

SAN MATEO COUNTY HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROGRAM

**A PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM
BETWEEN THE COUNTY OF SAN MATEO, THE
SHERIFF'S OFFICE AND THE SAN MATEO
COUNTY POLICE CHIEFS AND SHERIFF
ASSOCIATION**

**2019 Annual Report
May 29, 2020**

**PREPARED BY:
JOHN VANEK, HUMAN TRAFFICKING PROGRAM COORDINATOR
&
PAMELA ESTES, HUMAN TRAFFICKING ADVOCACY COORDINATOR**





PREFACE

This report is the work product of San Mateo County Human Trafficking Program Coordinator John Vanek and San Mateo County Human Trafficking Advocacy Coordinator Pamela Estes. Mr. Vanek and Ms. Estes are tasked with providing subject-matter expertise and leadership to: improve the County's response to human trafficking; enhance coordination among both governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) involved in the response to human trafficking within the County, and; represent the County in regional anti-trafficking efforts. This report contains the results of their efforts during calendar year 2019. This annual report addresses the following areas: 1) Law Enforcement Operations and Efforts; 2) Identifying and Assisting Human Trafficking Victims; 3) Community Training, Education and Outreach; and 4) Additional Items.

Per the San Mateo County Human Trafficking (HT) Program Coordinators' deliverables, an annual report was due January 1, 2019. It was anticipated that two of the Program's 2019 efforts (an updated Comprehensive Victim Services Surveys in order to include in this report the estimated number of human trafficking victim identified in 2018-19, and the Human Trafficking Poster / Hotel Compliance survey) would be completed by December 31, 2019. For reasons beyond the Coordinators' control, and related to the data collection needed for the Office for Victims of Crime, Services for Victims of Human Trafficking grant application, this report was not finalized until May 31, 2020.

1. LAW ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS AND EFFORTS

During 2019, Coordinators received an increased number of calls from law enforcement agencies seeking advice or assistance with suspected human trafficking (HT) victims and/or cases, which is a positive development toward the goal of providing a coordinated response to the crime of human trafficking within the County. At least three times during the year, the San Francisco Homeland Security Investigations / Human Trafficking Unit contacted Coordinators seeking assistance with adult female sex trafficking victims. In October, San Bruno Police Dept. contacted Coordinators for assistance with a female adult sex trafficking victim identified during the investigation of a Grand Theft, and that same month, San Mateo Police Dept. requested assistance with a female adult Korean national sex trafficking victim.

Illicit Massage Businesses (IMBs)

Law enforcement conducted pro-active operations during the year to identify potential HT victims and reduce criminal activity. Human trafficking and prostitution are known to occur in massage parlors referred to as Illicit Massage Businesses (IMBs). The best source of intelligence on the prevalence of IMBs within the County is the Rubmaps website, which allows buyers of sex to comment about their experiences at various IMBs nationwide. Coordinators reviewed Rubmaps information on a quarterly basis and the findings were provided to the Police Chiefs and Sheriff Association. As of January 3, 2019, Rubmaps reviews identified 12 IMBs operating within the County, which was a reduction of 50% from 24 IMB's identified in May 2018. As of December 2019, Rubmaps reviews identified 14 IMB's in the County, an increase of 2 over 12 IMBs identified in September 2019.

On June 4th, Coordinators organized and Redwood City Police Dept. hosted a training program on IMBs and investigative tactics and techniques with 16 attendees from six different agencies. Throughout the year four operations specifically targeted IMBs. The Sheriff's Office Crime Suppression Unit (CSU) conducted operations at IMB's on February 27th and April 25th; the City of San Mateo Police Dept. led an operation on June 25th, joined by Belmont and Foster City Police Dept., and Redwood City Police Dept. conducted an operation on August 27th. Through these operations, 7 massage parlors were investigated which resulted in two Asian adult females being cited for PC 647(b), six massage parlors were deemed suspicious and remain under investigation, and one was deemed legitimate. Identifying and eliminating IMBs within the County will continue to be a focus of the HT Program.

