



The Human Anti-trafficking Response Team (**HART**) was created in order to focus on and reduce Child Trafficking in Connecticut.

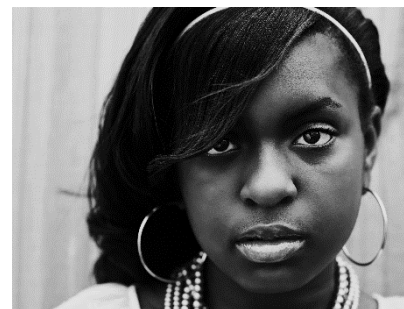
Webpage: <http://www.portal.ct.gov/DCF/HART/HART>

Let's Talk About Race and Human Trafficking

Written by: Yvette Young, Bree'Ana Johnson, Christopher Bidorini and Erin Williamson

Human trafficking is defined as “the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a person for sex or labor.”

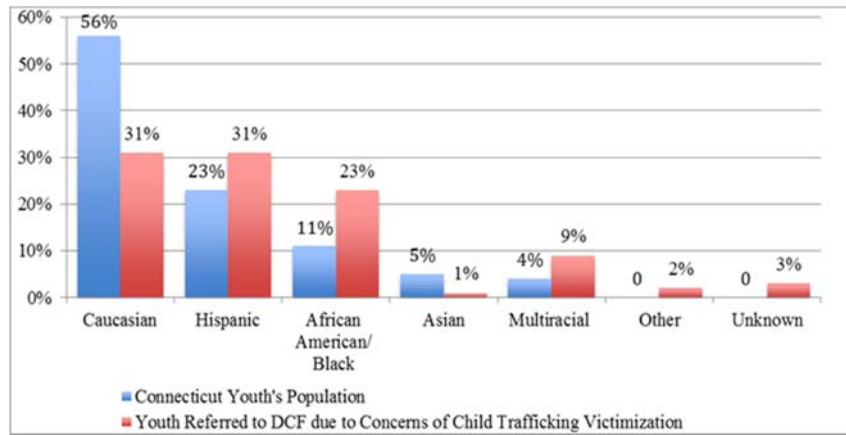
Throughout the past decade, human trafficking has been identified as a major criminal, social and public health issue in the United States. For many years, the dominant narrative portrayed international trafficking as a critical issue and directed efforts to eradicating it completely. The reality is that child trafficking in the United States is extremely prevalent, and even more prevailing is the correlation between human trafficking and race: “The racialized sexual exploitation of people of color that developed during slavery and colonization impacts cultural expectations and beliefs about the availability and use of children of color for commercial sex today.” (*The Racial Roots of Human Trafficking*, UCLA Law Review, 2015).



Racism and oppression are deeply embedded and perpetuated in human trafficking, given the immense racial subordination with respect to people of color. This is especially true when it comes to the sexual exploitation of minors. Many of us are well aware of the vulnerable populations in which trafficked persons derive – varying from undocumented migrants, runaways, at-risk youth, oppressed or marginalized groups, and those impacted by poverty. Our data indicate that there is a disproportionate number of children of color being trafficked in Connecticut. Of the 210 referrals that DCF received in 2018 for high-risk or confirmed victims of human trafficking, 153 of those referrals were children of color. That number equates to 73% of all referrals.

The following graph highlights this issue further, comparing the number of trafficking victims referred to DCF and the race of Connecticut’s youth population:

Race of Youth Referred to DCF Due to Concerns of Child Trafficking Compared to the Race of Connecticut’s Youth Population, 2015-2017



Due to the disproportionate number of children of color who are trafficked each year, human trafficking is a racial justice issue. It is time that we begin to have a comprehensive conversation about this matter in order to identify the root causes and be proactive about dismantling systems that perpetuate this crime. In efforts to combat this issue, our conversations and practices must be racially inclusive. We must consistently discuss the connections between trafficking, migration, poverty, racism and gender in an effort to destroy the roots of racial oppression and human trafficking. The notion that anyone can be a victim of trafficking is true. However, the fact that the majority of victims are people of color should not be undermined or understated. It is imperative that we address this issue so we can prevent our children from experiencing this form of victimization.

The following is a survivor’s account of how race played a role in their human trafficking victimization:

Survivor Reflection

“At the time of my victimization, I didn’t know what human trafficking was, but I knew that being a person of color didn’t make it any easier. Many of my buyers, both male and female, were white. To be ‘purchased’ is the ultimate feeling of objectification. The buyer was in charge and the victim was inferior – that was pretty clear. During that hour or so, they owned your body, but it often felt like they owned you. These power dynamics, combined with racial differences, heightened the perceived feeling of inferiority. The concept of racism is based on a belief that one’s race is superior, so the purchasing of a person of color by a white molester could easily be experienced as a (possibly unintended) act of racism.

