as purchasers of prostitutes and found these men are not particularly different from non-customers. They are only slightly less likely to be married, slightly more likely to be working full-time, slightly more sexually liberal and slightly less likely to be white. In addition, purchasers who had been arrested were not necessarily regular purchasers and many had less experience in seeking prostitutes. These men are generally arrested in police stings where women officers pose as prostitutes and these men offer to pay them for sex. In contrast, experienced customers are not likely to “fall for” the trap as they are more likely to know providers and less likely to make errors in negotiation that may lead to their arrest. Monto and Milrod conclude that the current law enforcement strategies to reduce demand are much more likely to arrest men who are less experienced in paying for sex, resulting in the most active and experienced customers remaining largely untouched.

Monto and Milrod also analyzed a subset of highly active customers, who refer to themselves as “hobbyists,” and found them to be substantially different from non-customers. The hobbyists tend to have high incomes, high socioeconomic standard and high levels of education. Their ability to pay up to $1,000 per hour and have sex indoors highly protects them from being caught by law enforcement. In fact, exposure to arrest and participation in “diversionary practices such as john schools” is minuscule for active customers. On the other hand, men who purchase sex on the street are more likely to have fewer social and financial resources. Monto and Milrod argue that the ethnicities of arrested customers tend to reflect the areas where law enforcement targets their stings and these areas tend to be representative of marginalized communities.

In conclusion, sex trafficking is a secretive underground activity that makes it difficult to target its most dangerous and active customers. If there are no buyers seeking to purchase sexual services, the sex work industry would cease to be a profitable (L. A. Smith et al., 2009). In addition, while focusing on demand we need to be mindful of purchasers as predators committing crimes of opportunity such as survival sex. Runaway and homeless children are at extremely high risk of using survival sex in exchange for basic needs to survive, such as shelter, food, water or clothing. Any individual who pays for sex with a minor, exercising control over their vulnerabilities to secure a sex act, commits a crime (L. A. Smith et al., 2009).
fewer economic and social resources available, possess genuine curiosity and yearn for a sense of belonging (L. A. Smith et al., 2009). Vulnerable or “at-risk” youth confront additional challenges such as family struggles or abandonment and obstacles finding secure work (Congressional Research Service Report on Vulnerable Youth, 2012).

The 2010 study, Meaningful Differences by Lauren Martin et al., compares the risks and characteristics of women sex workers who started trading sex as juveniles and those who started trading sex as adults. These comparisons showed that women who started trading sex as juveniles were more likely to have run away from home as a child, had their first sexual experience at a younger age, traded sex more frequently, engaged in street-based sex work and accepted clothes as payment for sex (Martin, Hearst, & Widome, 2010). The study concludes that women who started trading sex as juveniles had worse life outcomes than women who started trading sex as adults since as juveniles they attained less education, experienced higher rates of earlier trauma, had less stable housing and started using drugs at an earlier age.

It is evident that sex trafficking reduces youth’s ability to actualize their full earning and personal potential because of lower educational attainments, physical and mental health issues, drug addiction, criminal records and a lack of employable skills. These factors are related to the physical and psychological damages that youth incur from sex trading. Therefore, involvement in sex trading diminishes the victim’s lifetime potential (Martin et al., 2012).

**PERSONAL REALITIES OF SEX TRAFFICKED YOUTH**

Youth who end up bought and sold for sex can be broadly categorized in three groups.

- Youth looking to form relationships can be manipulated, drugged, kidnapped and sold into sex work. These youth may come from a wide variety of socioeconomic backgrounds.

- Youth with experiences of childhood abuse, who have run away or been “thrown away” from their homes. Running away, possibly from abusive home situation has been identified as a common pathway to juvenile entry into prostitution.

- Youth who come from low-income socioeconomic backgrounds where crime, drugs, and prostitution are prevalent in their communities. These young people are highly vulnerable to DMST due to economic pressures and normalization of sex work in their social network (Clarke, R., Clarke, E. A., Roe-Sepowitz & Fey, 2012).

**Kidnapping.** Researchers at Baylor University conducted a study of sex trafficking victims recorded over nine years. The respondents, on average, were 15 years of age, primarily female, citizens or residents of the U.S. and had not run away from home. The study found 25% of the victims ended up in exploitive situations through some type of false promise or kidnapping (Kotrla & Wommack, 2011).