Assist with Ventura County Sheriff's Office Human Trafficking Investigation

In June, the Ventura County Sheriff's Dept. requested assistance with a multi-site operation that included a hotel-based brothel in Burlingame. The HT Program, along with the SMC Sheriff's Office CSU and Burlingame Police Dept., assisted with the operation led by Ventura County. In less than five days, the HT Program was able to rally and coordinate numerous partners to participate and assist in the possibility of providing comprehensive victim services to as many as 14 HT victims. During the



course of the operation (in San Mateo County) six female Chinese nationals were contacted and offered services; none accepted services or self-identified as HT victims. Following the operation, Coordinators convened a post-op meeting to discuss the operation, determine how coordination might be improved in the future, and to provide all partners an overview of the broader investigation. Several NGOs were prepared to provide pro-bono services to victims as the County does not fund provision of victim services. The fact that so many NGOs actively assisted in a very short timeframe is a result of the partnerships created through the monthly Human Trafficking Initiative meetings which began in February 2018.

National Human Trafficking Hotline Tips

Contact with the National Human Trafficking Hotline (Hotline) was re-established in March 2018, updating the Hotline's protocol on how to notify San Mateo County when trafficking tips are received by the Hotline. The Coordinators continue to update the Hotline protocol as needed. During 2019, four Hotline tips were received; all were referred to the appropriate law enforcement agency for investigation. None of the tips received by the HT Program led to identification of victims or arrests of traffickers.

The Hotline also reports directly to Rape Trauma Services without notifying Coordinators when callers request anonymity and do not want law enforcement involved. In 2019 RTS had contact with 47 HT victims; we are unable to differentiate how many contacts were calls from the Hotline versus RTS crisis line calls, or Keller Center or law enforcement accompaniments, however, no Hotline calls were referred to Coordinators.

Prosecution of Criminal Cases

In March 2019, the defendant in a sex trafficking case pled to charges including PC 236.1 and was sentenced to 5 years in CDC.

In April 2019, the District Attorney's Office filed HT charges against a San Bruno woman related to domestic servitude. This case is pending trial.

Update of County's Law Enforcement Human Trafficking Protocol

During 2018, Coordinators conducted an extensive revision of the 2015 Human Trafficking Protocol which was also reviewed by a panel of law enforcement commanders. The revised protocol provisions were completed in March 2019 and includes a response guide which simply and systematically guides responding officers and investigators through the proper steps of documenting incidents, cross-reporting to other agencies, and contacting victim services. The Protocol was submitted to the Police Chiefs and Sheriff Association in May, and approved in October. The revised Protocol is available to all sworn officers on LawNet.

Addressing Human Trafficking "Demand"

"Demand" is a term used within the anti-trafficking community when referring to the buyers of commercial sex, regardless if those providing the sex are engaging voluntarily or being exploited by traffickers, within the "supply and demand" economic model. Demand reduction activities focus on identifying buyers, arresting buyers, educating



buyers of the risks involved, the victimization of those providing sex, and other public efforts which, together, reduce the buying of sex or compel buyers to do so outside San Mateo County. As a 2019 contract deliverable, coordinators engaged in preliminary discussions with members of the District Attorney's Office about developing and offering a "buyer school" for persons charged with PC 647 (a) (solicitation) to educate them on the harms of purchasing sex. It was determined that the number of individuals prosecuted in San Mateo County averages less than ten per year; as a result, developing a "buyer school" was deemed an imprudent use of resources at this time.

2. IDENTIFYING AND ASSISTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS

During 2018, Coordinators conducted an assessment to determine an estimate of the number of HT victims identified by county service providers who sought out some type of social services support in the 3-year period 2015-17. Service agencies identified approximately 102 likely HT victims among their clients who sought services during 2015-17, an average of 34 HT victims per year over the 3-year period, or 2.8 per month.

It was determined that ongoing assessments are important to determine the scope and prevalence of human trafficking in the County as we move forward, so a second assessment of service agencies was conducted in early 2020 to identify likely HT victims served during the 2-year period 2018-19. In 2018 the number of HT victims identified in San Mateo County by the HT Program, service providers, and local NGO partners was 130 or 10.8 victims per month (12 identified as labor trafficking victims); and for 2019 was 304 or 25.3 victims per month (43 identified as labor trafficking victims). This is a significant increase in HT victim identification over the first survey due in part to an increase in the number of service agencies that responded, an increase in awareness of the red flags of human trafficking, and enhanced collaboration and partnerships developed through the HT Program's efforts.

