

OUTREACH MINISTRY—OUR PARISH NETWORK OF CHARITY



Our Parish **SHEPHERD** PROJECT

STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION—PROTECT, HELP, EMPOWER AND RESTORE DIGNITY



LOOK BENEATH THE SURFACE

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IS MODERN-DAY SLAVERY

A victim of trafficking may look like many of the people you see everyday.

Ask the right questions and look for clues. You are vital because you may be the only outsider with the opportunity to speak with a victim.

There are safe housing, health, immigration, food, income, employment, legal and interpretation services available to victims, but first they must be found.



MEET DANIEL

Daniel was sent to the U.S. when he was 13. His parents, who were very poor, arranged for him to work in a restaurant for his “auntie”. He worked every day of the week and slept in the back of the restaurant. He never went to school and was told that he had to work to repay his debt to his smugglers. After that was repaid, he was told his wages would be sent home to his family. Daniel wanted to help his family so he did what he was told.

After two years, his debt was still not repaid and he was being increasingly mistreated by his “auntie”. A customer suspected something was wrong and called Child Protective Services. Daniel was rescued and placed with a foster family who helped him enroll in school and reclaim his childhood.

When does it become trafficking?

Labor exploitation rises to the level of labor trafficking when the victim is made to believe, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion that he or she cannot quit and has no other choice but to continue to work. Common means of control include:

Force – Physical and/or sexual abuse; restrictions on movement or confinement to the hotel property or an apartment supplied by the trafficker; constant surveillance.

Fraud – Misrepresentation of the work, working conditions, wages, and immigration benefits of the job; altered or bogus contracts; non-payment or underpayment of wages; visa fraud e.g. allowing a legitimate visa to expire or failing to provide a promised visa, thereby increasing the worker’s vulnerability to threats of deportation and limiting his or her alternative job options.

Coercion – Verbal abuse; threats of harm to the victim or the victim’s family members; threats of deportation or police involvement; isolation; exploitation of a foreign national worker’s unfamiliarity with the language, laws and customs of the US; debt manipulation; unreasonable deductions and fees for visas, transportation, rent, food and/or uniforms.

Open the eyes of our hearts Lord, we wish to see what You see and hear what You hear

Have you ever had the feeling that something didn't seem quite right about your interaction with someone you encountered? Although Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery often occur behind closed doors or in secrecy, the exploitation of human beings also occurs in broad daylight where individuals may unknowingly encounter someone who is enslaved. Simply being aware of human trafficking indicators is the first step in making a difference in the lives of those who may be entrapped.

Don't Ignore the Signs:

- ⇒ Unable to leave the work environment
- ⇒ Has limited contact with family or friends
- ⇒ They are an adult, but someone else controls their movement
- ⇒ Not allowed to speak for themselves or someone else always answers basic questions on their behalf
- ⇒ Shows visible fear or anxiety, but avoids eye contact
- ⇒ Repeatedly has unexplained injuries or bruises
- ⇒ Has no form of formal identification, such as a passport, license, state ID
- ⇒ Receives little or no payment
- ⇒ Works excessively long hours over long periods



If you would like more information about how you can help us in these efforts, please contact our Outreach Ministry at caritas@sacredhearhouston.org