**Homelessness.** Being homeless, a runaway or living on the streets has long been considered to increase the possibility of being propositioned for sex or solicited either by a purchaser or a trafficker. A homeless youth is solicited for sex within 48 hours of becoming homeless. Homeless youth are particularly susceptible, often exploited by men extorting sex in exchange for food or shelter. On any given night, an estimated 2,500 Minnesota youth experience homelessness. Some trafficked children have run away from home or have suffered physical or sexual abuse in their homes, making going back to the family difficult or impossible (Rittenberry, 2010).
In the 2012 tri-annual survey of homeless population in the Twin Cities metro area, the Wilder Foundation found among the homeless youth 56% were girls, and 82% were from communities of color. Fifty-four percent of all homeless youth were from an African American community. Kimberly Tyler’s research in 2009, with 151 homeless young adults engaged in sex work from the Midwest, revealed that youth who have been on the streets for long periods of time have a greater exposure to peers involved in high risk activities, resulting in a greater risk for trading sex. The research also found homeless youth who had been employed full time were 80% less likely to have traded sex compared to their less than full time employed counterparts. Finally, results indicated homeless youth of color were more likely to trade sex compared to their white counterparts. White homeless youth were 84% less likely to have traded sex than youth of color (Tyler, 2009).

**Survival Sex.** Trading sex may be one way by which homeless youth can meet their daily survival needs. Young people who are homeless face daily struggles of sexual exploitation, such as trading sex for money, drugs, shelter, food, or other goods. These transactions may be seen as a way to survive and earn an income, especially for those who are homeless for long periods of time (Holger-Ambrose et al., 2013).

**Foster Care System.** The literature emphasizes the risk of becoming homeless for former foster youth. Each year, around 26,000 youth “age out” of foster care, and of these youth, only about 40% receive independent living services (Congressional Research Service Report on Vulnerable Youth, 2012). The services received by young people from the foster care system, mental health system, and juvenile justice system have been a lost opportunity because none of these systems seem able to offer a clear path for preventing exploitation or helping teens exit ongoing exploitation or homelessness. Victims do not identify these systems as places that provided them sensitive, personalized care or targeted services meeting their individualized needs (Holger-Ambrose et al., 2013).

**Child Abuse.** Child abuse is characterized by physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and child neglect. Physical violence includes hitting, burning, choking, shoving, whipping, etc. Emotional abuse is the failure to provide the affection and support necessary for the development of a child. Neglect is defined as failure to provide for a child’s physical needs like food, water, clothing, housing, etc. Lastly, sexual abuse is any sexual act between an adult and child. For example, LGBTQ youth can experience significant family rejection as extreme as being kicked out of home when they disclose their orientation or gender identity. They also face a significantly higher risk of physical and sexual abuse and bullying and rejection at school (Holger-Ambrose et al., 2013).

Child abuse and feeling unwanted can force youth to find a sense of security, care and belonging outside of their family. In search of this, they run away from home, ending up exploited by a trafficker or a purchaser. The absence of security and a sense of belonging may draw them towards peers with similar histories and feel pressured to engage in activities such as truancy, experimental drug use, and sexual trading. Research has also found childhood abuse reduces the coping skills and self-confidence youth need to effectively deal with the high-risk situations (Roe-Sepowitz, 2012).

Sexual abuse. Sexual abuse has been identified as a common risk factor towards engagement in sex trade. Bagley and Young, in their study of 45 women formerly involved in prostitution, found nearly half of the women reported leaving home because of sexual abuse. Research also finds homeless youth who have experienced sexual abuse were more likely to have traded sex (Sullivan, 2013; Nabila El-Bassel, 2001; Rittenberry, 2010; Roe-Sepowitz, 2012; Tyler, Hoyt, Whitbeck& Cauce, 2001; Whitbeck, Chen, Hoyt, Tyler & Johnson, 2004).

