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herland VOICE

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Human Trafficking in Oklahoma: Who, How, And Why?

In 2010, Oklahoma City was listed as the number one city for child sex trafficking yet most Oklahomans would be shocked to hear that. The murder of 19-year-old Carina Saunders in Bethany in 2011 was the first time many people became aware that Oklahoma City was sitting right in the middle of the human trafficking epidemic. But in fact, a 2003 Department of Justice report ranked Oklahoma fourth in the nation for the number of trafficking survivors.

Saunders' body was found two weeks after she was reported missing. She had been tortured and murdered to frighten other women into cooperating with a human trafficking ring. Saunders grew up in Mustang and police do not believe Saunders was involved in illegal activities, but was simply a random target because she was loosely associated with people who were involved in the trafficking.

So why Oklahoma City? The answer is in part due to geography and transportation.

The city is at the crossroads of three major interstates in the center of the U.S. And much of the movement of human slaves through Oklahoma comes from Texas which ranks 2nd in the nation for human trafficking.

But also, Oklahoma ranks near the top in many high-risk categories for human trafficking including percentage of women incarcerated, domestic abuse, teen pregnancy, children in poverty, lower education, and youth homelessness. Oklahoma City ranks in the top 10 cities for internet searches for "porn."

The scope of human trafficking

Worldwide more than 2 million children are captured into sex slave trade annually and the U.S. is the top destination for child sex trafficking. Victims can be smuggled into the U.S. willingly and then forced or sold

into trafficking. In the United States, nearly 100,000 people each year are forced or coerced into becoming slaves. Most of them are girls who are forced into the sex slave trade. Other types of trafficking include child pornography, domestic servitude, organ trafficking, child brides, and traveling sales crews.

Some of the factors contributing to the rise in human trafficking and the sex trade include society's lack of awareness of the issue, sexualization of children, peer pressure, social norms, drugs, schools with a lack of funding and overworked teachers, and family conflict, disruption, or dysfunction.

The vulnerabilities of youth in relationship to human trafficking

So who are the vulnerable? Primarily run-aways and throwaways, often as young as 12. Victims are usually recruited and come

"WITH THE YOUNG GIRLS, IF YOU PROMISE THEM HEAVEN, THEY'LL FOLLOW YOU TO HELL," A CONVICTED CHILD SEX TRAFFICKER.

Herland Sister Resources 2312 NW 39th St Oklahoma City 73112
405.521.9696 www.herlandsisters.org herland@herlandsisters.org
Regular hours 2nd and 4th Saturdays from 1-5 pm

Trafficking (cont. from page 1)

from low income families with abusive and/or drug addicted parents. Many of the kids have been in and out of foster care. They are often on the street or in a shelter and may become commercially exploited after engaging in "survival sex" to meet daily needs for food and shelter. (In addition to runaways, some youth are actually trafficked or pimped by their own family members.)

Traffickers look for new victims around malls, 7-Elevens, and the bus station. Traffickers are experts at spotting a vulnerable youth with emotional or physical needs not being met. Traffickers are willing to invest a great deal of time and effort to break down the natural resistance of the potential victim. Victims are lured and tricked by gifts, a place to stay, and promises of a loving relationship. Only later is the trafficker's true intent revealed. Traffickers use psychological manipulation and threats, violence, or forced drug addiction and victims often feel trapped and powerless to leave.

Identifying human trafficking victims

Some signs to watch for:

- A history of sexual abuse and/or running away
- Signs of physical abuse
- Multiple STDs
- Unstable home life
- Substance abuse by the youth or family members
- Involved in child welfare or foster care system
- Unexplained gifts that don't fit the youth's situation
- Presence of an older boyfriend
- Lack of interest in previous activities
- Gang involvement, especially among girls
- Travel to other states or staying in hotels during a runaway incident

Holiday Greetings

As the year comes to an end, Herland would like to take a few minutes to thank you for your participation and support. After more than 30 years, Herland continues to offer women resources to strengthen, enrich and support them, and to promote a world free of prejudice, oppression, and exploitation.



Let's just take a glance back at some of the Herland events and happenings of the past year:

- Fall and Spring Retreats - providing a getaway weekend for 40 to 60 participants with great food, music, workshops and a general good time.
- Monthly Supper Clubs - where as many as 30 women gather to enjoy conversation, community, and some of the best food OKC has to offer.
- The Health Initiative - a group that gather once or twice a month to discuss nutrition and exercise with topics such as healthy snacks, weight loss, vegan vs non-vegan, and preventing Alzheimer's.
- Lending Library and Internet Cafe - open two Saturdays per month and providing classic feminist, LGBT, and other relevant literature and reading materials.
- Pride Weekend - celebrating with the community by hosting a Pride Picnic where all are welcome and

participating in the Pride Parade.

