

Maximo & Morales

Concerned citizen helps uncover enslaved nursing home workers

by Amanda Kloer, March 31, 2010

Yet another surprising line of work got added to the no-industry-is-free-of-slavery list today when a California couple was accused of forcing Filipino migrants to work in four elder care facilities. That's right, we can even find modern-day slaves in nursing homes.

Maximo and Melinda Morales, both originally from the Philippines, owned a small chain of assisted-living facilities in California. When it came to staffing those homes, they quickly discovered that bringing migrants from their home country to the U.S. to work was a lot cheaper than hiring local labor. Investigators say that the Moraleses traveled to the Philippines and offered people in need of work the chance to make a good living in the U.S. In exchange for being smuggled in, workers would pay the couple between \$3000 and \$8000, as well as buy their own plane ticket. The offer often sounded like the chance of a lifetime.

When the workers arrived in the U.S., however, the Moraleses confiscated their passports and told them they would need to work to pay off their debt. For some workers, they labored in the nursing homes for over a year before they received any wages at all. Sometimes they were forced to work 24-hour shifts, with very few days off, and were reduced to sleeping in hallways and closets in the homes. In addition to the horrible treatment, the Moraleses allegedly gave the workers a strict set of rules to follow, including: don't talk to neighbors or the family members of residents, don't take public transportation because of police checkpoints, don't disobey your bosses, and lie to Social Service representatives about the number of caregivers at the home. The Moraleses indicated they were powerful and well-connected, and any breaking of the rules could mean trouble for the workers' families back in the Philippines.

People who have family members living at elder care and assisted living facilities want to know their loved ones are being cared for by skilled, compassionate people -- not slaves forced to stay awake for 24 hours at a time and living in fear. While the direct victims of this trafficking plot are the enslaved workers, the elderly residents of the Moraleses' homes were almost certainly harmed by lack of appropriate care. How often did an error made by an overworked trafficking victim result in a serious health problem for someone's mother or grandmother? Elder care is a demanding job that requires specific training and skills. As abhorrent as slavery in industries like manufacturing and agriculture is, a t-shirt or cocoa bean won't die because the person processing it is enslaved. Human trafficking of caregivers creates a sphere of harm that goes far beyond the direct victims.

The situation at the nursing homes first came to light because of a concerned and aware citizen, a family member of one of the residents. Noticing some unusual activities, this person struck up some conversations with the workers there, who eventually confided their predicament. It's one more example of how knowing what to look for can help anyone spot human trafficking. It also reiterates the importance of kindness and support for everyone we come across, whether they're caring for our parents, cleaning our office, or assembling our burgers.

A little awareness helped save several migrant workers and even more elderly people from abuse and neglect. Imagine what a little awareness can do in your community.



Original story can be found at:

http://humantrafficking.change.org/blog/view/couple_enslaves_filipino_workers_at_california_nursing_homes

Mary

Dreams of America dashed: Mary's true story of slavery

by Amanda Kloer, August 04, 2009

Human trafficking between the U.S. and Mexico can be especially fluid because of the high demand for cheap labor in the U.S. and the broad border between the two countries. Here's Mary's story:

Mary was born in Mexico. When she was about 17 years old, she was persuaded to go to the USA with the promise that she would have a better life and be provided with a job. A man promised to take her and to look after her.

However, when she arrived in the USA her life got a lot worse. She was given a job at a factory packing vegetables. But she was escorted there and back every day and was never allowed to go anywhere on her own. She was never paid for the work that she did. She was given drugs and was badly abused. She wasn't allowed to go and see a doctor when she was ill or hurt. She wasn't allowed to leave her apartment except when she went to work. The man who took her to the USA threatened her. He said that if she tried to escape she would be deported - sent back to Mexico - or hurt by the immigration authorities.

Eventually Mary managed to escape with her young son. She is now staying in a special center that looks after people who have been trafficked or abused. She is being given shelter, food, clothing and advice about what to do next. She is hoping that she will be able to stay in the United States and start a new life.

