



# Promising Practices in Combatting Juvenile Sex Trafficking Surrounding Large Events and Beyond

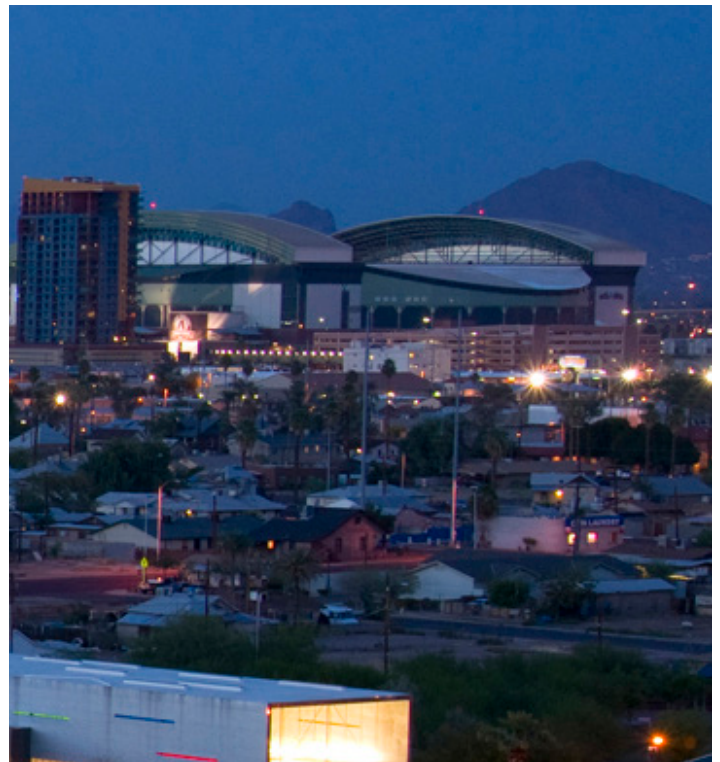
Proactive, interagency, multidisciplinary collaboration has proven helpful in effectively addressing human trafficking surrounding large events, such as the Super Bowl, as multiple municipal entities, neighboring law enforcement agencies, various service providers, local and visiting volunteers, and heightened media focus are generally involved.

This document reflects initiatives and lessons learned from the 2015 Super Bowl in the greater Phoenix area in Arizona and the 2016 Super Bowl in the California Bay Area. Experts in human trafficking and domestic minor sex trafficking, federal and local law enforcement agencies, service providers, community organizers, and survivor leaders, from both regions provided examples of proactive planning, targeted police operations, strategic use of the media, increased collaboration and focused efforts to facilitate service provision to better combat and prevent human trafficking, in particular juvenile sex trafficking. These efforts, captured here, are meant to serve as a tool for other locales planning to host large events.

## METHODOLOGY

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From March 2015 through May 2016, Shared Hope International interviewed anti-trafficking leaders in the greater Phoenix area and in the Bay Area regarding collaborative, proactive strategies, which were employed to address human trafficking, in particular juvenile sex trafficking, surrounding the 2015 and 2016 Super Bowls. This document reflects information received from three data collection activities: 1) individual interviews in-person and by phone; 2) a convening of approximately 50 leaders including law enforcement, service providers, survivor leaders, and community coordinators from the greater Phoenix area and the Bay Area in November 2015; and 3) a national briefing call, featuring a panel of six leaders including federal and local law enforcement, a local service provider, and a human trafficking expert.



*A view of University of Phoenix Stadium, home of Super Bowl XLVIII.*



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In addition to all the attendees at the above convenings, Shared Hope particularly thanks the following individuals for their leadership, generosity, and willingness to contribute and inform the production of this document:

