

Voices Against Sexual Assault



MONTHLY UPDATE

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2011

VOICES Annual Meeting Recap: Human Trafficking

Each year, VOICES works to raise awareness about sexual assault, including human trafficking and child abuse. This November, VOICES was proud to host Jane White of the Michigan Human Trafficking Task Force as the guest speaker at our 2011 Using Our Voice event!

During her presentation, White provided numerous stories about both international and local human trafficking, including trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation and labor exploitation.



**MICHIGAN
HUMAN TRAFFICKING
TASK FORCE**

One such story involved the case of young women trafficked from the Ukraine. Originally brought to the United States with the promise of a summer job placement, the young women arrived in the United States and were informed that the promised jobs no longer existed, but that work had become available in Detroit. Loaded onto a bus, the young women were moved from Dulles Airport to Detroit, where everything changed.

In Detroit, the women were told that they owed their traffickers a debt for transporting them to the states. Over the next several years, the women were forced to work for their captors at the Cheetah Club in Detroit. Controlled through weapons, force and threats of harm to themselves and their families, the women remained in

captivity until they confided in a customer from the strip club (Kahng, 2007).

Unfortunately, stories like this are all too common in the United States today. According to White, there are things we can do to help those who are trafficked. Her suggestions include:

- Telling at least five people that trafficking exists in Michigan
- Contributing time, talent, and resources to raising awareness or host a speaker night
- Putting the National Trafficking Hotline in your phone (1-888-3737-888)

Recognizing human trafficking is also important, in order to take these steps. According to White, some important signs that someone may be a trafficked person include: persons who work especially long hours with little or no pay, have signs of physical or sexual abuse, cannot speak for themselves, are not in control of his/her money or identification, exhibit fear or anxiety, or have poor physical health. If you see any of these signs, it is important to alert the National Trafficking Hotline.

Together, we can begin to raise awareness about this issue in our country. Through awareness raising, we can help stop the spread of this extensive criminal enterprise in our state, nation and world.

VOICES Signs Articles of Incorporation

Since our beginnings as a Public Education Subcommittee under the Kalamazoo's Comprehensive Approaches to Sex Offender Management (KCASOM) grant in 2006, VOICES has been steadily growing.

This year, at our 2011 Annual Meeting we made a very exciting announcement: Voices Against Sexual Assault is taking the next step by signing our Articles of Incorporation and becoming an official 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

Becoming an official non-profit organization will allow VOICES to seek funding and continue to grow our public education and awareness raising programs in Kalamazoo and the entire state of Michigan.

As we take this step forward, we appreciate the continued support given to us by our Board and all of our supporters. We hope that you will continue to work with and support us as we move forward and expand in the coming years.

Next Meeting

Thursday, January 12th @ 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!