Having a child, especially a child the trafficker knows about, changes everything for victims. Most parents would do anything in their power to keep their children safe from harm. Just like victims of domestic violence will stay with an abuser if he threatens to harm the children, so will victims of trafficking stay with a trafficker. In Mary's case, she was able to escape with her child. But many victims' children are back in their home country, and the traffickers threaten to harm them before the victim can get home.

Original story can be found at:

http://humantrafficking.change.org/blog/view/dreams_of_america_dashed_marys_true_story_of_slavery



5 boys from Panipat

Indian boys kidnapped, enslaved to produce your food and clothes

by Amanda Kloer, February 22, 2010

The rising cost of farm labor in India is taking its toll -- on the children of Panipat, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh. In the past several months, those regions have seen a swell in young boys being kidnapped from train stations and forced to tend cattle and farm crops. India is the second largest producer of food in the world and a huge exporter to the U.S. And a growing international demand for those products might be what's driving this trafficking trend.



This week, Indian police rescued five boys ages 9 to 11 from a group of corrupt landlords in the Panipat region of India. The boys had all been kidnapped at a nearby train station and then taken by the landlords to nearby farms. They were held in bonded labor and forced to work without pay maintaining fields and cattle. This is the first case of this form and method of trafficking to come to light in the Panipat region of India. The most prolific forms of slavery in India have traditionally been exploitation in the commercial sex industry and trafficking into various forms of factory or industrial work, including garment factories, cigarette manufacturing, and brick making. But activists in India fear that this case may be a sign that exploitation within India's massive agricultural sector is on the rise.

What's behind this bump in trafficking of young boys into forced labor on farms? The same thing that's behind all forms of human trafficking -- demand. In this case, it's a growing international and American demand for cheap food. India is already producing a lot of food, and they can produce a lot more food more cheaply when they don't have to pay the children forced to grow, harvest, and tend the crops and livestock.

U.S. imports from India have increased by 385% over the past 14 years. We import products like rugs, t-shirts, and bed linens from India, all of which are made in industries where child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking have been found. We also import food from India, which is another sector with a growing trafficking problem. And the U.S. is not the only country who has begun to import more goods from India. Why? It's cheaper to make a t-shirt or grow grain in India than in many other countries in the world. Part of that equation has to do with land values and the cost of setting up business, but a huge reason people choose to import from India is lower labor costs. And no labor is cheaper than slave labor. The international import market gives unethical businessmen, like the landlords, in this case, the motivation to reduce labor costs to nothing by trafficking children to do the work for free.

A growing trend of trafficking young boys into farm work in Panipat may seem like India's problem, but it's ours as well. We create the international demand for cheap consumer goods and cheap food, regardless of the cost to the people producing it. In this case, that price was paid by five little boys who had their freedom stolen at a train station to meet our demand. And if that's not inspiration to buy local, I don't know what is.

Original story can be found at:

http://humantrafficking.change.org/blog/view/indian_boys_kidnapped_enslaved_to_grow_your_food

Kaminah

For child domestic servants, work is life and all they know

by Amanda Kloer, February 21, 2010

Wanted: Domestic worker. Must be willing to cook, clean, work with garbage, and do all other chores as assigned. No contract available, payment based on employer's mood or current financial situation. No days off. Violence, rape, and sexual harassment may be part of the job.

Would you take that job? No way. But for thousands of child domestic workers in Indonesia, this ad doesn't just describe their job, it describes their life.

A recent CARE International survey of over 200 child domestic workers in Indonesia found that 90% of them didn't have a contract with their employer, and thus no way to legally guarantee them a fair wage (or any wage at all) for their work. 65% of them had never had a day off in their whole employment, and 12% had experienced violence. Child domestic workers remain one of the most vulnerable populations to human trafficking and exploitation. And while work and life may look a little grim for the kids who answered CARE's survey, it's likely that the most abused and exploited domestic workers didn't even have the opportunity to take the survey.