Few service providers assess for human trafficking as part of their client assessment process, so consistent and reliable tracking of HT victims does not exist. The identification of an HT victim often occurs after a trust relationship has been established through the course of providing services. Coordinators will explore ways to encourage service agencies to assess and track likely HT victims so more accurate data can be obtained in the future.

Identification of CSEC Victims and At-Risk Youth

Child and Family Services (CFS) currently track CSEC (Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children) youth who reside in San Mateo County. In late 2018, CFS adopted use of the CSE-IT tool (Commercial Sexual Exploitation Identification Tool; pronounced "See it"), an evidence-based observation tool to identify CSEC youth. As of December 2019, CFS has positively identified 7 CSEC youth who are under their jurisdiction. Based upon reports from mandated reporters, if a youth scores high on the CSE-IT tool, but exploitation has not been confirmed, the youth is identified on a "watch list." CPS determined that it was inappropriate for the agency to be the custodian of the "watch list" since these youth are not under CPS jurisdiction; the County Office of Education volunteered and currently serves as the "watch list" custodian. Coordinators are not

privity to the number of youths on the “watch list” as of December 2019. In addition, other at-risk youth may be identified by other County agencies or NGOs that the Human Trafficking Program is not aware of.

Comprehensive Services for All Victims of All Forms of Human Trafficking

HT victims often require a wide variety of services to assist them in becoming self-sufficient persons and recovering from victimization. In addition to general victim services, often services are differentiated based upon various criteria such as, victims age (i.e., minors or adults), sex (i.e., male or female) or place of birth (i.e., U.S. citizen or foreign national). Due to a lack of funding in the County, there is a lack of tailored services and the coordinated delivery of services which is a significant gap in the County’s response to trafficking. Coordinators continue to identify all of the various service providers currently providing specialized services to HT victims, or who may be available to offer services in the future (often dependent on funding), and general service providers who offer services that HT victims might need.

(In May 2020 the partnership of StarVista, the Sheriff’s Office, and the District Attorney’s Office submitted an application to the U.S. Department of Justice / Office for Victims of Crime, for the Services to Victims of Human Trafficking grant. This grant (if awarded) will provide \$750,000 in federal funds, plus \$250,000 in-kind match funds) over three years to serve HT victims with a nexus to San Mateo County. Award announcement will take place in September 2020.)

Provision for Minor HT Victims

Child Protective Services (CPS) and the juvenile court have jurisdiction over CSEC youth pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 300(b)(2), and AB 1322, which decriminalized prostitution for minors under the age of 18 and mandated services rather than criminalization in juvenile delinquency court. Rape Trauma Services (RTS) is under contract with CPS to provide crisis response and case management for CSEC youth. CPS faces challenges in finding housing for CSEC youth as few foster families are willing (and appropriately trained) to care for CSEC youth, and with the passage of AB 403, which is phasing out group homes, in general, there are fewer housing options for minors.

CPS and the juvenile court also have jurisdiction of minors who are victims of labor trafficking under W&I 300(b)(1) if determined that it is the result of parent/guardian neglect.

Housing and Other Services for Adult HT Victims

StarVista’s First Chance Sobering Station (FCSS) provides immediate respite shelter for adult HT victims who are referred by law enforcement. During 2019, FCSS provided short-term shelter to 12 HT victims. This service is a great benefit to the HT Program as it provides the Coordinators time to assess victims’ needs, and if necessary, research the availability of long-term housing and provide shelter to victims while going through the intake process which can take 7-10 days. Coordinators worked with FCSS staff to establish rules for clients staying at FCSS, and to translate the new rules and other intake documentation into the Korean language so it is understood by Korean-speaking



HT victims. Additionally, Coordinators provided security recommendations to FCSS to safeguard HT victims from their trafficker while staying at the FCSS.

