



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

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

Response to Recovery Conference

The 3rd Annual Response to Recovery: A Child Abuse Conference was held on May 23 with close to 500 people in attendance. This conference was sponsored by Connecticut Children's Alliance and DCF's Human Anti-trafficking Response Team (HART). In 2014, CT DCF's HART began partnering with Connecticut's multidisciplinary teams and child advocacy centers to provide a more comprehensive and supportive response to minor victims of human trafficking. Since 1995, CT's MDTs and CACs have been responding to child abuse victims in the state and have proven that a collaborative multidisciplinary approach is the best way to ensure each child receives the appropriate services, from response to recovery. Together, CCA and HART brought awareness to the fact that victims of 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 across the state. This year, there was a focus on labor trafficking and demand. We were able to include several national experts on child abuse and human trafficking in the conference this year.



Our keynote speaker was Kevin McNeil, a Special Victims Detective, author, educator, motivational speaker and child abuse survivor—brought back by popular demand. Kevin's passion

is to educate the world on the effects of abuse and how it can be eradicated from our culture. His passion was evident and his impact was great. Participants were moved and inspired by his message. This year, we had three breakout sessions, offering participants a variety of workshops. The workshop presenters were amazing and all in attendance felt enriched by their experience and exposure to the content they received during the conference.

Several individuals who went above and beyond to meet the needs of the children they serve were awarded the Hero award. This year's winners were: Nicole Buckley (Detective, Monroe Police Department), Christa Rider (Clinical Supervisor, DCF Region 5), Susan Kristoff (Supervisor, DCF Region 3) and Kari Pesavento (Director, Children's Connection CAC).

We also honored 6 youth from schools across the state who won our Human Trafficking Awareness Poster Competition. The winners were:

1st Place: Anaeli R., Henry Abbott Technical High School

2nd Place: Eliya B., Watertown High School

3rd Place: Jordyn B., Watertown High School

4th Place: Xuan K., Brien McMahon High School

5th Place: Katherine G., East Haven High School

6th Place: Naomi A., Watertown High School

We would like to extend a special thank you to the Governor's Task Force on Justice for Abused Children (GTFJAC) and The Underground for their generous donations—this conference would not have been possible without their assistance.

It took a team to make this conference a reality, so we would also like to thank all of the volunteers who assisted us to ensure that we had a successful event. Your generosity, time and support is greatly appreciated.



Yvette Young and Krystal Rich, Conference Co-Chairs





HART Shining Star Awards

The HART Shining Star Awards is an initiative to honor the exceptional work being done by DCF staff, HART committee members and community providers in Connecticut who focus on eradicating human trafficking and empowering victims of crime.

This quarter's recipients are:

Community Award – Jennifer Shimer



Jennifer Shimer is a Program Manager for Love146, where she provides response interventions, delivering interventions and safety planning to victims of child sex trafficking. She has spent the last ten years focusing on high-risk children and families. In addition to being a trainer for Love146's prevention program, she has co-developed risk prevention trainings for youth, caregivers and community providers.

"She is consistently willing and able to make herself available to conduct Rapid Responses on very short notice throughout the state when cases warrant this level of response. Jennifer makes youth a priority by being 100% present when meeting with them. She provides youth and caregivers with critical information and safety planning." –Erin Williamson, Love146

Community Award – Sgt. Michael Cumminski

"[Sgt. Cumminski] has been an active participant on our HART team and always goes above and beyond for the youth at risk in CT. A clear example of his dedication is the fact that he continues to reach out and follow up on a few youth here in the New Britain Area Office, including offering to be a part of a meeting while he was on paternity leave." –Todd Lowe, New Britain DCF

US Attorney's Office Award Ceremony



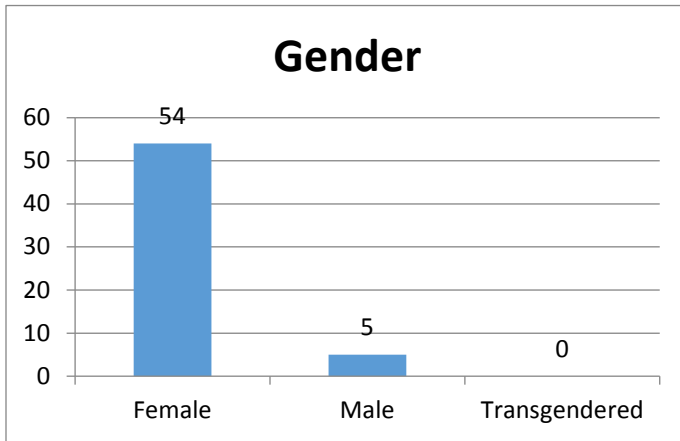
Pictured: Tammy Sneed and U.S. Attorney John H. Durham

The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Connecticut hosted its annual United States Attorney's Office Law Enforcement Awards Ceremony on June 20 in New Haven. The ceremony at the City of New Haven's aldermanic chambers recognized more than 160 individuals for their investigative efforts and other contributions to 31 significant federal criminal prosecutions and civil cases in Connecticut. Approximately 60 of the award recipients are members of local police departments from across Connecticut.