In part, child domestic workers have it so much harder than adults because the people who hire children are more likely looking for someone easy to exploit. Think about it -- if you wanted to hire a domestic worker, wouldn't you choose an adult with a stronger body and more life experience to lift and haul and cook than a kid? If you could get them both for the same price, of course you would. But what if the kid was cheaper, free even, because you knew she wouldn't try and leave if you stopped paying her. Or even if you threatened her with death.

That's exactly what happened to Kaminah. Her employer told Kaminah that they already had a plot of land sat aside and dug for her grave, and that any failure would be enough for the family to kill her and dump her body. She was repeatedly beaten and forced to let the wounds sit, untreated. Her employer mocked her and called her "ugly" because of those wounds. When Kaminah first took the job, she was offered a salary of 400,000 Rp a month, but never saw a penny of it. Her employers were recently sentenced to jail, but Kaminah's life will never be the same.

Child domestic workers like Kaminah live and work all over the world, including right here in the U.S. Many of them are human trafficking victims. The abuse and exploitation of a domestic worker may be harder to uncover, but it is still a crucial human rights issue in need of attention in Indonesia, the U.S, and all over the world.



Original story can be found at: http://humantrafficking.change.org/blog/view/for_child_domestic_servants_work_is_life

Kou

Men also being exploited, trafficked around the world

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia, September 15, 2009 (IRIN)

Kou Channyon's story is typical of many young Cambodian men.

Desperate for work, he was trafficked to Malaysia with the promise of earning more than US\$200 a month in a coffee factory. But after he arrived, his passport was confiscated, and he found himself working 13 hours a day, with barely enough money to cover his living costs. Barred from leaving the factory premises, he did not know if he would ever be able to escape.



"It was exhausting ... I got very little sleep and was paid less than other workers," the 23-year-old farmer's son from southern Kandal Province, told IRIN.

According to the UN Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP), thousands of Cambodians are trafficked annually for the purpose of labour exploitation - a figure expected to increase given the global economic downturn. "The risk factors for an increase are certainly there," Paul Buckley, field operations coordinator for UNIAP, told IRIN in Bangkok, citing job losses, diminished remittances, and rising debt as key indicators.

Cambodian exports have been badly shaken by the global financial crisis, resulting in thousands of workers losing their jobs. "This makes for an easier environment for traffickers to work in," Buckley said, noting the need for more quantifiable data and research.

Earlier this year, the International Labour Organization (ILO) projected that job losses may surpass 45,000 this year, with a disproportionate burden falling on young workers, who already face few employment opportunities.

"Cambodia confronts a growing problem of providing decent work for this young population," said Ya Navuth, executive director of Coordination of Action Research and Mobility (CARAM), a local NGO working to reduce illegal immigration to other countries. "I think the government has to solve the problems of labour exploitation or illegal immigration by increasing the domestic market for labour."

Some of the worst exploited are men and boys who end up on Thai long-haul fishing boats that ply the South China Sea for two years or more at a time, according to a UNIAP study in April 2009.

"The boats become virtual prisons on which the trafficking victims endure inhumane working conditions and physical abuse. Death at sea is frequently reported, sometimes at the hands of Thai boat captains," the study notes.

Cambodia has undertaken a series of measures to curb trafficking, including a 2008 law that recognizes men as potential trafficking victims for the first time, and provides a better legal framework to prosecute traffickers.

But given the fallout from the global economic crisis, tackling illegal immigration and trafficking may prove difficult for the Cambodian government because of its small budgets and limited human resources, said Lim Tith.

Full story can be found at: <http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=86155>

Restavek girl

A quarter million Haitian kids are 'restaveks,' or slaves

by Amanda Kloer, December 30, 2009

If you're a child born to poor parents in Haiti, chances are your career options are slave, slave, or slave. That's because approximately 225,000 children in Haiti live in situations of modern-day slavery. That's nearly a quarter million child slaves in one country. The existence of Haitian child slaves, often referred to as restaveks, has been documented for a long time. However, this is the first time the scope of the issue has truly been understood to be so large.



