



The Human Anti-trafficking Response Team (**HART**) was created in order to focus on and reduce commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) and Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST).

**Webpage:** <http://www.ct.gov/dcf/cwp/view.asp?a=4743&O=562246>

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By Yvette Young

The first annual Response to Recovery: A Child Abuse Conference sponsored by Connecticut Children's Alliance (CCA) and DCF's Human Anti-Trafficking Response Team (HART) was held on May 11th and 12th with over 200 people in attendance.

Since 1995, Connecticut's multidisciplinary teams and child advocacy centers have been responding to child abuse victims in CT and in 2014, the CT DCF Human Anti-Trafficking Response Team began partnering with them to provide a more comprehensive and supportive response to minors who were victims of human trafficking. Together, they have proven that a collaborative multidisciplinary approach is the best way to ensure each child receives the appropriate services from response to recovery and have brought awareness to the fact that the victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking deserve the same level of response as all child abuse victims.

Offering a diverse selection of session topics, this conference was an opportunity for law enforcement, child protective services staff, lawyers, social workers, therapists, teachers, forensic interviewers, medical professionals and child advocacy center staff to come together and learn how to strengthen their response to child abuse and exploitation cases across Connecticut.



(L-R) Tammy Sneed, Kevin Kane, Mia Fontaine, Commissioner Joette Katz, Krystal Rich, & Yvette Young

The conference began with opening comments by DCF Commissioner Joette Katz and Chief States Attorney Kevin Kane. These remarks focused on the prevalence of child abuse in the State of CT and the current response to meet the needs of victims. In addition, the conference featured two exceptional survivor speakers-- Mia Fontaine and Dr. Katariina Rosenblatt. Sharing their journeys to recovery, they were engaging and provided great

insight into the struggles, needs, and resiliency of survivors. Each day, participants attended workshops which focused on general child abuse as well as human trafficking. The workshop presenters were amazing and all in attendance felt enriched by their experience and exposure to the content they received during this two day conference.



Chief States Attorney Kevin Kane



DCF Commissioner Joette Katz



Yvette Young, Event Co-Chair



Krystal Rich, Event Co-Chair

We would like to extend a special “thank you” to our donors. This conference would not have been possible without help from the following individuals and organizations:

- The Underground

- Northeast Regional Child Advocacy Center (NRCAC)
- Klingberg Family Centers
- Hartford and MDT-14 Multidisciplinary Teams
- Heather Joss

It took a team to make this conference a reality so we would also like to thank the Conference Planning Committee members for a job well done.

Krystal Rich, Co-Chair  
 Yvette Young, Co-Chair  
 Christopher Bidorini  
 Annmarie Boulay  
 Kristen M. Clark

Kayte Cwikla  
 Karen Diaz  
 Caroline Diemar  
 Jill Fitzsimmons  
 Jillian Gilchrest

Christy Jackson  
 Latoya Lowery  
 Tammy Sneed  
 Erica Mello



Krystal Rich & Yvette Young- Conference Co-Chairs



(L-R) Tammy Sneed, Krystal Rich, Dr. Katarina Rosenblatt, Annmarie Boulay & Yvette Young



Erin Williamson, Love 146





## HART SHINING STAR AWARDS

The HART shining star awards is a new initiative to honor the exceptional work being done by DCF staff, HART Committee Members, and community providers in CT whose focus is on eradicating human trafficking as well as empowering victims of this crime.

Our recipients this quarter are:

### COMMUNITY AWARD

#### The Underground

The Underground is a grassroots, faith-based initiative dedicated to ending sex trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation in Connecticut.

Founded in 2013, The Underground has grown to over 500 volunteers from over 100 different churches. The Underground is supported by a church collaboration between Wintonbury Church in Bloomfield, Mill Pond Church in Newington, and New Life Church in Wethersfield and is led by Annmarie and Brian Boulay, Stephanie and Simon Wainwright, Heather and Paul Joss, and Gordon Ramsay.



One of The Underground's primary goals is to engage ordinary people from all walks of life in the fight against trafficking and exploitation. To that end, The Underground has hosted and presented at several awareness events throughout Connecticut and volunteers have assembled over 60 backpacks for at-risk children, have made over 30 care packages for survivors in recovery, and have donated hundreds of winter items for homeless youth. The Underground has funded over 8,000 information cards and over 10,000 bracelets with emergency phone numbers so those in need can find help. They have also connected several volunteers to local agencies where they can become trained to be mentors or foster parents.