Childhood sexual abuse plays a dual role in the life of victims of sex trafficking. On one hand, sexual abuse is a reason youth run away from home. On the other hand, child sexual abuse makes children more “susceptible” to DMST because they have learned to separate their emotions from their sexual activity (Rosen et al.,
Moreover, Holger-Ambrose found sexual abuse can cause alterations in cognitions, interpersonal interactions, and coping responses, which can subsequently lead to risky sexual behaviors and risk for sexual exploitation (Holger-Ambrose et al., 2013).

**Drug Abuse.** Drug abuse and sexual exploitation have a close relationship. Some victims involved in prostitution report they got involved in DMST to support an existing drug habit. Others report their use of drugs helps enhance sexual performance, allowing them to become numb and cope with fears of violence. Therefore, sex trading for drugs and drugs for surviving sex work become a vicious cycle in victims' lives (Holger-Ambrose et al., 2013).

**Family Based.** Connected to the issue of physical and sexual abuse is the problem of familial trafficking — when a family member trades or rents their child for sexual use by another person in exchange for money, food, drugs, etc. Familial trafficking happens at alarming rates in the United States. In a household/family, where women are involved in prostitution and men are their pimps, watchers or runners, young people grow up seeing sex trafficking as a lifestyle, a normalized phenomenon. Generation after generation, the same structures of sexual exploitation are perpetrated. This familial component of trafficking has been described in the study *Shattered Hearts* for Native American families. Research participants in the study described their own involvement in commercial sexual exploitation as a result of learned behavior and day-to-day survival within their families for generations (Pierce, 2009). Especially, when a monetary exchange is not part of the transaction, such as a mother allowing a person to have sex with her daughter for drugs, neither perpetrators nor victims perceive it as an act of sexual exploitation or trafficking.

The personal realities of juvenile victims of sex trafficking suggest not all groups of youth are similarly exploited. The suggestion that juvenile sex trafficking affects “every person, across gender, race, class, sexual orientation” equally minimizes the dimensions that underlie the experiences of the victims of trafficking, at the same time impairing our ability to analyze the prevalence and impact of trafficking on them. The effects of characteristics of youth, gender, poverty, and race increases children’s vulnerability to be sex trafficked. These characteristics do not act independent of each other. They interact with each other and layer on top of each other to increase vulnerability and deepen the risk of being trafficked. In addition, institutions of family, government and community fail the youth and become the entry point into the business of sex trafficking.
CONCLUSION

Juvenile sex trafficking is a complex issue with ample causes and consequences for the people involved and for communities. We, as a society, must care about sex trafficking because it is our moral, economic and social justice imperative.

• The sex industry is fueled by power and money. It happens in our communities, in our city, in our state. We all pay for it as citizens through tax revenues and lost potential of exploited youth. A 2012 cost-benefit study conducted by researchers from the University of Minnesota and Indiana State University show a savings of $34 tax dollars for every $1 invested in prevention models (Martin et al., 2012).

• Sex trafficking is a social justice issue. Prostitution and sex trafficking are strongly correlated with economics. Pimps and traffickers’ ability to exploit and involve women and children in selling sex is driven by poverty and lack of formal opportunities, disproportionately affecting poor and marginalized neighborhoods (Rosen et al., 2008). Poverty, combined with a pervasive lack of social safety nets and deep-rooted gender discrimination against women, creates push and pull factors that encourage sex trade involvement (Russell, 2007).

• Traffickers who exploit youth are charming and manipulative in bringing vulnerable youth under their control. Traffickers convince the young person that prostitution is a viable lifestyle for them, offering income and economic independence. They relentlessly reinforce this 24 hours / 7 days a week (Williamson et al., 2002).

• Exploited youth are our most vulnerable girls, boys and LGBTQ youth. The combination of youth gender, poverty and race increases children’s vulnerability to be sex trafficked. In addition, the institutions of family, government and community fail the youth and become the entry point into the business of sex trafficking. Research has found that common factors that make youth vulnerable to traffickers include neglect, abuse, poverty and homelessness. (Right now, the first two sentences are in the bullet before it.)

In addition, the institutions of family, government and community fail the youth and become the entry point into the business of sex trafficking (Holger-Ambrose, 2013). Research has found that common factors that make youth vulnerable to traffickers include neglect, abuse, poverty and homelessness (Tyler, 2009).
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: SOME CRITICAL DEFINITIONS

Domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST) is the commercial sexual exploitation of American children within U.S. borders. It is the "recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act" where the person is a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident under the age of 18 years.

