

Slavery Still Exists

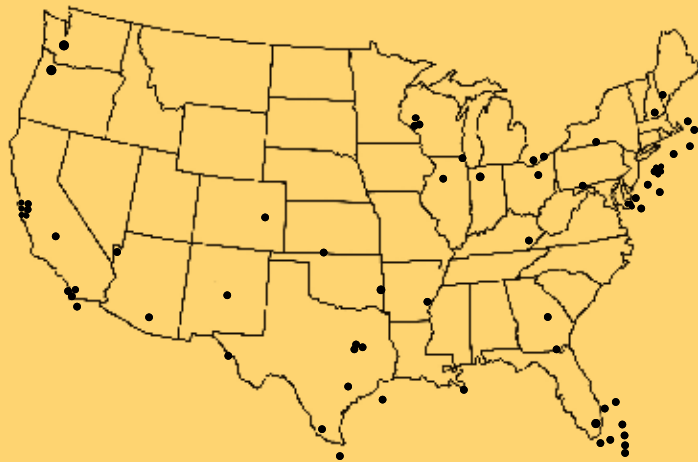
And it Could Be in Your Backyard



A community members' guide to fighting
human trafficking and slavery

Slavery in America

It is hard to imagine that slavery still exists in America, but it does. The US government estimates that **14,500 – 17,500** people are brought into the US each year to be used as slaves. Free the Slaves and UC Berkeley research indicates there are tens of thousands of people living in slavery, in America, right now. This is real slavery, people forced to work against their will under violence or threat of violence and are paid nothing. Like the slaves of the past, slaves in America can not walk away. They have lost control of their lives, and they are being exploited and brutalized in terrible ways.



Human trafficking is the modern-day slave trade and has been reported in 91 cities across the United States! The US Department of Justice reports that human trafficking has occurred in nearly every state of the nation.

This booklet will help you:

- Look for and identify trafficked and enslaved people in your community.
- Know what to do if and when you find slavery.
- Understand how slavery in the US fits into the slavery that exists around the world.
- Understand how slavery touches each of our lives
- Know what you can do in your life and community to bring slavery to an end.

Community members – people like you – can help detect victims of trafficking, helping them to safety and working to see the traffickers brought to justice. YOU can make the difference between slavery and freedom for someone in your community.



Why is there slavery in the United States?

Trafficking victims are often tricked into slavery through promises of work. Human traffickers tend to prey on impoverished people who live in countries with little access to education, health care or jobs. When traffickers disguise themselves as legitimate recruiters or employment brokers and promise paying work, many people are willing to sign on.

Parents desperately want to work so they can feed their hungry families. Young people want to work so they can pay for their schooling or that of their younger brothers and sisters. They are tricked into believing they will be paid for their work.

The basic rule of this global traffic in slaves is that victims flow from poorer countries to richer countries. While it is true that most slaves in the US are trafficked in from other countries, US citizens are also forced into slavery around the country. A recent study found the citizens of more than 35 countries enslaved in the US, with the greatest numbers coming from China, Mexico, and Viet Nam.

“He didn't let us make any phone calls or leave the work camp. So we realized, little by little, that we were trapped”

Trafficking survivor, female, from Guatemala

“We're a Neighborhood Watch community, but we're looking for strangers, not for people who are living here, not somebody living next door.”

Susan Ashcroft, made first contact with a victim of slavery held in her Baltimore suburb



It's a free country

Why don't they just walk away?



There are many reasons why victims of trafficking cannot simply walk away from their exploitative situation:

Fear – Most victims have been coerced, threatened and abused.

Threats to family members in home country – Oftentimes traffickers threaten to abuse or murder family members if a victim refuses to work or attempts to run away.

Sense of shame – Some victims feel such an acute shame about the activities they have been forced into that they fear exposing themselves, and their secrets to anyone.

Sense of obligation – Some victims feel obligated to pay off their “debt”, even though the “debt” is bogus and illegal.

Sense of loyalty to the abuser – This may take place as a result of brainwashing or traumatic bonding. Some victims are made to feel that they themselves have done something wrong, and that the trafficker deserves to punish them.

Language and social barriers – Extremely limited contact with the outside world leaves many victims isolated and many times without any understanding of the language or their location.

