

BUILDING BRIDGES



How Los Angeles County Came Together
to Support Children and Youth Impacted
by Commercial Sexual Exploitation

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Building Bridges

LOS ANGELES COUNTY'S STORY

Los Angeles County, one of the nation's most populous counties in the country, is also the site for large numbers of children and youth being victimized through commercial sexual exploitation (CSE). Over the last decade, Los Angeles County has devoted significant time, energy, and resources to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth (CSEC/Y). The County's work has been driven by survivors—the individuals who have lived experience and whose lives are most affected by the policy and practice changes implemented.

Los Angeles County's story consists of many layers; with each step forward, new information is learned, and the County uses that information to re-inform practice and build upon prior layers of work. The foundation of the County's efforts has been to educate the masses and bring awareness of the issue to agency partners and community members. And the County's approach has been responsive to, and played a role in moving forward, legislative changes.



Recognizing that no one agency or organization can effectively address this issue alone, the County has fostered collaboration among community organizations and government agencies. The County has also designed innovative protocols to identify and support youth as well as provide other targeted activities and educational opportunities. All of the work in Los Angeles County has been focused on one primary goal—more effectively serving and supporting youth both to prevent exploitation from occurring and to intervene effectively, when necessary.

The County has made tremendous progress over the past decade, learned many lessons along the way, and also recognizes that there is more work to be done. This report lays out the County's efforts, highlighting the individual champions who have been instrumental along the way. We believe this report will offer ideas, strategies, and hope for other jurisdictions.

As you read you will find references to



board motions



specialized protocols



educational videos



curricula



research



To view or download any of these resources, please visit <https://lacounty.gov/human-trafficking/>

The Issue

COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Los Angeles County has been identified as one of the nation’s high intensity areas for the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth. The “Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) refers to a range of crimes and activities involving the sexual abuse or exploitation of a child for the financial benefit of any person or in exchange for anything of value (including monetary and non-monetary benefits) given or received by any person.”¹ Children and youth who have experienced childhood physical and sexual abuse, emotional neglect, foster care and/or juvenile justice involvement, and/or homelessness are especially vulnerable to CSE. Exploiters target and prey on this vulnerability, often coercing and manipulating children and youth into the sex trade with promises of love and acts of kindness alternated with violence and threats, frequently resulting in trauma bonding. In order to adequately support children and youth in their paths to overcoming the extreme abuse and trauma they have experienced, and to support them in achieving their own goals and dreams, the individuals, systems, and community-based organizations involved in their lives must work together to provide comprehensive, collaborative, and individualized services and support.



See Me and Who I Am Becoming

In an effort to uplift survivors’ resilience, and build focus on the future rather than the past, in October 2020, the County launched an intentional messaging strategy—the “See Me” campaign. This campaign sends the message that survivors are not defined by what they have experienced, but instead by who they are and who they are becoming. The goal is to encourage providers, and society more broadly, to “see” survivors for their resilience, strength, dreams, and future—to see them as more than survivors of commercial sexual exploitation. As part of the “See Me” campaign, throughout this report several survivors share their own messages about who they are and who they are becoming. First, meet Nalah.



“
I want to be an advocate for girls who have been through commercial sexual exploitation because I believe that I have a lot of wisdom and knowledge to give.

***I am breaking generational curses
I am courageous and beautiful
I am becoming me
I am becoming everything they said I couldn’t be.***

”
Nalah



Table of Contents

Messages from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors..... 06

Message from Congressmember Karen Bass.....11

Those We’ve Lost 12

Acknowledgements 14

Funding and Contracts 15

Introduction: In The Beginning..... 16

Survivor Leadership32

 Connecting with Youth 34

 Informing Innovative Practices 34

 Survivor Leadership Academy for Youth..... 35

 Hiring Survivors 36

 Survivor Highlights..... 38

Initiatives54

Education and Awareness58

 Countywide Training..... 60

 No Such Thing Campaign 68

 Educating Hotels & Motels..... 71

 Zero Tolerance 72

 CSEC Child Abuse Poster 73

Adapting to Legislative Changes74

 Senate Bill 119376

 Senate Bill 85578

 Senate Bill 794..... 79

 Senate Bill 1322..... 80

Fostering Multidisciplinary Collaboration.....82

 Task Forces 84

 STAR Court: A Specialized Delinquency Calendar 88

 Safe Youth Zone 96

 LA Regional Human Trafficking Task Force 98

 District Attorney First Step Diversion Program..... 99

 DREAM Court: A Specialized Dependency Calendar..... 100

Collaborative Protocols106

 First Responder Protocol 108

 Detention Protocol..... 116

 Victim Witness Testimony Protocol..... 121

Supporting Our Youth Through Education & Empowerment 126

 Advocacy128

Empowerment Conference 131

Monthly Empowerment Events 141

Prevention Curriculum (“Word on the Street”)142

Intervention Curriculum (“Becoming Me”)..... 145

Parent Empowerment Program 148

Exploring the Housing Question152

 Background: the Complexities of Housing 154

 Provider Roundtable..... 154

 Research on the Impact of Specialized Services and Out of Home Care..... 156

 Foster Care Provider Think Tank 160

 Research to Action Summit161

 Expanding Housing Options for Transition Age Youth.....161

Lessons Learned & Next Steps..... 162

County Agency Highlights 174

 Probation Department.....176

 Department of Children and Family Services187

 Sheriff’s Department 196

 Department of Health Services, Medical Hub Clinics.....205

 Department of Mental Health210

 Department of Public Health.....214

 District Attorney’s Office.....218

 Juvenile Court Health Services.....221

 Public Defender’s Office 224

Community Partner Highlights 226

 Nola Brantley Speaks 226

 Saving Innocence 230

 National Center for Youth Law..... 237

 Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking..... 242

 Children’s Law Center of California 245

 Forgotten Children 250

 Gems Uncovered 254

 Journey Out 258

 Restoration Diversion Services..... 263

 Treasures 268

 ZOE International 273

Messages from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors



FIRST DISTRICT
SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

There is no greater duty than protecting and serving children and youth. That duty is most pronounced for young people identified as commercially sexually exploited. Los Angeles County’s commitment to that responsibility is unwavering. Our residents have made clear that protecting children and youth from sexual exploitation is of utmost importance. As a former Secretary of Labor under President Barack Obama, I worked to end human and child trafficking. Since coming home to Los Angeles County to serve, I remain steadfast in the work to protect children and youth identified as, or vulnerable to be, commercially sexually exploited. I have heard from families about the need to create more services for the parents of these young people—and because of my actions at the Board of Supervisors, Los Angeles County now offers that necessary support. I heard from advocacy organizations about the need for better housing options for young people identified as commercially sexually exploited—and through additional Board actions, Los Angeles County is now working to create that housing. My colleagues on the Board of Supervisors and I will continue responding to the needs of our residents. The Los Angeles County Probation Department and the National Center for Youth Law have dedicated their expertise to that end. I want to extend my gratitude to them for their forward thinking and leadership. I especially want to recognize the young people and their families who have shared their stories to protect other children and youth. In reading the “Los Angeles County Story,” I hope you find lessons to bring to your own community—because the health of our neighborhoods is measured by the success of our children.



SECOND DISTRICT
SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS



When I was elected to the Board of Supervisors in 2008, I was familiar with the depravity of labor and sex trafficking on an international level. But I was completely unaware of what was happening right here in the County of Los Angeles. A longtime constituent, Sinetta Farley, brought the issue of child sex trafficking to my attention. Sinetta had founded Restoration Diversion Services to provide counseling and referral services to young victims. Once I became aware of the magnitude of the problem, I had to get involved. Some things are impossible to “un-hear.”

We have come a long way since that time. As you read through the “Los Angeles County Story,” you’ll learn about the numerous steps the Board of Supervisors has taken to:

- identify the children victimized by these crimes to ensure that they receive vital County services;
- intensify, enhance, and tailor County programming to better serve victims and survivors;
- decriminalize and destigmatize children and youth whom traffickers and pimps treat as commodities;
- aggressively pursue offenders and traffickers, prosecuting them to the fullest extent of the law;
- raise awareness among County employees and the community to prevent children and youth who are at-risk of exploitation from falling prey to this pernicious crime; and
- push for federal and state legislation that protects our young people and funds services dedicated to their recovery and well-being.

We could not have accomplished this without the vision and hard work of our County departments, government partners, and legal and community advocates. My deepest gratitude is reserved for those who have survived the abuses and horrors of commercial sexual exploitation. Together we are all committed to dismantling and eradicating this violent and repugnant crime. Our children are not for sale.





**THIRD DISTRICT
SUPERVISOR SHEILA KUEHL**

Los Angeles County established its forward-thinking Commercially Sexually Exploited Children program in January of 2012 in order to bring an end to the epidemic of child trafficking. I'm happy to see that our work is making a difference. Earlier this year, the Los Angeles Regional Human Trafficking Task Force along with law enforcement agencies and task forces from all across California arrested more than 500 people suspected of trafficking. This operation resulted in 76 adult and 11 minor victims being recovered; 266 males arrested for the charge of solicitation; and 27 suspected traffickers and exploiters arrested. In total, 518 arrests were made. We want to make it abundantly clear that the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children will be soundly punished and that the partnership between law enforcement and child protection agencies will continue to work to end this scourge.



**FOURTH DISTRICT
SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN**



For decades Los Angeles County has been at the front lines of the fight against commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth. Over the years we've dedicated our attention and resources to the goal of better identifying and supporting individuals who have suffered this kind of exploitation. Early in my tenure as Supervisor my colleagues and I passed a motion requiring all current and new County employees complete an online "Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children" training to help them better identify and respond to youth who have been exploited. To date, over 70,000 County employees have completed the training and are serving as the eyes and ears for children and youth who have faced commercial sexual exploitation.

We have come a long way, but there is still much more work to be done. This includes better identifying and supporting youth who identify as LGBTQ+ and have also experienced commercial sexual exploitation, as we know that LGBTQ+ youth are disproportionately impacted by CSE. As Supervisor for the 4th District, I will continue to dedicate County efforts in support of children and youth who have been commercially sexually exploited. These individuals have endured more than most of us could possibly imagine—we must do everything in our power to ensure their needs are being met.





FIFTH DISTRICT SUPERVISOR KATHRYN BARGER

Los Angeles County, with the ongoing support of the Board of Supervisors, has been a leader in addressing the issue of commercial sexual exploitation of our children and youth. Across the County, agencies have broken silos and come together to recognize and take responsibility for those children in our care—those involved with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems—who have been commercially sexually exploited. These children are our most vulnerable. And it is our responsibility to ensure that they are not criminalized for what they have experienced, but instead, connected to specialized services that promote their long-term safety, stability, and well-being. Los Angeles County has said enough is enough.

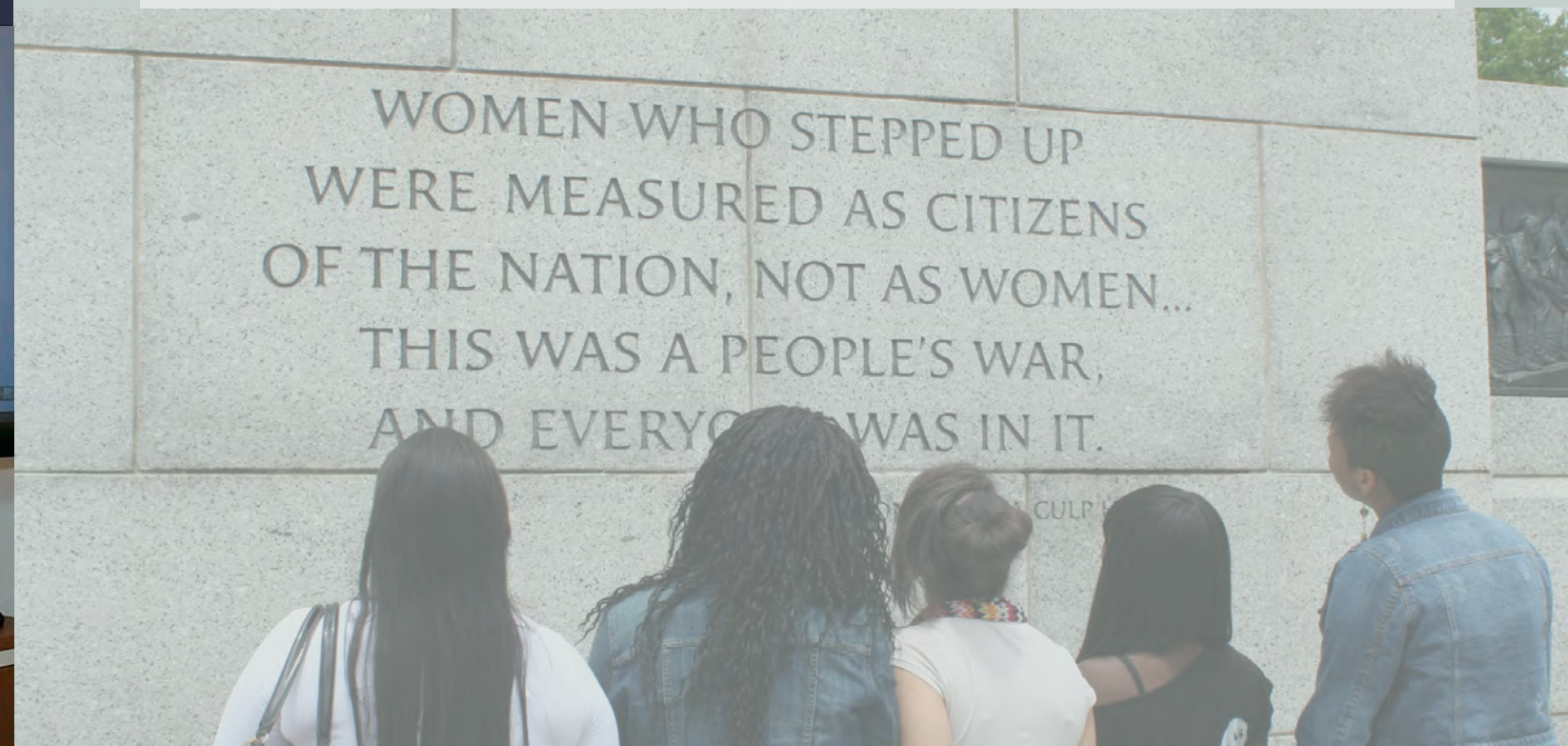
As Supervisor for Los Angeles County's 5th Supervisorial District, the protection and care of our children is one of my top priorities. I am so appreciative of the County's collaborative efforts to ensure that our youth who have been exploited have the supports and services that they need to heal and thrive. With the help of our County partners, the Board of Supervisors will continue our efforts to make sure no child is subjected to the trauma and injustice of commercial sexual exploitation. I hope other communities can look to the "Los Angeles County Story" as a collaborative model to serve children who have been commercially sexually exploited. Together, we will continue to fight to protect our children.

Message from Congressmember Karen Bass

Sex trafficking is one of the world's fastest growing criminal enterprises and in our country it disproportionately affects those who have been placed in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. I'm incredibly proud of the work that Los Angeles County has done and the leadership role they have taken on this issue. Protecting victims from the heinous crime of human trafficking must be a priority at the local, state and federal levels. One of the biggest victories was changing the way children were treated by the law in Los Angeles—today, a minor cannot be charged with prostitution—because how can you be guilty of something you can't legally consent to? There is "No Such Thing as a Child Prostitute"—and that's a perfect example of the change Los Angeles has created. My job is to take what's working at the local level, learn from those models, and implement them on a federal level.



The work that Los Angeles continues to do is an example for the nation. Changing the narrative and the paradigm and the stigma surrounding this issue is integral to addressing it and I'm so proud to continue this fight on the federal level alongside Los Angeles County.



Those We've Lost

Over the years we have sadly lost children who never had the opportunity to reach their full potential. We have not forgotten their lives and often say their names. Through our continued efforts to protect, serve and empower this vulnerable and courageous population of children and youth, we honor the lives of those we have lost.

We have also lost dear colleagues and friends who dedicated their lives to supporting and protecting these youth. We are forever grateful to have worked alongside such fierce champions. We dedicate our work to all those we have lost.



Lieutenant André Dawson served the City of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) for 33 years. André dedicated much of his career to fighting human trafficking—he led the LA Metropolitan Human Trafficking Task Force; served as a supervisor of the FBI Innocence Lost Task Force; was a member of the California Department of Justice, Attorney General’s Human Trafficking Work Group; and taught human trafficking enforcement strategies to officers throughout the state of California. Even after his retirement, André continued his service with the LAPD as a reserve officer for the Human Trafficking Task Force and as an independent consultant for human trafficking related crimes and undercover tactics. André’s life was dedicated to protecting and serving his community, aiding those in need, and being a loving and devoted father and husband.



Anna Soto worked for more than 20 years as an administrator for the Department of Public Health (DPH), including significant time in the division of HIV and STD programs. While at DPH, Anna became a staunch advocate for children and youth who had experienced CSE, particularly for foster youth and those involved in the juvenile justice system. She led DPH’s CSEC efforts across the County, and helped to form the public health human trafficking CSEC committee. Anna was committed to making life better for others. A true leader, she inspired others to get involved with local politics and matters impacting their community.



Fiza Quraishi was an attorney at the National Center for Youth Law, and was there from the start of the County’s work to address the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth. Fiza was a fearless child advocate, brilliant and creative lawyer, and a true believer in the power of collaboration—that by working together and breaking down silos, we can do better for and with the families and youth we serve. Fiza played an instrumental role in the Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol for CSEC and the Detention Interagency Identification and Response Protocol for CSE Children and Youth.



Acknowledgements

The County would like to acknowledge the many Departments, community partners, and survivors whose collaboration has made this work possible. This work is not easy, and would not be possible without the courage, commitment, and audacity of countless individuals who have gone above and beyond to fight for our children and our community. The County thanks each and every one of you.

Special thanks to Allison Newcombe, Erin French, and Kate Walker Brown, attorneys at the National Center for Youth Law, who authored this report and have played a significant role in pushing the County's efforts related to CSE forward; Kylee Olson, who designed this report; Syvanna Maberry, Denise Hoogland, and Saving Innocence for their contributions to the photography used throughout this report; and Rachel Monas, Graduate, Loyola Law School, for her contributions to the research and drafting of this report.



All of the beautiful artwork you will see throughout this report was created by survivors of commercial sexual exploitation at annual Empowerment Conferences.

Funding and Contracts

In order to effectively address the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth from all angles, Los Angeles County recognized early on that it would need to devote significant resources. The County was creative in its pursuit to identify funding and resource streams to support this work. In the beginning, the County funded specialized advocacy, training and discrete initiatives through an alternative to detention grant from the California Department of Corrections and the federal Title IV-E funding stream. Later on, the Board of Supervisors allocated nearly seven million dollars from the Healthier Communities, Stronger Families, Thriving Children (HST) fund to support the countywide efforts. The County also applied for and secured grant funding to develop innovative models and conduct groundbreaking research. The County has also secured significant ongoing funding from the State through its participation in the CSEC Program. The County acknowledges the many individuals who have pursued, advocated for, and ensured the

smooth distribution of funding sources to better support youth and communities impacted by CSE.

In addition, County agencies recognize that this work is only possible with the support of their departments' contracting and fiscal operations, who work tirelessly behind the scenes to create and monitor contracts with a number of partner agencies that are responsible for providing direct services and supporting the broader initiatives within the County. These contracts ensure that training, advocacy, curriculum development, protocol development, technical assistance and much more can successfully materialize. As a result of the hard work and support of these departments' contracting and fiscal operations, along with the County Chief Executive Office, numerous efforts in the County aimed at better identifying and serving youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation have been possible.

PROBATION DEPARTMENT CHAMPIONS



Latasha Howard
Director,
Contracts and
Grants Division



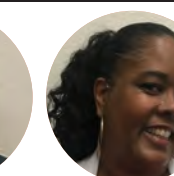
Daniel Sahagun
Supervising
Program Analyst



Yvonne Troncoso
Administrative
Services Manager
II



Juan Kubes
Administrative
Services
Manager II



Jodi Rogers
Procurement
Manager



Nita Jacobs
Procurement
Assistant I

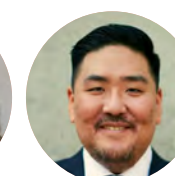


Ludy M. Yau
Finance Services
Division

DCFS CHAMPIONS



Claudia Pineda
Administrative
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Manager III



Andrew I. Kang
Administrative
Services
Manager I



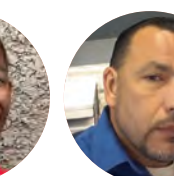
Margaret Wong
Administrative
Services
Manager II



Anna Hom Wong
Principle
Analyst



Terri Boykins
Deputy Director,
Contract
Management
and Monitoring
Division



Adrian Ledezma Jr.
MH Clinical
Training
Coordinator



Joo Yoon
Administrative
Services
Manager III



INTRODUCTION

In The Beginning...

Beginning in 2010, as Los Angeles County officials learned more about the issue of commercial sexual exploitation, they began to recognize the significant number of youth who experience exploitation in their community. With greater understanding of the issue came the realization that children and youth who have been commercially sexually exploited are victims of child abuse and neglect in need of comprehensive, trauma-informed supports and services. Today, Los Angeles County is a national leader in the fight against the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth—proactively identifying youth who have been exploited and connecting them with intensive, specialized services while also implementing innovative prevention strategies and dynamic education campaigns. It all began with a small number of champions that has evolved into a widespread response involving all corners and sectors of the County.

Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect

In 2010, at a meeting held by the Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN) committee, FBI agent Debbie Deem presented on the issue of domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST). Hoping to raise awareness that child sex trafficking is a domestic issue, and to gather support to address it at the county level, Deem inspired individuals on the ICAN committee, including Emilio Mendoza, an official with the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and Honorable Donna Groman to take action to address this issue in

Los Angeles County. Within weeks, the ICAN committee created a subcommittee on domestic minor sex trafficking, which Deem co-chaired. Judge Groman, a juvenile court judge and strong advocate for juvenile justice reform, convinced Michelle Guymon, an official with the Los Angeles County Probation Department (Probation), to attend the subcommittee's first meeting, which eventually led to Guymon's leadership in combating this issue.



DEBBIE DEEM

Victim Specialist, FBI (retired)

Debbie Deem spent over 30 years working in victim services. As a Victim Specialist with the FBI, she worked with victims of financial and violent federal crimes under investigation by the FBI. Prior to working with the FBI, Deem served as a Victim Witness Coordinator for the U.S. Attorney's Offices in San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Champion



EMILIO MENDOZA

**Assistant Regional Administrator,
Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services**

Emilio Mendoza co-chaired the ICAN subcommittee on DMST alongside Debbie Deem. Now serving as Assistant Regional Administrator for DCFS, Mendoza oversees the Multi-Agency Response Team, Runaway Outreach Unit, and CSEC Units. All three specialized programs play a significant role in many of the County's CSE initiatives.