Sex trafficking is the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purposes of a commercial sex act. Sex trafficking in which the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion (adult), or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age (minor). (22 USC § 7102; 8 CFR § 214.11(a))

Victim: any minor under the age of 18 who has been sexually exploited for the benefit of her/his exploiter is considered a victim of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking, whether the exploiter receives some financial benefit or gains other things of value, including goods, power, and status. If the victim is under 18 and/or if the trafficker is compensated in cash or kind (food, drugs, shelter, etc.) for sex or sexual services, she is considered a sex trafficking victim.

Market Facilitator: person who promotes the prostitution of an individual. "Promotes the prostitution of an individual" means any of the following wherein the person knowingly:

1. solicits or procures patrons for a prostitute;
2. provides, leases or otherwise permits premises or facilities owned or controlled by the person to aid the prostitution of an individual;
3. owns, manages, supervises, controls, keeps or operates, either alone or with others, a place of prostitution to aid the prostitution of an individual;
4. owns, manages, supervises, controls, operates, institutes, aids or facilitates, either alone or with others, a business of prostitution to aid the prostitution of an individual;
5. admits a patron to a place of prostitution to aid the prostitution of an individual; or
6. transports an individual from one point within this state to another point either within or without this state, or brings an individual into this state to aid the prostitution of the individual.

Purchaser or patron: We use this term to include anyone who pays in cash or kind (food, drugs, shelter, etc.) for sex or sexual services from a youth.

Other Definitions

“There are a variety of local, national, and international definitions of prostitution and trafficking. Systems of prostitution include exchange of sex acts for food and shelter and other needs; outcall/escort/cell phone; Internet advertised prostitution; massage parlors; pornography of children and adults; strip club prostitution; sauna- or nail parlor-based prostitution; live sex shows; street prostitution; peep shows; phone sex; international and domestic trafficking; mail order bride or servile marriages; and prostitution tourism.” (Garden of Truth, p. 10-11)

When a john calls a phone number he obtains online or via a free magazine for obtaining a prostitute, it is called escort prostitution. Indoor prostitution such as escort is advocated wherever there is a political movement promoting the decriminalization or legalization of prostitution; it is a way to protect the trick’s anonymity. In indoor prostitution, the trick is much less likely to be arrested irrespective of legal status of prostitution. (M Farley, Pg. 22)


APPENDIX II: HISTORY OF ACTIVISM

Minnesota has long taken a strong stance in protecting and providing services to victims of crime. Minnesota has a long history of leadership in response to the issue of human trafficking, particularly juvenile prostitution, and sexual exploitation. Minnesota’s response to the issue of human trafficking, particularly juvenile prostitution and sexual exploitation, has been no different.

2005

• The first state anti-trafficking statutes came into existence. These statutes defined sex and labor trafficking and created a civil liability law for trafficking victims.
• St. Paul Police Department received its first U.S. Department of Justice grant to begin the Gerald D. Vick Human Trafficking Task Force. Currently, the U.S. Attorney’s Office, District of Minnesota, is working in collaboration with the Gerald D. Vick Human Trafficking Task Force to provide law enforcement across Minnesota the opportunity to meet and discuss human trafficking cases.

2006

• Legislation passed that required the Minnesota Department of Public Safety to convene a statewide human trafficking task force. Composed of governmental and non-governmental agencies, the Minnesota Human Trafficking Task Force (MN-HTTF) continues to provide Minnesota with a forum to vet proposed human trafficking legislation. “No Wrong Door” model was created.
• Legislation passed to fund legal advocacy clinics and a statewide human trafficking hotline to identify and serve human trafficking victims.
• The first statewide human trafficking report was published.
• Civil Society established the Human Trafficking Watch to coordinate trainings, conduct public education and outreach and provide services to victims of human trafficking. Civil Society also was funded to provide a Minnesota-specific trafficking hotline and legal clinics to help identify and assist potential international trafficking victims.