- Supporting the community by participating in the MLK Parade, Jazzy Fest, Pride Parade, Peace Festival, YES All Daughters protest in Norman, the SISU Youth Shelter fundraiser, Freedom OK Marriage Equal-

ty Day celebration, and collecting donations to support the YWCA Women's Shelter, and many other events.

Upcoming Herland events include our annual White Elephant/Dirty Santa Party and Potluck Dinner on December 12th at 6:00 pm and the annual New Year's Day Open House.

Your participation is the reason Herland has remained strong through the years. As you know, Herland is a volunteer organization and we have never had any paid staff. We rely on your generous support and use it wisely. During this Holiday Season of giving, we ask that you continue your commitment to Herland by making a financial donation.

To donate online please go to www.herlandsisters.org and click donate or you can mail your donation to Herland Sister Resources, 2312 W I44 Svc Rd, Oklahoma City, OK, 73112.

Thank you for keeping Herland in your heart. We wish you a full and happy Holiday Season!

What's Happening

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

4:30 pm, Saturday, Dec 12
Herland

POTLUCK AND HOLIDAY PARTY

6 pm, Saturday, Dec 12 at Herland

NEW YEARS DAY OPEN HOUSE

1 pm, Friday, Jan 1 at Herland

HEALTH INITIATIVE

4 pm, Saturday, Jan 9 at Herland
Topic: Eating Disorders

SUPPER CLUB

5:30 pm, Saturday, Jan 9
Ingrid's, 3701 N Youngs

HEALTH INITIATIVE

4 pm, Saturday, Feb 13, Herland
Topic: Whole30 Program

SUPPER CLUB

5:30 pm, Saturday, Feb 13
Golden Palace Chinese Buffet
1500 S Meridian

HEALTH INITIATIVE

4 pm, Saturday, Mar 12, Herland

SUPPER CLUB

5:30 pm, Saturday, March 12
Mama Roja Mexican Kitchen
9219 Lake Hefner Parkway



SAVE THE DATE— DECEMBER 4TH

SISU Youth invites you to their charity gala, *When the Lights Go Down In the City*.

For more details, please see page 5.

NEW YEARS DAY

Potluck &
OPEN HOUSE

Friday

JANUARY 1

1 - 4 pm

Herland

2312 NW 39th Street

Start your New Year with Herland and it's bound to be a great one! Bring your favorite dish to share, and we'll provide the black-eyed peas, ham and beans, cabbage, cornbread, apple cider and eggnog.

This is the perfect opportunity to catch up with old friends and make some new ones!

HERLAND POTLUCK & WHITE ELEPHANT PARTY

saturday, december 12th
6:00 pm

please bring a wrapped present
for the gift exchange

we will also collect new toys for YWCA Shelter and
Open Arms Food Pantry

December Potluck & White Elephant Party

This is our December Supper Club and we hope you'll join us on Saturday, December 12th at 6:00 pm for this really fun event! Bring a dish to share for the potluck, and a wrapped gift (up to \$20 or re-gift) if you'd like to participate in the White Elephant / Dirty Santa

gift exchange.

In the spirit of the season, we will also be collecting new toys for the kiddos at the YWCA Women's Shelter and the Open Arms Food Pantry.

Herland Health Initiative

Eating Disorders

There are many misconceptions in our society about what causes eating disorders. Eating disorders are rarely about food or wanting to be thin. Instead, sufferers use food and unhealthy be-

haviors like dieting, starving, bingeing and purging to cope with unpleasant and overwhelming emotions and stressful situations. At least in the short term, these behaviors relieve anxiety and stress. Long term, however, they actually increase anxiety and stress and

create other serious complications. Please join us on [Saturday January 9th at 4 p.m.](#) to see how this may help inform and enlighten you about the effects of eating disorders on your body and your mind.

Whole30 Program

The Whole30 program is a month long clean-eating program that promises a bevy of health and emotional benefits. Developed by Dallas and Melissa Hartwig, a team with backgrounds in sports nutrition, anatomy, and physical therapy, the program aims to reset your metabolism and reshape your relationship with food.