Champion

“ At that time, human trafficking was seen by the law enforcement community as a federal issue. But Debbie Deem made clear that it was a County issue too, emphasizing the need to provide better services to survivors at the local level. ”

EMILIO MENDOZA



HONORABLE DONNA GROMAN

The Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles

Judge Donna Groman currently presides over Los Angeles County's Mental Health Court. She previously served as supervising judge of the Delinquency Division of the Los Angeles Juvenile Court, where she had oversight responsibility over one of the largest juvenile justice courts in the United States. Judge Groman was instrumental in the creation of the specialized Succeeding through Achievement and Resilience (STAR) Court, and has spearheaded several innovative initiatives throughout the County to keep kids out of the juvenile justice system.

Champion

Learning from Programs Across the Country

The subcommittee of the ICAN catalyzed the County around the issue and spurred it to take action to better identify and serve youth who had been commercially sexually exploited. With the support and encouragement of Probation’s upper management, including Reaver Bingham, Probation officials set out to better understand the issue and efforts to address it across the country. Guymon, along with Hania (Cardenas) Bocklen—who was then the Director overseeing Probation’s Independent Living

Program (ILP)—spent six months learning from jurisdictions all over the country. One of their final stops was in Dallas, Texas, where they met Byron Fassett, a sergeant with the Dallas Police Department, and gained insight into the issue through a law enforcement lens. Fassett emphasized the importance of getting county and local government involved in the issue and finding champions along the way—the County followed his advice.



MICHELLE GUYMON
Director, Child Trafficking Unit, Los Angeles County Probation Department

Michelle Guymon is the Director of the Child Trafficking Unit and has worked for the Los Angeles County Probation Department for 25 years. Guymon has been a champion for this issue since she first learned about it in 2010, advocating for countless CSEC initiatives across the County. She is currently Probation’s representative for the California Child Welfare Council’s CSEC Action Team, the project manager for the First Responder Protocol, co-chair of the Empowerment Conference, and a lead for the County’s Integrated Leadership Team.

“November 16, 2010. I remember the date so vividly because it was a day that changed my life. It was my first meeting of the Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking subcommittee. It was here that I learned that this exploitation wasn’t something happening thousands of miles away in a foreign country. In fact, it was happening right here, in our community, to the very girls I was charged to protect.”

MICHELLE GUYMON

“
As a juvenile court judge, I was frustrated that the only solution we had for CSEC youth was to keep them locked up for their own protection.

How very backwards that seemed.

We were incarcerating our young people to keep them safe from exploiters who were free to roam the streets victimizing other children. We had to find some alternatives, as our young people were forced to choose between exploitation on the street and juvenile hall, with not much hope for any better outcomes.

”
HONORABLE DONNA GROMAN

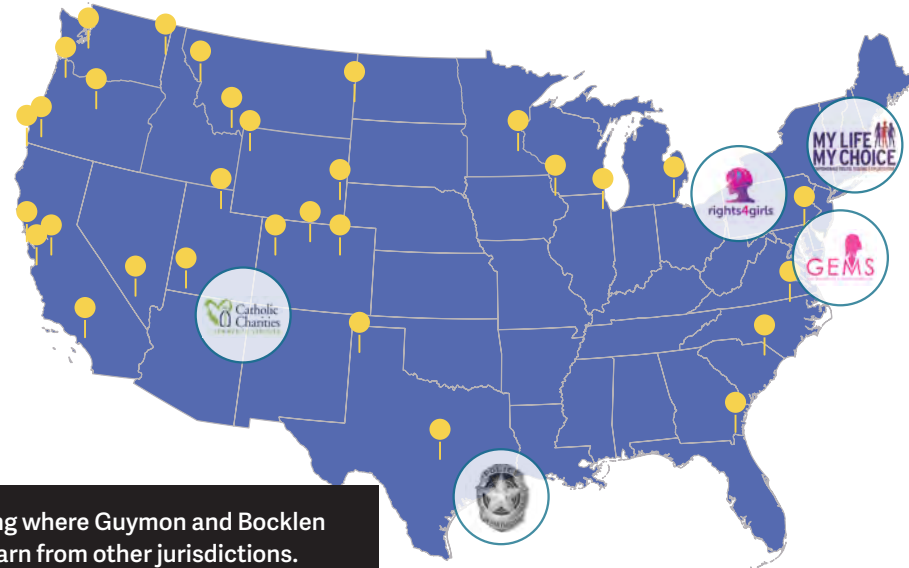


HANIA (CARDENAS) BOCKLEN

Senior Probation Director, Los Angeles County Probation Department

Hania (Cardenas) Bocklen has been a champion for this issue since the very beginning. While serving as Director of Probation's Independent Living Program, she advocated to support the housing needs of transitional age youth who had been, or were at risk of, commercial sexual exploitation. She currently serves as a Senior Probation Director in the Adult Bureau, where she oversees gender specific programming.

Guymon and Bocklen learned about several innovative programs serving youth who had experienced CSE. For example, in Las Vegas, there was a specialized courtroom to serve youth arrested for prostitution-related offenses; and in Boston, an excellent prevention curriculum, My Life My Choice.



Map indicating where Guymon and Bocklen traveled to learn from other jurisdictions.



BYRON FASSETT

Program Manager, National Criminal Justice Training Center (former Sergeant, Dallas Police Department)

Byron Fasset is the Program Manager for the National Criminal Justice Training Center. When Los Angeles County was first beginning its efforts to address this issue, Fasset, then a sergeant for the Dallas Police Department, provided support to Los Angeles County officials as they brainstormed their initial steps.



REAVR BINGHAM

Chief Deputy, Adult Services, Los Angeles County Probation Department

Reaver Bingham is the Chief Deputy of Adult Services at the Los Angeles County Probation Department. He was a champion from the beginning and continues to ensure adequate resources are provided and that CSEC is maintained as a priority issue for the Department.

Guymon and Bocklen realized, however, that despite these great standalone programs, no jurisdictions had yet developed a comprehensive approach. Guymon and Bocklen became determined to create a comprehensive support system for youth who had been commercially sexually exploited in Los Angeles County. To do so, they knew it would be crucial to gain the support of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, and obtain buy-in from the other child-serving agencies across the County.



Reaver Bingham speaking at the County's first CSEC conference in 2014.

"It's important to have all hands on deck, because this is not an issue that can be tackled by any one entity. Developing a very detailed strategic plan, providing whatever financial and human resources that need to be applied, is also very important. Equally important is to listen to the voices of those who have been affected by exploitation."

REAVR BINGHAM

Probation Partnering with the Delinquency Court

Then, in 2011, Probation and the delinquency court jointly applied for, and were awarded, an alternative to detention grant from the California Department of Corrections, aiming to decrease the detention time of victims of sex trafficking who were arrested for prostitution-related offenses and to increase the supports and services available to help them heal within the juvenile justice system. Through this funding, the County formed a specialized unit within Probation—the Child Trafficking Unit (CTU)—and a collaborative court for probation-involved youth—the Succeeding through Achievement and Resilience (STAR) Court.



In 2010 alone, there were 174 youth under the age of 18 arrested for prostitution-related charges. Of those 174 youth:

- 92% were African American
- 59% were or had been involved in the child welfare system
- 84% of all arrests came from two distinct areas of Los Angeles—Service Planning Areas (SPA) 6 and 8—the South Los Angeles and Long Beach Areas

In that same year, among 18-24 year olds (Transition Age Youth, or “TAY”), there were nearly 2,400 individuals that accounted for just shy of 5,000 arrests. The County suspected these Transition Age Youth (TAY) were likely exploited before they turned 18, which meant that there were many young people not being identified and provided supportive services.



HONORABLE CATHERINE J. PRATT
STAR Court, The Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles
Judge Catherine Pratt has handled juvenile delinquency cases in Compton, CA since 2007. In 2011 she created and implemented STAR Court in partnership with the Probation Department. Since then, she has worked with nearly 600 children and youth on probation who have experienced CSE. Judge Pratt now provides training for judges and other professionals throughout the country on how to work with youth impacted by CSE.

Gaining the Support of Local Government

Later that year, Guymon and Bocklen presented an overview of the grant to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Public Safety Cluster, catching the attention of former Supervisor Don Knabe’s office, specifically Nick Ippolito, then Children’s Deputy. Guymon met with Knabe to share the impact of the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth in Los Angeles. This meeting ignited Knabe’s interest in combating this issue—he quickly emerged as a leader and eventually advocated for a countywide response to prevent it from happening and to better identify and serve those who have been exploited or are at high-risk.



NICK IPPOLITO
Acting Chief Deputy, Department of Public Social Services (former Supervisor Don Knabe’s Children’s Deputy)
Nick Ippolito served as former Supervisor Don Knabe’s Children’s Deputy. In that capacity, he supported several board motions addressing CSE, raised awareness of the issue, and advocated for programming and resources to better support youth impacted by CSE. Ippolito continues to support countless efforts to improve the County’s response to children and youth who have been CSE.

“ I just so happened to be in that meeting that day. Michelle and Hania started to explain the federal grant—they described 12 to 15 year old children who were trafficked, by either their parents or by pimps, and some of the horrific things they go through. But what really made an impression on me was the fact that these youth were in our foster care system and in and out of our juvenile halls and camps. After hearing this, I got up from the meeting, marched into [Supervisor Knabe’s] office, and said, ‘you have no idea what’s going on!’ ”

NICK IPPOLITO



"With Supervisor Knabe's support, we were really able to do the outreach we needed to do to educate our Department, County partners, and the public on this issue. I believe that without him, LA wouldn't be where it is today."

- Hania (Cardenas) Bocklen, Senior Probation Director, Los Angeles County Probation Department

Hania (Cardenas) Bocklen, Michelle Guymon, and former Supervisor Don Knabe.



DON KNABE

Former Supervisor, Fourth District, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

Former Supervisor Don Knabe prioritized the issue of child sex trafficking and was instrumental in many of the County's efforts related to supporting survivors. During his time as Supervisor, he raised awareness of the issue, secured significant County resources, and laid the groundwork that provides comprehensive supports and services for survivors.

"I have been honored to serve Los Angeles County for nearly 20 years. Never in my time in office have I heard of an issue as shocking and disturbing as what is happening to young girls right here in the streets of America. A lot of people think human trafficking is happening over there in some third world country just as I did, but in fact, across the nation, communities are waking up to the fact that it is happening right here on our streets in our neighborhoods."

D O N K N A B E

Prioritizing Training

In 2011, recognizing early on the value of training people before developing new policies and practices, the County held the first CSEC-focused, two-day intensive training led by Nola Brantley, a nationally acclaimed advocate on the issue of child sex trafficking. With the support of the Probation Department, the County Board of Supervisors and the Department of Children and Family Services, the County has provided high quality training since 2011.

"The importance of training is to ensure that individuals across the County are on the same page and can work cohesively in responding to this issue. In Los Angeles, we've always facilitated multidisciplinary training—reaching people from different disciplines and from different departments. And when these individuals go back to their departments with what they've learned, knowledge can continue to spread."

- Nola Brantley, Founder and CEO, Nola Brantley Speaks



Nola Brantley facilitates training for County partners.

Creating Interagency Collaboration

Soon, the full Board of Supervisors became champions for change on this issue, dedicating resources and bringing agencies from across the County together to serve youth’s multifaceted needs. Recognizing that interagency collaboration would be vital, in 2012, the Board approved a motion to create the CSEC Task Force, co-chaired by the Chief Probation Officer and the Director of DCFS. Then, in 2013, the CSEC Task Force recommended to the Board that the County establish an interagency response model to serve victims of CSE—a model that would be a comprehensive and coordinated strategy that would bring together law enforcement, child welfare, probation, education, mental health, medical care and public health systems, as well as nonprofit victim advocacy organizations. This later led to the CSEC Integrated Leadership Team (ILT), which, as of 2020, oversees the County’s CSEC initiatives.

“No one agency or system can adequately serve these victims alone. We need to ensure that mental health, probation, law enforcement, education, other health providers, and community-based organizations are working together to bring resources to the table to serve these youth.”

JOAN PERA
Director of Community Relations,
Los Angeles County Probation Department (former CTU Supervisor)

Increasing the Capacity of County Agencies to Better Identify and Support Children and Youth Experiencing CSE

Building on the groundwork laid and lessons learned through the CTU and STAR Court, in early 2016, the County created a specialized unit within DCFS to achieve similar goals. The County also developed the Dedication to Restoration Through Empowerment, Advocacy and Mentoring (DREAM) Court, a specialized court for youth in the dependency system who have been identified as CSE. Further, the County expanded the capacity of the Departments of Health Services (DHS), Mental Health (DMH), Public Health (DPH), and others to better identify and support youth impacted by CSE in the County.



DIANE IGLESIAS
Senior Deputy Director, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services

Diane Iglesias has been an advocate for Los Angeles County’s efforts to address CSE since the beginning. Over the past 8 years, she has interfaced significantly with the ILT and partnered with all key agencies to move LA’s approach to this issue forward.

Centering Survivor Voice

Throughout its efforts to better address this issue, the County learned that partnering with survivors and amplifying survivors’ voices in this work is paramount. With unparalleled insights into how the County can best support youth who have experienced exploitation, survivors are the experts. Today, across Los Angeles County, survivor advocates conduct trainings and facilitate small group workshops for youth focused on prevention, mentor youth one-on-one and at empowerment events, work in various positions in County child-serving agencies, and inform local and state policies and practices around this issue.

“Survivor advocates give another perspective. We’re able to shine light on things that most people wouldn’t think of—kind of an ‘out of the box brain’—in finding solutions, as well as looking deeper into the problem.”

TIKA
Crisis Response Case Manager & Survivor Advocate, Journey Out



MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH NOVEMBER 27, 2012
ESTABLISH A SEX TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE

Sex trafficking of minors is becoming a paramount issue for municipalities across the country as law enforcement officials uncover more and more underage prostitution rings. The statistics as they relate to child welfare are staggering: the average age of entry into prostitution is 12 years old; and the average life expectancy following entry is seven years, according to several sources including the United States Department of Justice and the FBI.



Developing Processes and Protocols that Outlive Individuals

The County also recognized the importance of building processes and protocols that outlive individuals. To achieve this, the County, in partnership with the National Center for Youth Law, convened multidisciplinary workgroups to develop and implement interagency protocols to promote prevention, identification, and appropriate responses to children and youth who have been or are at risk of CSE. These interagency protocols include the Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol for CSEC (First Responder Protocol or FRP) and the Detention Interagency Identification and Response Protocol for CSE Children and Youth (Detention Protocol). And, the County is currently developing the Victim Witness Testimony Protocol (Victim Witness Protocol).



ERICA REYNOSA
Supervising Psychologist, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health

Erica Reynoso was one of the first DMH champions for this issue, assisting in the creation of a specialized CSEC Program within DMH. Since then, she has led significant training both within DMH and in other agencies and organizations and helped develop the Detention Protocol.



“Champions in the Probation Department helped us to better understand this population of youth. And then together, we worked to mobilize the resources necessary to support them.”

DIANE IGLESIAS
Senior Deputy Director, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services

Changes in Legislation

Changes in legislation have also been crucial in improving the County’s efforts to better identify and support youth who have experienced CSE. In 2014, the state passed Senate Bill (SB) 1193 (Steinberg), which requires that specified businesses and other establishments prominently post a notice on the warning signs of human trafficking, and where victims of this crime can receive help. Also in 2014, SB 855 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review) was passed, amending the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 300 to clarify that children who are commercially sexually exploited whose parents or guardians failed or were unable to protect them may fall within the description of 300(b) and be adjudged as dependents of the juvenile court. Then, in 2015, the state passed SB 794 (Committee on Human Services), which codified the federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014 (HR 4980) in state law. And recently SB 1322 (Mitchell) was enacted, rendering the crimes

of prostitution and loitering with the intent to commit prostitution inapplicable to minors. These legislative changes led Los Angeles and other counties to believe that child welfare would be the primary agency serving youth who have been commercially sexually exploited, and that the juvenile justice system would have a limited role in serving these youth; however, this has not been the case. Rather, Probation has learned that many children who are trafficked for sex become entangled in delinquent/criminal activity—often related to their exploitation and directed by their exploiter, or as a means of survival. As a result, while the County has developed specialized programs in the child welfare system, they have also continued to focus attention on identifying and supporting youth involved in the juvenile justice system who have experienced exploitation.

“We did not see this coming. I thought that after we stopped arresting children for prostitution, Probation would have a minimal role with youth who were being exploited. I didn’t anticipate how many kids would disclose their exploitation while they were in juvenile hall. Once we knew better, we had to do better for these young people.”

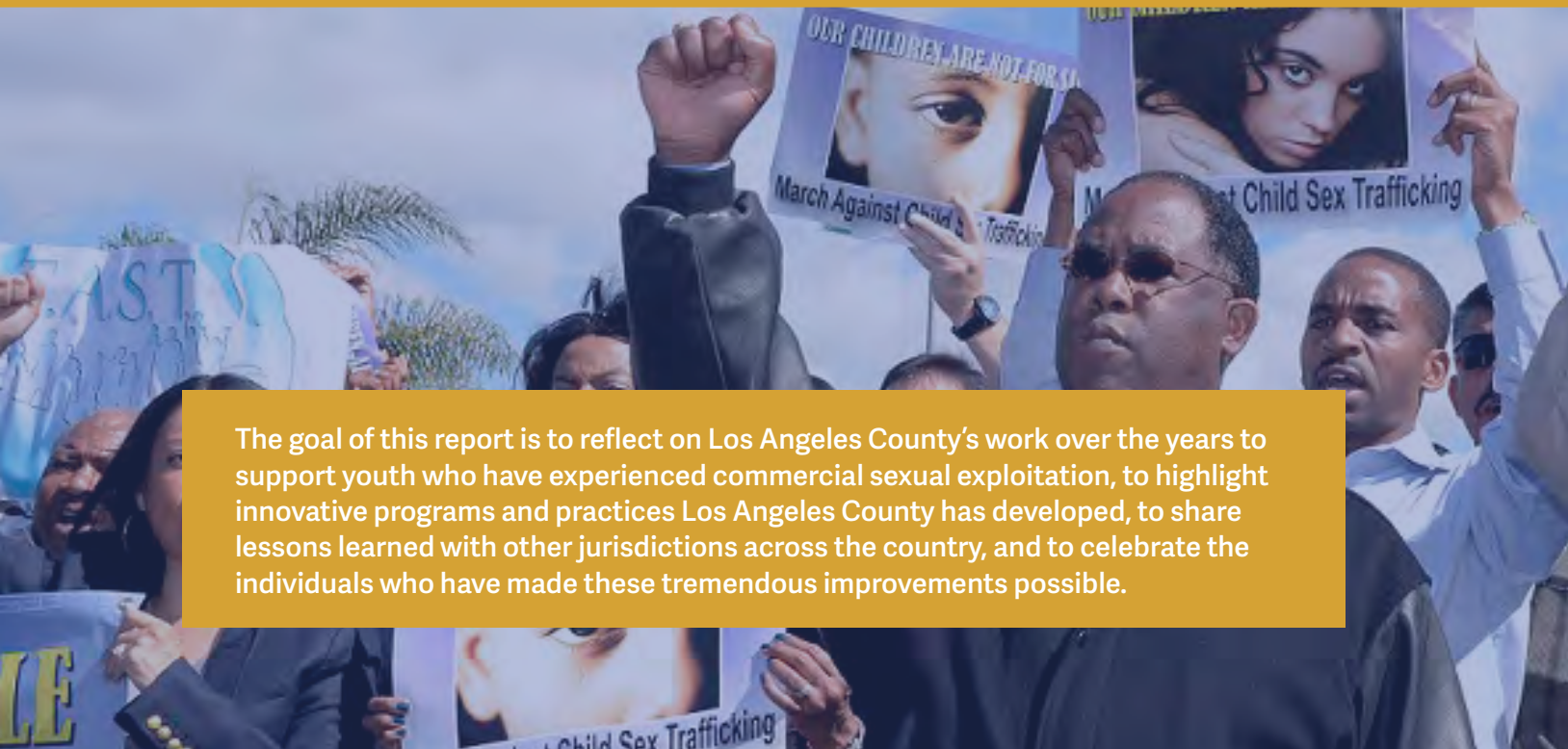
MICHELLE GUYMON
Director, Child Trafficking Unit
Los Angeles County Probation Department

From Then Until Now

According to data from the Probation Department, in 2010, 174 youth who had been commercially sexually exploited were identified as a result of arrests for prostitution-related charges. Today, because of collective efforts to increase awareness of CSEC, train individuals across Los Angeles County, and better support youth who have experienced CSE, over 1,900 youth who have experienced CSE have been identified by Probation alone. Meanwhile, according to data from DCFS, from 2013 to 2019 there were 4,199 referrals to the Child Protection Hotline for suspicion of CSE accounting for 2,554 unique youth. While this data is alarming, the illicit and underground nature of this crime makes it likely that this data underrepresents the magnitude of the issue in Los Angeles County. There are currently recommendations at the state level about standardizing definitions and data collection to attain more accurate numbers.

Since 2010, Los Angeles County has become a national leader in its efforts to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth. What started with a few committed individuals has now become a countywide endeavor to better identify and serve children and youth who experience commercial sexual exploitation or are at high risk. Through creativity, collaboration, and commitment, and together with county agencies and leaders, Los Angeles County has taken steps to ensure children are not criminalized for their exploitation, but instead empowered with the support and services they need to heal and thrive. And while tremendous progress has been made, Los Angeles County is committed to tackling the significant work that remains and will continue to make clear that

our children are not for sale.



The goal of this report is to reflect on Los Angeles County’s work over the years to support youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation, to highlight innovative programs and practices Los Angeles County has developed, to share lessons learned with other jurisdictions across the country, and to celebrate the individuals who have made these tremendous improvements possible.



“ I want to be a marine biologist because I have always been fascinated with the ocean.

**I am reliable and honest
I am smart and resilient
I am becoming a better version of myself in a new chapter of my life.**

I am becoming more intelligent and independent because of my experience in college.

**”
Lauren**



Partnering with survivors has been critical. From one-on-one support provided to individual youth, to informal conversations that grew into the Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol for CSEC, to working side-by-side in meaningful roles within agencies and community-based organizations, to strategizing countywide training, survivors have transformed the approach Los Angeles County has taken on this issue.

SURVIVOR LEADERSHIP

"It's important to partner with survivors because they can provide a unique lens through their own lived experience. It's also important to partner with not just one, but several survivors, because every survivor has different experiences."

- Nola Brantley
Founder and CEO, Nola Brantley Speaks

Survivor Leadership

Survivors are the inspiration for the work. Every day, Los Angeles County is inspired by the resilience, strength, and courage of survivors. And, because there is no substitute for lived experience, the County recognizes that all efforts to respond to CSE must center survivors’ voices and be informed by survivors’ lived experiences.