America is a melting pot, and we often refer to Americans in reference to their heritage: African-American, Asian-American, Native-American... but we rarely say European-American. Caucasian is considered the norm and everyone else is a sub-category of sorts. The sex industry is no different. Pull up the categories on any pornographic website: Ebony, Latina, Asian, Interracial. White is standard and everything else is a specialty, a fetish and a subcategory. The life of trafficking is also no different. If someone bought you, it was because they wanted to experience an [insert ethnicity here]. Aside from your physical body, your identity boiled down to

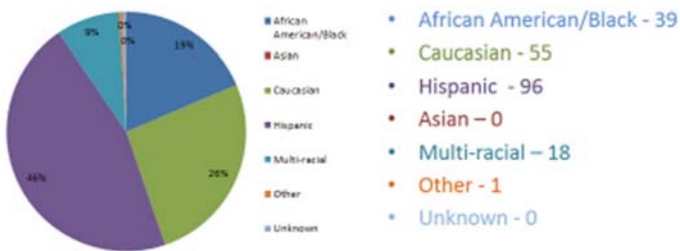
nothing more than “the [ethnicity].” As a male victim of color, I noted that my peers and I were often bought to play a dominating aggressive sexual role, which played into stereotypes and fantasies about people of color as “savage,” “beasts,” or “thugs.” Your identified ethnicity was now a selling point used to advertise you. It’s important to remember that trafficking is a business, just like any other, and race is a factor in the product.

We were sold for a certain amount of money for 30 minutes or an hour. Allow me to repeat myself: we were *SOLD*. In my case, being a person of color sold by a white person to other white people was painful on multiple levels. It wasn’t until my adult years that I was able to process how closely this aligned with racial oppression. I can’t compare one victim’s experience to another’s, but I will say that race can add an additional layer of oppression. This is especially true when noting that white peers were sometimes sold for more money simply because of their race. My dark-skinned friends and I were sold for less. These aren’t just ideas about relative worth in society or perceived racial disparities – these are cold, hard numbers that taught us that white children were literally worth more than children of color. Trafficking exemplifies the continued racism and oppression that exists in modern-day America.”

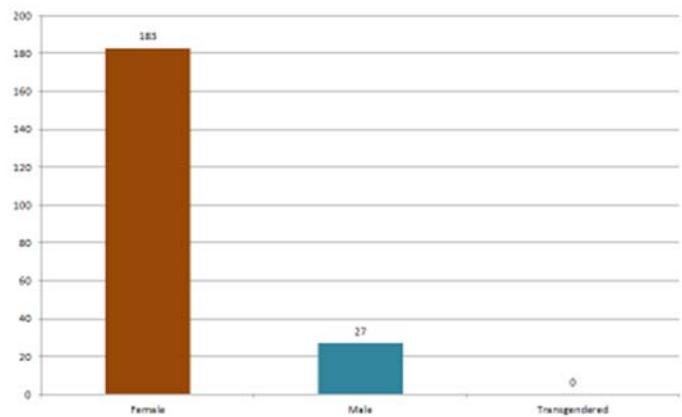
HART Data

We continue to see an increase in the number of referrals received. In 2018, DCF received **210 referrals** for high-risk or confirmed trafficking victims. Our data indicates that girls and youth of color tend to be disproportionately affected by sexual exploitation. In addition, the highest number for referrals each quarter were for youth living at home. This data highlights the importance of awareness education about human trafficking for parents as well as for our youth.

2018 Race/Ethnicity



2018 Gender

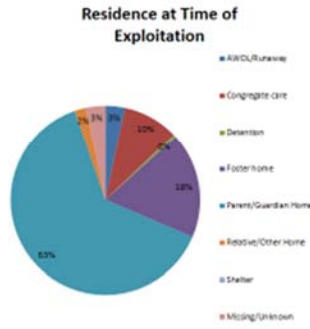


Clients Served by Region in 2018
Total =210



Region 1: Bridgeport, Norwalk
 Region 2: New Haven, Milford
 Region 3: Middletown, Norwich, Willimantic
 Region 4: Hartford, Manchester
 Region 5: Danbury, Torrington, Waterbury
 Region 6: New Britain, Meriden

2018 Residence at Time of Exploitation



- Parent/Guardian Home -133
- AWOL/Runaway - 7
- Congregate care - 20
- Detention - 1
- Foster home - 38
- Relative/Other Home - 4
- Shelter - 0
- Missing/Unknown - 7

STAY INFORMED

HART works diligently to enhance statewide initiatives all year round and uses Human Trafficking Awareness Month to highlight the issues amid this heinous crime. We engaged in events that aim to increase awareness and knowledge of community and supportive programming for victims of trafficking. Here are some events held in Connecticut, throughout the month of January:

