



Office of the Texas Governor Child Sex Trafficking Team

Greetings,

Summer is upon us and off to a great start!

We are pleased to welcome Grace MacLeod, Child Sex Trafficking Team Intern through the Texas Governor's Summer 2024 Internship Program. We are excited to have Grace join our team!

In this newsletter, you will find information about Internet Safety Month, an exciting community spotlight out of West Texas, federal funding announcements, training opportunities, and additional resources.

As always, we are incredibly grateful for the work you do on behalf of children and youth impacted by exploitation. Together, we will cultivate a safer and brighter future for all Texans.

The Child Sex Trafficking Team

June is Internet Safety Month

The internet has made it easier for children and youth to become susceptible to online exploitation. Human traffickers have become adept at using internet platforms, including various and everchanging social media channels, and online marketplace websites to recruit victims. In order to combat online exploitation, we must be educated on internet safety, help parents and children become more aware of online risks, and teach our community how to make safe choices on and offline.

Below is a list of free and easily accessible resources to increase online safety for children, youth, and their families.

- [**Keeping Yourself Safe: Protecting Your Physical and Online Safety**](#) | Lindsay Tomlinson and Aurora Garcia of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services' Worker Safety Support Division discuss creating physical safety in the workplace, including planning for safe client interactions, and handling potentially dangerous situations. Additionally, they address the significance of online safety and ways to safeguard personal information from unauthorized access.
- [**Department of Homeland Security: Blue Campaign**](#) | DHS' Blue Campaign is a national public awareness campaign designed to educate the public, law enforcement, and other industry partners to recognize the indicators of human trafficking. DHS offers several safety tips to keep in mind when using the internet, including social media.
- [**NCMEC NetSmartz**](#) | NetSmartz is an online safety education program that provides age-appropriate videos and activities to teach children to be safer online.
- [**Special Feature: Internet Safety**](#) | The Office of Justice Programs within the U.S. Department of Justice offers an excellent collection of federally-supported resources and publications pertaining to Online Safety for Youth.

CSTT Summer Intern



Grace MacLeod will begin her senior year at Texas A&M University this fall, where she is pursuing a B.A. in Sociology. Following graduation in the spring of 2025, she hopes to attend The Bush School of Government and Public Service to pursue a Master of International Affairs. She volunteers for Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Brazos Valley and last summer had the opportunity to spend a month in Zanzibar and Comoros supporting English literacy initiatives in local schools. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with friends and family, visiting the mountains of Colorado, and playing sports. As a CSTT intern, she is looking forward to serving alongside the team in support of their mission to aid victims of child sex trafficking and bring justice to those responsible.

Community Spotlight



El Paso County Attorney's Office

Nuisance Abatement Team

The El Paso County Attorney's Office is making a substantial impact in their community with their Nuisance Abatement Team (NAT) led by Assistant County Attorney, Amy Monsivais. Created in 2017, the NAT has been tasked with identifying physical places where human trafficking occurs, identifying activities or omissions of owners that contribute to the ability of traffickers to use the property for trafficking, providing training to law enforcement and/or prosecutors on civil enforcement, and providing training to the community to identify signs of

human trafficking in businesses or on properties.

The El Paso County Attorney's Office works closely with inspectors, investigators, and the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation to crack down on human trafficking and labor trafficking in various types of businesses. Since 2019, the NAT has closed down 42 business for illegal operations with 5 in FY 2024 to date. Most recently, the NAT helped permanently shut down [Jaguars Strip Club](#) after being accused of being a 'magnet for violence and criminal activity.'

The NAT within the El Paso County Attorney's Office is seen as a model for other county prosecution offices around the state. Amy Monsivais has found that "injunctive action lawsuits are effective tools for ridding the community of storefront brothels and disrupting human trafficking organizations."

If prosecuting offices would like to try to implement this method in their jurisdictions, the El Paso County Attorney NAT would be happy to assist. You may contact Amy Monsivais directly via [email](#).

Training Opportunities

2024 Conference Season

As we enter summer, conference season is in full swing! Attached, we have provided a list of upcoming conferences from August through October of 2024. We hope you find these helpful in your work to end sexual violence and commercial sexual exploitation. *Please note: fees are associated with these events.*

[View Conference Information](#)

Care Coordination: An Essential Component of the Texas Care Continuum

Office of the Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team

June 27, 2024 | Virtual

Join us for an in-depth presentation and conversation focused on the Texas Model for Care Coordination, an essential component of Texas' strategy to serve commercially sexually exploited youth (CSEY) through early intervention, active investigation, short-term services and long-term follow-up care. You will hear Care Coordination best practices from the Harris County Resources for Children and Adults and The Children's Assessment Center, the Harris County Children's Advocacy Center. These two agencies co-lead Harris County's Care Coordination Advisory Council, and have worked collaboratively together to provide best practice, high quality care coordination services in the Harris County community for the last six years.

[Register for this Webinar](#)

Commercial Sexual Exploitation-Identification Tool (CSE-IT) Training

Texas Network of Youth Services

July 18, 2024 | Virtual

The CSE-IT is a research-based screening tool that helps improve early identification of commercially sexually exploited youth (CSEY). The tool is appropriate for use by any provider serving youth, including child welfare workers, probation officers, mental health clinicians, and first responders. In Texas, CSE-IT is integrated within Lighthouse, an innovative software platform that enables users to complete screenings online and access and analyze CSE-IT data at any time. In this training, participants will become certified CSE-IT users and learn next steps to access and use the Lighthouse platform.

