

PRESS RELEASE

Public Forum on Human Trafficking in the Napa Valley

Organizers: Soroptimist International of St. Helena and Soroptimist St. Helena Sunrise

Thursday, Oct. 3, 2019

St. Helena, California

Contact: Pam Parker or Gina Lewis at [sist.helena@soroptimist.net](mailto:sist.helena@soroptimist.net)

Community members impacted by or concerned with rising rates of sex and labor trafficking in the Napa Valley are encouraged to attend a anti-trafficking training program on Wednesday, October 3rd, from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

Organized by Soroptimist International of St. Helena and Soroptimist St. Helena Sunrise, the 3-hour program will offer some light snacks followed by a guest speaker and a panel discussion on identifying and reporting incidents of human trafficking within the community.

Specific interest groups encouraged to attend the seminar include police and fire departments, teachers, counselors, foster parents, lawyers, social workers, therapists, nurses, doctors, city and county officials. All community members are encouraged to attend as this crime is happening in our backyard.

Human trafficking, as defined by the U.S. Department of State, is a form of “modern slavery” where human beings—children and adults alike—are trafficked, usually through force, fraud or coercion, for sex and/or labor or both. Behind guns and drugs, human trafficking is one of the fastest growing criminal industries in the world, including the United States. According to statistics collected from the National Human Trafficking Hotline run by Polaris and quoted by the State of California Department of Justice, California led the nation in reported incidents of human trafficking in 2018. Within California, the North Bay, including the Napa Valley, is seeing some of the highest rates of trafficking in the state, local officials report.

A nationwide scourge, human trafficking is projected to surpass the illegal sale of arms and drugs in the United States within the next year or two. To reverse this trend, law enforcement organizations like NSIB are teaming up with community activists and non-government organizations such as Soroptimist International to train the public to combat human trafficking. In Napa County alone, law enforcement report investigating eight cases of human trafficking between January 2019 and August 2019. This has been the yearly trend since local law enforcement started proactively investigating human trafficking in 2016. Every case that has been sent to the Napa County District Attorney’s Office for Prosecution has resulted in a prison sentence.

When: Wednesday October 3, 2019 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Where: St. Helena High School Performing Arts Center

Cost: Free

Guest Speakers and Panel Speakers to include:

Allison Haley, Napa County District Attorney

Napa Special Investigations Bureau, Representative TBA

Russell Wilson, Survivor