Connecting With Youth

Survivor advocates have a multitude of roles in the County. In partnership with the County, these committed advocates conduct trainings and groups focused on prevention, in addition to working individually with youth affected by or at-risk of exploitation. They provide support to youth on a deeply personal level, often fostering an instant connection with youth who feel no judgment and who can relate to similar lived experiences. To develop these relationships, survivor advocates travel to foster care homes,, juvenile halls and camps, and empowerment events—prioritizing meeting youth where they are. Through their experiences, they demonstrate the varied path one can take to ultimately be free from exploitation and lead a healthy, productive life. And in doing so, survivor advocates empower youth with hope for a future where they can achieve their own potential.

Informing Innovative Practices

Survivors also inform local and state policies and practices around CSE. Without the brainstorming and feedback of survivors, the First Responder Protocol’s success would not have been realized—it began with just a few individuals around a breakfast table who came up with the idea of coupling advocacy and agency support when a youth is first identified. Additionally, youth survivor leaders provide critical insight into how the County and our system partners can better serve youth by speaking on panels, participating in focus groups, contributing to the County’s research and strategies to improve housing options, and helping to brainstorm innovative approaches. Youth and survivor leaders know best what worked and what could have been done differently, and Los Angeles County is committed to centering that perspective. Survivor leaders from Los Angeles County and around the state also serve on the California Child Welfare Council’s CSEC Action Team and its Survivor Advisory Board, informing statewide policies and practices.

Survivor Leadership Academy for Youth

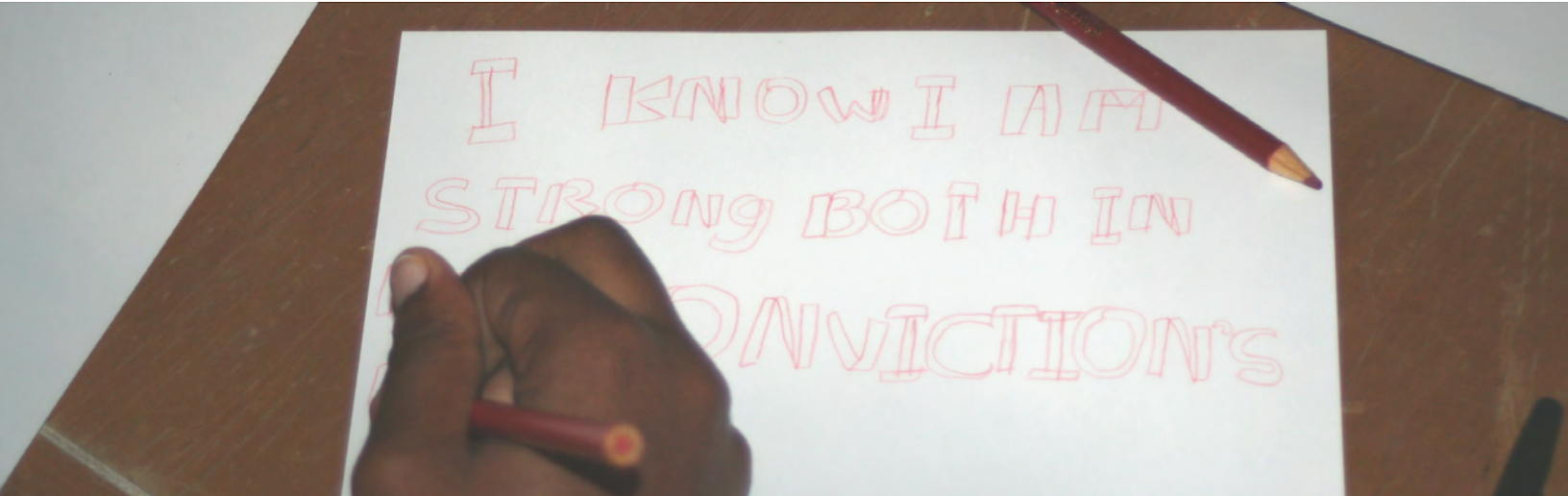
In 2018, in an effort to create a more formal program to support youth leadership and professional development, community-based organization Saving Innocence launched the Survivor Leadership Academy for Youth (SLAY) program. SLAY helps transition age youth (ages 18-22) acquire some of the practical and soft skills that can be difficult to develop when growing up in the foster care system. Topics covered in the program include healthy relationships, conflict management, emotional regulation, budgeting, professional development, and leadership skills. Youth are also partnered with career opportunities in the County, as well as leaders in the community, who provide them with career guidance.

“The SLAY program helps survivors learn how to be leaders in their communities—because we really believe that they will be the leaders of our communities one day.”

- Sara, TAY Program Manager & Case Manager, Saving Innocence

“I’ve really liked being a part of SLAY. There are several sessions that stand out that have been helpful to my growth and development as a young adult. My favorite session so far has been Healthy Relationships & Boundaries, where I learned about boundaries and what my definition of love is and what it should be. I also thought it was fun to have my photo professionally taken. I now have professional photos to use for my future!”

- Survivor participating in the SLAY program



Hiring Survivors

In addition to seeking feedback and involving survivors in the policy and practice shifts happening at the County level, the Board of Supervisors and several key organizations within the County also prioritized the establishment of pipelines that would lead to meaningful employment opportunities for survivors. For example, former Supervisor Don Knabe created a paid internship opportunity for survivors, integrating each intern into the Supervisors’ communication team and giving them opportunities to develop professional skills and perform substantive work that had nothing to do with their exploitation. This

internship was transformational and opened up opportunities for their future professional endeavors. Additionally, the Children’s Law Center of California (CLC) has prioritized hiring individuals with lived experience, first focusing on establishing positions for former foster youth, and now also prioritizing the hiring of survivors. Some of the positions held by survivors in CLC are not specifically tied to CSE, while others, like case managers who work in the specialized CSEC Court, benefit tremendously by having someone with lived experience.



CHERYL BURNETT

Former Assistant Chief Deputy and Communications Director for Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Fourth District

Cheryl Burnett worked in partnership with former Supervisor Don Knabe to create paid internships for youth who had experienced CSE.

Champion



Andrew Veis, former Supervisor Don Knabe, and Cheryl Burnett presenting a Board acknowledgement to a youth who completed an internship in their office.

“We did not tell anyone that they were survivors of sex trafficking, wanting them to have an identity beyond the labels of ‘victim’ or ‘survivor.’ When they came to the office they were treated just like the other interns. This was their first experience in a professional environment, and it was incredibly rewarding to see them discover new skills, gain confidence, build trust (particularly with the men in our office) and to think about their future with a new perspective. Everyone needs an opportunity and a cheerleader rooting for them—I’m grateful and honored that Supervisor Knabe provided us the chance to not only try to change policy and raise awareness of sex trafficking, but importantly, to help incredible young women realize their dreams.”

CHERYL BURNETT

Former Assistant Chief Deputy and Communications Director for Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Fourth District



LESLIE HEIMOV

Executive Director, Children’s Law Center of California

Leslie Heimov is the Executive Director of Children’s Law Center of California and co-chair of the California Child Welfare Council’s CSEC Action Team. Heimov is a tireless advocate working to improve California’s approach to identifying and supporting youth in the child welfare system who have experienced exploitation. She is committed to centering survivors’ voices in the efforts to combat this problem, hiring and supporting survivors as employees at CLC, and mentoring youth who have experienced CSE.

Champion

Survivor Highlights

Highlighted below are some of the survivors who have led and influenced the work in Los Angeles County. From mentoring youth one-on-one, to developing and facilitating training and curricula, to informing policies and practices to better serve youth across the County, and much more, these survivors have transformed Los Angeles County's approach to this issue and impacted countless lives along the way. Each survivor vividly remembers one or two people who made an impact on their life—a probation officer, survivor leader, group home staff, nurse, and many others. These reflections remind us that any individual can be that person for someone else by offering nonjudgmental support, encouragement, and consistency.



DA'ONNA

Survivor Leader, Saving Innocence

Da'Onna is a Survivor Leader with Saving Innocence. After entering Probation at age 15, she was referred to the CTU. Her **CTU DPO**, Terrika Woolfolk, provided her with support and encouragement. "[Ms. Woolfolk] always had my best interests at heart, no matter what it was. She knows the type of person I am and that I needed some type of structure, so she gave that to me...She's just always been a very good person and has given me good advice." Today, Da'Onna provides that same essential support and encouragement to other youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. "I feel like my life is meant to be a life of service, like this is what I was made to do. To give back and tell my story and share my experience to help someone going through the same thing as me." Sharing her own personal experience helps her connect with youth, empowering them to dream about a future without abuse and exploitation. And eventually, Da'Onna hopes to open her own group homes.

"I want to be able to provide that [home feeling] for some of the girls coming out of this and I want to be able to provide a safe haven for them."



GRAYNISHA

Business Owner, KDS Nails

Graynisha owns her own business, KDS Nails, is a Licensed Nail Tech, and is a graduate of Palace Beauty College and Chaparral High School. She is currently working to grow her own nail brand. Graynisha attended the Empowerment Conference seven years in a row, engaging with youth through her roles as a participant, Youth Ambassador, Youth Leader, and an MC. While Graynisha was on Probation, she met Rachel Thomas, a **survivor leader** who facilitated small groups in her group home. Thomas encouraged Graynisha to open up about what she was experiencing, and she began to do that and found the process to help in her healing. While still in high school, Graynisha traveled to Sacramento and presented to the California Child Welfare Council to share a piece of her story and to highlight the challenges that foster and probation youth face related to school instability. As Graynisha continued on her journey to heal, she decided to pursue her true passion and open her own nail business. Graynisha's team of support from the CTU, Nola Brantley and Saving Innocence got behind her in this endeavor and helped her to earn her license and set up her business. The tables have turned, and while Graynisha continues to see the DPOs from the Child Trafficking Unit on a regular basis, it is now because they are visiting her for their weekly nail appointments. By sharing her experiences with other youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation, Graynisha empowers them to heal, to dream, and to achieve.

"Empowerment means no matter what you have been through or what you get labeled, that's not what makes you. YOU are a survivor and NEVER feel discouraged about anything you want to do. Always be yourself that is what makes you UNIQUE!"



HARMONY

Founder and Executive Director, Treasures

Harmony is the Founder and Executive Director of Treasures, a faith-based outreach and support group to women in the sex industry and victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking. After enduring exploitation at a young age, Harmony was able to finally leave the life once she learned to love and value herself. "Learning the truth that I am lovable and that I am valuable made it really difficult for me to continue to participate in relationships and things that didn't reflect that." Also instrumental in her healing and recovery was meeting a **friend** who loved her unconditionally, as well as experiencing the unconditional love of God. Harmony founded Treasures, an organization that provides outreach and care to women in the commercial sex industry and victims of trafficking. She is currently writing curricula, developing trainings, and creating tools to support individuals to safely leave exploitative situations and relationships. Through sharing her own experiences, Harmony connects with, and supports, the survivors that she works with, helping them to heal and empowering them to become leaders in their communities. And in doing so, she helps inform system-wide responses to this issue to better support survivors who have experienced exploitation.

"Survivor leadership is so vital. There are insights and perspectives that we can only gain from learning from people who have been in situations we haven't been in. Even though I'm a survivor, I don't assume I know another survivor's experiences. I'm constantly learning from other survivors and their experiences to help strengthen the work that we do."



HEAVEN

Survivor, Student, & Mother

Heaven is currently pursuing her education while raising her son. Having been exploited at a young age and entering the child welfare system at age ten, Heaven recalls that she was vulnerable to exploitation due to a desire to feel loved, something she felt was missing at home. For Heaven, it was a **law enforcement officer** who helped her to open her eyes and see that she could be more than her exploiters made her believe. The same law enforcement officer who she first met when she was ten was still there five years later, engaging with her, connecting her with advocates, and encouraging her to get out. “Being in ‘the lie,’ you forget who you are. You don’t really get to know yourself. Now that I’m getting older, I am starting to feel more comfortable with ME. I am learning to love myself, and really get to know who I am. I am GREAT.” Over time, Heaven has built on the healthy relationships in her life to help her find healing and purpose. She has attended the CSEC Empowerment Conference for the past two years and spoke on the Survivor Panel in 2019. Looking forward, Heaven feels a deep calling to help other kids who are facing challenges similar to what she experienced, and wants to elevate and enhance youth housing and advocacy programs by developing partnerships with survivors.

“I don’t know how to explain it, I just need to give back. This is something that is calling me.”



JESS

Survivor Leadership Coordinator, Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking

Jess (they/them) is a Survivor Leader who currently organizes a collective of over 300 survivors from across the country, focusing on leadership and professional development, as well as policy work. Jess also trains service providers and law enforcement on how to engage with survivors, specifically the LGBTQ community, and works with the United Nations on a program focused on global sustainability. For Jess, there were two individuals who were instrumental in their journey towards healing. “When I was in the hospital, I met a **nurse** who recognized my trauma and validated how I was feeling as a perfectly acceptable way to respond after everything I had experienced. She made me feel safe enough to tell her what was happening. And she shifted the shame and blame away from me so I no longer felt like what was happening was my fault. She destigmatized, celebrated, and affirmed my queer identity—creating a sense of safety, trustworthiness, choice, and collaboration.” Jess also felt supported by an **instructor** they met while completing a school garden community service program. “This person reflected my humanity back to me and treated me like a kid—thirsty for knowledge, connection, something more. It was the second time I didn’t feel rejected, and wasn’t treated like a problem, a burden, an object, or a criminal. He taught me about food justice and showed me how to connect with earth and ancestral medicine.” Passionate about social justice and criminal justice reform, Jess was recently accepted to the University of New Hampshire Masters in Community Development Policy and Practice program, where they hope to acquire the skills necessary to tackle the complex development issues in their community.

“It’s important to ensure that survivors are equal partners in the work. Partnering with survivors, and centering their experiences, goes the furthest in addressing the inequities in access and power. Survivors should have a right to participate in the decisions that affect our lives.”



JESSICA

Survivor Advocate, Saving Innocence

Jessica is a Survivor Advocate with Saving Innocence and a proud mother. Jessica decided to leave the life after having her daughter. “My daughter was my main driving force—I didn’t want to die and leave her alone in this world without me.” When Jessica was exiting the life, her **daughter** and her **grandmother** encouraged her to continue moving forward. “I would leave my exploiter for a moment and run back to my grandmother’s house because it was safe. She would tell me, ‘I know you’re tired. I know you’re hungry. Just lay down.’ She would cry every time I would leave, but she would pray for me day in and day out. Everybody told me she was my prayer warrior—she prayed me out of that life.” As a Survivor Advocate with Saving Innocence, Jessica now helps other youth and young adults exit “the life” and move forward in their journeys towards healing. In addition, Jessica is committed to improving responses to this issue. “My passion has evolved over the years. It started with helping people recognize that what others and I have experienced wasn’t a choice, and it has moved into finding ways to protect children from being exploited and helping those who have suffered trauma to heal and thrive—I feel like God put me on this earth to help in some type of way.” Jessica not only supports and empowers the youth she works with, but she also informs Los Angeles County’s response to better identifying and supporting survivors of CSE.

“When working with survivors, I think people need to know that we have a voice and we are so much more than our trauma. If we want to be astronauts or doctors or case managers or nurses or anything else, we can. We are capable of anything.”



KENNYA

Investigator Clerk, Children’s Law Center of California

Kennya is a Survivor Leader, an artist, and an Investigator Clerk for the Children’s Law Center of California (CLC). For Kennya, a **mentor** from the Embracing Project in Las Vegas helped support her healing. “She was all about helping youth and women who have been trafficked. When she was assigned to my case for my trial, she was adamant on getting me to open up and helping me find myself again.” And Kennya learned to do just that. Today, Kennya empowers other survivors to open up and find themselves through various forms of art: drawing, painting, collages, and more. For the past 3 years, Kennya has taken on a leadership role at the Empowerment Conference, where she co-facilitates the art workshop, teaching and encouraging youth to express themselves through art. And while the journey hasn’t been easy, Kennya is proud of where she is today and all that she has accomplished.

“The journey is hard. You won’t simply forget about the past and the fast money. But it is really just up to you and it takes time. You need to fight to continue doing the positive things that you want to do instead of going back to what is the fast and easy way.”



KRISTINA

Survivor Leader and CSEC Case Manager, Children's Law Center of California

Kristina is a Survivor Leader and a CSEC Case Manager for the Children's Law Center of California (CLC). When Kristina missed her daughter's first birthday, she decided to leave the life. "I started to see that even if I worked hard and did everything my trafficker asked of me, I couldn't get just one visit with my daughter. And that was my breaking point." And when she was getting out of the life, Kristina met a **truck driver** at a truck stop who offered her support when she needed it most. "When I first met him, he knew I shouldn't have been out there. He always told me that when I was ready to get out of the life, he could help me. Then there was a moment when I had nobody to call and I took a leap of faith. I called him and he made it happen—he got me a hotel room for the night and took me to Walmart to get a new change of clothes. He was that one person that didn't ask me any questions and didn't judge me—he just helped." Today, in addition to providing one-on-one mentorship to survivors of CSE, Kristina trains and educates local community partners on vital CSEC topics, bringing awareness to the epidemic of human trafficking. Kristina currently serves as a member of the California Child Welfare Council's CSEC Survivor Advisory Board, the Los Angeles County CSEC Steering Committee, and on the Compton Human Trafficking Task Force. Kristina is also pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Communicative Disorders at California State University, Fullerton with the goal of becoming a children's speech and language pathologist.

"Don't be afraid to start over again. This time, you are not starting from scratch but from experience."



MONIQUE

Survivor Advocate, ZOE International, and Survivor Leader, Treasures

Monique is a Survivor Advocate with ZOE International, as well as a Survivor Leader with Treasures. After attempted murder charges were dropped against her, Monique felt like she had been given a second chance, which encouraged her to turn her life around. Monique met a **woman at church** who intentionally poured into her, "She was very consistent, and she really cared about me, which is something I never experienced before." Monique also received support from Treasures, who frequently reminded her that she was loved, valued and purposed, "Even the simplest thing—sending me handwritten cards on special occasions—sent the message that I mattered, that there were people who were actually thinking of me." Today, Monique is passionate about empowering girls and women to recognize their own self-worth. She provides consistency, support, and encouragement to the survivors that she works with through ZOE International and Treasures. "I have the honor of walking alongside youth who have similar experiences to mine, like not having a loving home and not feeling cared for or cherished. I get to be the person in their life that can do those things for them—the things that I wish someone had done for me." Monique also identifies where there are gaps in services for youth survivors and encourages them to speak up for themselves.

"I love that I get to be a part of not just advocating for the youth, but also empowering them to advocate for themselves. I want them to know that their voice matters! It's important that I teach them to speak up for themselves, because long after our services are done, I want them to be able to continue to advocate for their needs, their wants, and their dreams."



NOLA

Founder and CEO, Nola Brantley Speaks

Nola is a Survivor Leader, the Founder and CEO of Nola Brantley Speaks, and a nationally-recognized trainer on trauma and CSEC. Becoming a mother encouraged Nola to leave the life. And when she did, a **mentor** and colleague was there to support her healing. “She was instrumental in that process because she accepted me exactly where I was—and I was not in the best place. I was rough around the edges, but she just loved and accepted me right then. As I began to make changes, she guided me along the way.” Today, Nola facilitates trainings on CSE and CSE-related topics across the country, raising awareness of the issue through education and empowering providers to better support youth who have experienced CSE. As of today, she has trained over 100,000 people on the issue of CSE. Nola also helps to develop curricula to support youth who have experienced CSE, including the LA prevention curriculum, “Word on the Street.” Nola co-developed and has co-chaired the annual Empowerment Conference in Los Angeles County for the past 8 years, a three-day retreat where youth who have been CSE come together to learn from other survivors and work through their trauma in a safe space with trusted adults. Nola also works directly with survivors, empowering them to recognize and build on their strengths. “I’m really passionate about helping to shape and mentor other survivors, whether they are already in leadership positions or wanting to be in leadership positions. And not necessarily leadership in the movement, but just leadership in any kind of way.” Nola also encourages those who are involved in this work to practice self-care.

“Value yourself above all else.”



OREE

Survivor Advocate, Saving Innocence

Oree is a Survivor Advocate with Saving Innocence, a student, and a proud mother to her daughter. After enduring sexual abuse and trauma as a young child, she was trafficked at 11 years old. At age 15, with support from a **staff member at her group home**, she was finally able to leave the life. For Oree, her **CTU DPO**, Terrika Woolfolk, provided her with consistent support and encouragement as she continued her journey to heal. “Ms. Woolfolk changed my life. She was more than just a Probation Officer. She taught me accountability and she treated me with respect. And she’s still in my life today—I can talk to her about anything.” With courage, resilience, and compassion, Oree now provides invaluable support and mentorship to other youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. Her warmth and positive energy is contagious, lighting up every room she enters. Her leadership inspires and empowers the youth she works with one-on-one, as well as the youth she engages with through workshops and empowerment events.

“I go into the juvenile halls—the same juvenile halls I used to be at—and I get to work with the kids on prevention work. It’s just this amazing feeling that I get to go back into the very places where I found hope at and work with kids. I get to be that person that I didn’t have when I was a kid. I’m not just this victim of sex trafficking. It’s only a part of my story, that’s all.”



SETREAN

Survivor Advocate, Saving Innocence

Setrean is a Survivor Advocate with Saving Innocence and a proud mother. In 2020, she completed her bachelor's degree, and she plans to enroll in a master's program for psychology. After enduring physical and emotional abuse as a child, she was trafficked and arrested for prostitution at age 15. While in juvenile hall, she felt encouraged by some **staff at Sylmar Juvenile Hall** who ensured she always felt supported and loved. When Setrean had her daughter, she became determined to provide her with the love and support that she didn't have when she was growing up. "I started to do better so that this little girl who was innocent like me didn't have to go through what I went through." After hearing a female pastor speak at church about her own experience in the life, Setrean felt encouraged to seek services and supports for her exploitation. "When [the pastor] exposed her past and everybody clapped and encouraged her, that made me feel more comfortable to seek help for how I felt about being trafficked." And now, she is determined to share her story with other youth who are experiencing commercial sexual exploitation. Through her leadership and advocacy, she empowers the youth she engages with.

"The best part of the work is sharing my knowledge to help others see that this situation does not make you any less of a person than someone who hasn't experienced trafficking."