Because The Underground uses a unique financial model where churches pool their human and monetary resources to cover overhead expenses, all donations go directly toward benefitting victims, survivors and those at-risk of being trafficked or exploited in Connecticut.

## **COMMUNITY AWARD**

### **Detective Joshua Lewis Hartford Police Department**

Detective Josh Lewis has been in law enforcement since 1993, joining the Hartford Police Department in 2004. He has worked as an officer in Patrol and then a pro-active Street Crimes Unit. He has received several departmental awards, unit citations and the prestigious Chief's Medal of Valor.

In 2010, Lewis was assigned to the Hartford Police Special Investigations Division, where he was promoted to Detective. Initially assigned cases of juvenile sexual and physical abuse, Detective Lewis then transitioned into working cases involving Registered Sex Offenders and Sex Offender Registry violators. In 2015, Detective Lewis began training in and working cases related to Human Trafficking. He was assigned to the Homeland Security Investigations Task Force for Human Trafficking in early 2016 and is currently investigating all reported Human Trafficking cases for the Hartford Police Department.

*"Being in a profession where I see kids struggle every day in a system where resources are lacking, Josh Lewis is a breath of fresh air. When LiAnn went missing I knew she was in serious trouble because going even a few hours without talking to her was unusual for me. Being a mother figure in her life, I reacted like one. I was restless, panicked, and scared to death. I called anyone and everyone for help but there was little anyone could, or was willing to do. Someone mentioned Josh as a resource and we called him to see if he was able to help. Josh jumped right in and helped. He was the first person to provide us with information about her possible whereabouts. From that moment on, Josh was unstoppable. He talked to informants, set up a raid, pulled LiAnn out of hell and saved her life. Josh then handled LiAnn with a sensitivity and understanding. He understood her vulnerable position and made her feel like he was her champion. He made her feel that he would protect her from that moment forward and that no person would hurt her. "They will have to go through me before they get to you" were the words he gave her. He allowed her to feel a sense of safety at her most vulnerable time. Without Josh Lewis, LiAnn would not be alive today. I thank him from the bottom of my heart, he is a hero."*

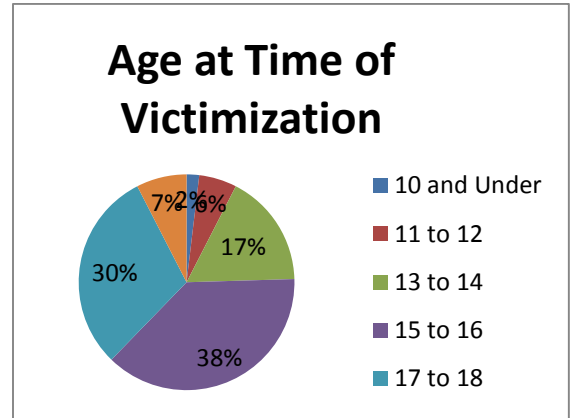
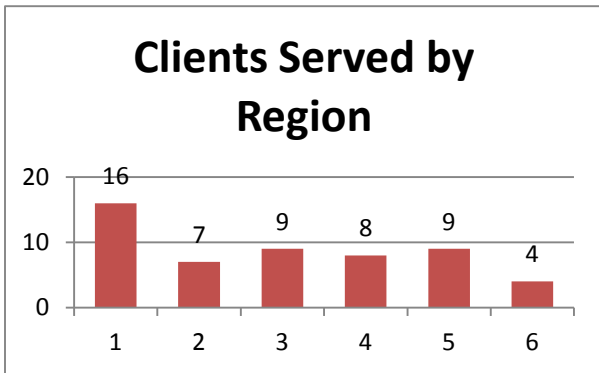
*- Amy T.: LiAnn's High School Teacher*

*'Many people gave up on LiAnn because of her history, but not Detective Lewis. He never gave up on finding her. When all hope was lost, he never wavered; he never stopped. In our eyes, Detective Josh Lewis is a HERO! He saved LiAnn's life, not only from the men that kidnapped her and held her against her will, but he also saved her from herself. Thank you Detective Lewis!'*

*- The Danko Family: LiAnn's Foster Family*

# HART DATA

In 2015, The Department of Children received the highest number of referrals since their focus on Human Trafficking began in 2008. A total of 133 referrals were made to the department for youth at risk or confirmed as victims of CSEC/DMST. Thus far, in 2016, we see this trend continuing as DCF received 53 referrals for Quarter 1 of 2016. Our continued effort to educate our community about this crime is resulting in an increase in the number of identified victims of CSEC/DMST.



