



# **EASTERN SHORE HUMAN TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE**

**Moving forward to combat this evil together**

## **MEETING SUMMARY**

**June 2, 2017**

Following is a summary of the highlights of the discussions that took place during the Friday, June 2 meeting of the Eastern Shore Human Trafficking Task Force (TF) held at Christ Church in Easton.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

Marion Barnett	Carol Kunkel
Anne Beane	Kathleen Maloney
Kristen Berkowich	Leigh Sandifer
Sheriff Joe Gamble	MaryAnn Schindler
Carol Gordean	Diane Shaffer
Kim Hendricks	Becky Smith
Ann Holladay	Ed Thomas
Ann Hynes	

Everyone introduced themselves indicating their interest in Human Trafficking.

1. Sheriff Gamble described the initiative he is leading, “Talbot Goes Purple,” a substance abuse awareness program that will engage the community and youth to stand against substance abuse. As background he provided some statistics:
  - 8% of Talbot County high school seniors have tried heroin
  - 91 Americans die every day from an opioid overdose
  - 80% of heroin users started with recreational use of prescription painkillers

He emphasized that opioid abuse is already a crisis in Talbot County, on the eastern shore and throughout Maryland and indicated that it will get worse before it gets better.

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A highlight of this endeavor will be the participation of former NBA player and former drug abuser Chris Herren in two in-school assemblies on September 19 and 20 and in a community event at 7:00 pm September 19. Joe described the many parts of the Purple Project and the gratifying way in which the Talbot communities and business have become engaged and supportive. He thanked the Task Force for becoming a Purple Project sponsor. Thereby, the ESHTTF is a partner/sponsor for the Project Purple events in Sept. Our name and logo will appear on their advertising and program. Ann stressed that she will explore with Sheriff Gamble how the TF members can become involved. Joe concluded by pointing out that legislation dealing with drug abuse has been enacted recently and more will be considered during the 2018 session of the General Assembly.

2. Ed Thomas summarized a recent national report describing how Google is spending millions of dollars and making their lobbyists available in support of Backpage (a notorious internet prostitution and trafficking website) and working to prevent strengthening the federal Communications Decency Act which unintentionally makes it difficult to successfully prosecute pornography cases. The report and an online petition were sent to TF members.
3. MaryAnn Schindler provided an update regarding the Artworks for Freedom events that will take place in September in Easton including photo stories, paintings, panel discussions, music and other forms of artwork many created by trafficking survivors. She pointed out that there will be an education component. A website is being created and there will be coordination with the Project Purple. The events will take place six days a week over a three week period thus many volunteers will be needed. Some TF members indicated they will be available. MaryAnn will update the TF after their upcoming general board meeting. Ann Holladay will check with Becky Anthony to see if Salisbury U. students may get involved. Carol Kunkle described the quilt she made to be part of Artworks. After Easton Artworks will move to Washington D C.
4. Diane Shaffer introduced Becky Smith who described her experiences during a recent human trafficking missions trip to the Manila area in the Philippines. Much of the activity was going into bars and strip clubs to engage the girls and try to rescue them, lead them into a different lifestyle. She pointed out that poverty and lack of education aids trafficking recruitment and sex tourism fosters the trafficking of young girls and boys.

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5. Leigh Sandifer described her association with Seraphim Global an international human trafficking education, training and research organization. Leigh lives in Berlin on the lower eastern shore and is considering undertaking some HT activities as she reduces her Seraphim commitment in Arlington perhaps some structured fact finding or service directory efforts. She pointed out the labor trafficking that takes place in Ocean City. We will explore ways in which Leigh and the ESHTTF can cooperate.
  
6. Ed described the University of Baltimore, School of Law, Trafficking Prevention Program, Maryland Volunteer Lawyers Service initiative. He explained that the TF will host a meeting of social service providers on July 12<sup>th</sup> when Jessica Emerson and Laurie Culkan from the University of Baltimore School of Law will provide information and training for how the free post-conviction legal services will be provided for human trafficking survivors. TF participants were invited to attend.

**NEXT MEETING:** The next meeting will be held on July 12<sup>th</sup> after the MVLS meeting described above, which will begin at noon at Christ Church in Easton, wraps up.

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