TIKA

Crisis Response Case Manager & Survivor Advocate, Journey Out

Tika is a Crisis Response Case Manager & Survivor Advocate with Journey Out, a mentor, and an entrepreneur. For Tika, it was a **hospital nurse** who helped her begin her journey to heal. "She stayed with me everyday—even when she was off work, she still came to visit me. And she just sat there, and when I wanted to speak, she was there to listen—she didn't judge me or anything like that. And that was a huge turning point in my life because she was the first person that I felt comfortable enough [with] to tell my story from beginning to end. That part—just someone to listen to what I had to say, without interrupting or interjecting, or showing any judgment in body language—it meant the world to me." Tika also felt supported by individuals in Probation, including one **DPO at Sylmar Juvenile Hall**. "Ms. Johnson always made me feel like there was more to life than what was going on." With a deep understanding of generational trauma, Tika is passionate about sharing her own experiences to help other individuals overcome their own trauma and begin to heal. "When you have people with certain kinds of trauma who aren't treated, it goes down generations. And we need to stop the hurting of the people affected by this." By sharing her own experiences, Tika both empowers young adult and adult women that she works with and influences County responses to this issue.

"I'm just trying to turn my pain into purpose as much as I possibly can."

I Believe

I believe good things come from bad situations

I believe I can overcome my struggles with time

I believe people come into your life as blessings or lessons and in due time we figure that out

I believe what doesn't kill you makes you stronger

I believe being a survivor doesn't define me

I believe I was beautifully made with a purpose to succeed

we believe we have help

we believe we are loved, strong and gifted

But most importantly we believe

WE GOT THIS!!!!

2015

This poem was created by youth at the 2015 Empowerment Conference.

"The painting we worked on symbolizes us."

The bigger butterflies are our survivor leaders guiding us in our journey by empowering us to become the women we want to be.

They give us words, represented outside the circle that lift us up to get there.

The lock and key represent that we hold the power to give our heart to the people who deserve it like the survivor leaders and them to us.

The smaller butterflies represent girls like us trying to increase our leadership by harnessing our own power."



This artwork and accompanying message were created by youth at the 2015 Empowerment Conference.

INITIATIVES

"And they need to know that we will stand up and care for these children. So, anybody who thought this was just a moment for us, that this was just a fad, that we were just trying to catch the wave of what was happening at that time in terms of policy activity and political maneuvering, they were just simply wrong... We are going to stay on the case, and we're not going to give up on this very, very critically important work. We won't turn our back on these children."

*- Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
speaking about the issue of CSEC at a board meeting on July 9, 2019*

INITIATIVES

58 EDUCATION & AWARENESS

74 ADAPTING TO LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

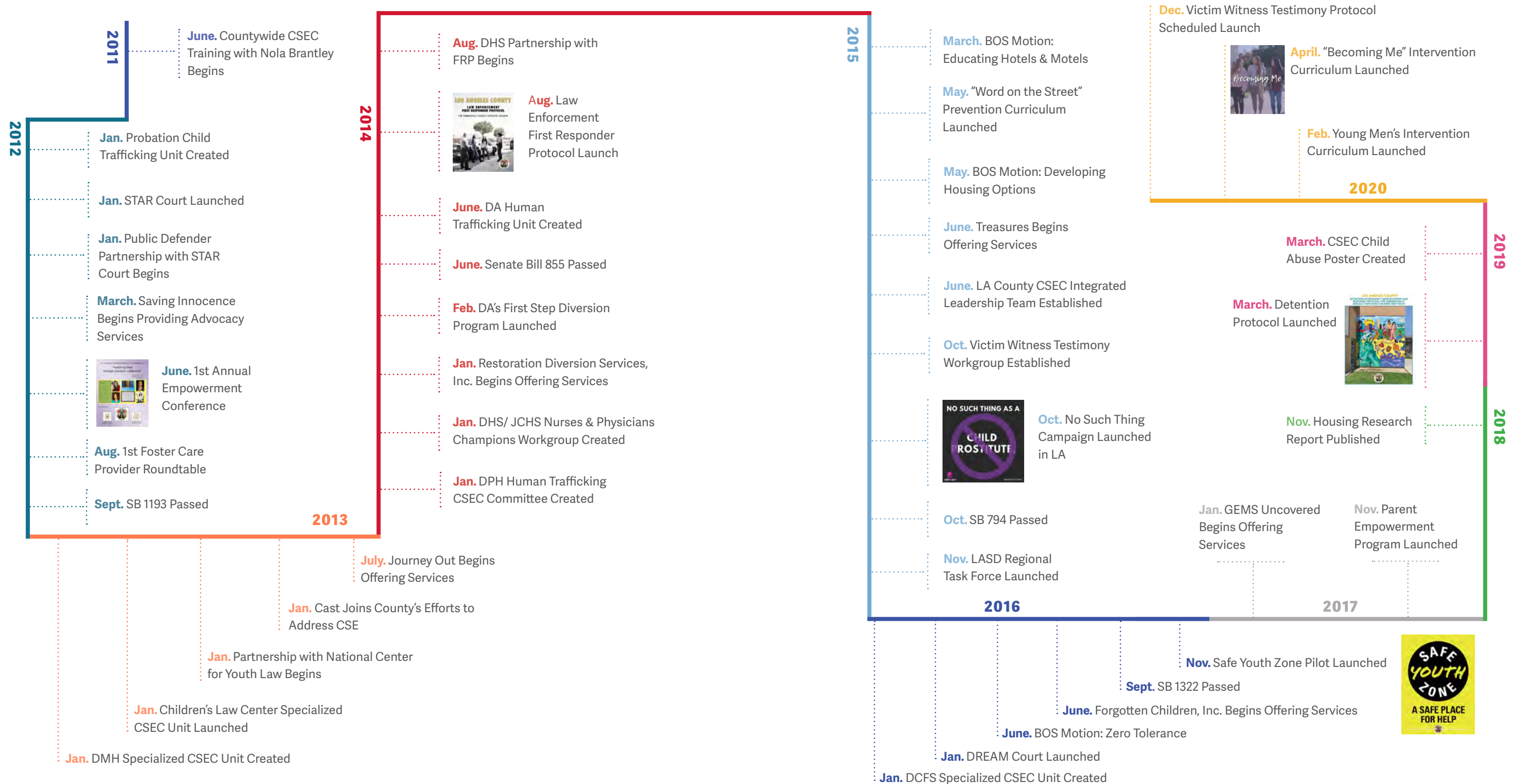
82 FOSTERING MULTIDISCIPLINARY
COLLABORATION

106 COLLABORATIVE PROTOCOLS

126 SUPPORTING OUR YOUTH THROUGH
EDUCATION & EMPOWERMENT

152 EXPLORING THE HOUSING QUESTION

LOS ANGELES COUNTY TIMELINE OF PROGRESS



NO SUCH THING AS A CHILD PROSTITUTE

SuchThing

HUMAN RIGHTS
PROJECT FOR GIRLS

NO SUCH THING
AS A CHILD PROSTITUTE

HUMAN RIGHTS
PROJECT FOR GIRLS

MAN RIGHTS
JECT FOR GIRLS

#NoSuchThing

HUMAN RIGHTS
PROJECT FOR GIRLS

NO SUCH THING
AS A CHILD PROSTITUTE

SuchThing

HUMAN RIGHTS
PROJECT FOR GIRLS

NO SUCH THING
AS A CHILD PROSTITUTE

HUMAN RIGHTS
PROJECT FOR GIRLS

MAN RIGHTS
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Los Angeles County's efforts recognize that change and collective action is predicated by education and awareness. One of the first, major initiatives that the County undertook was training the masses—both those on the ground engaging with youth every day, and those in the community who might unknowingly be able to help. As time went on, the County expanded these efforts, launched an awareness campaign, targeted specific businesses where exploitation is more likely to occur, and passed local motions to make clear that there would be zero tolerance for CSE in the County. Below are the major steps the County took to educate and build awareness in the community.

EDUCATION & AWARENESS

NO SUCH THING
AS A CHILD PROSTITUTE

"Through education, you can change culture. In Los Angeles County, we've utilized training and education to change how our community perceives and understands these youth. Today, people really believe that there is 'No Such Thing as a Child Prostitute'—and that's made all the difference."

- Diane Iglesias, Senior Deputy Director
Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services

Countywide Training

Since 2011, Los Angeles County has prioritized training as one of its key CSEC initiatives—providing a wide array of CSEC trainings to Children’s Social Workers, Deputy Probation Officers, various County Departments, foster care providers, law enforcement agencies, schools, advocates, community-based organizations and community members. At the beginning general awareness training was the focus, but it became clear that more advanced training would be necessary, as agencies and partners alike wanted additional tools to more effectively engage the population. As of December 2019, 19 different types of in-person trainings, ranging from CSEC 101 to vicarious trauma and self care, have been offered, 256 training sessions have been completed, and over 26,000 people across the County have been trained.

In 2011, the County partnered with Nola Brantley, CEO and founder of Nola Brantley Speaks and a nationally-recognized trainer on trauma and CSEC, to develop a strategy for the County’s training initiative and to provide trainings for multidisciplinary partners, with the intent of breaking down silos and spreading awareness that CSE is a countywide issue deserving of an all-hands-on-deck response. By spreading awareness through training, agencies and individuals across the County had the information needed to inform what policy changes were made and what protocols and practices were put into place, based on what they were seeing on the ground. Over the years, the County has partnered with a number of individuals to expand its training curriculum, including Falilah Bilal (National Black Women’s Justice Institute), Leah Jonet Albright-Byrd (Activist, Author, and Artist), Dr. Monique Morrow (National Childhood Traumatic Stress Network), Francoise Mathieu (Specialist in High-Stress Workplaces & Author of the Compassion Fatigue Workbook), to name a few. Initially, CSEC trainings were provided only



NOLA BRANTLEY

Founder and CEO, Nola Brantley Speaks

Nola Brantley has been a leader in Los Angeles County’s training initiatives since the very beginning. Brantley continues to lead the County’s training efforts, facilitating training on CSE and CSE-related topics regularly across the County.

Champion

“When I first got into this work, we began with direct services to support youth who had experienced CSE. However, the issue we ran into immediately was that we could not do it alone—if the community couldn’t identify these youth, then it wouldn’t be easy to respond to them. While as an organization we could provide support to a few, we needed to have the whole community, especially our systems and institutions, involved and working together. And that’s something that happened once we started to provide training.”

NOLA BRANTLEY

Founder and CEO, Nola Brantley Speaks





“Los Angeles County’s commitment to the ongoing education of its staff and community partners is vital and immensely impactful. As someone who has had the privilege of developing and facilitating training workshops, I am continually impressed by Los Angeles County’s devotion to supporting this vulnerable population. I have the advantage of a historical perspective of the evolution of services provided on a state and national level for victims of human trafficking and as someone with lived experience, I remember the severe lack of support this population once had. Los Angeles County has developed systems of care for CSEC that have my endorsement and are being modeled across the nation. The vast array of trainings offered are a significant part of the profound impact being made. Los Angeles County is a force and I’m honored to be included in such a powerful community-transforming endeavor!”

LEAH JONET ALBRIGHT-BYRD
Activist, Author, and Artist

to employees whose positions were directly relevant to CSEC, such as social workers, probation officers, public health, mental health and children’s attorneys. Soon, champions within these departments—many of whom were themselves powerfully transformed by the trainings—advocated for their expansion to reach others who work with youth at risk of CSE. On March 25, 2014, through a motion by the Board of Supervisors, DCFS and Probation began the process of developing and implementing mandatory, annual trainings on the subject of CSEC for all foster family agencies, group homes, and state-licensed foster parents. They engaged Nola Brantley Speaks to develop the training curriculum. By expanding training, more providers were able to accurately identify youth.

While agencies, group homes, and foster parents were already receiving annual training on other topics related to fostering youth, the issue of CSEC had never been one of them. The resulting 3-day trainings —“CSEC 101 and 102”—were designed to give professionals and parents the tools to identify youth who are or had been victims of CSE, recognize their common patterns of behavior, understand their unique needs, and how to address those behaviors and needs with trauma-informed care and other emergent best practices. As of June 2014, all foster family agencies, group homes, and state-licensed foster parents caring for children and youth in Los Angeles County are now required to receive this comprehensive training each year.



[VIEW TRAINING SUMMARY](#)



“

This training (The Healing Begins With You) was very different than any other training I’ve been to. The trainer did a great job at educating us on how we can be the best support we can be and reminding us that it’s all about them—not about us.

”

FOSTER CARE PROVIDER

EVERYTHING GETS BETTER

“Children in foster care and group homes are specifically targeted by pimps and gang members because the circumstances that caused them to be removed from their homes (i.e., parental abuse and/or neglect) often makes them especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation....Given that children touched by the foster care and juvenile justice systems are being sexually exploited, the adults responsible for their safety and welfare are in the best position to help prevent exploitation, or at a minimum, to notify DCFS and law enforcement of any concerns related to possible or actual sexual exploitation. Training these providers to identify signs of sexual exploitation will help them to partner with DCFS and law enforcement to save children before they are sexually exploited or help exploited children receive the necessary services to prevent further exploitation.”

- Mark Ridley-Thomas & Don Knabe, BOS Motion March 25, 2014:
Strengthening Safeguards for At-Risk Children in Foster Care and Group Homes to
Prevent Sexual Exploitation by Human Traffickers

CHANGE MYSELF

T CAN FORGIVE AND

I HAVE THE POWER TO

Online Training Module

In a further effort to identify youth who have experienced CSE in the County as early as possible, the Board of Supervisors approved a motion on November 14, 2017 to require that all Los Angeles County public employees—even those who are not employed by agencies that typically interact with youth—be trained with basic awareness and skills to identify and respond to youth who have experienced CSE, if needed. As of August 31, 2020, 73% of current County employees—approximately 75,884 individuals—completed the CSEC Online Training Module, which was created by the CSEC Integrated Leadership Team in collaboration with Nola Brantley Speaks. Additionally, CSEC training was added as a required component of the County's onboarding process for all new employees.

As a result, employees from many different public agencies have shifted their mindsets about CSE and trauma, recognizing that there is “No Such Thing as a Child Prostitute,” and have begun to identify and report youth being commercially sexually exploited in the County. For example, one Public Works employee, while fixing a broken streetlight near an area known for exploitation, noticed a young girl who appeared to be exploited and called the Child Protection Hotline (CPH) to get her help.



[VIEW COUNTY ONLINE TRAINING MODULE](#)

I CAN MAKE MY OWN CHOICES
AND DECISIONS

“

In order to protect youth from ongoing trauma and abuse and to improve the effectiveness of our intervention strategies, Los Angeles County must develop processes to identify Commercially Sexually Exploited Children as early as possible. Identification can occur in several different ways. For example, one youth may disclose to their probation officer or social worker with whom they have developed a relationship, while another may be identified by a health care provider when warning signs are revealed through a routine check-up. A youth might be identified by Parks and Recreation employee if they are homeless or engaging in sexual activity in a local park, or may seek help at a Fire station in the middle of the night while trying to flee a dangerous situation. The examples of how a youth can be identified are numerous, and involve employees not just from agencies intended to support children, such as DCFS and Probation, but from across all County agencies (and beyond). The County needs to ensure that all staff are trained with basic awareness and skills to identify and respond in the moment, if need be.

SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

BOS motion November 14, 2017

”

By training so many public employees and community partners who interact with youth experiencing CSE, Los Angeles County has fundamentally shifted its collective mindset and approach to this issue. Many in LA now recognize CSE as a form of child abuse that is prevalent in the community, thus making great progress towards dismantling negative stereotypes about youth experiencing CSE, cultivating compassion for victims, and increasing services to help survivors heal from their trauma. As a result, staff working with at-risk youth and those who have been exploited are better equipped to identify when a youth is experiencing exploitation, effectively intervene, and provide support services that are evidence-based, trauma-informed, and victim-centered.

Making great progress towards dismantling negative stereotypes about youth experiencing CSE, cultivating compassion for victims, and increasing services to help survivors heal from their trauma.

“It is truly heartbreaking that we live in a day and age where these kinds of actions go on exploiting the innocence of youth. I will make it my duty to be ever vigilant, to look for clues, and report my suspicion of human sex trafficking.”

FIRE DEPARTMENT

AGN. NO.

November 14, 2017

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR JANICE HAHN

In order to protect youth from ongoing trauma and abuse and to improve the effectiveness of our intervention strategies, Los Angeles County (County) must develop processes to identify Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) as early as possible. Identification can occur in several different ways. For example, one youth may disclose to their probation officer or social worker with whom they have developed a relationship, while another may be identified by a health care provider when warning signs are revealed through a routine check-up. A youth might be identified by Parks and Recreation employee if they are homeless or engaging in sexual activity in a local park, or may seek help at a Fire station in the middle of the night while trying to flee a dangerous situation. The examples of how a youth can be identified are numerous, and involve employees not just from agencies intended to support children, such as DCFS and Probation, but from across all County agencies (and beyond). The County needs to ensure that all staff are trained with basic awareness and skills to identify and respond in the moment, if need be.

- MORE -

MOTION

SOLIS

KUEHL

HAHN

BARGER

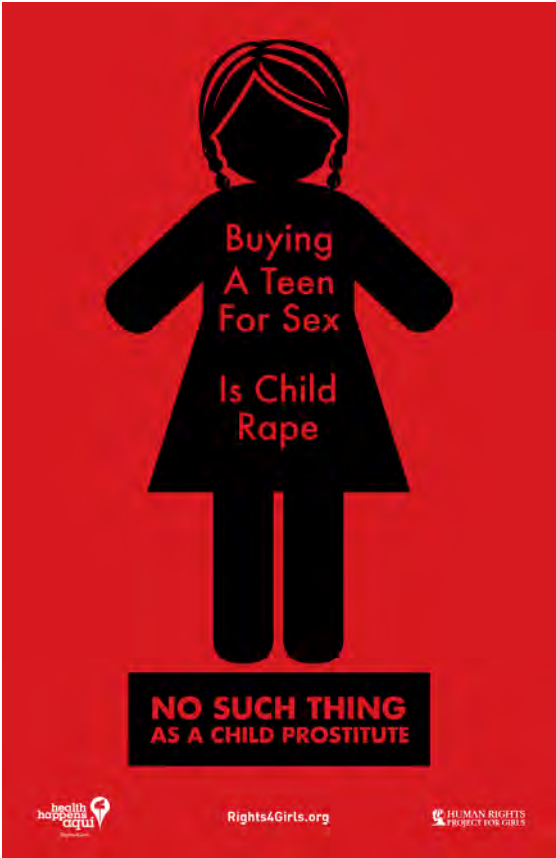
RIDLEY-THOMAS



VIEW BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MOTIONS FROM 3/25/14 and 6/24/14

No Such Thing Campaign

As the County progressed its work to improve services and support for youth impacted by CSE, it became increasingly clear that there needed to be a significant, unified effort focused on changing language and law. The “No Such Thing” Campaign, which was developed by a Washington D.C. based human rights organization, Rights4Girls, in partnership with renowned survivor activist T Ortiz Walker Pettigrew, made clear that there is no such thing as a “child prostitute”—there are only victims and survivors of child sex trafficking, a form of child abuse. Rights4Girls strategically chose to launch this national campaign in Los Angeles County, where the stage had already been set for recognizing trafficked youth as victims of commercial sexual exploitation with the groundbreaking Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol.



“We knew if we could change the law and practice of criminalizing children for prostitution in the largest county, then the rest of the country would follow. Los Angeles County set the stage for the ultimate shift in how trafficked children are being reconsidered as victims and survivors of child rape.”

MALIKA SAADA SAAR

Senior Counsel on Civil and Human Rights, Google;
former Executive Director, Rights4Girls



“It is time to help survivors of sex trafficking realize their full potential and dignity. The national launch of the ‘No Such Thing’ campaign here in Los Angeles is an important step toward realizing that goal.”

SUPERVISOR SHEILA KUEHL
Third District

“Our goal was not only to change our laws, but also our language. Following the launch of No Such Thing LA, news organizations like the Associated Press instructed writers to stop using the term ‘prostitute’ when discussing sexually exploited children. These changes marked a clear shift in public perception and helped solidify the treatment of sexually exploited youth as victims rather than criminals.”

YASMIN VAFA
Executive Director, Rights4Girls



As language shifted, laws, public perceptions, and responses also began to shift. Momentum increased to develop policies and practices to better identify and support children and youth who had been commercially sexually exploited, which in turn, created space for youth to receive help without being criminalized or feeling judged.



“Children and teenagers who are commercially sexually exploited are not prostitutes. They are victims of child rape and they are deserving of our attention, our care, and our commitment to ending this violent and repugnant crime. I cannot emphasize this enough: our children are not for sale.”

- Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Second District

Educating Hotels & Motels

The Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) provides County funds to dozens of hotels and motels that participate in the General Relief (GR) Emergency Housing Program, wherein the hotels and motels accept vouchers in exchange for providing shelter for people experiencing homelessness. Many of these hotels and motels are located near areas known for high rates of exploitation and are frequently used as venues for the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

In order to participate in the GR program, the owners of these hotels and motels enter into an agreement with the County. On March 3, 2015, the Board of Supervisors approved a motion by Supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas and Don Knabe to add new requirements to the County’s agreements with these businesses to: 1) prevent any trafficking from occurring at hotels and motels that receive funding from the County through the GR program, and 2) prevent CSEC by training these business owners to identify victims and intervene to stop their exploitation.

To achieve these goals, at the request of DPSS, County Counsel added four new requirements for hotels and motels to participate in the GR program. As a result, all Los Angeles hotels and motels that wish to receive funding from the voucher program must:

1. Formally agree not to participate in or allow any form of sex trafficking to take place in their facilities or on their premises;
2. Hang, in a visible place, a poster provided by the Probation Department that includes hotline information for reporting trafficking incidents and resources for victims to get help;
3. Allow law enforcement to check their guest registries at-will in order to locate and prosecute exploiters; and
4. Receive training, provided by the Probation Department, on how to identify victims of CSEC and report suspected incidents of trafficking.

Out of the 40 hotels and motels participating before the new requirements were added, 33 of them (82.5%) signed the amended agreements in order to continue participating in the GR program. To hold the hotels and motels accountable to this agreement, the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, LA Police Department, and other law enforcement agencies have partnered with DPSS to provide information if any arrests for sex trafficking or related criminal activity take place in these participating hotels and motels so that the County can enforce the agreements and remove the hotel or motel from the GR voucher program.

“Out of all of the [hundreds of] the children we have helped serve, rescue, and restore, one hundred percent of them have been held captive or sold out of a motel or hotel in Los Angeles County. [Exploiters] move the children around to keep them disoriented and keep them more susceptible and incapable of escape.”