Long-term housing / shelter options for adult HT victims remain a significant gap in services. Options vary depending upon criteria established by the various non-profit NGOs and the number of beds is limited. In San Mateo County, there is only one, 8-bed, long-term housing facility for single females and no long-term housing options for women with children or men who have no resources. There are two housing facilities with a combined 24 beds available for single women and women with children, and a 6 bed shelter available for men in Alameda County that Coordinators can refer victims to.

Coordinators had conversations with the San Mateo County Human Services Agency (HSA), and LifeMoves, the agency that operates the County's shelter beds, about making shelter beds available to HT victims, but this is not currently an option to ease the housing crisis. The County has a policy against LifeMoves holding shelter beds, and HSA is of the opinion that the County's shelter system is not an appropriate housing option for HT victims, so the HT Program will continue to seek out other viable housing options.

Coordinators have been in contact with Human Investment Project (HIP) Housing, to discuss housing for HT adults, and this program provides promise for HT victims who are more self-sufficient and self-reliant. During 2019, Coordinators were able to find housing for HT victims at Freedom House, Serenity House, Turning Point, and through hotel stays paid for by NGOs Worldsong Aid, and Special Operations Silicon Valley. Coordinators attend the County's quarterly Continuum of Care meetings which is a collaboration of stakeholders promoting a community-wide commitment to end homelessness to stay abreast on the various County agencies' efforts to increase housing for under-resourced residents.

Case Management for Adult HT Victims

Once an HT victim has been identified who desires assistance, comprehensive case management services are important to the HT victim's stabilization and forward progress. Providing case management to adult HT victims continues to be a challenge due to lack of funding. The District Attorney's Office, Victim Services Division, (DA VSD) provided case management for adult labor trafficking victims, and Coordinators provided case management to adult, U.S. citizen and foreign national sex trafficking victims throughout 2019. In November, International Rescue Committee (IRC) San Jose office assisted Coordinators with an adult foreign national victim. At that time, the HT Program learned that IRC was providing case management to 6 HT victims from San Mateo County who were unknown to the HT Program. IRC case management assistance is no-cost to the County. Due to lack of funding, Coordinators relied upon financial assistance from NGO's Worldsong Aid and Special Operations Silicon Valley to provide the personal needs, clothing, food support, and transportation of adult HT victims.

Coordinators has been engaged in conversations with DA VSD, RTS, Samaritan House, one of the County's core service agencies, Community Overcoming Relationship Abuse

(CORA), Justice at Last and StarVista about expanding case management services to include adult HT victims.

Funding for HT Victim Services

As lack of funding for services is a primary gap in assisting victims, Coordinators applied for \$75,000 from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative community funds grant but was not awarded the funds. Coordinators also attempted but were unsuccessful in re-opening grant funding through Cal OES Human Trafficking Unit. As noted above, in May 2020 an application was submitted for the OVC Services for Victims of Human Trafficking grant; award announcement is pending.

3. COMMUNITY TRAINING, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Ongoing Law Enforcement Training

Coordinators continued to offer the two-hour *Human Trafficking for Law Enforcement* course every other month. During 2019, 42 law enforcement officers and two civilians attended the course. For the two-year period of 2018-19, 164 people have attended the course. Coordinator Vanek prepared a Human Trafficking for Law Enforcement Expanded Course outline and submitted it to the South Bay Regional Academy to seek POST Certification of the course.

Ongoing Human Trafficking Initiative (HTI) Meetings

In February 2018, Coordinators launched the Human Trafficking Initiative (HTI) which is a forum open to all who are interested or involved in the response to trafficking in San Mateo County in order to share information, receive education and training. The HTI is held monthly on the second Tuesday (except in December). It continues to be a great resource for those active in the anti-trafficking efforts in San Mateo County. The connections made at HTI meetings have resulted in NGO's offering direct assistance to HT victims, increased community knowledge of human trafficking, and collaboration between a wide variety of organizations and individuals to work against human trafficking in San Mateo County.

