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Human Trafficking Commission Meeting

150 E. Gay St, 18th Floor,
Columbus, Ohio
October 12th, 2011

In Attendance:

Melinda Sykes, Ohio Attorney General's Office
Karen Rainey, LWV Ohio
Linda McNelly, Stop Human Trafficking Dayton
David Moser, Governor's Office
Maggie Toal (for Jai Chabria), Governor's Office
Aaron Dennis, CPD
Brent L. Currence, Ohio Attorney General's Office
Amanda Poole, Salvation Army
Alisa Bartel, University of Dayton
Tony Talbott, Abolition Ohio
Vicki German, Ohio Attorney General's Office
Mark Bollard, DHS-HSI
Christine Barrett, Ohio Attorney General's Office
Valerie Kunze, Ohio Public Defender
Gene Kelly, Sheriff Clark County
Mark Ensalaco, University of Dayton & Abolition Ohio
Gene Jarvi, OSP Investigations
Erin Cordle, Catholic Diocese of Columbus & Office for Social Concerns
Brooke Boswell, Senator Jim Hughes
Sandra Holt, ODJFS
Jeff Barrows, Gracehaven
Theresa Flores, Gracehaven
Shane Stegmiller, Hannah News
Alex Kreidenweis, OH Abolitionist Coalition
Kate Hanson, Ohio Attorney General's Office
Miranda Shield, Ohio Attorney General's Office
Lauren Hancock, Ruling Our Experiences Inc.
Greg Dalga, HSI
Heather Hill, USAO
Kristin Cadieux, FBI
Kelsey Bail, The Salvation Army
Crystal Ward-Allen, PCSAO
Representative Teresa Fedor
Michelle Hannan, The Salvation Army
Trisha Smouse, The Salvation Army
Krista Allison, ODE
Stephanie Krider, Ohio Right To Life
Debra Seltzer, ODH
John Murphy, Ohio Prosecuting Attorney's Office

Marianne T. Hemmeter – Ohio Attorney General's Office
Lisa Hinkelman, Ruling Our Experiences
Liz Tiemeier, NASW-OH
Lisa Miriello, FBI

On The Phone:

Celia Williamson – University of Toledo

Minutes

Melinda Sykes called the meeting to order. She thanked everyone for attending today. The first thing discussed was the need to fill the two chair openings for the Law Enforcement subcommittee, and Demand Reduction subcommittee.

The Chairs for the six subcommittees include:

- Research Analysis – Dr. Williamson
- Prevention Outreach – Crystal Ward-Allen
- Legal Legislation – Judge Peter Sikora
- Victims & Safe Locations – Michelle Hannan
- Law Enforcement – Sheriff Gene Kelly (Volunteered to chair this subcommittee at the commission meeting)
- Demand Reduction – Debra Seltzer offered to co-chair

A Victims Services representative spoke next about the steps they are taking towards combating the Human Trafficking problem in Ohio.

- Currently they are developing a peer review process.
- They will conduct a peer review of victims services in order to help different agencies better address this problem, more specifically, know what steps to take when working with a trafficked victim.
 - o Specifically cater this concept to human trafficking
 - o They are planning to share this concept with Task Force & Ohio Coalition.
 - o As of now they have an intern working on putting these contacts together, and should have more substantial material on this in a month.

Julie at BCI explained the process of how BCI receives information on trafficked victims, and the best way in to get the information to them.

- Any tips that anyone would like to send to BCI should be called in to BCI.
- Once these tips are called in, they will relay this information to the field officers so that they will be able to investigate these leads.
- BCI does not work alone in this process. They work with local law enforcement in order to get the help to where it's needed as quickly as possible. By working with local law enforcement they are better able to serve the victim, as well as, create future networking connections that can prove to be very helpful.

Representative Fedor then spoke about the Safe Harbor Law that she is trying to get passed

- We will be sure to send the bill to the legal and legislative subcommittee, so that they can comment on the bill
- As of now, we do not have the infrastructure in place to help trafficking victims as proposed in the legislation; however we are working on passing a policy through legislation in order to accomplish this.

- Our biggest hurdle with this proposition is funding. We are trying to make sure we have enough funding in order to have more victim's services.
- Representative Fedor believes that the legislation itself will first be passed and then be tailored to fit the needs of specific trends that we see happening in Ohio.
- The next topic we discussed was House Bill 262 and what the next step was in getting help to underage victims. In order to help answer this Celia Williamson talked about her research in Toledo.

Celia Williamson discussed via teleconference, the new sites that she has incorporated in her surveys. She plans on having preliminary results by December.

Following Celia Williamson's description of her research, Alex Kreidenweis spoke about his research and all the people he is currently surveying.

- Alex is building on Celia's research as he conducts interviews of his own through the University of Dayton.
- His research will survey those working with the human trafficking issue to see what their perspectives are on the issue.
- He is currently researching the possibility of a unitary frame that each agency can use in order to identify and combat human trafficking in Ohio.

Gene Kelly and the Law Enforcement Sub Committee then spoke about creating better law enforcement networks and contacts across the state in order to become more efficient at combating human trafficking.

- We discussed having a bi-monthly meeting for law enforcement so that they can discuss new issues that arise in their field with regards to human trafficking.
- Law enforcement will also make sure to work with BCI so that they can help create a better network of information in order to combat this problem.
- As of now Toledo is the only city working on this type of network, but it is starting to spread to agencies in different cities across Ohio.

Melinda Sykes then talked about how other states are combating this issue, specifically New Mexico. The difference between federal and state laws with regards to human trafficking was then discussed, and how we can use some of those ideas to help our situation in Ohio. Melinda suggested that the law enforcement subcommittee create a Law Enforcement Guide to Human Trafficking similar to the one created by the New Mexico Attorney General.

Law enforcement then explained the issue of some victims falling through the cracks of our system. In order to help fix this problem, law enforcement is trying to get more information from the victim so that they can be more effective. With this information they will be better able to identify girls who are at a higher risk.

The Victim Services group then notified the commission of the legal representation for victims seminar they had on September 28th. This seminar was for lawyers and counselors, which will help train them in how to interact with victims and hopefully generate more representation for victims.

Michelle Hannan from the Salvation Army notified the commission of the grant that they received from the Victims of Crimes Services on October 1st. They are to work with Gracehaven in order to increase training and awareness by getting volunteers to help them get more support from different communities. Currently, the Salvation Army works with 14 different counties.

Crystal Ward-Allen of the Prevention Outreach subcommittee the notified us of how Ken Lawson is currently putting together a training curriculum for secondary schools across the state. Promotion for this will be happening on Oct. 21st.

- In early August the Strengthen Child Welfare Act was introduced
- This act helps on the federal and state level.
- They also mentioned the possibility of increasing the age of a foster child who is the victim of human trafficking to be able to remain in care until the age of 21, so that they can remain in foster care services.
 - o This has not yet been discussed in Ohio.
- They are able to track and report victims by entering them into the NCIC.
- This legislation also would make residential services for juvenile trafficking victims eligible for child welfare funds.
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Jeff Barrows of Gracehaven then notified the commission that they have a new staff member and should be open by the 1st quarter of 2012. This will be the first residential facility for minor human trafficking victims.

Representative Fedor then notified the commission that on January 12th they will be hosting an event to help spread the word about the Safe Harbor Act. As of now only five states are working with her on this.

Following Representative Fedor, Tony Talbott explained to the commission that he is working on a High School curriculum to be used around the state to help make students aware of human trafficking. Melinda will be sending this to all of the Commission members for their review.

Adjourned.