KIM BIDDLE
Founder and former Chief Executive Officer, Saving Innocence, speaking in support of the BOS motion passed on March 3, 2015

Zero Tolerance

In 2016, as Los Angeles County continued fighting CSEC with a variety of outward-facing initiatives, the Supervisors decided to take a powerful step internally: to implement a “zero tolerance” policy forbidding the County from employing a person who has been convicted of any human trafficking-related activity. “As the largest employer in the region, we have a responsibility to set forth standards of behavior that are a model for other employers,” former Supervisor Don Knabe wrote in his October 4th, 2016 motion to the Board.² “It is for these reasons, and more, that I strongly believe this Board should adopt the position that no employee or contractor who is convicted of buying a minor for sex, or any human trafficking-related activity, should be allowed to serve the County of Los Angeles in any capacity.”³

Not only does this policy set an important example, but it also has the effect of raising employees’ awareness of human trafficking and CSE of children and conveying the seriousness with which Los Angeles County regards these crimes. In response to the Board’s motion, the Department of Human Resources (DHR), Internal Service Department (ISD), and County Counsel modified the County’s employment policies and all employee/independent contractor contracts to incorporate the “zero tolerance” policy. Every newly hired Los Angeles County employee and agency that is contracted with the County must sign a separate document stating that they understand the policy and agree to abide by it.

In addition to holding exploiters accountable, the Supervisors also wanted to show support for survivors of CSE and human trafficking. As supervisor Don Knabe explained, “(w)orking with Probation and other County departments, survivors play an absolutely essential role in providing wraparound services to victims and offering a healing force to our most vulnerable children.”⁴ To that end, the Board instructed County Counsel to add language to employment policies to make it clear that a prospective employee with a criminal record showing prostitution or related offenses would not be disqualified from county employment if they were a minor and/or a victim of human trafficking at the time.

Working with Probation and other County departments, survivors play an absolutely essential role in providing wraparound services to victims and offering a healing force to our most vulnerable children.

CSEC Child Abuse Poster

As with other forms of maltreatment defined in the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act, mandated reporters are required to report any knowledge or reasonable suspicion of commercial sexual exploitation of children to the child protection agency (CAL. PENAL CODE § 11165.1(d)). Recognizing signs of possible abuse and reporting concerns gives DCFS the opportunity to investigate and offer services specialized to address the needs of youth and families or caregivers who have been impacted by CSE.

In 2019, Probation, with support from DCFS, DMH, DPH, and DHS, created a CSEC Child Abuse Poster in an effort to further educate and train county employees, foster care providers, and other contracted agencies. This poster highlights CSE as a form of child abuse, and gives direction to call 911 or the Child Protection Hotline if mandated reporters reasonably suspect a youth has experienced CSE. The CSEC Child Abuse poster has been distributed for posting in all County agencies, foster care providers, and other contracted agencies who are mandated reporters.





Los Angeles County has both adhered to significant legislative shifts in the way children and youth are served and treated as victims of commercial sexual exploitation as well as developed the practice that has been a model for driving policy changes. Below are some of the key legislative changes that have shaped Los Angeles County's practice for serving and supporting children and youth who have experienced CSE.

ADAPTING TO LEGISLATIVE CHANGE

"Some of our best partners have been at the state legislature. In the last several years, they have put forth a flurry of bills that have expanded and clarified the responsibilities of our child-serving agencies to better identify and protect children. By passing laws that direct how the County responds to this issue, our state partners have been incredibly helpful in moving the needle forward in Los Angeles County."

*- Emily Williams, Senior Deputy for Human Services and Child Welfare,
Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors*

Senate Bill 1193

Posters in public places that include information about human trafficking, and hotline numbers to get help, can be a lifeline for those who are experiencing exploitation and feel they have no way out, no one to turn to, or may not even understand they are a victim. In 2012, California passed Senate Bill (SB) 1193 (Steinberg), which requires that specified businesses and other establishments—including emergency rooms, urgent care facilities, airports, and bus and train stations among others—prominently post a notice containing information about the warning signs of human trafficking, and where victims of this crime can receive help.

On February 11, 2014, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors approved a motion by Supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas and Don Knabe to post notices in compliance with SB 1193 throughout Los Angeles County. The resulting poster states in English, Spanish, and Chinese: “If you or someone you know is being forced to engage in any activity and cannot leave—whether it is commercial sex, housework, farm work, construction, factory, retail, or restaurant work, or any other activity—

call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center . . . to access help and services. Victims of slavery and human trafficking are protected under United States and California law.” The National Human Trafficking Hotline’s number is displayed in large font, meant to be visible from a distance so that victims can jot it down without their exploiters noticing.

Although Los Angeles County was only required to post notices at twelve County-operated medical establishments, the Board was resolved “to do everything in its power to get the message out to the public so that children can be protected and the mantra ‘No more. Not in our streets. Not to our children!’ will be echoed throughout Los Angeles County.”⁵ To spread the word to the County at large, the District Attorney sent letters signed by the Supervisors to 300 local businesses within the DA’s jurisdiction, informing them about the bill and letting them know that they needed to comply. The Board also encouraged County agency field offices, such as DCFS and Probation, to display the posters, recognizing that youth victims of trafficking are frequently involved in the child welfare and delinquency systems.

Additional requirements were added in 2017⁶ through the passage of SB 225 (Stern) and AB 260 (Santiago). The notice must now also include a number victims can text to access services, and must be posted in hotels, motels, and bed and breakfast inns.

Implementing SB 1193 has had positive results: in 2019, the National Council of Jewish Women of Los Angeles (NCJW) reported that calls to the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST) anti-trafficking hotline—one of two phone numbers highlighted on the posters—increased by 1000% between 2013 and 2017. NCJW further reported that the LA City Attorney’s Office, in partnership with NCJW’s Human Trafficking Outreach Project, had sent out over 1,032 advisory letters to establishments required to comply with the bill.⁷



If you or someone you know is being forced to engage in any activity and cannot leave -- whether it is commercial sex, housework, farm work, construction, factory, retail, or restaurant work, or any other activity - call the **National Human Trafficking Resource Center** at **1-888-373-7888** or the **California Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (CAST)** at **1-888-KEY-2-FRE(EDOM)** or

Si a usted, o a alguien que conoce, lo están forzando a hacer algo y no lo dejan ir -- ya sea sexo por dinero, trabajo de casa, campo agrícola, construcción, fábrica, en una tienda minorista o restaurante, o cualquier otra actividad -- llame al **Centro Nacional de Recursos para la Trata de Personas** al **1-888-373-7888** o a la **Coalición de California para Abolir la Esclavitud y la Trata de Personas** (California Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking, CAST) al **1-888-KEY-2-FRE(EDOM)** o

如果您本人或您认识的人被迫从事任何活动且无法脱身 — 无论是商业性交易、家务劳动、农场工作、建筑、工厂、零售、餐馆工作还是任何其他活动 — 请拨打电话给全美反人口贩运资源中心，电话号码 1-888-373-7888 或打电话给加州废除奴役和人口贩运联盟 (California Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking, CAST)，电话号码 1-888-KEY-2-FRE(EDOM) 或

1-888-539-2373

to access help and services. Victims of slavery and human trafficking are protected under United States and California law.

The hotlines are:

- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Toll-free.
- Operated by nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations.
- Anonymous and confidential.
- Accessible in more than 160 languages.
- Able to provide help, referral to services, training, and general information.

For more information: www.atty.lacity.org
Los Angeles City Attorney's Office

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para obtener ayuda y servicios. Las víctimas de esclavitud y trata de personas están protegidas bajo las leyes de California y los Estados Unidos.

Las líneas de ayuda:

- Están disponibles las 24 del día, 7 días por semana.
- Son gratis.
- Están operadas por organizaciones no de gobierno y sin fines de lucro.
- Son anónimas y confidenciales.
- Prestan servicio en más de 160 idiomas.
- Pueden brindarle ayuda, remisión a servicios, capacitación e información general.

获得帮助和服务。奴役和人口贩运受害者受美国加州法律的保护。

热线电话：

- 每周七天、每天二十四小时开通；
- 免费；
- 由非营利、非政府组织运营；
- 匿名和保密；
- 可用160多种语言拨打；
- 能够提供帮助、转介服务、培训和一般信息。

Report Human Trafficking. Text BeFree (233-7333).

VIEW BOARD MOTION IMPLEMENTING SB 1193 (Steinberg)

Senate Bill 855

Children who were commercially sexually exploited were not recognized as victims of abuse and neglect under the law until 2014 when SB 855 was passed, amending the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Section 300. Now, children who are commercially sexually exploited whose parents or guardians failed or were unable to protect them may fall within the description of §300(b) and be adjudged as dependents of the juvenile court. Recognizing the need for a coordinated approach and additional funding, in that same legislative package, the Legislature established the CSEC Program, a state-funded Program that counties choose to participate in. To draw down funds through the CSEC Program, a county is required to develop an interagency protocol to support and serve children who have been commercially sexually exploited. These protocols must be developed by a multidisciplinary team led by the county human services department, and must include representatives from probation, mental health, public health and the juvenile court.

Los Angeles County formed a Steering Committee in 2015 in order to develop its interagency protocol. In addition to the required agencies listed above, the County included many other public agencies and community partners that would be involved in supporting and serving the children and youth through the protocol. Complying with the requirements of SB 855, Los Angeles County received just over 2.75 million dollars in the first year of the CSEC Program and has received approximately that amount in the subsequent years. The Steering Committee continues to meet to develop the annual County Plan that must be submitted to the California Department of Social Services to continue to participate in the program and draw down the associated funds.



Los Angeles County CSEC Steering Committee. Back row, from left to right: Lt. Dan Stanley (LASD), Frank Sontoro (District Attorney's Office), Shelly Caterino (LADL), Naomi Cohen and Maria Griglio (County Counsel), Adela Estrada (DCFS), Kristina Fitz (CLC), Loretta Worthington (DHS), Marcia Baas (Casey Family Programs), Denise Miranda (LAUSD), Karen Streich and Myla Lampkin (DMH), Jenny Cheung Marino (CLC), Tricia Denson (DCFS). Not pictured: Michelle Guymon (Probation), Anna Long and Dr. Susie Baldwin (DPH), Mario Gallegos (LAPD), Judge Michael Nash (Office of Child Protection), Evangelina E. Reina (DCFS), LaShona Jenkins (LACOE).

Senate Bill 794

In 2015, California passed SB 794, enacting the requirements of the federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (PSTSFA) of 2014 (P.L. 113-183). Importantly, SB 794 requires counties develop protocols for youth who have been commercially sexually exploited and for youth who run away or go missing from foster care.

Subsequently in 2016, Los Angeles County developed CSEC policies and procedures to comply with SB 794, requiring that social workers and probation officers:

- 1. Identify children who are receiving child welfare services who are, or are at risk of becoming, victims of commercial sexual exploitation;
- 2. Document these children in the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS);
- 3. Determine appropriate services for these children; and
- 4. Receive relevant training in the identification, documentation, and determination of appropriate services for these children.

Importantly, Los Angeles County extended these requirements to youth on probation who are living at home, and not receiving child welfare services.



Michelle Guymon, Director of Probation's Child Trafficking Unit, leads a training on Senate Bill 794.

Given that children who run away or are otherwise disconnected are at increased risk of exploitation, the PSTSFA defines a number of requirements that were codified in California law and eventually implemented in Los Angeles. Specifically, when a child goes missing from care and who is believed to be at risk of or a victim of commercial sexual exploitation, a report must be made to local law enforcement within 24 hours. Law enforcement is then responsible for entering the information in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database. Probation officers and social workers are responsible for reporting to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The agencies are also required to expeditiously locate the child. Upon locating the child, a debrief must be conducted with the child to determine how the youth survived while away from care, the factors that led them to leave, and whether they experienced exploitation while they were away from care. The information gathered in the debrief is then to be used to inform subsequent housing decisions.

In 2017, recognizing that youth who have left care are particularly vulnerable to exploitation when they are unaccounted for, the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, DCFS, and Probation entered into a formalized agreement to form the CSEC Locate Team. As part of this agreement, members of the Locate Team exchange resources such as funds to pay for investigations and software to help locate children, with the aim of locating and recovering as many missing kids and children experiencing CSEC as quickly as possible. In March 2020, DCFS and Probation expanded the CSEC Locate Team to also include the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD).

Senate Bill 1322

In response to a greater understanding of the dynamics of commercial sexual exploitation, and in an effort to further its commitment to preventing criminalization of youth for their exploitation, California passed SB 1322 in 2016. Effective January 1, 2017, youth under eighteen can no longer be arrested for prostitution offenses in California—affirming Los Angeles’ early adoption and recognition that there is “No Such Thing as a Child Prostitute.” Because Los Angeles County had implemented the First Responder Protocol in 2014, it had already developed the infrastructure and partnership with law enforcement to ensure a coordinated response to serve youth without having to arrest them. This made implementation of SB 1322 more seamless in Los Angeles County than other places throughout the state. However, there is still a need for further training to ensure kids are not arrested for other crimes “for their own protection.”



SB 1322 was introduced by Senator Holly J. Mitchell.



FOSTERING MULTIDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

Los Angeles County's efforts have been driven by a collective response—bringing together public agencies and community partners to develop policies and practices to better equip the systems and community to effectively identify and serve youth who have experienced CSE, as well as their families and caregivers. From responding to middle-of-the-night crisis calls, to participating in weekly multidisciplinary meetings, to developing and implementing new countywide collaborative protocols, the County has only been able to move this work forward because of the willingness and eagerness from individuals across these agencies. Below are the multidisciplinary collaboratives that were the underpinnings of the work in the County.

"The partnerships that we've created in Los Angeles County have been critical to the work we do. I have never seen people come together from such a diverse set of agencies, and throughout different departments, as passionately as they have to address the issue of commercial sexual exploitation in Los Angeles County."

*- Ed Fithyan, Regional Administrator
Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services*

Task Forces

In order to take large-scale, multidisciplinary action, on November 27, 2012, the Board approved a motion by former Supervisors Michael Antonovich and Don Knabe to create the CSEC Task Force. The CSEC Task Force was formed to examine the needs of youth who have experienced CSE and to make recommendations for how the County could effectively combat this issue and better support these youth and their families.

The Board recognized that interagency collaboration was vital to tackling such an ambitious goal. Because Probation and DCFS were most likely to interact with youth experiencing CSE, and positioned to provide these youth with support services, the Supervisors determined that the CSEC Task Force would be co-chaired by the Chief Probation Officer and the Director of DCFS. The Task Force also included representatives from

the DA’s Office, law enforcement, DMH, DPH, DHS, and more.

After meeting regularly for more than half a year, in July 2013, the CSEC Task Force recommended that the Board of Supervisors create a countywide interagency response model to assist victims, collect data, and provide training to all agencies who serve these victims. On September 24, 2013, the Board approved a motion by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and former Supervisor Don Knabe to establish a countywide multi-agency response model and to report back in ninety days with an implementation plan. The response model was envisioned as a comprehensive and coordinated strategy that would bring together the myriad of agencies and nonprofit organizations that would encounter and serve victims of CSE.

“
The Board of Supervisors recognized early on that this is an issue requiring a multidisciplinary response. Creating the CSEC Task Force was a critical first step in fostering collaboration across County agencies.
”

ROBERTA MEDINA



ROBERTA MEDINA
Deputy Director, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services

Roberta Medina co-chaired the first CSEC Task Force in 2013, leading the County’s efforts during that time, and has continued to be a strong advocate for youth experiencing CSE in the County.

Champion



Los Angeles County CSEC Integrated Leadership Team, 2019.

Representatives from DCFS and Probation, including Fesia Davenport, Diane Iglesias and Michelle Guymon, along with Fiza Quaraishi and Kate Walker Brown from the National Center for Youth Law, Angela Chung and Stephanie Richard from the Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking, and Jessica Midkiff, a survivor leader, formed the County’s first leadership team to embark on this project, initially laying out strategies and goals for the County and providing regular reports to the Board on their progress. As this large-scale project developed, more and more County agency officials engaged with the issue and began simultaneously undertaking their own separate actions to address CSEC.

As interest and passion for combating the commercial sexual exploitation for children and youth grew among agencies, the Board decided that the County needed one, unified body to coordinate the various departments’ efforts in order to minimize repetition, confusion and overlap, particularly when it came to data collection and reporting. On October 16, 2015, the Board of Supervisors created the CSEC Integrated Leadership Team (ILT), led by Probation, DCFS, and LASD. These three agencies collaborate frequently with representatives from DMH, DPSS, DPH, DHS, the DA, Public Defender, Alternate Public Defender, and panel attorneys. As of 2020, the ILT is still the primary oversight body of

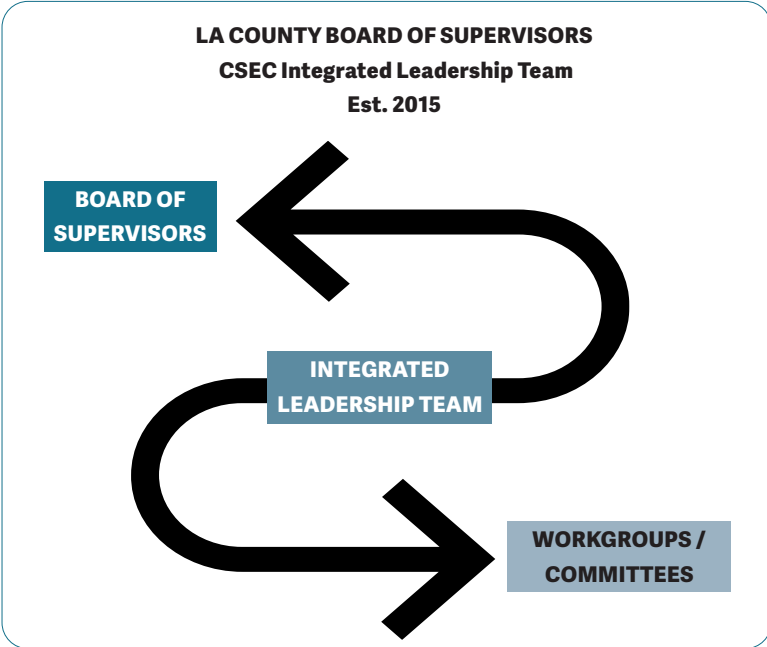


XIOMARA FLORES-HOLGUIN
Children’s Service Administrator II, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services

Xiomara Flores-Holguin has served in a multitude of roles in DCFS throughout her career and was involved from the beginning of the FRP with MART. She also serves as the law enforcement liaison helping with collaborative investigations.

Champion

the County’s initiatives related to CSEC, meeting on a monthly basis and updating the Board of Supervisors and its children’s deputies quarterly on the progress of the County’s various initiatives to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Los Angeles.



ED FITHYAN
Regional Administrator, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services
Ed Fithyan, formerly a member of the County’s CSEC Integrated Leadership Team, played a significant part in advancing DCFS’s role in supporting children experiencing CSE in LA County. His previous role included overseeing the Emergency Response Command Post, Multi-Agency Response Team, CSEC Program, Homeless Services, and the Runaway Outreach Unit.

Champion



VIEW BOARD MOTION 11/27/12
BOARD MOTION AMENDMENT 11/27/12
BOARD MOTION 9/24/13



“
I want to become a lawyer to fight for what is right in our justice system.

***I am the law.
I am a woman.
I am becoming uniquely great.
I am becoming an inspiration and perfecting my greatness.***

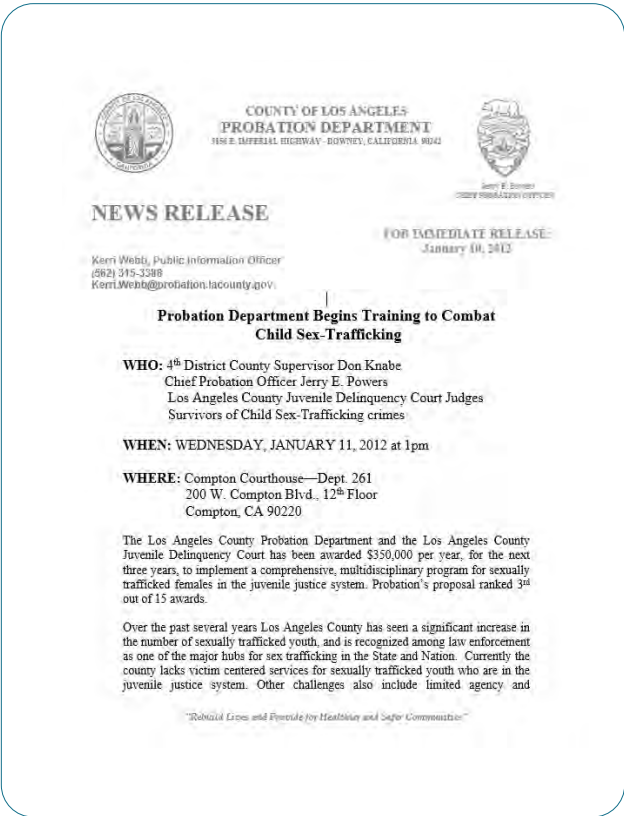
Emara”

STAR Court: A Specialized Delinquency Calendar

Founding of STAR Court

In 2011, Honorable Catherine J. Pratt—a Los Angeles County delinquency court judge—started noting poor outcomes for youth who had experienced CSE compared with other youth who she saw in her courtroom. It was becoming clear that current intervention strategies were not working. In response, Judge Pratt collaborated with Probation to secure grant funding to create a collaborative court for probation-involved youth who had experienced CSE.

As a result of these efforts, the Succeeding Through Achievement and Resilience (STAR) Court was established in 2012 with the goal of addressing the needs of youth impacted by CSE through a collaborative, non-adversarial approach. When STAR Court was established, prior to the change in California law through Senate Bill 1322, children and youth who were being exploited were still being arrested and charged with prostitution-related offenses. STAR Court was founded on the principle that youth who were being arrested for involvement in prostitution-related activities are in fact victims of commercial sexual exploitation, and in order to break the cycles of abuse and system



involvement, a non-traditional approach was necessary. STAR Court includes a dedicated court calendar, now two days a week, where youth experiencing exploitation are met by a collaborative team and a consistent judge. The court is located in Compton, California, where a majority of early arrests for prostitution-



STAR Court dedication with Judge Pratt, Hania (Cardenas) Bocklen, and Michelle Guymon.

related offenses were happening. Through her work with youth in the STAR Court, Judge Pratt and her team learned that youth who have experienced CSE often have histories of

"Judge Pratt asked me what would work for me, and not what would work for them. She wanted me to do whatever would work for me. She always kept her word. I did everything I was supposed to do, we trusted each other. She came down from the bench and hugged me, she's always willing to see me and talk to me. She's a good, little Judge."

- STAR Court youth

childhood sexual, physical, and/or emotional abuse that have not been addressed, and this trauma is often compounded by their exploitation and juvenile justice system involvement. This unaddressed and amplified trauma makes it more difficult for youth to stay in school, to fully engage in services, to develop meaningful healthy relationships, and to successfully "complete" their terms of probation. To improve these outcomes, the STAR Court helps to address underlying individual, interpersonal, family, or community issues that a youth may be experiencing—issues that likely made the youth vulnerable to exploitation in the first place. It aims to empower youth and equip them with the tools and skills necessary to thrive once they are no longer under court or probation supervision. STAR Court also works to promote the safety of youth by offering a range of comprehensive services and supports and focuses on youths' strengths and individual needs, to reduce recidivism, and to disrupt the pattern leading to increasing criminal activity.