The Whole30 program could be a good option for individuals looking to give themselves a healthy reset or discover what food sensitivities they might have. Please join us on [Saturday February 13th at 4 p.m.](#) for discussion.



It's All About Our Planet

Saving paper saves money and since Herland is a nonprofit organization, every little bit helps. But really, it's about our planet. Cutting down trees to print a paper newsletter just doesn't make sense when most people access the internet or e-mail every day of their lives.

Herland is striving to be part of the solution and would like your cooperation in going green. Over 300 of our subscribers have already gone electronic and we thank you!

Starting in 2016, we would like to e-mail the Voice to every person still on our paper copy mailing list (about 200 addresses) who has internet or e-mail access. This edition of The Voice will be the last that we mail out to the 200 addresses on our paper copy mailing list. We will only mail a paper copy of The

Voice to those that specifically request it. All others will be switched to the e-mail version.

If you do not have access to the internet or email, just drop us a line at Herland, 2312 NW 39th St, OKC, OK 73112 or call us at (405) 550-2312 to let us know and we will continue to mail a paper copy to you.

If we already have your email address, you don't need to do a thing. If you think we don't have your email address and you would like to continue receiving The Voice,

please send your email address to: herland@herlandsisters.org.

Thank you for helping us help our planet!
Sincerely,
Your Planet-Loving Friends!

OVER 40% OF WOOD PULP GOES TOWARD THE PRODUCTION OF PAPER.

THE UNITED STATES ALONE, WHICH HAS LESS THAN 5% OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION, CONSUMES 30% OF THE WORLD'S PAPER.

PRINTING AND WRITING PAPER EQUALS ABOUT 1/2 OF U.S. PAPER PRODUCTION.

THE AVERAGE OFFICE WORKER USES 10,000 SHEETS OF COPY PAPER EACH YEAR.

Yes All Daughters

Yes All Daughters is thrilled to announce that we're collaborating on a national campaign to empower young people to stand up against sexual violence! The program is set to launch next month and we're looking for pilot locations nationwide. If you'd like to join us, please private message us on Facebook and we'll share details.



Sheltering Our Homeless Youth

According to the Oklahoma State Department of Education, youth homelessness has reached near epidemic proportions. In the Oklahoma City metro alone, over 9,000 students qualified as homeless.

Resources offered to these young people can be quite limited, and for those in the Oklahoma City metro area, the options can be almost non-existent. The most urgent need at this time for metro youth is emergency shelter. Youth under the age of 18 who are not accompanied by a parent or who are not in the care of OKDHS currently have no shelter options, and the only shelter options available for youth over age 18 are the adult homeless shelters, which can feel extremely frightening to a young person first experiencing

homelessness.

Since June 5, 2014, Sisu Youth has been operating a volunteer based day center to help connect youth (ages 15 to 24) to basic need support (food, clothing, personal care items) and case managers in health care, housing, employment, and education. The work has been fantastically successful. However, we have found in this year, that THE most important resource that we could possibly offer these kids is a safe place to sleep at night.

NEARLY 44,000 OKLAHOMA STUDENTS QUALIFIED AS HOMELESS DURING THE 2013-2014 SCHOOL YEAR, PUTTING OKLAHOMA 5TH IN THE NATION FOR CHILD HOMELESSNESS.

We are relieved and elated to be able to report to you that through the tireless dedication of the Sisu Volunteer Team and the overwhelming support of the OKC community (our Sisu Family) we have found and begun the move into our 16-bed overnight shelter space.

Join us on Friday, December 4th, at Plenty Mercantile, 807 N Broadway, for an evening of celebration as we mark this milestone in the life of our city. Tickets to our charity gala, *When The Lights Go Down In The City*, are available at sisuyouth.org or by calling (405) 459-SISU. Help us help them.



CHARITY GALA
WHEN THE LIGHTS GO DOWN
IN THE CITY

SISU YOUTH
A Guiding Light to Homeless Youth in Oklahoma City
7:00-10:00 p.m., Friday, December 4th
Cocktails and Heavy Hors d'Oeuvres
Plenty Mercantile, 807 N. Broadway Ave., OKC
Purchase Tickets at SISUyouth.org
Enter "GALA" on Message Line when Purchasing Tickets
Tickets Available-\$50 each
Sponsorships available
(405)459-SISU



Poetry Submissions for Voice

We want your words/poems/stories for our February edition of the Herland Voice! Any style, including contemporary or experimental are welcome. Please send submissions and any questions to: herland@herlandsisters.org.

HERLAND

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