January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month

Labor Trafficking

Labor Trafficking is a form of modern day slavery in which individuals perform labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. According the Polaris Project, there are more then 16 million victims of labor trafficking globally.

Traffickers who exploit people for forced labor do not discriminate. Neither do employers: Victims can be any age, race, religious affiliation, gender identity, or nationality. They may also come from any socioeconomic group. Certain risk factors, however, may make certain individuals more vulnerable to forced labor than others. These include:

- Unstable immigration status

- Language barriers

- Poverty and lack of basic needs like food, shelter, and safety

- The psychological effects of a recent or past trauma

Forms of Labor Trafficking:

- Bonded labor, or debt bondage, is probably the least known form of labor trafficking today, and yet it is the most widely used method of enslaving people. Victims become bonded laborers when their labor is demanded as a means of repayment for a loan or service in which its terms and conditions have not been defined or in which the value of the victims' services as reasonably assessed is not applied toward the liquidation of the debt.

- Forced labor is a situation in which victims are forced to work against their own will, under the threat of violence or some other form of punishment, their freedom is restricted, and a degree of ownership is exerted. Forms of forced labor can include domestic servitude; agricultural labor; sweatshop factory labor; janitorial, food service and other service industry labor; and begging.

- Child labor is a form of work that is likely to be hazardous to the health and/or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development of children and can interfere with their education. The International Labor Organization estimates worldwide that there are 246 million exploited children aged between 5 and 17 involved in debt bondage, forced recruitment for armed conflict, prostitution, pornography, the illegal drug trade, the illegal arms trade and other illicit activities around the world.

Online Trafficking

Between 2019 and 2020, traditional trafficking recruitment sites such as bus stations, strip clubs, mental health facilities, and private foster homes, all experienced significant declines. At the same time, websites such as Facebook and Instagram experienced an increase in trafficking.

Commonly used tactics offenders use:

- False identities: Traffickers often create fake profiles, pretending to be someone the child knows or can relate to, such as a peer or a trustworthy adult.

    - Offenders may use attractive profile pictures and fabricate personal details to deceive the child into believing they are interacting with a genuine person.

- Sharing explicit content: Predators may request or exchange explicit images or videos with children, often starting with innocent or flirty conversations and gradually escalating to more explicit content.

    - Once the predator obtains compromising material, they can use it as leverage to manipulate and blackmail the child into further exploitation.

- Online coercion and threats: Traffickers may employ coercion, threats, or intimidation tactics to force children to comply with their demands.

    - They may threaten to harm the child, their family, or their reputation if they do not comply with their requests.

- Absence of control from parents or caregivers or their lack of knowledge: Traffickers often target children whose parents are absent, not adequately monitoring their online activities, or unaware of the potential risks of trafficking and exploitation online.

    - Offenders take advantage of the lack of parental supervision to establish contact and groom the child without detection.

- Online peer pressure: Some traffickers recruit children by leveraging peer pressure: they may introduce the child to a group or online community where exploitation is normalized, and other children are already involved.

    - Through manipulation and the desire to fit in, the child may be coerced into engaging in sexual activities or agree to meet offline.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Types of Trafficking	Social Media Platforms					
	Facebook	Instagram	Snapchat	Chat Apps*	Dating Sites & Apps	YouTube
Agriculture & Animal Husbandry	●			●		●
Arts, Sports & Entertainment	●	●				
Bars, Strip Clubs & Cantinas	●	●				●
Domestic Work	●			●		
Escort Services	●	●	●	●	●	
Illicit Massage Businesses	●	●		●		
Outdoor Solicitation	●	●	●			
Personal Sexual Servitude	●	●	●	●	●	
Pornography	●	●		●		●
Remote Interactive Sexual Acts			●	●	●	
Restaurants & Food Services	●			●		
Travelling Sales Crew	●	●	●			●

*Kik, KaKaoTalk, WeChat, WhatsApp

** Each dot can represent one or more touch points throughout a trafficking life cycle.

** The cases above are based off of analysis of 40,000+ cases of potential human trafficking and 11,000+ cases of potential labour exploitation.