"We in the U.S. Attorney's Office are persistently mindful that our work and success are dependent on the dedicated efforts of our federal, state and local law enforcement partners," said U.S. Attorney John H. Durham. "On behalf of everyone in the U.S. Attorney's Office, my sincere congratulations to all of our award recipients." In addition to the criminal and civil case awards, U.S. Attorney Durham presented several special awards during the ceremony.

The U.S. Attorney's Award for Outstanding Partnership was presented to Tammy Sneed, Director of Gender Responsive Adolescent Services for the Connecticut Department of Children and Families. Ms. Sneed has been essential in coordinating services for human trafficking victims and assisting with local, state and federal investigations involving the sex trafficking of children.

HART DATA



Our data from Quarter 1 of 2018 continues to highlight that the majority of referrals received by DCF are for females. That being said, we received five referrals for males in Q1, which is the highest number of male referrals for any quarter to date. Male victims of human trafficking often go unseen, resulting in underreporting for the population. Nationally, 30% of human trafficking cases are men. We have additional work to do in regards to the identification of male victims in Connecticut.

STAY INFORMED

The following information is taken from our Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking of Boys and Male Bodied Youth Curriculum. Identification of male victims of human trafficking is low. Awareness is a critical element in assisting in identifying more male victims of this crime. There are many factors that complicate the identification process for male victims. The following information is intended to inform you of these challenges.

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.
- 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.

1. ECRAT-USA. (2013). *And boys too*. New York: Author. <https://d1qlyv3p11c9w.cloudfront.net/00028618-800B-4FCD-A991-2195275350A8/1b1293ef-1524-4f2c-b148-93db11379d11.pdf>

If you are interested in our Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking of Male Bodied Youth curriculum, please contact Linda Lukin at linda.lukin@ct.gov to schedule a training. Below is a description of this curriculum:

Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking of Boys and Male Bodied Youth: This curriculum is designed to enhance an individual's understanding of Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking (DMST) with an emphasis on boys and male bodied youth. The training assists participants in identifying boys and male bodied youth victims, understanding the unique warning signs and the impact on this population. Participants will learn definitions, federal and state legislation related to human trafficking, prevalence of DMST in CT and identifying the buyers/exploiters of this crime. The training is 2.5 hours, and includes video and PowerPoint materials. CEUs are available.

CT Legal Conference



Yvette Young, HART coordinator, was a panel member for the CT Leadership Role in Eradicating Human Trafficking session at the CT Legal Conference on June 11. This panel was coordinated by the members of the CT Bar Association's Special Committee on Sex Trafficking of Children. Other panel members included Karen Chesley, a partner at Boies Schiller Flexner LLP who is working for Legal Momentum to represent sex trafficking victims in litigation against Backpage.com. In addition, all four candidates for the Attorney General position were present, including William Tong, Chris Mattei, Paul Doyle and John Shaban. The panel discussion was moderated by Rich Meehan. One of the focuses of the discussion was on how the office of the next Attorney General can effectively respond to and prevent child sex trafficking in the state.

HART Grantee Meeting in Washington, DC



(L-R) Erika Mongrain, Melanie Kmetz, Tammy Sneed, Krystal Rich, Yvette Young, Samantha Lowry

In June of this year, Yvette Young (HART Coordinator), Tammy Sneed (HART Lead), Krystal Rich (Chapter Director of CT Children’s Alliance), Melanie Kmetz (HART Liaison), Erika Mongrain (HART Liaison) and Samantha Lowry (Evaluator) attended the annual Administration for Children and Family (ACF) grantee meeting in Washington, DC. All the grantees were asked to present on their projects. Yvette Young, Tammy Sneed, Krystal Rich and Samantha Lawry presented on behalf of HART. They highlighted the accomplishments of the HART team and lessons learned, including:

-Expansion of Training Curriculums

- Increase number of Training of Trainers (TOT)
- Online Curriculum
- Statewide CCA/HART Conference

-Collaboration with Tribal Communities

-Partnership with The Underground (Faith-based Initiative)

-Human Trafficking Task Force

-Enhanced Collaboration with MDTs and CACs

- Direct referrals sent to MDTs for DMST cases

-Data Findings

- Residence at time of exploitation



The Underground Backpack Event

The Underground’s annual DCF Family Backpack Build event took place on August 3. It was a great experience with many people working together to provide children and youth in Connecticut with school supplies.

All HART regions were represented along with law enforcement, churches and community members who worked together to build 477 backpacks. Each backpack had supplies, a note of encouragement, and a Hot Line "We Are Young" bracelet. Thanks to everyone who came out! Patrick Sexton from Waterbury DCF wrote: "On behalf of Region 5 (Waterbury) and our foster children, I want to express our sincere gratitude. The backpacks and supplies you generously gave were very popular, and went like 'hotcakes!' I also found the service prior to the filling of the backpacks very inspirational. You have a wonderful congregation."



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