# ELIMINATING DEMAND



Why is Human Trafficking Growing So fast?  
 - Huge Profits

How Do You Eliminate the Profit?  
 - Eliminate the Demand

Worldwide, a growing movement is focused on stopping the demand for commercial sex. Too often, society puts the onus on the victims, however, the most efficient approach to eliminating this abuse is to focus on the sex buyers. When they stop buying, the entire system of degradation collapses.

*"No girl or woman would be a victim of sex trafficking if there were no profits to be made from their exploitation." Luis CdeBaca, US Ambassador-at-Large for the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.*

*\*Information and image was taken from Strategic Justice Partners website*

# STAY INFORMED

This year, we revised the Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking of Boys and Male Bodied Youth curriculum. This curriculum focuses on the unique issues that boys and male bodied youth experience as trafficking victims. We recently held a Training of the Trainers for this curriculum and we have several trainers who are ready to begin training. If you are interested in this training, please contact Yvette Young at [yyoung@thevillage.org](mailto:yyoung@thevillage.org).

## THE VICTIMS: BOYS

- The scope of male HT/CSE is vastly under reported.<sup>1</sup>
- Some research suggests boys could make up as much as 50% of HT/CSE youth in the United States.<sup>2</sup>
- In 2011, an estimated 1,000 youth were arrested for prostitution and commercial vice.<sup>3</sup>
  - 24% of these arrests were male.
  - 9% were under the age of 15.

## CHALLENGES TO IDENTIFICATION

- Boys are often unwilling to self-identify due to shame and stigma about being gay or being perceived as gay by family and community.
- Lack of screening and intake by law enforcement and social services agencies due to the belief that boys are not victims of HT/CSE.
- Limited outreach by anti-trafficking organizations to areas, venues, and tracks known for male prostitution.
- Oversimplification of the reality that boys are not generally pimped hides the needs and misinforms potential services.

*\*John Jay Study 2008*

# NEW LEGISLATION

On June 1, 2016, Public Act No. 16-71: AN ACT CONCERNING HUMAN TRAFFICKING was signed into law by Governor Malloy. This public act improves upon our previous trafficking law.

The following is a summary of the changes to the law:

- revise the duties and composition of the trafficking in persons council;
- require state's attorneys and municipal chiefs of police to provide data and information concerning human trafficking prosecutions and investigations to the General Assembly;
- require that the Commissioner of Children and Families and the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection develop a training program to raise awareness of incidents of human trafficking,
- institute reforms that are designed to prevent human trafficking at hotels, motels and similar lodgings;

- raise the age for a person to be convicted as a prostitute;
- eliminate the requirement that a person knew the victim was under eighteen years of age or was a victim of coercion or human trafficking in order to be convicted of a class C felony for patronizing a prostitute;
- create mandatory fines for patronizing a prostitute and require such fines be used to fund investigations of prostitution and human trafficking;
- raise the age of a minor for purposes of enticing a minor to engage in prostitution; expand requirement for display of notice concerning services available to victims of human trafficking;
- amend forfeiture requirements related to prostitution.

## LIFE BEYOND “THE LIFE” WORKSHOP

On May 2, 2016, a workshop entitled *Life Beyond ‘The Life’* was conducted by Withelma “T” Ortiz Walker Pettigrew.



Named by TIME magazine as one of the “100 Most Influential People in the World” in 2014 and one of the “30 People Under 30 Changing the World” in 2013, T was also honored by Glamour magazine as a “Woman of the Year” in 2011. In her role as a Survivor Leader and Nationwide Consultant in Domestic Human Trafficking, Mental Health, Juvenile Justice, and Child Welfare, T specializes in developing strategies to end domestic child sex trafficking, reforming the child welfare, juvenile justice and mental health systems and implementing policies and practices to ensure that all vulnerable children have an opportunity to thrive. Furthermore, T uses her own inspirational story

of being a survivor of human trafficking and how life has been for her beyond “the life” to highlight themes of wellness, empowerment, self-discovery, self-esteem building and personal fulfillment.