"I wanted to see better outcomes. I wanted to see kids who at the end of probation had made progress in school and in reconnecting with their community because I hadn't been seeing that—we were just aging them out."

HONORABLE JUDGE CATHERINE J. PRATT
STAR Court, Superior Court of California, Los Angeles County

Components of STAR Court

STAR Court includes a specialized docket for youth experiencing CSE and a dedicated judge—Judge Pratt—who handles all CSEC/Y-related cases to maintain consistency. Each youth is assessed and supported by a team of dedicated and specially trained professionals who make up the Probation CSEC multidisciplinary team (MDT). The MDT includes probation officers, prosecutors, defense attorneys, specialized advocates, school personnel, a mental health clinician, a public health nurse, and child welfare staff. The MDT assesses the youth’s needs and goals by first getting to know the youth, and then makes recommendations regarding

housing options and services to help the youth achieve their goals. The Court considers these recommendations when issuing orders and closely monitors the youth’s progress. Not all youth under Probation jurisdiction who are identified as having experienced CSE are referred to STAR Court. Rather, referrals are determined on a case-by-case basis by the Probation CSEC MDT after considering the following factors: the youth’s age, service needs, which court the youth’s case is currently in, proximity to the specialized court, and the youth’s preference. Ultimately, the decision is up to the youth’s attorney and Judge.

“
The collaborative court is a great model, particularly because of the team approach and how it incorporates the youth’s voice. It’s also beneficial that Judge Pratt sees the youth more often. I think from the youth’s perspective, they feel like they have a voice, and that’s empowering to feel like their voice is being heard.
”
TERRIKA WOOLFOLK



Champion

TERRIKA WOOLFOLK
Deputy Probation Officer II, Child Trafficking Unit, Los Angeles County Probation Department

Terrika Woolfolk has worked in the Probation Department since 2006, and started in the Child Trafficking Unit (CTU) in 2012. As a long-time case carrying DPO, Woolfolk’s approach with youth has always been one of respect, consistency, trust, and nurturing. She currently is the CTU STAR Court Liaison, the primary coordinator and administrator of the Probation CSEC MDTs, and remains connected to many youth she supported along the way.

Once a youth comes under the jurisdiction of the STAR Court, the youth will be scheduled to appear in court approximately every four to six weeks—much more frequently than a typical delinquency case. The probation officers, defense attorneys, and advocates assigned to each youth see them, at a minimum, twice each month, but typically much more often than that. Many youth communicate with members of their team on a daily basis through a combination of face-to-face, telephonic, and social media contacts.

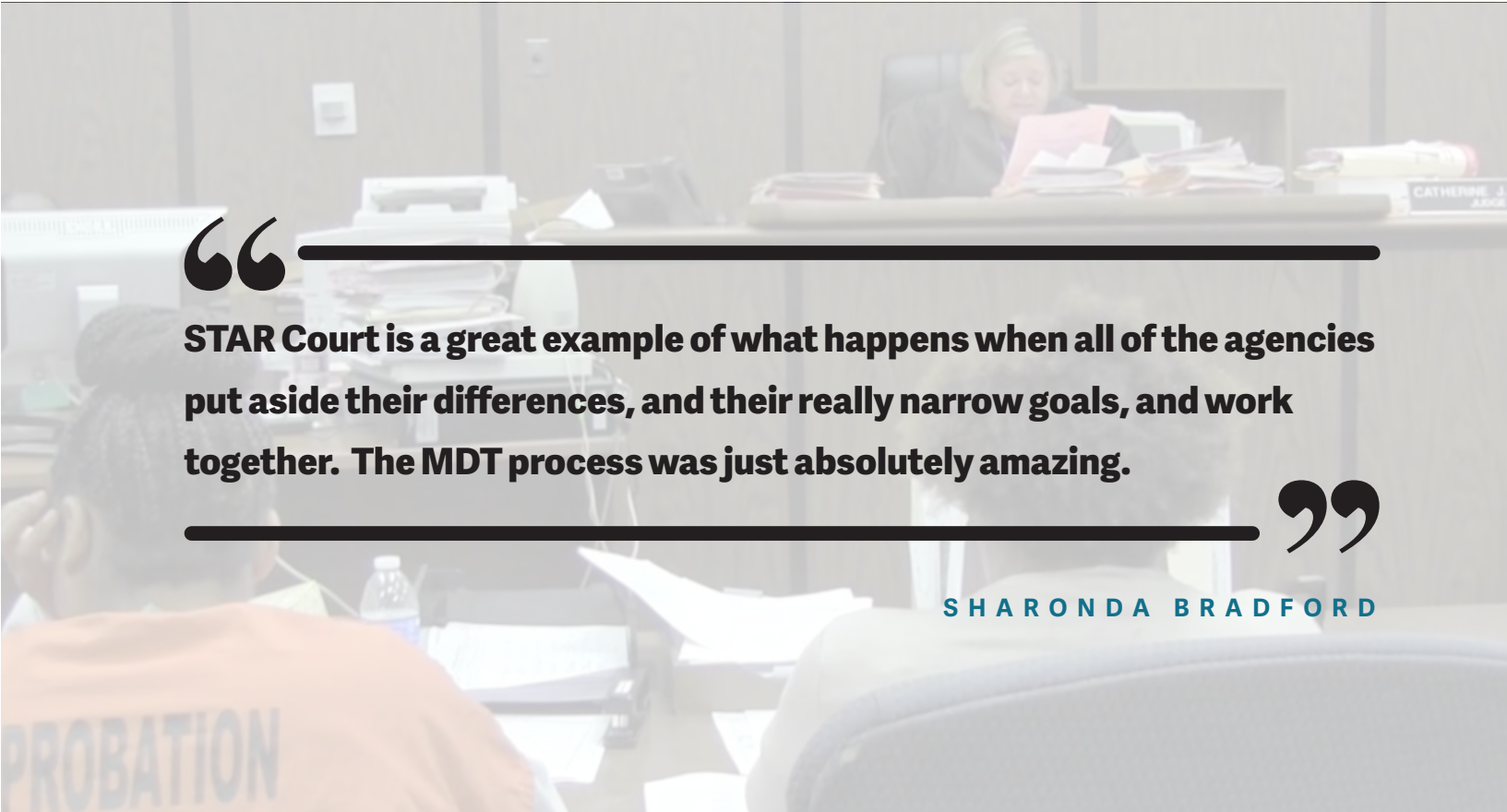
“Everybody in the courtroom...
you feel like a family.”
- Survivor⁹



Champion

SHARONDA BRADFORD
Deputy Public Defender III, Deputy in Charge of the Compton Branch (former Deputy Public Defender in STAR Court)

Sharonda Bradford is a public defender and spent three and a half years zealously representing youth in STAR Court. She has also played a key role in the development of the Victim Witness Protocol.



“
STAR Court is a great example of what happens when all of the agencies put aside their differences, and their really narrow goals, and work together. The MDT process was just absolutely amazing.
”

SHARONDA BRADFORD

The STAR Court team aims to ensure that each youth involved in the Court:

- is heard, frequently checking in to determine what they need to succeed and meet their goals;
- has safe and stable housing, including when Court jurisdiction ends;
- is enrolled in an appropriate school program, receiving the necessary educational supports;
- has at least one healthy relationship with an adult that will last beyond their court case;
- has trauma-informed, strengths-based mental health counseling;
- is receiving appropriate medical care, including dental care;
- is informed about any legal proceedings that involve them and is prepared to meaningfully participate in those proceedings; and
- upon turning 18 or transitioning out of the system, has copies of or access to all essential documentation, including: birth certificate, social security card, state identification card, immunization records, school transcripts and records, and any pertinent legal records.



The STAR Court team and partners in Washington, D.C. while attending the United State of the Women Summit in June, 2016.



Former Supervisor Knabe speaks at the STAR Court dedication in 2012.

Judge Pratt and the STAR Court team have learned that each youth needs an individualized intervention plan with a significant focus on building strong relationships with the youth. These relationships are strengthened by monthly social and community activities (such as bowling, horseback riding, painting, and community service projects), as well as birthday and graduation celebrations.



Champion

ALLISON NEWCOMBE
Attorney & Associate Director, Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative, National Center for Youth Law (NCYL)

Allison Newcombe was stationed in the STAR Court for three years as a specialized attorney who helped youth address legal needs outside of their court case. At NCYL, Newcombe brings the voices and experiences of her former clients into policy advocacy to improve the very systems they were involved in. Newcombe has helped in the development and implementation of the three major collaborative protocols in the County.

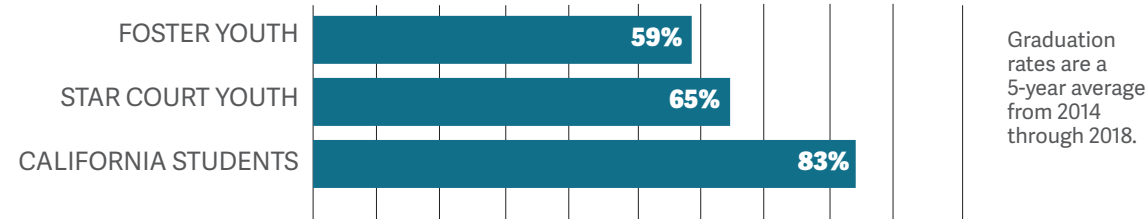
Impact of STAR Court

As of today, over 600 youth have been referred to the STAR Court. While quantifying the “success” of STAR Court is difficult, data shows that these youth are spending less time in custody, have higher graduation rates and the vast majority have not been re-arrested for prostitution, either as a juvenile or an adult. Because of the profound trauma these youth have suffered, youth experience frequent progress and setbacks, so the STAR Court celebrates each incremental success along the way, prioritizing consistency of relationships and youth’s self-defined goals.

STAR Court is proud of the lasting relationships it has fostered with youth who have participated in the program—relationships that often extend beyond the close of the youth’s case.

GRADUATION RATES

Given the complex trauma that youth who have experienced CSE have faced, coupled with high rates of school instability, the STAR Court team is proud that 65% of youth in STAR Court eligible to graduate high school graduated, compared to 59% of foster youth statewide.



“ It’s hard to let people see the rough draft of our lives. We want people to see the pretty picture in the end and the glamour when it’s all finished. The reality is there will always be a continuous rough draft that we are all working on to becoming more of who we are and achieving our great goals. And today represents one of those great accomplishments. We have graduated high school. And I am really proud.

”

CHELSEA
Survivor



FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT <https://www.courts.ca/gov/27693.htm>

Safe Youth Zone

For youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation and attempt to seek help or leave their exploitative situation, it can be difficult to identify an appropriate safe place to go and challenging to communicate their experience and needs. These barriers only further compound the control the trafficker holds over a youth, and can result in more harm to the youth if they unsuccessfully try to escape or seek help.

The Safe House Program, originally launched across Los Angeles County in 1997, provides a temporary haven for any child or adult facing a potentially threatening situation and needing a safe place to go. The original Safe House Program included all Los Angeles County Fire Stations, which were outfitted with an easily

identifiable white and yellow sign indicating that they were a safe location to seek refuge. When a person was in trouble, they could seek out a local Safe House and be protected and connected with services.

On May 10, 2016 former Supervisor Don Knabe introduced a motion to rebrand and expand the existing Safe House Program to meet the needs of children and youth who were experiencing CSE. As a result of this motion, on November 2, 2016 Los Angeles County launched the Safe Youth Zone Program in a pilot area. Full countywide implementation is expected by Summer 2021.

Once fully implemented, the Safe Youth Zone Program will create a countywide network of safe spaces for youth to seek refuge—including law enforcement agencies, fire stations, hospitals, and other county offices. Instead of waiting to be identified by law enforcement or having to navigate the streets to find a safe place, the Safe Youth Zone Program will create places situated all over the County where youth can choose to go and be connected with services. Once a youth seeks help at a designated Safe Youth Zone, agency personnel assess for immediate needs (including medical care or other basic needs). For youth who are suspected victims of CSE, the First Responder Protocol will be initiated. The FRP involves a collaborative, 90 minute response by DCFS and/or Probation and a specialized CSEC advocate. Youth will remain in the Safe Youth Zone until the FRP responders arrive. Since implementing the Safe Youth Zone in the pilot area in 2016, 25 young people have self-identified as victims of CSE and sought assistance from law enforcement.



Former Supervisor Don Knabe speaks at the launch of the Safe Youth Zone Program pilot.



RESOURCE TIPS

Know your options.

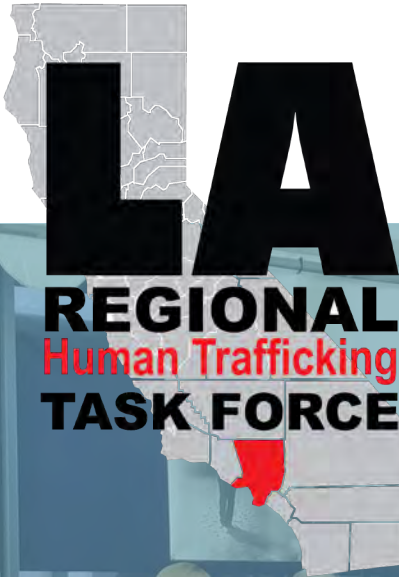
CONTACT YOUR SAFE PEOPLE.

GET TO A SAFE PLACE.

Call 211.

LA Regional Human Trafficking Task Force

The Los Angeles Regional Human Trafficking Task Force (LARHTTF) was formed by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) in October of 2015, aiming to strengthen collaborative efforts to prosecute traffickers and support survivors. Today, the task force is co-led by the LASD and the Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking (CAST), in partnership with several federal, state, county, and city agencies, as well as non-governmental and community-based organizations. The goal of the task force is "to increase early identification of victims of all forms of human trafficking within Los Angeles County, to strengthen investigation and prosecution of labor and sex trafficking cases in Los Angeles County, and to address the individualized needs of trafficking victims through provision of comprehensive services."⁸



“
Having each of these independent agencies all working together under one roof for one common goal has been the key to the success of the LA Regional Human Trafficking Task Force.

JEFF WALKER

Sergeant, Los Angeles Regional Human Trafficking Task Force, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

District Attorney First Step Diversion Program

On February 12, 2014, in response to a growing understanding that children and youth arrested for prostitution are victims of child abuse and exploitation, and not criminals, Los Angeles County District Attorney, Jackie Lacey introduced the First Step Diversion Program. The program was developed to help children and youth who had been CSE rebuild their lives and move forward towards futures without the burden of a criminal record. This program was an important first step in changing perceptions around this issue, shifting the collective mindset to recognize that children and youth should not be criminalized for their exploitation.



Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey.

“
The First Step Program was hugely effective and through the work of many of our partners, a huge success. The program was a life changing event for all of us involved in the DA's Office. The young people we met and tried to help changed the way our attorneys looked at prostitution, minors and sex trafficking. It was a monumental shift in how we handled cases in the Juvenile system.

PHILLIP GLAVIANO

The voluntary program was available to children and youth, ages 12 to 17, who had been charged with prostitution or prostitution-related offenses. By participating, the youth's case was diverted from prosecution for one year and referred to several services, including sexual assault and mental health counseling, substance abuse treatment, and other appropriate services. Youth were also required to participate in a 10-week education program—"My Life My Choice"—that was developed in Boston, Massachusetts with the aim of preventing the cycle of abuse and exploitation of young girls. After successfully completing a one-year program of therapeutic services and treatment, as well as other appropriate services, and the "My Life My Choice" curriculum, the youth's original charge was cleared. It helped pave the way for California to pass Senate Bill 1322, making prostitution and loitering with intent to commit prostitution inapplicable to minors as of January 2017, thereby rendering the DA's Diversion Program unnecessary.



PHILLIP GLAVIANO
Deputy District Attorney,
Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Phillip Glaviano has served as a Deputy District Attorney for 32 years. From 2013-2019, he served in the Juvenile Division as the Assistant Head Deputy. During his time in Juvenile, Glaviano was tasked with developing and implementing the First Step Diversion Program.

Champion



FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT lahumantrafficking.com

DREAM Court: A Specialized Dependency Calendar

Founding of DREAM Court

The Dedication to Restoration Through Empowerment, Advocacy and Mentoring (DREAM) Court is a specialized collaborative courtroom for youth who have been identified as having experienced commercial sexual exploitation.

The DREAM Court launched in February 2016, after the passage of Senate Bill 855, which amended the Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) to clarify that youth who are commercially

sexually exploited are victims of abuse and neglect and should be served through the dependency court system. Now, any new WIC §300(b)2 filings in Los Angeles County are filed directly in the DREAM Court. Additionally, if youth in other dependency courtrooms are identified as having experienced CSE, their attorneys can request that their case be transferred to the specialized court.



Champion

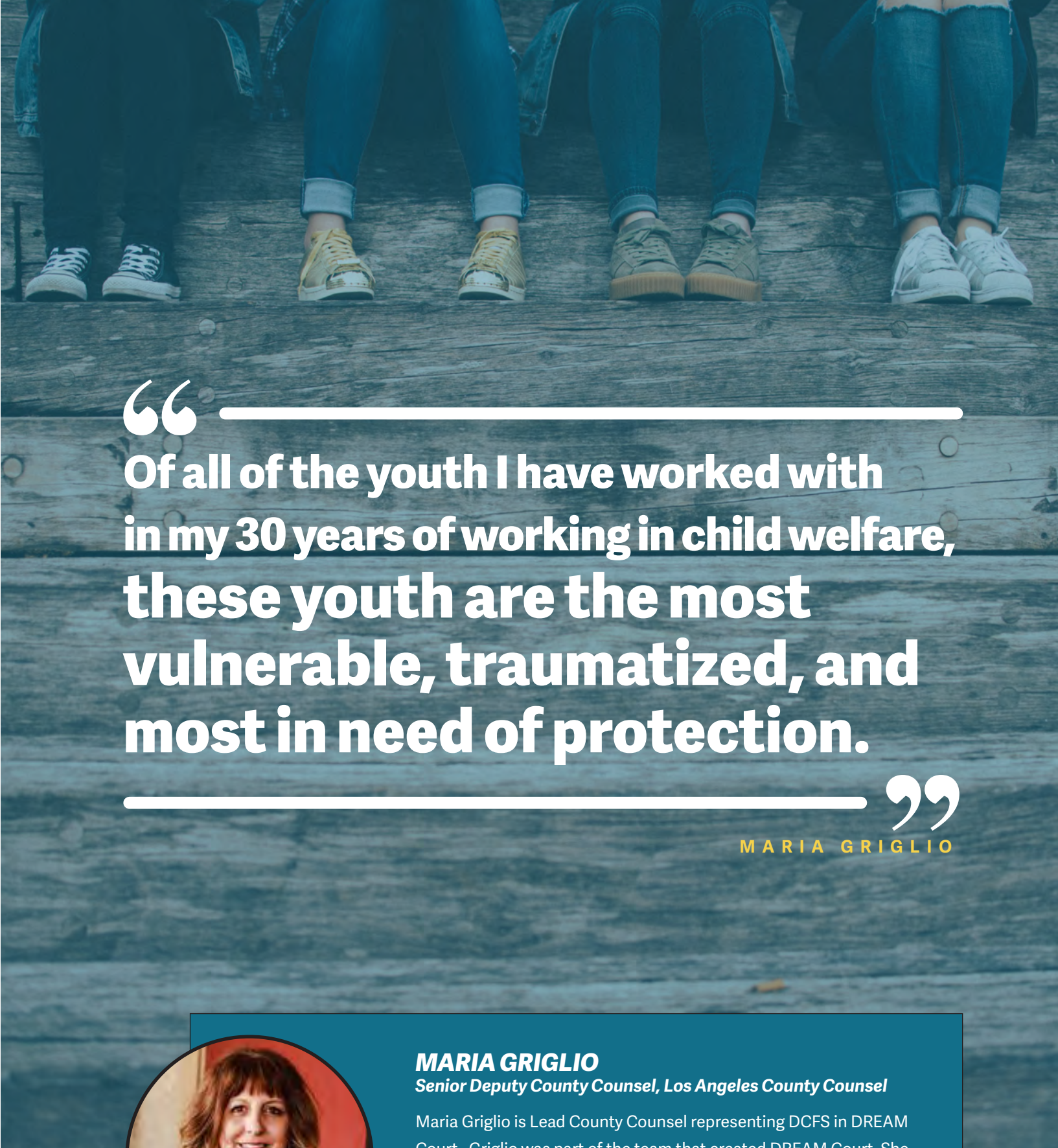
HONORABLE AKEMI ARAKAKI
*The Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles,
Supervising Judge - Dependency*

Judge Akemi Arakaki has been a Judge since 2010 and has presided over DREAM Court since December 2017. She has cultivated relationships and created a warm environment for youth in her courtroom throughout her tenure.

“ I have the honor of working with some of the most dedicated, compassionate and intelligent people I have ever met. I do not claim to be an expert in anything, but know that we all need to be better listeners. Therefore, what I will do is use the opportunity to listen. In a recent article by Keyonna Monroe, a survivor, I read: ‘Not only do you steal a child’s innocence that way, but you steal their voice and you lock it up in a box and they feel like they don’t have their own key.’ Every day that we get to work in this arena is an opportunity to help a young person find their key and reclaim their voice. I am just very grateful to be a part of this team.

”

HONORABLE AKEMI ARAKAKI



“ Of all of the youth I have worked with in my 30 years of working in child welfare, these youth are the most vulnerable, traumatized, and most in need of protection.

”

MARIA GRIGLIO



Champion

MARIA GRIGLIO
Senior Deputy County Counsel, Los Angeles County Counsel

Maria Griglio is Lead County Counsel representing DCFS in DREAM Court. Griglio was part of the team that created DREAM Court. She provides legal advice to Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services through litigation, training, and case management, specializing in cases involving commercial he sexually exploited children. She is an active member of the LA County Steering Committee.

Components of DREAM Court

The DREAM Court engages youth who have experienced CSE using a collaborative, trauma-informed model. All attorneys, courtroom staff and hearing officers have all completed extensive training in order to better understand and engage with youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. Every youth in the DREAM Court has a specially trained attorney from the Children’s Law Center (CLC) and is paired with a specialized advocate from a community-based organization who provides

comprehensive support and assistance with securing services.

The DREAM Court reviews cases with greater frequency than a traditional dependency court calendar, with each youth appearing in court every six to eight weeks, compared to review hearings every six months in a traditional dependency courtroom.

The DREAM Court team members include specialized staff from CLC, DCFS, and the County Counsel’s office. Three attorneys and four case managers from CLC work exclusively with CSE clients on their caseloads. These specialized, lower caseloads enable the CLC CSEC team to commit the necessary time and attention that youth need to feel supported and succeed. Most DREAM Court youth also have a specialized social worker with a reduced caseload to facilitate closer engagement through DCFS’s specialized CSEC unit.