Restaveks are usually children from extremely poor families who are sent away to work as domestic servants in wealthier homes. The children aren't paid for their work, but provided shelter and a sometimes meager meal supply. In the best case scenarios, families will send their restavek children to school. But restaveks often work long days performing a variety of household tasks for nothing more than a meal or two a day. Two-thirds of restaveks are girls, and they are extremely vulnerable to rape and sexual abuse from the families who house and control them. The life of a restavek child in Haiti often varies between bleak and hopeless, and many children never successfully leave their slave conditions.

This new study of child slavery in Haiti, the largest of its kind to date, was conducted by the Pan American Development Foundation. They found that 22% of children were living away from home, and 30% of households had restavek children in them. The study also uncovered a new trend of movement. While historically, restavek children were sent from rural areas to urban areas, increasingly children are being moved from one urban area to another. Poverty has become a stronger indicator of restavek status than geography.

The system of restaveks in Haiti is strongly rooted in poverty. Poverty pushed families to send children away to work. And desperately trying to remain out of poverty is what pushes the families who take in these children to exploit their labor. While human trafficking is often a demand-driven enterprise, this is a case in which addressing the poverty of the potential supply of victims will seriously reduce the number of trafficked children. While some families might still demand slaves and traffickers will be willing to meet that demand, the scope would be much less without such high poverty levels.

A quarter million child slaves is obscene, especially in a single country. But it's the reality for far too many children in Haiti. In fact, 225,000 too many.

Original story can be found at:

http://humantrafficking.change.org/blog/view/a_quarter_million_haitian_children_are_slaves

Related story and videos can be found at: <http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/americas/12/24/haiti.child.slaves/index.html>

Shadir

Back in school, no longer forced to weave carpets as a slave

by Amanda Kloer, May 18, 2009

Traffickers lure victims in a number of ways, but one common technique is to promise a job opportunity, often abroad. But what seems at first like a good job where one can make good money, can quickly turn into slavery. This is the story of Shadir, from the U.S. Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

Shadir, a boy of 15 years, was offered a job that included good clothes and an education; he accepted. Instead of being given a job, Shadir was sold to a slave trader who took him to a remote village in India to produce hand-woven carpets. He was frequently beaten. He worked 12 to 14 hours a day and he was poorly fed. One day, Shadir was rescued by a NGO working to combat slavery. It took several days for him to realize he was no longer enslaved. He returned to his village, was reunited with his mother, and resumed his schooling. Now Shadir warns fellow village children about the risks of becoming a child slave.



Original story can be found at:

http://humantrafficking.change.org/blog/view/weaving_all_day_shadirs_true_story_of_slavery

Maria

Trafficked and imprisoned, Mexican slave now aids survivors

Maria was taken from her hometown in Mexico at the age of 15, with promises of a well-paying job as a housekeeper for a family in California. Instead, the same woman who offered her the job sold her into slavery to a single, white older male for \$200.

For five long years she was raped and beaten. She was forced to clean 18 to 20 hours a day while her “boss” dug her own grave, reminding her of what would happen if she tried to escape.

After five years, she was freed when her boss was killed by another man. That is, she thought she was finally free, only to learn that she was to be held responsible for his death.

Maria served more than 22 years in prison for a crime she did not commit. That along with five years she spent in forced servitude would be enough horror to make a person unforgiving and ruthless for life. Instead, Maria has been an active member of the Survivor Advisory Caucus at CAST (Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking) since 2003.

For the past five years, she has been a valuable leader and accomplished trainer in CAST’s leadership development program for survivors. She has served as a media spokesperson and conducted numerous newspaper and television interviews to increase public awareness of human trafficking.



Original story and video can be found at: <http://www.castla.org/survivor-stories>

Shyima

Slaves are oftentimes discovered unsuspected as housemaids

Westlake, Calif., February 23, 2010 (Adrienne Alpert, KABC)

As many as 17,000 human slaves are trafficked into the United States every year. Los Angeles is a prime destination. With the city's diverse culture, people from foreign countries blend in. They blend in in agriculture, in sweatshops, and they blend in as the domestic slave next door.

The family who bought an 8-year-old girl for a domestic slave does not live in their house any more, but the home is still impressively big in an Irvine guard-gated community. A garage door hides the place where the girl lived.