Fear of police and immigration officials – Police corruption experienced in the victim's home country is often exploited by traffickers who terrify their victims with stories of what the police in the US may do to them.

The following pages tell true stories of what happens when community members find slaves.

How can we find slaves in our communities?

Watch for the following signs of slavery. The person might be a domestic worker, work in a restaurant, on a farm, in a shop, in a factory, or as a prostitute. The worker is likely to be enslaved if he or she:

- Is working or being held against his or her will
- Is not free to change employers
- Does not control his or her earnings
- Is unable to move freely or is being watched or followed
- Is afraid to discuss him or herself in presence of others
- Has been assaulted, or threatened with assault for refusing to work
- Has been cheated into payment of debt upon arrival
- Has had his or her passport or other documents taken away

If any of these apply, the person might be a victim of modern-day slavery. Modern slavery happens where workplaces are not monitored, worker wage and safety laws are not enforced, or where the work is not legal. In America, human trafficking and forced labor have occurred most often in the following industries:

Prostitution, Domestic service, Agriculture, Garment sweatshops, Food services, Entertainment, Factories, or Landscaping.

“They told us if we tried to escape they would really hurt us. So we were afraid, if we escaped they would catch us and beat us. Or kill us. Or abandon us in the middle of nowhere where no one would ever find us.”

Trafficking survivor, male, from Mexico

Can One Person Make a Difference?

For over five years, Louis Etongwe, a telephone worker in Virginia, has been an outstanding anti-slavery worker. Louis first learned about slavery in his community when a young woman appeared at his cousin's house for Thanksgiving. When Louis found out that the girl had run away from a situation of domestic enslavement nearby, he felt compelled to help. Needless to say, this decision was a difficult one as it placed him at odds with members of his own Cameroonian community. This did not stop Louis and his wife. Knowing there was nowhere else she could go, they offered shelter to the young girl, believing that,

room and board to these girls and helped them in bringing the traffickers to justice.

Louis recently flew to Cameroon where he visited the rescued girls' home village and brought videotaped messages that the girls recorded for their parents. Louis says that when he played the video for the girls' parents:

"They were so surprised — The mother was in sack-cloth mourning dress; the traffickers had told the family the children had died. That moment was the first time it ever dawned on me that I was making a difference to a lot of people."

With videotaped testimony from both the girls and their parents, the Maryland Attorney General has now begun prosecuting the traffickers in these cases. Louis continues to help investigate these cases and others and takes time off from his regular job to help victims of trafficking and abuse. Louis's work has been difficult and dangerous, but fulfilling.

"I've never felt so excited in my life to be doing what I'm doing," Louis says.

Thankfully, now community members who want to help victims of trafficking do not have to go it alone. They can join forces with the many local organizations across the United States that have begun working together to rescue victims, find them safe places to stay and empower them to rebuild their lives.

"When you sow a good seed, it has a multiplying effect (and) that is the most important thing."

Sure enough, he soon learned that several other young women were also being held as slaves. Traffickers were tricking young Cameroonian girls into thinking that domestic work opportunities with families in the US would offer them access to an education and better life. Instead, these young women became slaves, forced to work long hours performing excruciating work with no chance for education and often no money.

After establishing covert communication with these victims of slavery, Louis arranged for their escape. He arranged to meet several girls at a specific location while another waited for her master to leave so that she could run out of the house and into Louis's waiting car. Louis and his family provided

Slavery in a Church?

The last place Deetz and Sandy Shepherd expected to meet an enslaved person was in church. What they learned shocked their entire community and led the Shepherd family to become part of the modern-day Underground Railroad to help save a boy named Given.

The Shepherds were happy to offer their home to a traveling boys' choir that was singing at churches in their community. Given and the other choir boys were from shantytowns in Zambia, and were brought to the US by an American man who promised payment and an education. The boys were even promised that the money they raised at churches would be donated to their home communities in Zambia in order to build sorely needed schools.

well-intentioned audiences in churches, schools, and malls, who believed that their financial contributions were providing the boys with schooling, housing and a salary. If any of the boys asked for their pay, they were told that they would be paid in one lump sum at the end of their tour. If they asked more questions, or insisted on being paid, they were threatened with deportation back to Zambia. This threat was very real to Given and the other boys.