Additionally, parents in DREAM Court benefit from the CSEC Parent Empowerment Program (PEP), which educates parents on the dynamics of CSEC and provides them with tools to keep their children safe. DREAM Court youth may find added comfort and support from a facility dog that is available to sit with the youth during their hearings.



TIFFANI CORTEZ
CSEC Attorney, DREAM Court

Tiffani Cortez has been an attorney at the Children’s Law Center of California since 2013. Cortez was CLC’s first CSEC Attorney in DREAM Court in 2016 and still continues to advocate for youth impacted by CSE in the specialized courtroom.

Champion

“Representing our girls in the DREAM Court is the most meaningful work I’ve ever done. I see their faces and I see myself and my community looking back. So I feel it’s my calling and responsibility to use every tool I have to be a fierce advocate, protect them, and most importantly, love them.”

TIFFANI CORTEZ



ELSIE VAN CLIEF
CSEC Case Manager, DREAM Court

Elsie Van Clief has been an employee at the Children’s Law Center of California since 2007 and has been a Case Manager in DREAM Court for the past 4 years. She was CLC’s first CSEC Case Manager in DREAM Court.

Champion

“My hope is that every girl I work with feels seen, heard and valued. I believe young people are the greatest investment of our time, resources and energy. It is my joy to see them grow, be empowered and find their voice.”

ELSIE VAN CLIEF
CSEC Case Manager, DREAM Court



Dogs of DREAM Court.

To ensure a coordinated and non-adversarial environment and to address the needs and strengths of each youth, the DREAM Court team holds weekly multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings, where social workers, attorneys, case managers, specialized advocates, a mental health clinician, school personnel and probation officers collaborate to create (and revise, as necessary) comprehensive case plans for each youth. The DREAM Court MDT is coordinated and administered by DCFS. The administration includes tracking information related to youth in the court, identifying the youth who will be on calendar, ensuring the necessary team members are present to discuss the case, and communicating and coordinating among the wide range of partners to ensure the meetings run smoothly and efficiently.

“
I’ve worked with this population my entire career but the moment I decided to engage with this issue was when I noticed the African American community was being affected by this issue more than any other community. I decided that I needed to be part of the solution.
”
ERIC BALL



Champion

ERIC BALL
Children’s Services Administrator of the Runaway Outreach Unit (ROU), Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services

Eric Ball is a passionate advocate for supporting youth who have experienced CSE. As Children’s Services Administrator of the ROU, he oversees the unit that is responsible for locating children who runaway or who go missing from care. He also initially came up with the name for DREAM Court, and now is the primary coordinator and administrator of the weekly MDTs.

Impact of DREAM Court

To date, the DREAM Court has handled over 500 cases of youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. CLC has collected and tracked data on youth serviced through the DREAM Court to learn about the impacts of the court and its processes as well as a means to improve its practices to better serve youth who have been impacted by CSE. A number of data indicators are tracked for each youth who participates in DREAM court including: number of runaway incidents, placement moves, percent/number of youth enrolled in school, participation in employment/ job readiness programs, and number/percent linked to mental health and other identified needed services in the youth’s case plan. The data thus far demonstrates that the extra time and attention given to clients has resulted in a dramatic decrease in running away and an increase in placement and educational stability, employment and enrollment in job readiness programs, and connections to mental health and case plan services.

From July 2014 through October 2020, a total of 320 WIC 300(b)(2) petitions have been filed.

Funding for DREAM Court

To support the DREAM Court, DCFS utilizes State CSEC Program Funds, which are available to counties that choose to participate in the CSEC Program, and fulfill the Program requirements pursuant to SB 855. LA County’s allocation of CSEC Program funds has allowed DCFS to support the expansion of CLC’s capacity—specifically the hiring of three CSEC Case Managers and to partially fund a CSEC Program Supervisor, a CSEC Supervising Attorney and two CSEC Attorneys—staff positions assigned exclusively to the DREAM Court. This added capacity provides youth with more intensive services and supports—which would not be possible with out the program funds.

Within the DREAM Court, CSEC Program Funds have also been utilized for CSEC training, youth and family support services, and development and implementation of a CSEC database for CLC to effectively evaluate services provided and track status of clients.

“
I am proud that in Los Angeles County we work collaboratively with agencies and organizations who in the past would have been adversaries. In DREAM Court, the parents’ attorneys, children’s attorneys and county counsel all work together, recognizing our differences but finding commonalities and recognizing our common goal of providing the youth safety, protection, and resources for healing and thriving.
”
MARIA GRIGLIO
Senior Deputy County Counsel
Los Angeles County Counsel



As Los Angeles County embarked on its effort to better support and serve children and youth who had experienced exploitation, it became clear that policies and practices would need to change. For some specific issues, the County needed to coordinate multiple agencies and non-governmental partners, requiring new processes, procedures, and clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Below are three of those protocols.

COLLABORATIVE PROTOCOLS

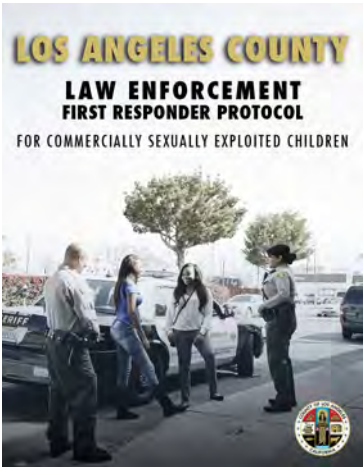
"Change often starts with a brave innovator. The development and implementation of three protocols in Los Angeles County—the Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol, Detention Protocol, and Victim Witness Protocol—reflect a commitment to change and a nod to several of these innovators. The County recognized a need to memorialize these significant changes in policies and practices in order to ensure they outlived the champions who built them. This foresight and these protocols have created lasting change that will be sustained for years to come, undoubtedly benefitting countless young people in the County and nationally."

- Kate Walker Brown, Director, Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative, National Center for Youth Law

First Responder Protocol

Law enforcement officers are often on the front line of discovering and identifying children and youth who have been commercially sexually exploited and those at-risk of exploitation. Detectives conduct proactive operations both on the streets and online to identify potential victims of exploitation. Additionally, patrol officers may encounter youth on the street or when responding to radio calls for domestic disputes, which may also be exploitative. Historically, in Los Angeles County and around the country, the law enforcement response was to arrest the child for prostitution or related charges, to detain them in juvenile hall, and to prosecute them through the juvenile delinquency system.

With the growing understanding that exploited children and youth are victims of child abuse and that there is “No Such Thing as a Child Prostitute,” Los Angeles County began to envision an approach that no longer involved arresting and detaining children for their victimhood.



FRP Partners at monthly Multi-Agency Review Committee meeting.

“The First Responder Protocol has served as the foundation for our evolving policies and practices when dealing with commercially sexually exploited youth. It established a starting point for our ongoing collaboration with DCFS, the Probation Department and a team of dedicated service providers. Together, we share the priority of identifying and caring for CSEC youth, while holding their exploiters accountable, and the FRP is the product of our combined effort.”

- Human Trafficking Bureau, LA Regional Human Trafficking Task Force, Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department

In 2013, long before legislation to decriminalize prostitution for youth under the age of 18, the Board of Supervisors charged the CSEC Task Force, led by Probation and DCFS, with developing a multi-agency response to combat commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth that avoided arresting and detaining victims in juvenile halls. In response, the multi-agency partnership, comprised of Probation, DCFS, DPH, DHS, and LASD, in collaboration with the National Center for Youth Law, developed and implemented the Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol for CSEC (First Responder Protocol or FRP), the first protocol of its kind.

The goal of the FRP is to identify exploited and at-risk youth and provide a quick, coordinated, service-based response, focusing on both the immediate, short-term needs of the youth while also supporting them to achieve long-term safety and stability through youth-centered, strengths-based, and trauma-informed services provided by a team of professionals connected to the youth. Given that the first 72 hours after identification represents a critical point of intervention and an opportunity for building rapport, trust, and relationships with the youth, the FRP focuses on providing intensive support and engagement during that time frame, while also recognizing the need for longer-term supports, offering a minimum of 90 days of engagement with a specialized advocate, but often longer.

“It quickly became clear that to us that addressing the commercial sexual exploitation of children had to be at the top of our list.”

MARIA GALLEGOS

Officer in Charge, Detective Supervisor, Los Angeles Police Department



KATE WALKER BROWN

Director, Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative, National Center for Youth Law

Kate Walker Brown has worked with Los Angeles County since 2013, initially working with the County to conceptualize the FRP. She has since helped draft the Detention Protocol and has worked on the development of the Victim Witness Protocol. The work in Los Angeles County has allowed Walker Brown and partners to advocate for broader changes at the state and national level making an even broader impact for children and youth impacted by commercial sexual exploitation.

Champion

The FRP outlines the roles and responsibilities of the partner agencies, which includes an expedited, 90-minute response following identification and additional, intensive engagement over the following 72 hours. Within the first 90 minutes after identification, law enforcement must engage the youth using victim-centered, trauma-informed strategies, report the known or suspected abuse to the Child Protection Hotline, assess the youth for any urgent medical or other needs, and transport the youth to a staging area. Once

at the staging area, a community-based advocate, as well as specialized workers from either DCFS or Probation, meet with the youth, ensure their basic needs are met (such as clothing and food), and hold a multidisciplinary team (MDT) meeting to establish a safety plan and determine where the youth will stay that evening. Throughout the first 72 hours, the advocate frequently checks in with the youth to make sure they are safe and their needs are being met.

“
We simply could not have achieved all the work we have done to address commercial sexual exploitation without partnership. No one agency can do this alone—we need each other.
”

LINA TEAGUE

Former Officer in Charge, Los Angeles Police Department

Also within 72 hours, or sooner if necessary, the young person receives a full medical and mental health assessment at a DHS Medical Hub. At the Medical Hub, youth also receive any necessary urgent medical care, including reproductive health services such as HIV prophylaxis and emergency contraception, which both must be administered within certain timelines to ensure effectiveness.

Following the expedited response over the first 72-hour period, both the specialized Probation and/or DCFS units and the community-based advocate remain connected to the youth. The community-based advocate serves as a support for the youth, guiding them through interactions with the various county agencies, ensuring that their voice is informing decision making, and providing case management and crisis management assistance as needed. The advocate provides these supports for a minimum of 90 days, but typically stays

“
As law enforcement, we’re supposed to be out there helping people. There’s nothing in the rulebook that says help has to come in handcuffs.
”

ERIC HOOKER

Sergeant, Long Beach Police Department



Champion

JEFF WALKER

Sergeant, Los Angeles Regional Human Trafficking Task Force, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Jeff Walker supervises a team of 11 detectives dedicated to the investigation of human trafficking cases. Most of the team's work focuses on sex trafficking and CSEC-related cases.

The First Responder Protocol requires the young person to receive a full medical assessment within 72 hours of recovery.

connected to the youth for six months or longer. The specialized Probation and DCFS units also provide enhanced engagement and intensive ongoing case management services.

In 2014, the FRP was implemented in a pilot area, consisting of the LASD's Compton and Century Stations, and the Long Beach Police Department. In late 2015, implementation of the Protocol was expanded to the LAPD's 77th and Southeast Divisions.

By the end of 2016, the FRP was expanded to all LASD stations; by July 2018, the Protocol was rolled out to all of the remaining LAPD divisions; and in December 2019, the FRP was expanded to include the Pomona Police Department. The County plans to expand the Protocol to cover local police departments, fire departments, and medical first responders in 2020 and 2021. Representatives from multiple jurisdictions, including the Counties of San Diego and Alameda, and the states of Alabama, Texas, and Washington have met with individuals involved

in the development and implementation of the FRP to learn how to implement the FRP model in their respective jurisdictions.

To facilitate continuous problem solving, oversight, and improvement after implementation of the FRP, the County agencies and the providers implementing the FRP formed the Multi-Agency Review Committee (MARC). The MARC meets once a month to analyze data, discuss challenges and ongoing needs, amend the Protocol as necessary, assess the sufficiency of resources, and report to the Board of Supervisors about the progress of FRP and its implementation. For example, the MARC developed a decision tree to clarify roles and responsibilities for different stakeholders in situations which have arisen during implementation that were not previously planned for. In addition, the MARC has spearheaded, planned, and overseen the efforts to expand implementation of the FRP beyond the pilot areas.

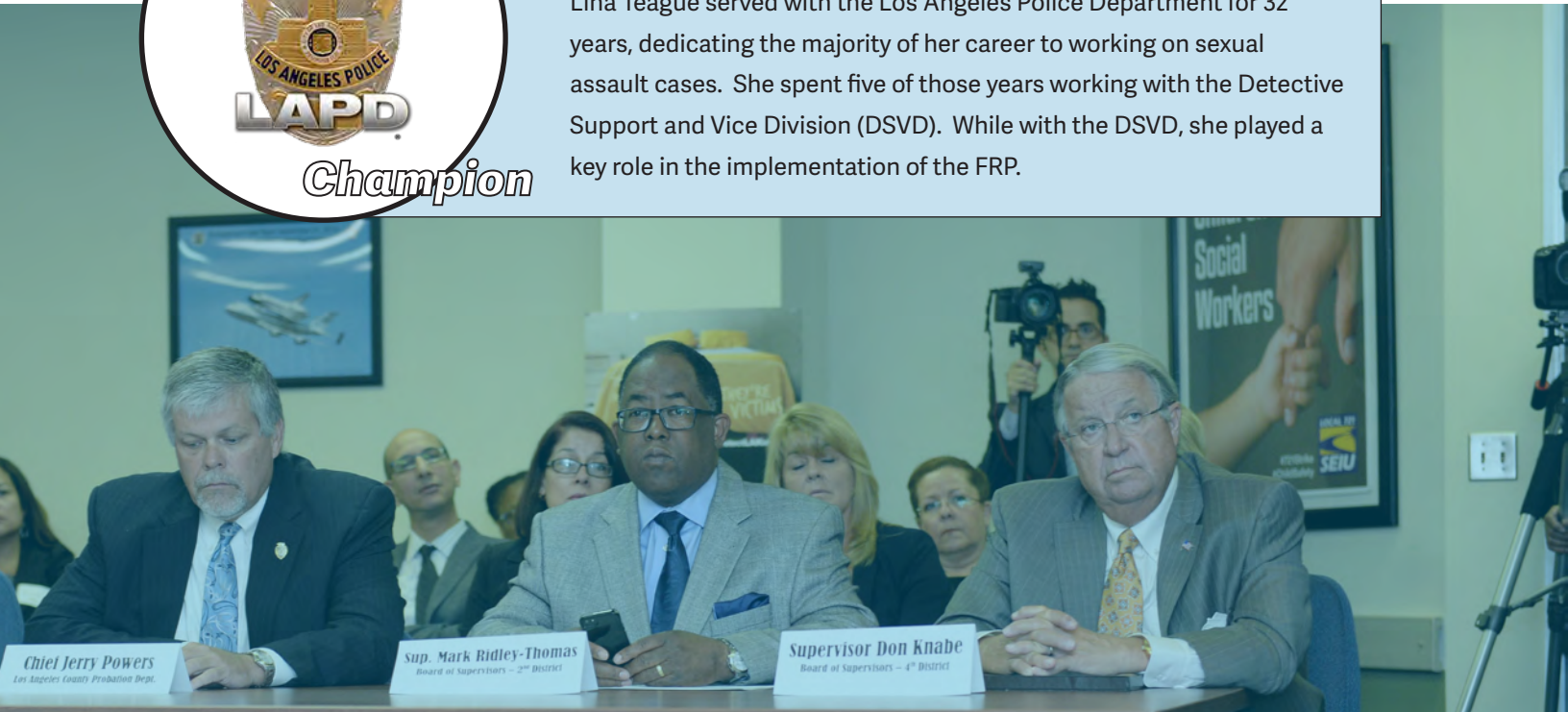


Community-based advocates begin to establish relationships with youth within the first 72 hours of recovery. They serve as a support for the youth, guiding them through interactions with the various county agencies, ensuring that their voice is informing decision making, and providing case management and crisis management assistance as needed. The advocate provides these supports for a minimum of 90 days, but typically stays connected with the youth for 6 months or more.



LINA TEAGUE
Former Officer in Charge, Los Angeles Police Department

Lina Teague served with the Los Angeles Police Department for 32 years, dedicating the majority of her career to working on sexual assault cases. She spent five of those years working with the Detective Support and Vice Division (DSVD). While with the DSVD, she played a key role in the implementation of the FRP.



MARIO GALLEGOS
Officer in Charge, Detective Supervisor, Los Angeles Police Department

Mario Gallegos leads a team that helps ensure the safe and speedy recovery of children and youth who have been commercially sexually exploited. Mario and his team conduct parallel, aggressive investigations regarding Human Trafficking violations.

Since implementing the Protocol six years ago, the FRP has yielded valuable insights into the profile of young people vulnerable to sexual exploitation in Los Angeles County. For example, of the 463 youth recovered through the FRP from 2014 to 2019, we have learned that: the average age of first recovery was just under 16 years old; the youngest victim was 11; the victims were disproportionately African American (70%); and 86% of victims had a prior referral to DCFS. This information will help develop future strategies for identifying and supporting youth at risk for commercial sexual exploitation in Los Angeles County.

It is also evident that the FRP is making a positive impact on young people recovered. For example, among those youth who were

recovered between 2014 and 2018, only a small percentage of youth went missing within the first 72 hours of recovery—less than 25%. This may be tied to the fact that youth receive immediate, intensive support from specialized advocates as well as specialized units within DCFS and Probation. Moreover, the continued support and engagement built into the FRP resulted in even more stabilization and even fewer missing youth over time—less than 12% of those same missing youth remained missing from care by August of 2018.

It is also evident that the FRP is making a positive impact on young people recovered.



ERIC HOOKER
Sergeant, Long Beach Police Department

Eric Hooker was formerly the Sergeant for the VICE Unit of the Long Beach Police Department. Hooker helped develop the FRP and, since the FRP's launch, has remained committed to its implementation. Hooker also advocated to extend services and support to survivors over 18 years old, creating a diversion program where these Transition Age Youth could receive services with a community agency in lieu of arrest in Long Beach.

This new data has exciting potential to help advocates and lawmakers understand the needs of youth who have been impacted by commercial sexual exploitation and to improve services for these youth. On November 13, 2018, the Board approved a motion by Supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas and Janice Hahn to have an outside research institution conduct an external evaluation of the FRP and interpret the valuable data gathered so far. The research, conducted by California State University, Los

Angeles, was completed and a report released in August, 2020. The report includes an overview and assessment of each stage of the protocol, as well as overarching recommendations for strengthening the Protocol and the County's capacity to support youth impacted by CSE, as well as improving the County's data system.



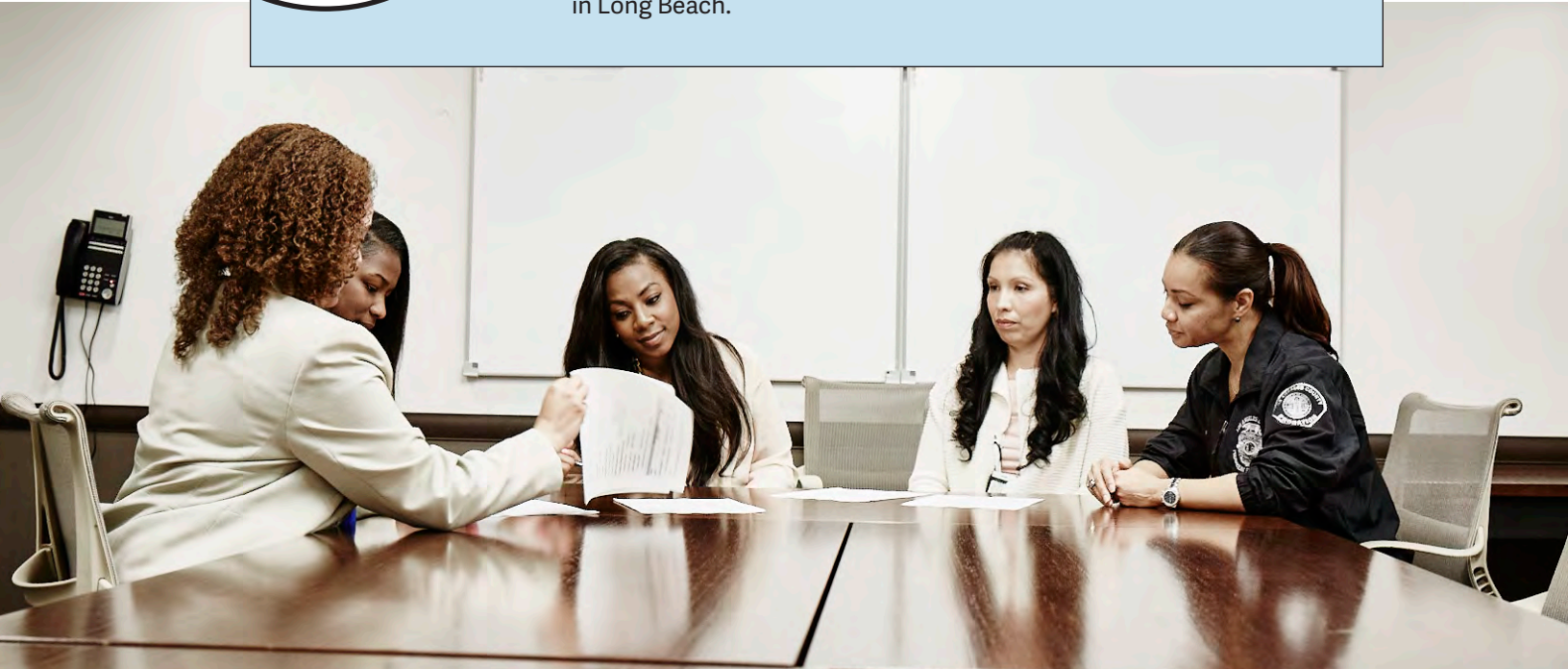
CASEY GRACE
Investigator, Los Angeles Police Department, South Bureau

Casey Grace served as an Investigator for the Los Angeles Police Department, South Bureau, from 2014 to 2020. As an Investigator, he played a significant role implementing the FRP.



DR. JANET ARNOLD-CLARK
Senior Physician, Los Angeles County Department of Health Services

Janet Arnold-Clark has been involved with the FRP from the beginning and is committed to ensuring that youth receive comprehensive medical care upon identification. She has innovated and helped drive new approaches for serving this particularly vulnerable population.