The Egyptian girl slept inside the garage when she wasn't working a 16-hour day. In Egypt, Shyima was sold to cover a theft an older sister was accused of. "I went there with my mom to visit and I never went back home," said Shyima.

Now age 20, Shyima can talk about the experience. She was a 10-year-old housekeeper. She cooked and cleaned for the family's five children, who emigrated from Egypt and had Shyima smuggled along to continue working for them, while she slept on a filthy mattress and had to wash her clothes with dish soap.

"Every country has outlawed slavery, and yet it's still taking place and, in fact, is growing," said Kay Buck, executive director, Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST).

Buck cites the number of people working with little or no pay at 27 million worldwide. "It's really the human rights issue of the 21st century," said Buck.

A neighbor finally called authorities three years ago, concerned about the little girl who was always working and never went to school.

Abel Ibrahim was convicted and sentenced to three years in federal prison and deported. His now ex-wife, Amal Motlieb, served nearly two years, and she was deported. They were ordered to pay Shyima \$76,000 for the two years she was their slave.

When asked when she finally realized it was wrong, Shyima said, "When I finally got taken away, and when they told me this is not legal here."

Fear keeps modern day slaves from running away, fear that facing the law will be worse. "She said that the police would arrest me and put me in jail and a lot of bad people that could rape me," said Shyima.

Today, the little girl who was a domestic slave wants to join that army and work for Immigration and Customs Enforcement. "ICE, yes, I'm going right into ICE for all immigration, helping with human trafficking and being out there to rescue others and be part of it," said Shyima.

She is Shyima Hall, adopted by a loving family. She's a college student with a bright future.



Cara & Stacey

Cousins plucked from busy street get crash course in sex trade

by Amanda Kloer, February 12, 2009

A couple years ago, the *Toledo Blade* did a multi-part series on the trafficking of two young girls in Toledo, OH. Their story is both powerful and typical of trafficked children in America.

"In the modest, Midwestern city of Toledo, Ohio, cousins and best friends Cara and Stacy went out one May afternoon for a frosty. It began to rain, and a woman driving a white Lincoln Continental pulled alongside the girls. The man in the passenger seat looked familiar; the girls thought he was a friend's father. The girls asked, and the man claimed he was who they thought, and offered them a ride."

Like many trusting teens, the girls had no thoughts that someone would be out to do them harm in their quite suburban neighborhood. Unfortunately, the man was not their friend's father, but a human trafficker named Derick Willoughby.

"Their 10 days in captivity amounted to a crash course in the business of forced sex. They were given clothes and fake identities, and were taken to hotels around Toledo and forced to perform sex acts. An adult always watched and collected payment. Cara and Stacy learned quickly not to cry or speak without permission. When one girl broke a rule, they told authorities, it was her cousin who took the beating."

Traffickers and pimps are master manipulators, and they understand what it takes to keep each girl in prostitution. Sometimes it's promises of love, sometimes it's rape, and sometimes it's beating the girl's friend instead of her. It's the reality of trafficking of children in the U.S.

Cara and Stacey were eventually rescued and are now safe, hoping to put this horror behind them.

Original story can be found at:

http://humantrafficking.change.org/blog/view/a_crash_course_in_sex_cara_and_staceys_true_story_of_slavery

Related story can be found at:

<http://www.toledoblade.com/apps/pbcs.dll/artikkel?&Dato=20060109&Kategori=NEWS08&Lopenr=601090328&Ref=AR>



Katya

Unsuspecting European women routinely are trafficking victims

TODAY Show, December 3, 2007

In spring of 2004, Katya (not her real name), like thousands of other foreign exchange university students, was looking forward to the summer job placement that she and a friend had received in Virginia Beach, Va. When she and her friend Lena arrived at Dulles Airport after a long flight from Ukraine, they were relieved to be met by fellow countrymen who spoke Russian.

The two men, Alex Maksimenko and Michael Aronov, were holding signs with the girls' names and greeted them by taking their bags and luggage. Charming and reassuring, Aronov informed the girls that they had been reassigned to a job in Detroit where they would waitress and perfect their English language skills.