Twenty-one youth from various programs across the state were in attendance. T engaged them in a discussion about human trafficking and dispelled many myths associated with ‘the life’. She encouraged attendees to look at the difference between ‘the life’ and life in general. After the presentation, all the girls in attendance received a signed copy of the book, *The Survivor’s Guide to Leaving*, generously donated by Love 146. The post workshop book signing was a clear indicator that attendees enjoyed the workshop and connected with T. Although it took about an hour, T signed each book and wrote an inspirational statement to each girl in attendance.







Pictured from left to right:  
Yvette Young, HART Coordinator, Erin Williamson, Love 146, Withelma "T"  
Ortiz Walker Pettigrew, Tammy Sneed, HART Lead.

## YWCA COMMUNITY MATTERS CONVERSATION



The YWCA Community Matters Conversations focus on timely topics impacting the greater Hartford community. On March 22, 2016, the focus of the Community Matters Conversation was #AntiHumanTrafficking: It Happens in Hartford. The discussion was moderated by Yvette Young, HART Coordinator and the panel consisted of Sarala Nagala, U.S. Attorney's Office, Krystal Ambrozaitis, Salvation Army, Leonela Cruz-Ahuatl and Jillian Gilchrest, PCSW—all of whom are experts on the topic of human trafficking. The panel discussed the prevalence of human trafficking in the state, legislation that supports victims, prosecution of perpetrators, services available to trafficking

victims, how to make a report to the DCF Careline, as well as how to access support when needed. There was a call to action portion of the session and those in attendance were asked to take action and become Human Trafficking Abolitionist. The Community Matters organizer stated the following about the event, "We are especially thankful to Yvette Young for the wonderful facilitation and the candid and open conversation of our panelist: Krystal Ambrozaitis, Leonela Cruz-Ahuatl, and Attorney Sarala Nagala."

## JOINT INFORMATION FORUM: WHY NO CONVICTIONS?

On March 31, 2016, The Permanent Commission on the Status of Women moderated a discussion on the issue of zero convictions for trafficking in person in Connecticut.

According to PCSW, “a decade ago, in 2006, Connecticut enacted Public Act 06-43, which created the felony charge of trafficking in persons. Yet since then, only 10 arrests have been made and there have been no convictions.” However, during that same time, the Department of Children and Families received more than 400 referrals of individuals with high-risk indicators for human trafficking that demanded a collaborative response, including the participation of law enforcement. Those numbers have climbed each year, with 133 referrals in 2015, according to the Governor’s office.

“We decided to convene trafficking experts because, as we learn more about human trafficking, in particular sex trafficking of adults and minors, we need to ensure that victims are supported and that law enforcement and prosecutors have the tools to adequately punish traffickers, those buying sex, and those permitting and facilitating the sale of sex in Connecticut,” said Jillian Gilchrest, Senior Policy Analyst for the PCSW, and Chair of the state’s Trafficking in Persons Council. Members of the Judiciary Committee, Public Safety and Security Committee, and Children’s Committee joined with representatives from the U.S. Attorney’s Office, DCF, DESPP, the State’s Attorney’s Office, Love 146, The Underground, ICONN, and Grace Farms to discuss this issue and to explore what policy or legislative changes can help remove barriers to prosecution.



(L-R): Tammy Sneed, Annmarie Boulay, Commissioner Joette Katz, Brian Sibley, Jillian Gilchrest, Krishna Patel, Jim Ehrman, Alicia Kinsman, Kevin Kane (seated), and State Representative Diana Urban (seated)

## CHANGE TALK WEDNESDAY SHOW

On Wednesday May 18, 2016 Yvette Young, HART Coordinator was interviewed by Change Talk Wednesday host Melinda Johnson on the topic of Human Trafficking and its impact on women and girls.

Change Talk Wednesday is a part of the RIVERS Women’s Initiative. It is a live show designed to promote thought provoking discussions on women focused issues and inspirational dialogue on how to make change in our everyday lives. To listen to the interview you can click on the following link: <https://youtu.be/cVbRHT7MGNU>



Pictured: Melinda Johnson & Yvette Young

# HART CONTACTS



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