In reality, Given and his friends were being exploited. Neither he nor any of his choir-mates received any payment for their work. No schooling was provided. It seemed that all the boys did was sing, sing, sing. And sing they did, sometimes performing as many as eight concerts in a single day to

The Shepherds weren't the only ones to notice that something wasn't quite right about the choir. Soon federal authorities had enough information to build a case against the traffickers and the boys were placed in the homes of compassionate community members.



Louis is quick to point out that even the smallest action can make a big difference. He urges everyone, no matter where they live in the United States, to take the first step in fighting slavery in our communities.

"Know your neighbors, ask them questions."

Louis Etongwe



Given

now enjoys a safe and productive life with the Shepherds.

Is there a plan to end slavery?

Yes!

While there are still 27 million people in slavery around the world, never before has it been so possible to fully eradicate slavery.

Free the Slaves is proud to announce a groundbreaking new book by FTS president, Kevin Bales. *Ending Slavery: How we free today's slaves* follows up on his groundbreaking work *Disposable People*. While *Disposable People* introduced thousands to the problem, *Ending Slavery* proposes a solution for the world.

Today slaves are at the smallest proportion of the world population in history, and the profits from slavery are not essential to any industry, nation or economy. Laws are in place against slavery in every country, and both international agreements and public opinion are united in condemning slavery. Though it is a pernicious and hidden crime, the stage is set to end slavery forever, if we agree and act together.

Ending slavery requires mobilizing two great tools and applying them across a large number of fields. The tools are public awareness and resources. Though everyone condemns slavery, few are aware of how it permeates our lives. It is concealed by our own ignorance. But as the public learns the extent and reality of modern slavery, it is exposed. Once found, to root it out requires funds – for law enforcement, liberation, and the rehabilitation of freed slaves. The total estimated cost, however, is low in global terms, well within the budgets of governments and international agencies.

Awareness and resources then must be applied across nearly all the parts of life and society. Individual slaves need to be freed, communities must search out slavery in their social fabric, businesses must examine their product chains and clean them of slavery, the UN, World Bank, and World Trade Organization all have ways to eradicate slavery in their work to reduce poverty and support trade. Development agencies are engaged with the poor and vulnerable that often fall into slavery, and simply need to build an awareness of slavery into their good work. Governments have, in their laws and international treaties, pledged themselves to the end of slavery, but need to act on their promises.



Louis, Deetz and Sandy didn't set out to be heroes when they freed slaves. They just saw a wrong and were determined to make it right.

You can too.

Who will do it?

Businesses are beginning to realize that there is slavery throughout the global economy, including in their own supply chains—and that businesses themselves can be a key part of the solution. Businesses should learn from the chocolate companies, which are leading the way by doing things like creating the International Cocoa Initiative. Consumers should support the businesses that choose to fight slavery.

businesses

All over the world and right in our neighborhoods, slaves are coming to freedom. Sometimes it is because people in slavery are rising up against their slaveholders and demanding their freedom. Sometimes it is because average citizens join with others and work to be vigilant in their own communities. Working together sends the message that traffickers and slaveholders have nowhere to hide and slave-made goods are not welcome.

communities

You!

The best way individuals can get people out of slavery is to make sure anti-slavery workers have what they need to get the job done. Even a small regular donation can literally make the difference between slavery and freedom. Get connected. Make a difference. Free the Slaves. www.freetheslaves.net.

governments

Governments should be leading the way in the eradication of slavery. Why? Because they already promised to end slavery. Every country has enacted laws banning slavery, making it a crime, and promising to wipe it out. What's needed from countries now is action. This starts with a national plan to end slavery within its borders. It's not easy but with political will and resources, it can be done!

international organizations

When entities like the United Nations, World Bank and international development organizations reoriented their programs to make sure women and girls also benefited—using a 'gender lens'—they quickly became more effective. When these groups start using a 'slavery lens', FTS believes the same will happen, and more slaves will be freed.

What else can we do to end slavery?