The men drove Katya and Lena to the Greyhound bus station and gave them tickets to Detroit. Confused and exhausted, the girls had no reason to question the change of plans.

"When we got to the hotel in Detroit, everything changed," says Katya. "They closed the door and sat us down on the couch, took our passports and papers and said, 'You owe us big money for bringing you here.' They gave us strip clothes and told us that we were going to be working at a strip club called Cheetahs."

Shocked and scared, the two women were subjected to physical, mental and sexual abuse over the next year as they were forced to work 12-hour shifts stripping for local Detroit men's clubs. According to immigration customs agent Angus Lowe, the men controlled the women through intimidation with guns and threats to hurt family members back home.

Katya and her friend are two of the estimated 17,000 young women and girls annually who are forced to work in the sex industry in the U.S. by organized criminals. "Chicago, Houston, St. Paul, Minnesota, these crimes are happening in every community in America big and small," says Marcie Forman, director of investigations for ICE (Immigration Customs Enforcement). "We're talking about money here. Millions of dollars, and these people don't think about these women as human beings. They think of them as dollars and cents," Forman says.

In February 2005, after months of planning and finally confiding in a customer from the strip club, the two girls escaped and were brought to the FBI and ICE. Their escape resulted in the arrest of Alex Maksimenko and Michael Aronov, both of whom pleaded guilty and are serving time in federal prison for their crimes.

Even though her captors are in prison, Katya says she will never live without fear. Maksimenko's father — who was also convicted of forced labor and illegal trafficking — continues to live openly in Ukraine as a fugitive from authorities.



Original story can be found at: <http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/22083762>

Full story can be found at: <http://today.msnbc.msn.com/id/22083762/#ixzz0kXDyW4YT>

Videos of many other stories of European women like Katya can be seen at: <http://www.priceofsex.org>

Lisa

Sex trafficking finding its way to American Indian girls, women

By Amanda Kloer, January 18, 2010

All over the world, indigenous populations are highly vulnerable to trafficking into commercial sex industries. Here in the U.S., the American Indian population is no exception. Unfortunately, sex trafficking among this population is rarely studied. The following is a brief look at sex trafficking of American Indians in the U.S. For a more in-depth analysis, check out this recent report out of Minnesota.

One Native woman, let's call her Lisa, told a social service agency her story. At the age of 12, Lisa's mother began selling her to other men on the reservation, to support her mother's crack habit. To cope with the pain of being raped repeatedly at her mother's behest, Lisa turned to drugs as well. By the time she was 14, Lisa used the only way to earn money she knew to support her addiction -- she began recruiting other young American Indian girls into the sex trade. This system of exploitation rippled through Lisa's community, until she was eventually able to get out.

Lisa's story is not unusual. Some advocates claim cultural trauma and a history of exploitation and abuse of American Indians allows traffickers to get a foothold in these communities. Other experts point to a number of risk factors that influence other populations -- high rates of runaway or throwaway youth, normalization of sex for children, drug and alcohol addiction, and social systems failures. All these risk factors are present in some American Indian communities, and in many cases the problems are acute. American Indians also face many of the same barriers members of other traditionally marginalized communities face, like lack of educational opportunities and cycles of poverty which can be hard to break.

Addressing the exploitation of Indian Americans can be challenging, especially for those living in areas governed by tribal law. Often, young girls living on reservations are taken outside the reservation and sold for sex in nearby cities. Therefore, fighting this form of trafficking takes cooperation between tribal authorities and those from outside the tribal area. Some NGOs are working to train both tribal and city-based law enforcement to recognize trafficking across jurisdictions within the U.S., but more work is needed. Additionally, once traffickers are apprehended, it can sometimes be difficult to determine which authority should prosecute them.

The challenges American Indian women and girls face when it comes to sexual exploitation and trafficking are similar to those other native and indigenous populations face, including those in Australia, Canada, and other formerly colonized countries. It's important to consider the unique needs of all native peoples and include them in broad national plans to address human trafficking in that country.