*Wear Blue Photo Challenge
Winners*



DCF Manchester

HART Helps



DCF Region 5

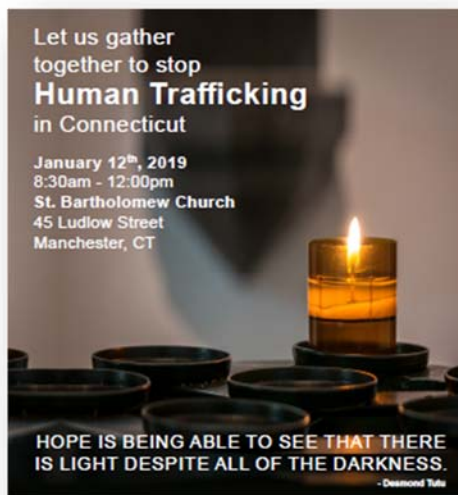
Conexion Latina Radio Interview



Pictured is Maricarmen Cahuaranga (radio host and columnist from Identidad Latina Radio/Newspaper) alongside Tammy Sneed and Eduardo Rivera. As a social work student, Maricarmen aims to make a positive impact in our society. Tammy and Eduardo spoke about the issue of human trafficking throughout the state of Connecticut and the United States during an interview on Conexion Latina Radio. The show can be found on the radio and Facebook.

The Underground: Gather Together Event

The Underground: Gather Together event was held at St. Bartholomew Church to inform the public about the reality of sex trafficking in Connecticut. It featured presentations from CT DCF and testimony from a survivor leader. Equal Exchange offered a Fair Trade chocolate tasting and a presentation on labor trafficking in the cacao industry. The event concluded with a community service project led by Krystal Ambrozaitis of the Salvation Army's Bloom Initiative.



Sex and Money: Film Screening and Panel at The Village

This event included a screening of the documentary *Sex and Money*, followed by a panel discussion among key stakeholders who aim to eradicate child trafficking. Panelists included Yvette Young, Erin Williamson, Christopher Bidorini and Annmarie Boulay. The event was moderated by Kristen Clark, GTFJAC coordinator. The event provided attendees with more insight about the sexually exploitation of children and how human trafficking is the nation's most profitable organized crime.



Training and Curricula

HART has worked tirelessly to eradicate and spread awareness about human trafficking in Connecticut. Our efforts are shown through the development and boost in trainings conducted among various stakeholders. In 2018, there was a total of **236 trainings conducted** that educated **4,866 participants**. In 2019, between the months of January and March, we've conducted **68 trainings** that educated **2,113 participants**. There has also been an increased number of trainings among law enforcement professionals – we hosted **95 trainings** for law enforcement workers in 2018 and **39 trainings** for them thus far in 2019. Our efforts to train law enforcement professionals, medical personnel, teachers, EMS, and other service workers is helping us bring even more awareness about human trafficking to Connecticut residents.

The curriculums we currently offer are:

Curricula in the Training of Child Trafficking in CT

- Introduction to Child Trafficking in CT
- Introduction to Human Trafficking in CT for Law Enforcement (POST Certified)
- Introduction to Child Trafficking in CT for Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

- Child Trafficking of Boys & Male-Bodied Youth
- Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking – Day 1 & 2
- Fostering in the Best & Hardest of Times: Helping Foster Parents Care for High-Risk Kids and Child Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Youth-Specific Curricula

- Youth Awareness on Child Trafficking
- Youth Prevention: Not a #Number

Shining Star Awards

The HART Shining Star Award is a new initiative to honor the exceptional work being done by DCF staff, HART committee members, and community providers in Connecticut focused on eradicating human trafficking and empowering victims of this crime.

Our Shining Star Award recipients for the last quarter of 2018 are:

Leadership Award: Christopher Bidorini, MSW – Policy Practice, DCF



“Christopher Bidorini has been instrumental in gathering data for missing information for the pie system and updating our response manual. In addition to that, he has done an excellent job educating those in the community and in the state of Connecticut. In fewer works, his commitment to the cause has been above and beyond. He has been a huge help and done many wonderful things for DCF and the HART community. He worked on a new policy that is being implemented for DCF in the near future and has presented trainings.”

Community Award: Roberta Senter, LMSW – Love146 Survivor Program



“[Roberta] has an amazing presence with one of my clients who has been trafficked. She is always there to pick up the phone and has shown a consistent presence in her life when she had no one. She is the kindest, most patient advocate for every kid for which she works... and my client feels the safest and most supported by Roberta. I cannot say enough good things about her.”

What's to Come



4th Annual Response to Recovery: A Child Abuse Conference

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

Central Connecticut State University, New Britain, CT

Sponsored by Connecticut Children's Alliance and DCF's Human Anti-trafficking Response Team

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/4th-annual-response-to-recovery-conference-tickets-60581580137>

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