



October 2016

Dear Parent,

To date, the largest sting in the USA involved 55 FBI field offices and 74 FBI-led Child Exploitation Task Forces throughout the country composed of more than 400 law enforcement agencies. This great work is the latest of a series of enforcement actions targeted at domestic minor sex trafficking where children are being rescued as part of the annual FBI Operation Cross Country sting. *These results reveal that domestic minor sex trafficking is an emerging crime happening in communities throughout the country and frequently the victim is middle school or high school age.*

Can it happen in my neighborhood? Can it happen to someone I know? The answer to both of those questions is yes, and in response Shared Hope International has created a presentation to help educate young people and adults in our area. If your kids know the signs of recruitment, they will be able to take action before their friend becomes a victim. Our goal is to give you the necessary tools to answer these two questions: what are the signs of trafficking and what can I do about it?

We invite you to view *Chosen*, a true story of two all-American girls explaining how they were lured into trafficking. The practical steps provided in *Chosen* are focused on raising awareness and helping prevent it from happening to teens. One young viewer wrote, "We can all be more aware; now that I know how, I can look out for my friends."

The film was produced as appropriate for youth as young as 13 years of age because that is a common age of recruitment in the U.S. *Chosen* is not a sexually explicit film about the horrors of 'being' trafficked – it's about how kids are tricked before they are trafficked. It's about the lies, tactics and brainwashing that trafficking recruiters use. This is the story of two teenage girls from good homes—an athlete, a cheerleader, a straight-A student – but still they were fooled into believing the lies designed to entrap them. *Chosen* isn't a sex education film; it fits into the category of anti-bullying, healthy relationships, or social justice issues. It is crucial for middle school and high school children to see *Chosen* so they are made aware of the issue of domestic minor sex trafficking and more able to identify situations where they or a friend might be in danger of being trafficked. It's all about prevention.

In addition, Shared Hope has created *Chosen* Gang Edition. This film responds to the increasing trend of gang sex trafficking as gangs are turning to sex trafficking as a means of revenue. *Chosen* Gang Edition addresses high-risk youth – children who may have been sexually abused, in foster care, a runaway, a drug abuser, or otherwise marginalized by their life circumstances, making them vulnerable to the power, the belonging, the 'family' a gang offers to them.

We ask that you encourage your school to use this film to educate your son or daughter and their friends to take part in this educational opportunity so they can defend their friends. One law enforcement officer put it this way, "We will get the bad guys. But please don't make it so we have to rescue you too. Please listen to this message and you'll be safer."

Thank you for helping us to help you protect your community's children.

Shared Hope International

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