- Special Supervisory Agent Ryan Blay, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Civil Rights Unit/ Human Trafficking Program Manager; Washington, D.C.
- Christopher Watson, Program Director, Sexually Exploited Minor Program Bay Area Women Against Rape, BAWAR; Oakland, CA
- Assistant Special Agent in Charge Bertram Fairies, Federal Bureau of Investigation; Oakland, CA
- Agent Marty Parker, Federal Bureau of Investigation; Oakland, CA
- Agent Doug Hunt, Federal Bureau of Investigation; Oakland, CA
- Sergeant Kurtis Stenderup, Santa Clara County Sheriff's Office; Santa Clara, CA
- Sharan Dhanoa, Coordinator of the South Bay Coalition to End Human Trafficking, No Traffick Ahead; CA
- Brian Wo, Bay Area Anti-Trafficking Coalition; CA
- Rose Mukhar, Shared Hope International Ambassador of Hope, MISSEY Board Member; CA
- Sarai Theolinda Smith-Mazariegos, SHADE Project, MISSEY Board Member, Survivor Leader; CA
- Sergeant Clay Sutherlin, Phoenix Police Department; Phoenix, AZ
- Savannah Sanders, Human Trafficking Services Manager, SAFE (Safeguarding Adolescents from Exploitation) Action Project a Program of Sojourner Center
- Detective Christi Decoufle, Phoenix Police Department / A Victim's Voice, LLC; AZ
- Dominique Roe-Sepowitz, Office of Sex Trafficking Intervention Research at Arizona State University, Director
- Sergeant Domenick Kaufman, Mesa Police Department; AZ
- Detective Scott Carpenter, Scottsdale Police Department; AZ

This document is a product of the Regional Collaboration Project of Shared Hope International and is primarily authored by Rachel Harper, Policy Counsel, under the leadership of Linda Smith, Founder and President and Samantha Vardaman, Senior Director.



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## PREVENTION PLANNING

### *Using Media for Awareness Campaigns and Deterrence*

Strategically engaging media may effectively raise awareness, accurately inform the public, and increase deterrence, particularly with respect to demand of sex trafficking. Although shaping a consistent message is difficult when dozens of groups are involved, cohesion in messaging is ideal.

Media campaigns may successfully be used as a deterrence mechanism. The months leading up to large events present prime opportunities to host media campaigns designed for the general public to deter demand for commercial sex with minors, to shift perspectives away from viewing victims, especially juvenile sex trafficking victims, as criminals, and to warn and discourage traffickers from operating in the area. Arizona leaders focused concerted efforts to highlight enforcement efforts in the media, particularly targeting demand, starting six months in advance of the Super Bowl. Law enforcement agencies also endeavored to communicate that various jurisdictions were working together, and that “there [was] no safe haven in the area for traffickers to operate.” – SSA Ryan Blay, FBI. Law enforcement’s public messaging was founded, in part, on the economics of trafficking and focused on discouraging buyers from engaging in commercial sex. However, various leaders reported that as the Super Bowl drew closer, media coverage was harder to secure because city leaders were sensitive to negative advertising.

*“By spreading the word early on that we would be cracking down on this type of criminal activity, we succeeded in stopping sex traffickers from operating as ‘business as usual’ and in some cases deterred traffickers from attempting to bring this crime into Bay Area communities at all.”*

–FBI Assistant Special Agent in Charge Bertram Fairries<sup>1</sup>

Panelists suggest forming agreements between law enforcement agencies or appointing one strong, dedicated Public Information Officer (PIO) between agencies to help capitalize on media coverage to increase deterrence and ensure cohesive messaging. Identifying a lead agency to coordinate press releases, highlighting collaborative efforts of all participating agencies, and carefully presenting enforcement efforts, such as arrests, as a positive message for the area may magnify the impact of media coverage. In selecting lead agencies and media platforms, panelists also urge future host locales to consider that busy news cycles or larger cities often have more competing news which may lessen the visibility and impact of human trafficking campaigns.

<sup>1</sup> FBI, Seven Juveniles Recovered in Joint Super Bowl Operation Targeting Human Sex Trafficking, Press Release, Feb. 9, 2016, available at [http://dig.abclocal.go.com/kg0/PDF/PRESS\\_RELEASE\\_SB50\\_Human\\_Trafficking\\_Crackdown.pdf](http://dig.abclocal.go.com/kg0/PDF/PRESS_RELEASE_SB50_Human_Trafficking_Crackdown.pdf)



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Collaboration between nonprofit organizations and law enforcement may also increase the impact of press releases. Panelists even suggested that an NGO may work with law enforcement agencies and assume leadership in managing media coverage for collaborative law enforcement efforts. California nonprofit leaders report that they were able to meet with leaders from Arizona and build on Arizona's intentional media engagement. A Bay Area initiative, No Traffick Ahead, which was comprised of over 65 groups, focused concerted effort to proactively avoid mixed messages from different groups, in the crowded media space regarding human trafficking around the Super Bowl.

