



HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**Submitted by: AAUWNJ Board of Directors
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February 24, 2014

Now that the Super Bowl has passed, where do we go from here? Before we decide that, let's take a look at where AAUWNJ started two years ago and what we have done so far. The NJ Coalition, which is the first of its kind in the nation, began two years ago with approximately 30 local civic, religious and humanitarian groups trying to come to grips with a huge international crisis. By the time the Super Bowl occurred, there were over 100 groups in the Coalition with a decided focus on what to do in New Jersey to combat human trafficking.

The focus was to raise awareness that human trafficking existed, that it was here in New Jersey, and that something had to be done. Thanks to the Coalition and the outreach of its members and contacts, the conversation is now out there. Getting municipalities and/or counties to issue a proclamation making January 11 Human Trafficking Awareness Day was a step in that direction.

At the Coalition meeting on February 19, 2014, it was time to evaluate the effectiveness of the efforts to raise awareness and to continue the conversation about human trafficking. The outreach to the hotels surrounding the Super Bowl was a success in the fact that all hotels were contacted and made aware the problem existed and that there was a way in which they could help identify suspected victims. In cooperation with ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking), 1,200 hotel managers and staff were trained in how to recognize victims and what to do to notify law enforcement.

The next step was to cooperate with Operation S.O.A.P. (Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution) to distribute soap bars with the hotline number on it to lower level hotels. In order to do this, volunteers were needed. Over 300 people showed up on Saturday, January 25, and another 300 on Sunday, January 26, 2014 to deliver the soap to the hotels. Eleven thousand posters of missing children were delivered along with the soap bars. Between the ECPAT and S.O.A.P. operations, over 400 hotels were contacted.

The media coverage, in local, mainstream and electronic media, was excellent. There were over 600 articles and/or posts during the weeks leading up to the Super Bowl. The NJ Coalition was cited in many of the articles, and quotes by Coalition members were included often.

Prior to the Super Bowl, people were asked to post notices about human trafficking on their Twitter and Facebook accounts and to include graphics and facts. Their posts were then to be connected to Thunderclap, which would send all of the posts out at 8:30 p.m. on Super Bowl Sunday.

Lastly, the HT Challenge was to use social media on Super Bowl Sunday to expand the awareness of human trafficking. Coalition members and their contacts were to turn the TV off during half-time and have a discussion about human trafficking. One Coalition member had made up a flyer with a series of questions and distributed it to local restaurants and bars. In order to find the answers, participants were asked to go to Facebook, where a post about human trafficking would give the correct answers. Another distributed a handout at a Super Bowl party to aid in the discussion.

The Coalition is aware of at least 3,400 posts on Twitter and Facebook by 625 users and 564 users on Thunderclap. It is estimated that among all of the social media posts, an audience of approximately four (4) million was reached, including some outside of the US.

The question was asked if there is any way to verify the number of victims who were rescued, as reported in the newspaper. A representative from Homeland Security, who was in attendance at the meeting, said data collection and sources are difficult to collect and confirm. She also congratulated the Coalition for the job we did and thanked us for helping them do their job.

The Coalition will continue its efforts to have legislative proclamations issued declaring January 11 as Human Trafficking Day. So far over 90 proclamations have been issued. Check the web site to see if your municipality and/or county is listed. Contact NJGT@jfedgmw.org to participate in this effort.

Now to answer the question as to where do we go from here. The NJ Human Trafficking Coalition has been operating for two years as a volunteer organization. The time has come to look past the Super Bowl and look toward continuing our efforts to raise awareness and to open the conversation with new audiences. In order to do that, the Coalition will refocus and organize working groups to move forward. Please read the list of committees below and email the Coalition at NJHT@ifedgmw.org to let us know where you are willing to help.

- Governance and Funding: To develop a governance plan and find funding opportunities for the ongoing work of the Coalition.

- Proclamation Project: To continue efforts to encourage NJ municipalities to issue proclamations designating January 11 as Human Trafficking Awareness Day.
- SOAP Project: To follow up with hotels to get feedback and plan for future outreach.
- Statistics: To collect information about the success of the anti-human trafficking efforts during the Super Bowl. If you find any articles that include statistics, please forward them to us to compile the information.
- Arizona 2015: To connect the Coalition there to share what we learned this year. Focus will be on working with the media and coalition building.
- Legislative committee: To schedule a meeting to follow up on implementation and enforcement of human trafficking laws.
- Social Event: To plan a Coalition social event to thank all our volunteers and to provide an opportunity for networking. The event will be held in May to coincide with the first anniversary of the passage of the human trafficking legislation.
- Meeting with Government Departments: To help us learn more about the departments in the State government that are involved with combating human trafficking.

We need your help in continuing the work of the NJ Human Trafficking Coalition. Read over the list of working committees.

What committee piques your interest? Email us at njht@ifedgmw.org to join us in this unique opportunity to improve the lives of victims of human trafficking.

The next meeting of the Coalition is Monday, March 31, 2021, at MetroWest on Route 10 East in Whippany. Go to the website (njht@ifedgmw.org) for time and directions.

UP-COMING EVENTS

Feb. 26, 2014	Rutgers Law School , Newark
Mar. 7, 2014	Rutgers, New Brunswick
Mar. 28, 2014	Panel Discussion- Alex Aidekman Family Jewish Community Center , Whippany
Apr. 2, 2014	Stand Against Human Trafficking , Drew University