Original story can be found at:

http://humantrafficking.change.org/blog/view/sex_trafficking_of_american_indian_girls_and_women

Theresa

Sex trafficking survivor now runs home for rescued victims

By Kelsey Cano, University of Dayton Flyer News, Nov. 12, 2009

She wasn't a person, and to them, she didn't have an identity. They didn't value her as a human, only as a body that could be exploited for sex.

But, she does have a name. Her name is Theresa Flores, and she's a survivor of modern day slavery.

Flores, who grew up in an upper-middle class family near Detroit, was sexually exploited for two years, beginning when she was 15 years old.

On Tuesday, Flores spoke as part of a panel for the Dayton Human Trafficking Accords. Discussing her experiences in human trafficking never gets easier. As the last one to speak, Flores stood at the podium, instead of remaining in her seat as others on the panel had done. It's still hard enough that she needs to hold onto the podium as a form of support. "One decision you make can change the rest of your life," she said.

For Flores, that decision was getting into a car with a boy who offered to drive her home. Having just moved to a new town and being the new kid at school, Flores appreciated the attention from him and other men. But, instead of driving her home, the boy drove her to his house. "I was taken to his home where I was drugged and raped," she said.

The hardest part, Flores explained, was losing her virginity in the rape. Being raised in an Irish Catholic family, she had planned to remain a virgin until marriage. She was devastated. The next day, Flores was shown pictures that had been taken during the rape.

"They said they would show my parents, my dad's boss, my priest and post the pictures at school," Flores said. "They said I had to earn them back."

For the next two years, Flores was used by this group of men for sex until she could "earn" her pictures back. The traffickers would call her during the night and drive her to mansions where she was forced to have sex. "There was no way to escape until they were done," she said.

Flores explained that in those two years she was trafficked, she learned traffickers don't value people. She became unwillingly aware of this fact one night when older gentleman at a mansion asked her what her name was. The trafficker there responded, "She has no name. Why would it matter?"

The worst night of those two years, Flores explained, occurred when she was driven to a dirty hotel in inner-city Detroit and dragged into a hotel room. After being dragged into a small room, two dozen men waited for her. "They said it was a reward for all my hard work," Flores said.

Flores was auctioned off to the highest bidder, and the next day, she woke up with no money or clothes. She eventually made her way to a diner, and said a waitress asked if she was okay. "She was the only person that helped in those two years," she said.

Now, instead of looking back on the ordeal, Flores is moving forward and helping young girls avoid, or survive,

(OVER, please)



human trafficking. Flores is now the spokeswoman and director of awareness and training for Gracehaven, a safe home for girls under 18 who have been the victims of human trafficking. The shelter is the fourth of its kind in the entire U.S., the first in Ohio and also the first faith-based shelter.

Flores is also raising awareness about human trafficking and its misconceptions. "You can open the paper and see an article about a 16-year-old arrested for prostitution," she said. She explained that these girls are being pimped out, and we need to stop treating them as criminals, and rather as victims.

Flores experienced misconceptions about human trafficking when she appeared on the Today Show. After appearing, the site received 280 comments, 90 percent of which were negative. People would ask, "Why didn't you just leave?" she said.

"We have to change our ideals," Flores said. "People don't understand the bondage doesn't have to be physical. It can be mental."

Flores hasn't lost faith that human trafficking, a modern day form of slavery, can end. "I do believe we can stop slavery. Even when it was happening to me, I never lost faith or hope that it would stop tomorrow."

Related stories can be found at:

<http://www.uaelawdirectory.com/html/dayton.html>

<http://www.springfieldnewssun.com/news/springfield-news/victim-of-human-trafficking-ring-shares-her-story-93689.html>

Timea

Accomplished young woman ends up an immigrant sex slave

Born of a police woman and painter in Budapest, Hungary in 1977, Timea's extraordinary journey began. Along with her older brother, Zoltan, Timea suffered through her parents tumultuous marriage and subsequent divorce as a child.

