

Voices Against Sexual Assault



MONTHLY UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2012

“Human Trafficking: Modern Day Slavery”

On January 31st, 2012 the Western Michigan University Criminal Justice Student Association sponsored FBI Victim Specialist Carmen Kucinich to come and speak on human trafficking. The event, which filled to overflowing, covered a number of important topics including a breakdown of what human trafficking is, how individuals can recognize trafficking when it occurs, and resources to help learn more and assist survivors of human trafficking.

The facts shared by Kucinich were eye opening for many attendees, as they demonstrate the breadth of this criminal enterprise in our country. Among the statistics she noted, Kucinich shared that:

- The #1 destination for Americans looking for sex with children is the USA, where the child sexual exploitation has become a “cottage industry” driven by the Internet. Many of these children are later prosecuted for prostitution.
- There are approximately 1.8 victims of human trafficking per 1,000 population, although only .4% of trafficking victims are identified.
- Sex trafficking is surpassing drug trafficking in volume because people can be sold multiple times, and drugs only once.
- The average age at recruitment is 13; 25% of current

prostitutes were recruited as children and life expectancy averages 7 years after beginning in the sex trade.

These sobering statistics are a reminder of why VOICES and our supporters have taken such a strong interest in the human trafficking trade in our country. Did you know that the first federal law on human trafficking was passed in 2000? Here in Michigan, our first law was passed just four years ago, and we are currently prosecuting our second case—we have some catching up to do and becoming informed and involved is the first step!

To learn more, visit some of these resources suggested by Kucinich:

- Alternatives for Girls – Detroit: www.alternativesforgirls.org
- Justice for Our Neighbors – West Michigan: <http://ifonwestmichigan.org/>
- Human Trafficking Task Force – Michigan: <http://www.humantrafficking.msu.edu/>
- Promise – Chicago: <http://www.sapromise.org/>
- HOPE Project – Muskegon: <http://www.hopeprojectusa.org/>
- Polaris Project – National: <http://www.polarisproject.org/>
- Statistics Database – Ann Arbor: <http://www.law.umich.edu/CLINICAL/HUTRAFFICCASES/>

VOICES Prepares for Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April

As April is just around the corner, VOICES is again preparing for Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM), and is looking forward to partnering with some amazing community organizations to raise awareness about the impact of sexual abuse in our community.

As a teaser of upcoming events, please know that we will be participating in the following events for SAAM this year:

- Free screening of the film *Men and Boys Healing* at the Western Michigan University Little Theater on Tuesday, April 3rd and Wednesday, April 11th from 7-9PM.
- The WMU Take Back the Night event on Thursday, April 12th from 5-8PM in the WMU Bernhard Center.

These are just two events that we will be participating in—stay tuned for more!

Next Meeting

Thursday, March 8th, 2012 @ 4PM
YWCA Kalamazoo

VOICES meets regularly at the YWCA of Kalamazoo on the SECOND Thursday of the month at 4PM. Please RSVP to info@voicesasa.org to join us!