During 2019, the highest attendance was at the February meeting with 55 attendees, and the lowest attendance was at the October meeting with 13 attendees, with an average monthly attendance of 34.8 attendees. 2019 HTI guest speakers included: Wilma Gandoy, Consul for Protection and Legal Affairs from the Mexican Consulate in San Francisco; Sgt. Junsun Lee with the Redwood City Police Dept. and an expert witness on the crime of human trafficking; Ben Greer, Emergency Management Coordinator / Instructor II with CalOES; and Erin Albright, Visiting Fellow with the Office for Victims of Crime.

Launch of Stand-Alone Website

Though the HT Program has existed since July 2015 it has lacked a dedicated web presence where the public, county and city agencies, service providers, and victims of trafficking can find reliable and current information and resources related to human trafficking within San Mateo County. During January and February, Coordinators



worked with the County Information Services Department (CISD) to create and write content for a stand-alone website: www.stophumantraffickingmsc.gov. The website was publicly launched on March 12. Analytics from the website reveal that during 2019, 766 unique users viewed the website which is 2.5 unique users per day, the website received 2,338-page views and 1,696 unique views. The majority of the visitors to the site were most interested in events and resources.

Managing HTI Contact List through GovDelivery

In March, Coordinators worked with the County Information Services Department to set up an account for the HT Program on GovDelivery, a web-based e-mail subscription management system that Coordinators now use to manage the HTI Contact List. This service has allowed Coordinators to better manage out-going communications for the program and for NGO partners, and it allows a member of the public to subscribe to the HTI Contact List through the HT Program website. As of December, there are 306 individuals on the HTI Contact List which is over a 50% increase in the past 12 months.

County's Community Information Handbook Presence

The San Mateo County Human Services Agency prints an annual Community Information Handbook (CIH), a resource guide for County and Bay Area wide services which has a corresponding online version at www.smc-connect.org. Coordinators submitted a listing for the National Human Trafficking Hotline which is now included on the first page of the CIH with other emergency numbers. Additionally, Coordinators promoted the CIH to HTI members as a place to list their services since previous editions of the CIH had no resources for HT victims. Coordinators will continue to monitor and encourage service providers to list their resources in the CIH.

Hotel/Motel Visits Re: HT Poster and Employee Training Compliance Checks

Background: California Civil Code Section 52.6 requires certain businesses to post a notice that identifies resources available to HT victims and the community. The law was amended in 2017 to now include hotels, motels and bed and breakfast inns in the list of businesses required to post this notice, which went into effect on January 1, 2019. Additionally, California Government Code Section 12950.3 effective January 1, 2019, requires all hotel and motel employers to provide at least 20 minutes of education regarding human trafficking awareness to employees by January 1, 2020.

In an effort to promote compliance with the new laws, Coordinators, with assistance from the Peninsula Hills Women's Club, mailed posters to all hotels, motels and bed and breakfast inns located in San Mateo County during November 2018. Additionally, on January 29, 2019, Coordinators hosted a coffee and training for hotel/motel operators to explain the legal requirements of posting the human trafficking poster and providing human trafficking education to employees.

Coordinators worked with the San Francisco FBI Citizen's Academy, Sisters Against Slavery and Worldsong Aid, to develop a volunteer training for volunteers to conduct poster compliance checks at all San Mateo County hotels and motels. The HT Program hosted the volunteer training on November 13 at Peninsula Covenant Church in Redwood City. Over 25 volunteers attended, who were trained how to conduct a poster

compliance check at a hotel, provided with materials and signed up to visit specific hotel/motel properties. Also, the SMC/SV Convention and Visitors Bureau, through their newsletters, alerted hotels and motels about the human trafficking notice law, the upcoming employee training law, and the upcoming volunteer compliance visits.

Volunteers visits to hotels and motels were not completed by the end of 2019 but continued through March 2020 at which time visits were halted due to Shelter in Place orders prompted by COVID-19. Volunteers returned feedback forms for 99 hotel visits out of 161. Volunteers visited approx. 61% of the hotels and motels in the County. From these visits, we learned that only 38% of the hotels and motels visited were displaying the human trafficking notice/poster in a location where it would be conspicuous to the public, as required by law (i.e. lobby), and approx. 50% of the hotels and motels are training employees on human trafficking. Volunteers also provided hotel and motel staff with information about 2 free employee trainings to be hosted by Bay Area Anti-Trafficking Coalition in early 2020.