4 2012 Minnesota Statutes, 609.321 Prostitution and Sex Trafficking; Definitions, Retrieved on 7/9/2013 from https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/statutes/?id=609.321&year=2012&keyword_type=all&keyword=prostitution
2008
• At the request of the MN-HTTF, the Advocates for Human Rights conducted a comprehensive needs assessment on sex trafficking.
• The Gerald D. Vick Human Trafficking Task Force hosted a human trafficking conference in 2008 for approximately 200 people. The Action Network to End Sexual Exploitation in Minnesota (ANESEM) was established to bring awareness about human trafficking at the Republican National Convention and the Democratic National Convention.

2009
• Minnesota Statutes section 609.322 was amended to specifically define sex trafficking as a crime and provide for increased penalties.

2010
• The Advocates for Human Rights received a grant from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety Office of Justice Programs to develop and deliver training to county attorneys on how to use Minnesota’s new law in the prosecution of sex trafficking crimes.
• The Women’s Foundation of Minnesota launched its MN Girls Are Not For Sale campaign, a five-year, $5 million campaign to end prostitution of Minnesota girls through grant making, research, convening and public education.

2011
• Two events occurred that shaped the current discussion and response to human trafficking in Minnesota. The first event involved a public declaration by a group of county attorneys announcing they would no longer prosecute minors for prostitution or prostitution-related charges; the second event was the passing of the Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Youth law, mandating the development of this victim services model.
• Breaking Free and MAATTO hosted the Demand Change Project—a two-day international anti-human trafficking event that focused on ending the demand for buying and selling human beings.
• The Minnesota Indian Women’s Sexual Assault Coalition created the Garden of Truth, which focused on in-depth interviews with 150 Native women about their experiences with sex trafficking and prostitution.

2012
• A series of public resolutions calling on Backpage.com to end its adult classified section, which facilitates the trafficking of minors for sex, also began to reshape the community response to juvenile sexual exploitation.
• Since 2004 the Minnesota Department of Health Sexual Violence Prevention Network hosted five human trafficking presentations around the state to raise awareness and encourage local anti-human trafficking work.
• Communities across Minnesota are convening regional task forces to address issues related to human trafficking.

In Duluth, the American Indian Housing Community Organization and the Program for Aid to Victims of Sexual Assault have come together to provide leadership around the sex trafficking of Native women and girls. Rochester, Bemidji, Brainerd, and St. Cloud are all in the early stages of forming working collaborations.

2014
• Implementation of Safe Harbor Law will begin. (No Wrong Door Report)
• As part of Safe Harbor for Sexually Exploited Youth legislation, Department of Human Services will provide $1 million over the next two years to launch the housing component. Funds will go to: The Link (metro area), Breaking Free (St. Paul), Life House (Duluth) and Heartland Girls Ranch (Benson).

APPENDIX III: MINNESOTA SAFE HARBORS LAW3

SF1/HF1, Special Session Public Safety / Judiciary Bill, Article 4 Sexually Exploited Youth

This legislation allows Minnesota to build a system that responds appropriately and effectively to child victims of sexual exploitation and sex trafficking (prostitution). Included in the omnibus public safety budget bill that Gov. Mark Dayton signed into law on July 20, 2011, Safe Harbors Minnesota does the following:

1. Treats sexually exploited (prostituted) children (under age 16) as victims in need of protection, not criminals, and establishes a mandatory first referral to services for youth ages 16 and 17;

2. Increases fines on purchasers to create a funding stream for supportive services; and

3. Develops a victim-centered statewide service model.

Key Provisions

1. Explicitly defines sexually exploited (prostituted) youth and sex trafficking (prostitution) victims as children in need of protection or services.

2. Excludes sexually exploited (prostituted) youth and sex trafficking (prostitution) victims from the definition of delinquency. This provision phases in, effective 2014, to ensure that adequate systems to address sexually exploited (prostituted) youth are in place.

3. Amends the definition of “prostitute” to include only individuals 18 years of age or older, effective 2014.

4. Charges the commissioner of public safety, in consultation with the commissioner of health, the commissioner of human services, and other stakeholders to develop a victim services model to address the needs of sexually exploited (prostituted) youth and youth at risk of sexual exploitation (prostitution).

5. Increases penalties for buyers of prostitution with revenue split between service providers, prosecutors, and law enforcement.

3 Summary by Minnesota Girls are Not for Sale
http://www.mngirlsnoforsale.org/educate/laws/