Human traffickers are not limited by national borders; so neither should anti-slavery efforts. There are more than 27 million people enslaved all over the world. How can you help fight slavery and trafficking at their source and their destination? There are a number of easy steps anyone can take:



Educate yourself

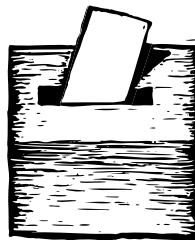
- ▶ Distribute this pamphlet to your community groups, places of worship, businesses, etc. You can buy copies in bulk at www.freetheslaves.net or by calling 866.324-FREE
- ▶ Visit our website to learn more about our work, read the stories of survivors, screen our documentary films, download or order this guide, sign up for eUpdates and more: www.freetheslaves.net.
- ▶ Read **Ending Slavery: How we free today's slaves** by Kevin Bales. This exciting new book is a plan for ending slavery in the next 25 years.
- ▶ Watch *Dreams Die Hard*; this documentary film tells the stories of four different people enslaved in US neighborhoods, and what it took to bring them to freedom.

Involve your community

- ▶ Get to know your neighbors and local businesses.
- ▶ Support local human rights advocates, domestic violence and homeless shelters and immigrant rights groups. Each may help victims of trafficking.
- ▶ Educate others. Uninformed people are powerless to help!
- ▶ Hold a house party to watch *Dreams Die Hard* and discuss it. www.freetheslaves.net/films/dreamsdiehard
- ▶ Ask your local school or your children's teachers to consider teaching a lesson on modern slavery. A Teaching Pack on modern slavery is available from www.freetheslaves.net/educationpacks
- ▶ Ask your faith community to educate its members on slavery and trafficking.

Speak truth to Power

- ▶ Ask your elected officials what they are doing to end slavery.
- ▶ Write a letter to the editor of your local paper. Let your favorite media outlet know you want more stories about slavery
- ▶ Tell your investment manager you don't want to invest in slavery.
- ▶ Keep asking tough questions and spreading the word about slavery.



Pursue a human rights-related career

Professionals in all areas of expertise are needed to end slavery forever. To learn more about careers visit: www.freetheslaves.net

Use your purchasing power

Ask vendors if their products (clothes, produce, etc.) are Fair Trade or slave-free. Let them know that labor standards are important to you as a consumer, and that you want to be able to purchase merchandise that is produced responsibly.



Give the Gift of Freedom: Donate to Free the Slaves

Your contribution will help us end slavery forever by:

- ▶ Freeing and rehabilitating slaves around the world,
- ▶ Exposing the problem of slavery through the media and community outreach,
- ▶ Working with businesses and consumers to remove slavery from the products we buy,
- ▶ Educating policymakers and encouraging governments to enforce their own laws,
- ▶ Researching slavery and the best ways to fight it.

To order more booklets:

- ▶ Go to www.freetheslaves.net/cmz
- ▶ Call 1-866-324-FREE (3733)



Who is Free the Slaves and what do we do?

Free the Slaves is a non profit organization made up of people who don't want to live in a world with slavery. We are financially transparent, politically independent and we test each action by one simple question, "will this help free slaves?"

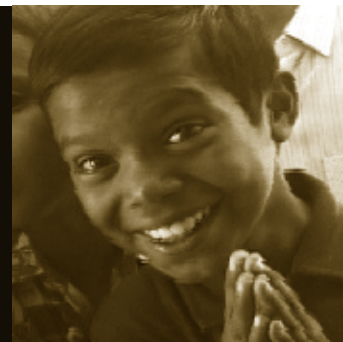
Around the world we work to free slaves, help them rebuild their lives and research real world solutions to eradicate slavery forever. We use research and stories from the frontlines of slavery to convince the powerful and the powerless that we can end slavery.

We must end slavery.

If you suspect that someone is a victim of human trafficking call the Human Trafficking Information and Referral Hotline at

(888) 3737-888 (this is a free call)

A trained social service worker will help you to take the next step.



The Freedom Dividend

“It may sound strange but there is profit in ending slavery. When you set millions of people free to work for themselves, to buy food and clothing and shelter and education and medicine and even toys for their children, you unchain productivity.

The result is a freedom dividend of significant proportions.”

– Kevin Bales - Co-Founder and President of Free the Slaves



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