[Register for this Training](#)

Towards a Safer Texas: Combating Sexual Violence Through Prevention, Intervention, Collaboration and Policy Change

Office of the Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team

July 31, 2024 | Virtual

Join members of the Office of the Governor's Public Safety Office (PSO) as they present and discuss Texas' response to sexual violence as seen through the lens of three statewide initiatives overseen by the PSO: the Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force, the Child Sex Trafficking Team, and the Sexual Violence Prevention Workgroup.

[Register for this Webinar](#)

Lived Experience and Lifelong Advocacy Leads to the CASA ACT (Anti-Child Trafficking) Framework at Texas CASA

Office of the Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team

August 28, 2024 | Virtual

Rhonda Kuykendall, a survivor of familial trafficking, will share her lived experience and how she has taken her exposure to child sex trafficking at the age of ten years old to empower survivors and equip direct service providers on how best to advocate with survivors of child sex trafficking. Rhonda will also share information on the intersectionality of human trafficking and the child welfare system. Texas CASA has created CASA ACT (Anti-Child Trafficking) to better equip CASA volunteers and staff across the state. CASA ACT has two frameworks: a program guide to provide best practices for the 74 CASA programs; and a volunteer guide, Advocacy for Youth Affected by Sex Trafficking; to educate CASA volunteers on the intricacies of child sex trafficking and how best to support youth affected by sex trafficking.

[Register for this Webinar](#)

Funding Opportunities

OVC FY24 Human Trafficking Fellowship Program

The Fellow selected under this program will work collaboratively with OVC and the larger victim services field to identify and promote culturally responsive service models and activities that can be shared with the anti-trafficking field to enhance services to victims of severe forms of human trafficking.

Closing Date: June 17, 2024

OVC FY24 Pilot Program for Community Based Organizations in Underserved Communities to Build Capacity and Serve Adolescent and Youth Victims of Trafficking

OVC seeks to develop and build the capacity of community-based organizations (CBOs) in underserved communities to provide services to adolescent and youth human trafficking victims through the provision of mentorship and training and technical assistance to these organizations.

Closing Date: June 20, 2024

Resources

Polaris: Resilience Fund



The [Polaris Resilience Fund](#) offers direct cash assistance to survivors of human trafficking across the U.S. to fill the gaps between traditional resources. In doing so, The Resilience Fund gives survivors back exactly what their traffickers stole from them – control over their own lives.

[View Resource](#)

I AM A VICTIM OF SEXTORTION, WHAT CAN I DO? IT IS NOT YOUR FAULT
 You have been tricked and you are not alone!

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO:

WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE OFFENDER

- 1) Don't pay them. If you already have, stop paying them. Paying them only leads to a demand for more money.
- 2) Stop all contact.
- 3) Block them and report to the platform.
- 4) Don't delete any communication with them.
 - Screenshot the messages (not email images)

SECURE YOUR DIGITAL ACCOUNTS

- 1) Change your passwords on all social media accounts.
- 2) Update privacy settings and use two-factor authentication.

NOTIFY YOUR LOCAL POLICE IF YOU FEEL YOU CAN'T DO THAT, TALK WITH SOMEONE ABOUT IT

- 1) A friend
- 2) An older sibling
- 3) A close friend
- 4) A teacher/counselor/parent

NOTIFY THE CYBERTIPLINE

https://report.cybertip.org

AVOID PAYING A "SERVICE" TO INVESTIGATE YOUR CASE

You can also file a claim, or a reimbursement of the system.
 Only report sextortion to law enforcement or a law enforcement agency.

UTILIZE FREE TRUSTED RESOURCES

See back of this page for free trusted resources.

www.icac-taskforce.org **ICAC** Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program

Sextortion Victim Resource

Sextortion Victim Resource is a two-page guide created by the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Task Force to help victims of sextortion navigate next steps after exploitation. Service providers are able to customize this guide to include local resources.

[View Resource](#)

Warning Signs 

Encourage open lines of communication
 It is important for parents to encourage open lines of communication as children are not afraid to talk about inappropriate incidents or solicitations.

Be aware of the warning signs
 Children should beware of personal questions about themselves, their body, who lives with them, whether or not they have a boyfriend or girlfriend, etc. These are warning signs that the conversation is becoming inappropriate, and the child should end the conversation immediately.

Your child is spending too much time online
 If your child is spending more time than usual on the computer, find out why.

Your child suddenly stops going online
 If your child is spending less time on the computer than usual, it could be a sign that something inappropriate or uncomfortable has happened. Question your child in an understanding and supportive manner.

Online friendships
 If you know your child has developed a friendship with someone they met online, it is very important for parents to talk to their child and find out everything they can about that person and the particulars of the friendship.



Internet Safety Handout

The Children's Assessment Center has developed this four-page handout for communities that discuss warning signs of online exploitation, prevention tips, internet safety and education resources.

[View Handout](#)

Report Human Trafficking

If you believe a someone is in immediate danger, call 911.

[iWatch Texas](#) – Tips made to iWatch are investigated by the Texas Department of Public Safety.

[National Human Trafficking Hotline](#) – Call the toll-free hotline at 1-888-373-7888. Tips made to the hotline are reviewed and routed to local law enforcement. This hotline also offers 24/7 confidential support for survivors.

[Texas Child Abuse Hotline](#) - Report child neglect and abuse, including sexual exploitation of a child, to the Texas Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400.



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