Local Outreach

Coordinators represented the HT Program throughout San Mateo County by speaking or representing the HT Program at the following events: San Mateo County Board of Supervisors (January); City of Redwood City Council meeting (January); City of San Mateo City Council meeting (January); Dignity Health – Sequoia Hospital HT Awareness Event (January); Commission on the Status of Women (February); PenTV appearance (February); College of San Mateo awareness event (April); Families United for Education graduation ceremony (April); Lily’s Wings play panel discussion 2X (May); Millbrae City Council (March); Golden Gate Federated Women’s Club District Convention (April); SMC Core Agency Directors (January and November); County Continuum of Care meetings (quarterly); CSEC Steering Committee (quarterly); SO Community Policing Unit Program on human trafficking - panel member (June); County Commanders meeting; and PCSA meetings.

Regional Networking

Coordinators represented San Mateo County at regional events whenever possible. During 2019 coordinators attended or presented at a wide variety of events including: San Francisco Collaborative Against Human Trafficking Conference (San Francisco); South Bay Coalition to End Human Trafficking (San Jose), and; No Traffick Ahead (regional, quarterly meetings).

Preparations for January 2020 HT Awareness Event

At the end of 2019, Coordinators planned for the HT Program’s first public event, which occurred on January 29, 2020, to raise awareness about human trafficking during National Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

Funded *Lily’s Wings* Theatre Performance

Lily’s Wings is a bilingual play that identifies the grooming process that often takes place with youth to trap them in sex trafficking. The play was produced by Fuse Theatre. The HT Program saw this play as a unique opportunity to increase awareness about human trafficking, so the HT Program funded a performance of *Lily’s Wings*. Working

the Sheriff's Activities League, *Lily's Wings* was performed as a school assembly at Pescadero High School.

Teen Sex Trafficking Poster Campaign

Abolitionist Mom, <https://abolitionistmom.org>, has created a number of visual media campaigns to raise awareness about human trafficking. Abolitionist Mom created a six-poster set focused on teen sex trafficking awareness/prevention. The HT Program purchased 20 poster sets for distribution throughout San Mateo County. Sets were provided to the District Attorney's Office for display at the Girls Camp. Poster sets were also provided to San Mateo County Office of Education's Safe and Supportive Schools Program for distribution to the public high schools within the County.

4. ADDITIONAL ITEMS

CSEC MOU & CSEC Steering Committee Update

Since February 2018 Coordinators have worked as part of the County's CSEC Steering Committee and CSEC Work Group to update the CSEC MOU. The CSEC MOU was completed on December 10, 2019, at which time it was circulated to department heads for signature. The CSEC MOU was signed by Sheriff Bolanos in February 2020, and by Chief Pardini, President of the PCSA on April 22, 2020. Coordinators continue to represent the Sheriff's Office on the CSEC MOU Steering Committee and participate in ongoing Steering Committee meetings.

Coordinators' Continuing Education

In March the HT Program funded the opportunity for Coordinator Estes, Sheriff's Sgt. Mike Leishman, Deputy Chris Laughlin and DDA Alpana Samant to attend the Freedom Network annual conference in Alexandria, VA.

Coordinator Estes attended an 80-hour training to become a certified Sexual Assault Counselor, and a 40-hour training to become a certified Human Trafficking Advocate.

Coordinator Estes attended the following trainings: Ensuring Trauma-Informed Approach Amid Changing Landscapes hosted by SBCEHT (San Francisco); Understanding the Legal Framework of Human Trafficking for Social Service Providers hosted by CAST-LA (Los Angeles/Sept.); "Surviving the Systems" Anti-Trafficking Symposium hosted by SFCAHT (Sept.); A new CalOES 3-day human trafficking training (Richmond/October) of which Coordinator Vanek was a developer and trainer.

Coordinators Recognized for HT Work

In January, Coordinator Vanek was recognized by the San Francisco Collaborative Against Human Trafficking (SFCAHT) for the strategic leadership of the HT Program, and in May, Coordinator Estes received a Sheriff's Commendation for her case management of a female sex trafficking victim who assisted the District Attorney's Office in successfully prosecuting her trafficker.

-END-