*“Overall, we were able to promote a consistent message with the media that respected our diverse partner agencies. This cohesive messaging was unique to our region and created a sense of regional unity.”*

–Sharan Dhanoa, Coordinator of the South Bay Coalition to End Human Trafficking, No Traffick Ahead

Law enforcement leaders in Arizona and a service provider in California also warn that media coverage and the associated logistics can become intrusive, especially during operations. Feedback also

warned that media exposure may further exploit victims; thus, ensuring that journalism covering sting operations or trafficking trends respect victims, allowing privacy at times, may be a consideration when planning for camera crews.

## COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

### *Task Forces, Coalitions, Trainings*

Collaborative community efforts can both build momentum in advance of large events and help maximize the impact of tailored initiatives for months and years after the event has occurred.

Task forces or coalitions that clearly identify their goals help to avoid duplicity and confusion between groups, because as multiple entities engage in anti-trafficking efforts around large events, overlap between groups and government agencies is likely without coordination.

Offering and leading targeted trainings is a key component to comprehensively combatting human trafficking. Prior to large events which cause an influx of people traveling to an area, presentations regarding trafficking indicators to industry personnel who have an increased likelihood of witnessing trafficking activity, such as individuals working within the travel industry, including airline staff, or individuals working within the hospitality industry, including security, housekeeping, and reception personnel, could increase reports of suspected trafficking activity. One community leader in the Bay Area reported that people were particularly open



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to trainings on human trafficking leading up to the Super Bowl and that in hindsight she wishes she had the capacity and time to conduct more trainings for these eager audiences.

With multiple groups conducting trainings, coordination is key. After working to mobilize the private sector and leading trainings both in Arizona and in California leading up to the Super Bowls, Savannah Sanders who is now the Director of Community Outreach and Human Trafficking Services, SAFE (Safeguarding Adolescents from Exploitation) Action Project a Program of Sojourner Center, communicated that at times groups or volunteers from outside the area separately contacted hotels with information leaving confusion as to whether hotel staff had received training and were fully informed. As anti-trafficking trainings and efforts may be underway well over a year prior to a large event, communicating with local leaders and learning what efforts have already been initiated may increase the impact of volunteers and nonprofits from outside the area.

## INVESTIGATIVE STRATEGIES AND COLLABORATION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

Working in collaboration between federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and conducting tailored sting operations targeting trafficking offenses, leading up to the large event with increasing frequency and intensity were reported to be effective.

*“We heard from pimps that they avoided coming to Arizona because they were hearing of law enforcement effort and johns’ boards did warnings of heightened legal risks.”*

–Det. Christi Decoufle, Phoenix Police Department /  
A Victim’s Voice, LLC, AZ

But leaders from both California and Arizona emphatically stressed to start preparations well in advance of the event.

*“Start early! Start at least one year in advance, if not earlier.”*

–Det. Christi Decoufle, Phoenix Police Department /  
A Victim’s Voice, LLC, AZ

*“Get ahead of it!”*

–Special Supervisory Agent Ryan Blay, FBI,  
Civil Rights Unit/Human Trafficking Program Manager;  
Washington, D.C.





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Neighboring law enforcement units that work in unison can better avoid crime displacement, which often occurs when only one area increases enforcement efforts and effectively pushes the crime into a surrounding area.

*“Reaching out to local law enforcement can avoid crime displacement, which does not solve the problem but merely pushes it from city to city.”*

–Special Supervisory Agent Ryan Blay, FBI

Collaborative human trafficking operations during large events also create long term benefits for the metropolitan area, as local agencies remain better equipped to run specialized operations. Reports from law enforcement highlighted that after seeing operations modeled and the cooperation between agencies, some agencies that were initially daunted by the prospect of conducting human trafficking operations now plan to continue operations after seeing their impact during the Super Bowl.