**The following cases only represent the cases that occurred in the United States and where the type of trafficking or labour exploitation was known.

** The data referencing cases is for the timeframe of 7 December, 2007 – 31 December, 2017.

Keeping Youth Safe Online

- Discuss Internet Safety and Develop an Online Safety Plan with children before they engage in online activity. Establish clear guidelines, teach children to spot red flags, and encourage children to have open communication with you.

- Supervise young children's use of the Internet, including periodically checking their profiles and posts. Keep electronic devices in open, common areas of the home and consider setting time limits for their use.

- Review games, apps, and social media sites, before they are downloaded or used by children. Pay particular attention to apps and sites that feature end-to-end encryption, direct messaging, video chats, file uploads, and user anonymity, which are frequently relied upon by online child predators.

- Adjust Privacy settings and use parental controls: for online games, apps, social medial sites, and electronic devices.

- Tell Children to Avoid sharing personal information, photos and videos online in public forums or with people they do not know in real life. Explain to your children that images posted online will be permanently on the internet.

- Teach children about body safety and boundaries including the importance of saying 'no' to inappropriate requests both in the physical world and the virtual world.

- Be alert to potential signs of abuse, including changes in children's use of electronic devices, attempts to conceal online activity, withdrawn behavior, angry outbursts, anxiety, and depression.

- Encourage children to tell a parent, guardian, or other trusted adult if anyone asks them to engage in sexual activity or other inappropriate behavior.

Snapchat — One of the most popular apps in recent years. While it promises users can take photo/video and it will disappear, new features including stories allow users to view content for up to 24 hours. Snapchat also allows users to see your location on their Snap Map.	**WhatsApp** — A popular messaging app that allows users to send texts, photos, voicemail, make calls and video chats worldwide. WhatsApp uses an internet connection on smartphones and computers.
Kik — A mobile that allows anyone to contact and direct message your child. Kids can bypass traditional text messaging features. Kik gives users unlimited access to anyone, anywhere, anytime.	**MeetMe** — A dating social media app that allows users to connect with people based on geographic proximity. As the name suggests, users are encouraged to meet each other in person.
Whisper — An anonymous social network that promotes sharing secrets with strangers. It also reveals a user's location so people can meet up.	**Live.Me** — A live-streaming video app that uses geolocation to share videos so users can find out a broadcaster's exact location. Users can earn "coins" as a way to "pay" minors for photos.
Discord — An app that allows users to talk to friends and strangers in real-time via voice, text, or video chat while playing video games.	**TikTok** — An app popular with kids for creating and sharing short videos. With very limited privacy controls, users are vulnerable to cyberbullying and explicit content.

Apps

PARENTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

McFarland is a small community south of Madison in Dane County. In January of 2017, a group of concerned citizens came together to discuss substance abuse problems in the McFarland area. The McFarland RADAR is a result of these meetings

We are comprised of local representatives from schools, businesses, churches, village administration as well as parents, and youth—all working together to promote healthy lifestyles

For more information go to: https://www.radarmc.com/

For time, day and place of meetings, please contact Cathy Kalina at CathyK@fsmad.org

McFarland RADAR Mission Statement

"*The mission of McFarland's RADAR Coalition is to promote healthy lifestyles in the McFarland area through alcohol and drug abuse prevention and education efforts.*"

The McFarland RADAR (RADAR stands for Relevant Alcohol & Drug Awareness Resources) Coalition works to develop, implement and support environmental strategies to reduce substance abuse.

We believe by working together, we can nurture social and environmental changes to make the McFarland area a safer and healthier place, brightening the future of our children, youth and families.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

We are asking you to give the gift of time. Make a difference in the lives of our youth and our community by

1. Working with us in providing support for planning, project management and awareness campaigns

2. Helping with coalition events, conferences, workshops, and fairs held throughout the year.

3. Being a voice for change in our community, it is time to come together and be that force for change in the McFarland area.