In spite of difficult family circumstances, Timea toured as an accomplished soprano and excelled in school. From volunteering to athletics to art and music, a passion for teaching quickly unfolded. As life would have it, a spine injury would change those plans.

It was during the recovery from injury Timea was moved by musical artist, Pierrot, while confined to bed. The melodies and lyrics provided the needed inspiration to move forward and heal. Out of her profound appreciation, it became her mission to spread the word about Pierrot and his music. After meeting the singer in summer of 1991, Timea launched and managed his fan club over the next 5 years growing it from a handful to well over 1,500 active members to this day.

Because of the success and knowledge gained through Pierrot and the Hungarian music scene, Timea landed an intern position with the local TV station, Csepp-TV, where she created a successful local show for the teenage market which then further opened doors in the music industry.

Her talent was quickly recognized by industry experts. She worked with established labels such as EMI, Sony Music Hungary, BMG Ariola Hungary, Warner Hungary and Polygram.

Before her 20th birthday, Timea made what was to become an extraordinary and life-changing decision to visit and work in Canada for the summer of 1998 to earn extra income during a lull in the music video production market. She answered an advertisement and spoke with an articulate woman who told her she could work as a housekeeper, nanny or nightclub dancer, which sounded like a good opportunity to explore another culture and save some money for her future.

On April 18, 1998, Timea arrived at Terminal 3 in the Pearson International Airport. Filled with excitement for a summer of adventure, Timea was whisked away by her employers, stripped of her identification, and informed her work contract was in fact of an exotic dancer – not what an intelligent, sweet and naïve young lady from Hungary would have ever dreamed for herself.

Here starts the journey of an immigrant sex slave.

Timea was forced to work as a sex slave in Toronto, Canada for the following 3 months including numerous occasions of sexual assault at her employer's hands as well as a Canadian agent - a living nightmare.

On August 18, 1998, she miraculously escaped her captors and made it back to Budapest, Hungary.

But yet again, life had other plans. While she thought she was returning home to safety, instead she was in even



(OVER, please)

greater danger as the Hungarian police failed to protect her. Against all reason, she went back to Canada where she actually felt more secure.

In March of 1999, Timea contacted and began working with Detective Bert O'Mara with the Canadian police force who headed up a joint task force, Project Almonzo, consisting of Immigration, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and other social organizations to clean up the exotic industry in the Greater Toronto Area and to bring her own captors to justice.

Unfortunately in March of 2004 after 6 long years, the trail ended finding her employer and sexual assaulter not guilty on all charges. More disappointments would follow.

As if that wasn't devastating enough, her boyfriend and roommate at the time took his own life only one week later in their shared home. And to add more salt to the wound, Timea's work permit expired with the closing of the court case; she lost her job and hit the financial skids. She was understandably devastated and on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

Even then, she wasn't ready to go to Hungary because she was terrified she might be hunted down by the Hungarian Organized Crime members she successfully put in jail in 1999. Through a series of fateful twists and turns, Timea was granted Permanent Resident status in February of 2005 by the Canadian government, which began her return to wholeness.

As part of Timea's journey to heal and forgive the pain of the past, as well show appreciation for all those who helped her along the way, she has been giving back to the country and community that eventually treated her with kindness.

Timea has shared her vision of hope through answering suicide hotlines, distress calls for the United Way, as well as developing a number of fundraising events for youth-oriented organizations such as Future Aces Foundation. Out of that experience and strong desire to affect change, she founded No More Violence, a project designed at stopping gun and youth violence in North America.

Timea is certain proof we each have the opportunity and choice to live full and joyful lives in spite of difficult circumstances. As a living example of grace in action, Timea is guided by unseen hands in everything she does to this day and the best is truly yet to come!

Original story can be found at:

http://humantrafficking.change.org/blog/view/from_budapest_to_toronto_timea_evas_true_story_of_slavery

Related stories can be found at:

<http://www.kmbc.com/newslinks/20668959/detail.html>

<http://www.wix.com/timea77/Timea-E-Nagy-Bio>

<http://www.wix.com/timea77/Walk-with-me>

<http://in-the-news.webs.com/>