In the Bay Area, for the 2016 Super Bowl, the FBI office based in Oakland established a Human Trafficking Operation Center (HTOC), intended to act as a funnel to connect municipalities and to gather and disseminate information. The HTOC was staffed with FBI agents, victim specialists, and experts in technology and facial recognition software. The HTOC was established to provide analytical sup-

port, and run phone numbers and descriptions of suspects. Reports reflect that this inventive concept was valuable but could be improved and would likely be more effective if the HTOC had time to front-load investigators in the field with information.

Regarding anti-demand efforts, law enforcement in both Arizona and California placed concerted effort on addressing demand for sex trafficking by conducting demand reduction stings. Both locales experienced a huge push for law enforcement to address demand surrounding the Super Bowls, and agencies are continuing to do so. In fact, leaders in Arizona reported identifying over 150 buyers in one week.

*“The largest effect of our efforts was targeting demand.”*

–Sergeant Clay Sutherlin,  
Phoenix Police Department, AZ

Some agencies implemented a “zero tolerance” policy, so that any buyer identified was mandatorily arrested or cited.

*“An overall goal was to focus on demand, and it was a success!”*

–Sergeant Kurtis Stenderup,  
Santa Clara County Sheriff’s Office, CA

As sex trafficking often occurs online, undercover operatives posed as females online to identify buyers. However, Sergeant Domenick Kaufman, Mesa



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Police Department, AZ reported that his unit has increasingly become aware of young male victims. In fact, he reported that using a male decoy in an undercover operation brought in more responses than female decoys.

*“Using a male decoy helps develop awareness that the victimization of young boys is an aspect to be addressed in your city, too.”*

–Sergeant Domenick Kaufman,  
Mesa Police Department, AZ

Also, strategic collaboration between law enforcement and non-policing entities can provide unique, needed support and foster new investigative strategies and successful interventions. Agent Marty Parker, FBI, Oakland, reported that one favorable result from collaboration surrounding the Super Bowl, was that many law enforcement agencies recognized value in working with NGOs and service providers that they had not previously recognized. For example, one valuable resource provided by an NGO, Klaas Kids, used in both Arizona and California, was a database of pictures of hotel rooms, so that law enforcement could identify the location of some potential sex trafficking victims based on the background in pictured online advertisements.

Additionally, incorporating a victim advocate during operations may greatly alter the experience for the recovered victim and the success of related investigations. A critical result from collaboration

between law enforcement and service providers, as reported by Sergeant Kurtis Stenderup, Santa Clara County Sheriff’s Office, was a fundamental shift in how investigators worked with victim advocates. His units incorporated the advocates, included them in briefings, taught them their safety signals and allowed them to conduct interviews, instead of law enforcement.

*“Our biggest success was partnering more effectively with victim advocates, building trust and understanding and effectively working alongside each other in victim-centered investigations.”*

–Sergeant Kurtis Stenderup,  
Santa Clara County Sheriff’s Office;  
Santa Clara, California

Lastly, panelists suggested offering tailored presentations, such as a brief, five-minute overviews with handouts listing key signs of trafficking, to *all* levels of law enforcement, including all patrol units. These brief trainings may increase detection of trafficking activity, especially during times of depleted resources surrounding large events, as specialized vice units are often otherwise engaged. Additionally, encouraging all officers to document data related to suspicions of trafficking offenses, even instances that do not result in arrest, and organizing consis-



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tent information sharing strategies could create a useful database of suspected perpetrators, victims, or fact patterns to be used by colleagues or other law enforcement agencies.

## ENSURING ACCESSIBILITY OF NON-PUNITIVE, VICTIM-CENTERED SERVICES

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In the months leading up to a large event, researching and coordinating availability of services can be very advantageous. Dispensing information regarding the location, operating hours, and contact information for service providers to key individuals and groups, such as first responders, operation centers, and volunteers has proven to be helpful. For example, law enforcement in Arizona compiled a reference guide, listing NGOs, all local shelters and service entities.

Establishing an accessible “drop-in center” with specific services immediately available on site, as well as information regarding off-site services also proved to be an effective tool. The Bay Area benefited from two significant drop-in centers. NGOs in the East Bay area ran a “Survivor Services Headquarters” program at Alameda County’s Family Justice Center, starting seven days before and extending four days after the Super Bowl, staffed by 3-5 people each day from 9am to 3pm, with fewer staff from 3pm to midnight. Bay Area Women Against Rape (BAWAR) led this effort, but several local providers

were involved, including S.H.A.D.E. Project and Love Never Fails. The Survivor Services Headquarters contained three different staffed positions: Ambassadors, who were to assist in making the survivor comfortable; Advocates, who were rape crisis counselors; and Administrators, who made decisions as to who was admitted to the building, whether to file a report, what food was dispensed, and what shelter was contacted.

Approximately 98% of the survivors who received services from the drop-in center were brought by law enforcement. However, feedback reflected that all patrol units were not aware that they could bring individuals to the service center, despite the fact that Survivor Services Headquarters had been announced to the heads of all local law enforcement via email. Correspondingly, leaders wished that they had started earlier and invited a larger discussion with police departments, probation departments and district attorneys’ offices. Although law enforcement were often initially reluctant to bring individuals to the Service Headquarters, law enforcement later requested that the Survivor Services Headquarters be extended the week after the Super Bowl. With an eye to long term developments, local leaders and service providers are now interested in running a Services Headquarters multiple times a year. In the South Bay, Community Solutions ran a similar, although less comprehensive, drop-in center. Despite the successes of this approach, leaders still report that they wish they had started preparations much earlier.





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*“You don’t know what you don’t know until you know you don’t.”*

–Christopher Watson, Program Director,  
Sexually Exploited Minor Program Bay Area  
Women Against Rape, CA

Additionally strategic outreach to potential victims, instead of arrest, may increase victim-centered intervention and produce positive, more empowering interactions between potential victims and law enforcement. For example, passing out informational business cards with contact details to individuals suspected of being commercially sexually exploited in Arizona garnered approximately 1 call per 12 cards dispensed. These individuals were informed that the FBI were monitoring them, but the overall tone of interactions was that law enforcement were “there to help.” In Santa Clara, CA, Sergeant Kurtis reported that his unit took a radically different approach and did not issue citations or arrests upon first contact with a person engaging in commercial sex but instead introduced them to a victim advocate, pursuant to their goals to increase contacts with exploited persons and identify human trafficking victims.

Reports reflected that many exploited persons were transported into the area surrounding the Super Bowl; thus, feedback included recommendations to establish a clear process for responding to issues particular to victims that have been transported from other states or counties. For example, response plans may consider the circumstances under which

providers can offer services immediately, whether victims can remain in the area or must be returned, how efforts to preserve evidence should be coordinated, or what potential jurisdictional issues are likely to arise.

Repeatedly, reports stressed that one continuing obstacle is a shortage of beds and shelter space. Although leaders in the Bay Area contacted and collaborated with various shelters and created an app to show availability, lack of bed capacity remains a critical gap.

## EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

Although evaluating the impact of preventative and restorative efforts is difficult, gathering outcome reports from law enforcement agencies, service providers, and other nonprofit organizations has provided valuable information.

### *Key Lessons Learned:*

- 1.) You can’t start too early in preparing for large events.
- 2.) Collaboration between federal law enforcement, local law enforcement, and service providers is key. Communicating what each entity can offer and sharing information increases effectiveness.
- 3.) Endeavor to maintain the collaboration and momentum, striving for long-term sustainabil-



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ity. Continue to build relationships and run coordinated operations after the event.

- 4.) Proactively, strategically and cohesively engage the media.
- 5.) Don't limit your focus in investigations but, instead, comprehensively include buyers, traffickers, juvenile victims and adult victims. Don't allocate or spend all of your resources in one area only.
- 6.) Focus on demand; target the exploiters with victim-centered investigations.
- 7.) Use victim advocates; bring them in for initial contact with potential victims.
- 8.) Incorporate survivor voices and consult survivor leadership.
- 9.) Create a plan specifically for minor sex trafficking victims to ensure safety and services.
- 10.) Gather information and establish partnership with all service providers and potential shelters in the area.