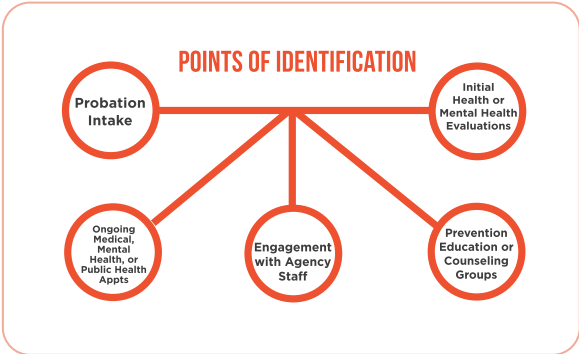
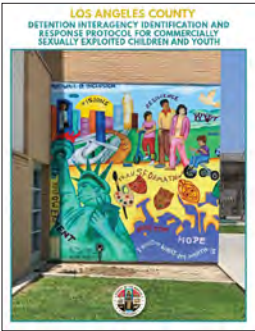


VIEW
FIRST RESPONDER PROTOCOL FOR CSEC AND RELATED REPORTS, INCLUDING: 4-YEAR DATA REPORT, 6-YEAR DATA REPORT, AND CALSTATE LA ASSESSMENT BOARD MOTION 11/13/18

Detention Protocol

Beginning in 2015, a small group of champions including Probation, Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS), and DMH at one detention facility in Los Angeles, Central Juvenile Hall, in collaboration with NCYL, began to discuss how to better identify and serve and serve youth impacted by commercial sexual exploitation who were still ending up in county detention facilities despite early efforts in the County to avoid criminalization of these youth. They committed to further expanding understanding and awareness of the issue in detention facilities by proactively training their fellow staff members to identify the red flags associated with CSE, and to discuss it with youth in thoughtful, non-judgmental ways. In addition to more training, the survivor- and advocate-led prevention workshops and support groups at Central Juvenile Hall helped educate youth about CSE, encourage discussions, and create environments where more youth

understood the dynamics of exploitation and felt comfortable coming forward if they had experienced it. Soon, other agencies—DPH, DCFS, and the Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE)—joined the efforts, and other detention facilities in the County followed Central Juvenile Hall’s lead.



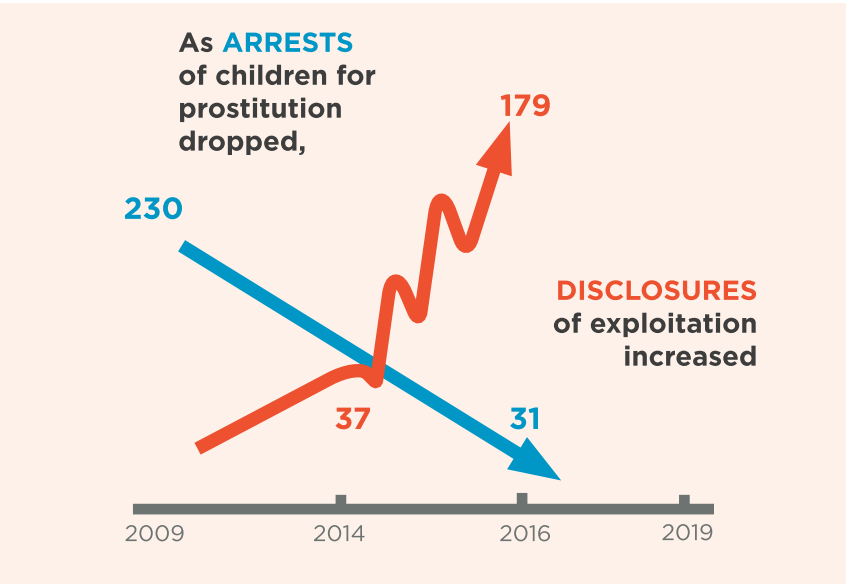
The Detention Protocol was the brainchild of this small group of champions: Marya Monares (JCHS), Kate Walker Brown (NCYL), Michelle Guymon (Probation), Myla Lampkin (DMH), Markese Freeman (Probation), and Fiza Quraishi (NCYL; not pictured).

“ I’m encouraged to know that through the training and collective agencies’ commitment to our youth in detention facilities, we are beginning to see more personal disclosures from young men and those who are LGBTQ, populations that we have otherwise had difficulty engaging and identifying. ”

SUPERVISOR KATHRYN BARGER
Fifth District, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

As a result of these collective efforts, youth who had experienced CSE began disclosing their exploitation to staff in detention facilities across Los Angeles. Between 2013 and 2019, over 600 children in three juvenile halls disclosed that they had been, or were being, exploited. But for the commitment of dedicated staff taking proactive steps to increase awareness and sensitivity, these children may never have been identified.

Between 2013 and 2019, over 600 children in three juvenile halls disclosed that they had been, or were being, exploited.



“
When I first started working with youth who trusted me enough to disclose exploitation, I was often faced with barriers while trying to help them. We did not yet know how to respond to CSE, and resources weren’t readily accessible. With persistent searching for guidance, I crossed paths with some pretty spectacular people from Probation and the Department of Mental Health. We started talking more and figuring out ways that we could coordinate care of our suspected and identified exploited youth. The kids at Central started seeking us out for help. And they started to heal.
 ”
DR. MARYA MONARES



DR. MARYA MONARES

Pediatrician, Juvenile Court Health Services

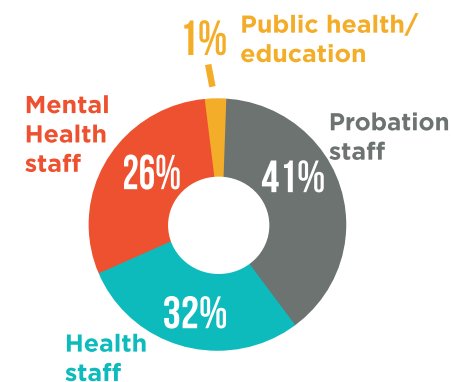
Dr. Marya Monares is a frontline physician for Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS). Dr. Monares serves as Chairperson of the JCHS Nurses and Physicians CSEC Champions Committee.

Champion

In an effort to document and formalize these practices, the Detention Interagency Identification and Response Protocol for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children and Youth (Detention Protocol) was born. Launched in March 2019, the Detention Protocol defines responsibilities for the agencies to actively identify children in detention, ensure they have the necessary supports while in detention, and effectively plan for and support their transition back to the community.

RELATIONSHIPS ARE EVERYTHING

Youth disclose exploitation to well-trained staff across all agencies



“As a mental health provider working with youth who demonstrate signs and symptoms of complex trauma as a result of being trafficked and sexually exploited, it is crucial that we communicate amongst team members who can help support and further assist these kids. Having the Detention Protocol in place ensures that these vulnerable youth are not being missed and will receive needed services and resources to minimize the impact of trauma while promoting their well-being and resiliency.”

- Myla Lampkin



MYLA LAMPKIN

Mental Health Clinical Supervisor, Department of Mental Health

Myla Lampkin is the CSEC Program Supervisor for the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health. Lampkin provided mental health services in Juvenile Hall for 11 years and was a champion for creating the Detention Protocol.

Champion

In addition to being implemented in the three juvenile halls in Los Angeles, Probation and its partners have begun plans to adapt the Detention Protocol to address the needs of young people in Dorothy Kirby Center, a therapeutic, residential treatment center, which is a longer-term detention facility.

“
This protocol recognizes that when these youth do come into our custody and care, it is our responsibility and duty to identify that they have been exploited, report the exploitation as child abuse, build trusting relationships with the young person, and work collaboratively across multiple agencies to support them in meeting their myriad needs while also building on their strengths and cultivating their goals and aspirations.
”

MARKESE FREEMAN
Senior Detention Services Officer,
Central Juvenile Hall

HOW THE PROTOCOL WORKS

- 1

CALL TO CHILD PROTECTION HOTLINE
to report abuse
- 2

NOTIFICATION TO CTU AND CSEC COORDINATOR
to assess and coordinate with agency partners
- 3

NOTIFICATION TO MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH STAFF
to assess and address immediate needs
- 4

MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM MEETINGS
to ensure ongoing needs and goals are met
- 5

CONNECTION TO RESOURCES IN THE COMMUNITY



FOR MORE INFORMATION VIEW DETENTION PROTOCOL

Victim Witness Testimony Protocol

Youth who have been commercially sexually exploited are frequently called upon to testify as witnesses in court to aid in the criminal prosecution of their exploiters. The experience of appearing and testifying in court can be stress-inducing and traumatizing for many witnesses; it is made even more so when the witness is a child victim testifying against their exploiter. Because of the stress, fear, and potential for re-traumatization, some youth refuse to testify or end up leaving home without permission. Understandably, others who agree to testify have difficulty telling or

remembering the full or true story or answering questions coherently once they are on the witness stand. While others who are compelled to testify without proper supports suffer the ramifications of re-traumatization far beyond the day of testimony. Several of these consequences, however, are avoidable or may be mitigated. Providing sufficient support to victims and their families and caregivers before, during, and after the youth’s testimony can help support their safety and wellbeing—both in the short and long-term. Ultimately, that support will also have a



JANE CREIGHTON
Special Assistant, Special Operations Unit, Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office

Jane Creighton is a Special Assistant in the Special Operations Unit of the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office. She has played an integral role in the development of the Victim Witness Protocol.

“
District Attorney Jackie Lacey knew that human trafficking was a serious issue that needed to be addressed in our County. She felt the best way to address this issue was to have specially trained prosecutors who can give it their full attention. And for DA Lacey, the best way to approach these cases is through vertical prosecution, meaning that one prosecutor will stay with the case from start to finish.
”

JANE CREIGHTON

“A child victim’s testimony could be crucial to the successful prosecution and conviction of their trafficker. What is of equal, if not more, importance, is that the process in which the child victim is subpoenaed to testify, the preparation for trial and debrief after their testimony is trauma-informed and victim-centered. The Victim Witness Testimony Protocol allows all agencies involved to work together to help support youth through a stressful and re-traumatizing process and help minimize the risks to their safety and well-being.”

JENNY CHEUNG MARINO

Los Angeles County Superior Court Commissioner

positive impact on the criminal prosecution of exploiters, which will reduce future exploitation of other children and youth. Aiming to decrease the risk of re-traumatization and harm to youth asked to testify in criminal proceedings against their exploiters, and support the goal of zealous prosecution of exploiters, on October 20, 2015, the Board of Supervisors created a multi-agency workgroup, led by Probation and STAR Court, and in collaboration with NCYL, to develop the Victim Witness Testimony Protocol. Scheduled for launch by early 2021, the Victim Witness Testimony Protocol defines the roles and responsibilities of all agencies and community partners that will interact with

a youth before, on the day of, and after their testimony, including DCFS, Probation, DMH, the DA’s Office, Law Enforcement, the Public Defender, Alternate Public Defender, CLC, and specialized advocacy agencies. The Protocol further provides for multidisciplinary support for the youth and their family and caregivers. Each testifying youth will have an individualized Victim Witness Support Team that will guide the youth and their family and caregivers throughout the entire process, from case filing through the day of testimony and beyond.



[VIEW BOARD MOTION 10/20/15](#)

In an additional show of support for youth survivors of CSE, on August 17, 2016, the Board of Supervisors sent California Governor Jerry Brown a letter urging him to sign AB 1276 (Santiago), which authorizes minors 15 years of age and younger to testify outside the presence of the judge, jury, defendants, and attorneys in a human trafficking trial. At that time, California law already allowed minor victims of abuse to testify about their abuse via closed-circuit television, in order to protect against potential re-traumatization while confronting their abuser and limit the general anxiety involved in testifying at trial, ensuring that the child’s testimony would be as effective as possible. AB 1276 proposed to extend those protections to minor victims of CSE and human trafficking. Following the Board’s letter, on September 26, 2016, Governor Brown signed AB 1276 into law (now codified in Cal. Penal Code § 13471.).¹⁰



I wanted to let you know about court yesterday. It was tough, but I have never been prouder to be part of a team.

Assisting my client yesterday in adult was a reminder of why our work is necessary and essential. My client suffered a panic attack on the witness stand and was unable to complete her testimony. We must return a third day for her to recount the facts of what she describes as torture that started two years ago, at age fourteen.

Yesterday, Transportation DPO Smith was great! She has established a strong rapport with [my client] and was instrumental in calming and comforting her. It wasn’t just Smith. DPO Dawson suspected that yesterday would be a stressful day and asked CTU team for support. It was a thing of beauty.

[My client] was escorted from the rear, the judges’ hallway, by two transportation officers and the bailiff. Violet entered the courtroom flanked by Shantel, Terrika, Kamillah, Gina, Haley from Saving Innocence, the DA Victim Advocate, and me. The defendant’s family that had been intimidating [my client] from the back of the courtroom were now outnumbered.

Yesterday was hard, but it was also very special. The entire courtroom staff was impressed and moved by the dedication of the team. As you go about your day, remember that the work of the team matters and is having an impact.

- L



JENNY CHEUNG MARINO

Los Angeles County Superior Court Commissioner

Jenny Cheung Marino previously served as a Firm Director at the Children’s Law Center of California. As Firm Director, she supervised attorneys and case managers who represent youth in the DREAM Court. She has also played a significant role in the development of the Victim Witness Protocol, and in the planning of the annual Empowerment Conference.



“ Courts can be where justice is served, though the road to justice can be long and scary for our kids. It can often take several years for a case to go to trial, so thankfully we have that time to work together, help kids find the courage to testify and heal along the way. ”

AMBER
Senior Director of Clinical Programs, Saving Innocence



“ I want to be in the medical field because I want to be a healer.
I am healing
I am healing others
I am becoming the woman of my own dreams
I am becoming a phlebotomist ”
Sydnee





SUPPORTING OUR YOUTH THROUGH EDUCATION & EMPOWERMENT

At the outset there was outrage because youth were being harmed in unimaginable ways in Los Angeles County. The County has used that outrage and centered the voices of youth and survivors to build effective processes and supports so that youth have what they need to thrive. The County has provided significant resources and backing to ensure youth have specialized advocates, that they have access to survivor-developed prevention and intervention curricula, and that they have the opportunity to be kids through different empowerment opportunities. They also have developed a curriculum to help parents and caregivers to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to support their children who have been impacted by commercial sexual exploitation.

"It is really significant how much one relationship, or a handful of relationships, can do to change the trajectory of someone's life. It's a powerful thing to have someone that says I'm here to support you, here to advocate for you. And I really believe that when someone feels supported, and feels seen and heard, they have more resilience to give it one more shot."

- Sara, TAY Program Manager & Case Manager, Saving Innocence

Advocacy

Early on, with the help of survivors, County agencies and officials recognized that it would be important for youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation to have the opportunity to build a trusting relationship with an adult outside of the system. Many of these youth have had prior negative experiences with public agencies—whether probation, law enforcement, or child welfare—and as a result, may find it challenging to trust individuals

in these agencies, at least initially. To foster these trusting relationships, the County began partnering with community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide specially trained advocates for CSE-identified youth.

"They are a positive role model and are like a big sister."
- Survivor, on her community-based advocate¹¹

“
Advocates can help survivors learn to trust again. Survivors may have been trained by their traffickers not to trust law enforcement, or social workers, but traffickers are not warning them about advocates. I think it’s helpful for these kids to have that extra person who understands what they’ve been through, who makes sure they have their needs met, and who can provide them with emotional support to help guide and coach them through the healing process.

”
A M B E R

Senior Director of Clinical Programs, Saving Innocence



KIM BIDDLE
Founder and former Chief Executive Officer, Saving Innocence

Kim Biddle founded Saving Innocence in 2010, with a passion to support children who, at that time, were being arrested and not recognized for their victimization. She helped grow Saving Innocence into one of the largest CSE advocacy organizations in the County, providing round the clock support to children identified as CSE.

In 2012, the Superior Court, Probation Department, and District Attorney’s Office contracted with its first CBO, Saving Innocence, to provide a continuum of care for youth who have experienced CSE. Their advocacy on behalf of each youth, and their partnership and collaboration to support each youth, has been essential.



Saving Innocence’s team of specialized advocates (“case managers”) respond alongside law enforcement 24 hours a day to support children and youth who have been commercially sexually exploited. In addition to crisis response, Saving Innocence provides long-term case management for children and youth. Their approach is strengths-based and trauma-informed, and they work closely with youth and families to ensure that the youth’s myriad of needs are met. Some of the case managers and other support staff are survivors, which has proven tremendously beneficial in providing an added layer of support and understanding to youth.

“
This was a fight for human dignity: to protect the invaluable worth of every human being regardless of race, gender, age, beliefs, or background. To stand up for the most vulnerable in our society because their health is our health. Their freedom is our freedom. Not seeing these children, or stigmatizing them for their abuse misses their story and humanity. Preying on the innocence of these children, seeking to destroy it for money, is the greatest violence against humanity I have witnessed.

”
KIM BIDDLE
Founder and former Chief Executive Officer, Saving Innocence

Recognizing the positive impact that advocates have on the lives of youth, the County is committed to providing this crucial support, and as of January 2020, the County has contracted with two CBOs, Saving Innocence and ZOE International, to provide these comprehensive advocacy services to youth who have experienced CSE and are system-involved. These CBOs collectively have capacity to support up to 450 youth who have experienced, or are at risk of, commercial sexual exploitation. In addition, there are several CBOs in the County who provide advocacy services to adults who have experienced exploitation. While these organizations are not under contract with the County, the County works in close collaboration with them. For more information on these CBOs, see their Community Partner Highlight, beginning on page 230 (Saving Innocence) and page 273 (ZOE International).

“Advocates play several roles, but the biggest thing is they’re not cops. I don’t expect these girls to know who I am and what my true intentions are. They just know I’m a cop, they’ve dealt with cops in the past, and cops have done the same thing over and over again—arrest me, throw me in jail, release me, arrest me again. But by partnering with advocates, we’ve been able to show them that we’re doing things differently.”

- Eric Hooker, Sergeant, VICE Unit,
Long Beach Police Department

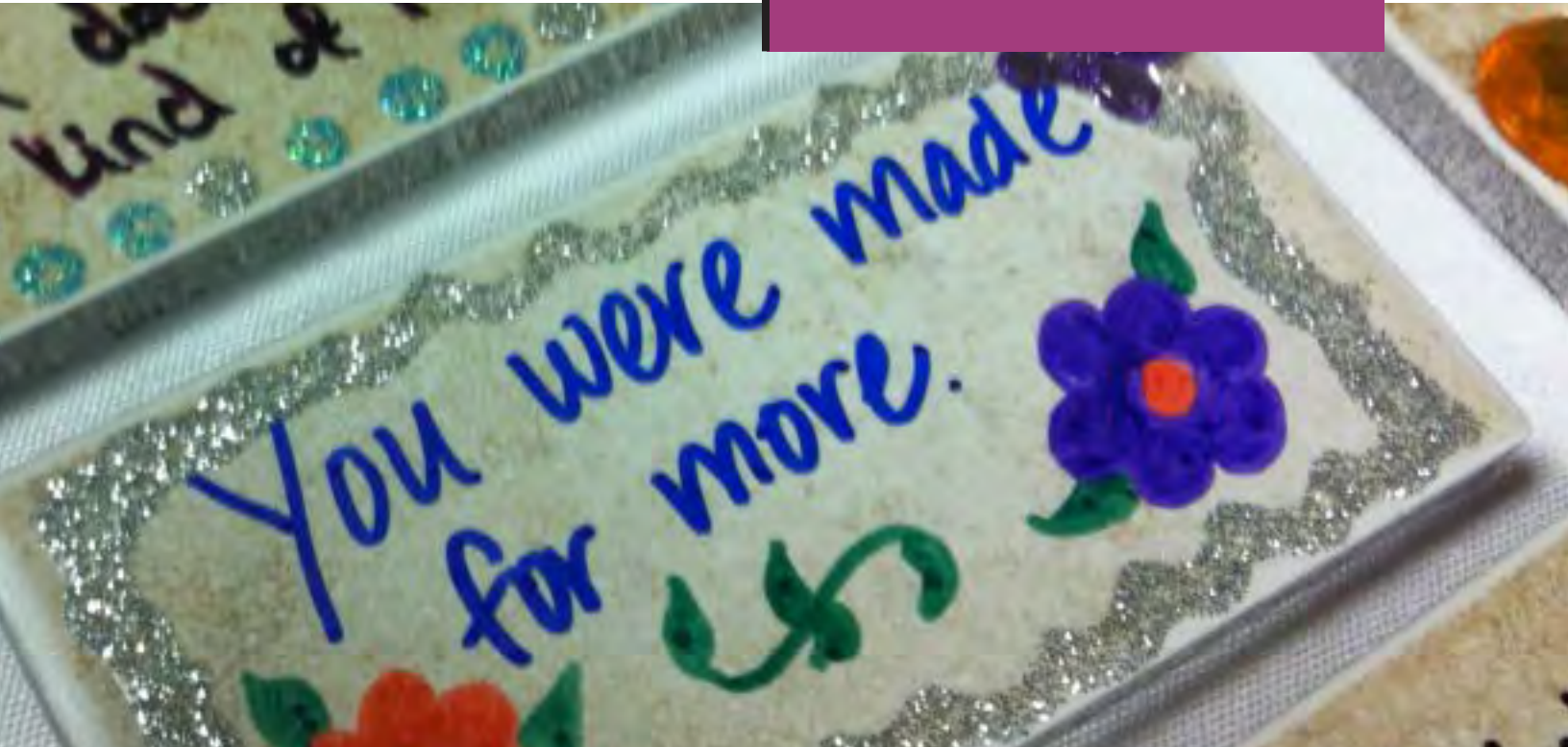
Empowerment Conference

In June 2012, Probation hosted the first annual CSEC Empowerment Conference: Inspiring Hope through Survivor Leadership. The Empowerment Conference is structured as a three-day retreat where youth/TAY who have been commercially sexually exploited come together in a safe space to learn from other survivors, socialize with friends and allies, realize and build on their strengths, spend time in nature, and work through their own trauma with the support of trusted adults and peers. The goal of this event is not only to empower youth who have been commercially sexually exploited, but to show them that they are not alone, that they have a tremendous amount of internal strength, and that they have people who care about them and will walk alongside them on their journey to heal.



“I can honestly say that for the first time in my life I now know what love feels like. When I was little my parents used to tell me they loved me, but they also hurt me...so I was confused by that. When I was with my 'pimp' he used to tell me he loved me, but he also hurt me and it never felt like love. The past two days being around people who care, who give you a hug when you need one, and say they are here to support me, without conditions or wanting something in return—it feels good. It feels what love should feel like. So thank you for that.”

- Survivor, speaking about the 1st annual Empowerment Conference



In the first eight years of the conference, over 250 youth participants have attended along with over 40 adult survivor leaders from across the country. Past facilitators include a number of nationally recognized subject matter experts, including Rachel Lloyd (GEMS, New York, NY); Nola Brantley (Nola Brantley Speaks, Los Angeles, CA; formerly MISSSEY, Oakland, CA); Yasmin Vafa (Rights4Girls, Washington, DC) and Maheen Kaleem (NoVo Foundation; formerly Rights4Girls, Washington, DC); Withelma “T” Ortiz-Macey (2011 Glamour Magazine “Woman of the Year”); Carissa



“For many young women who are either still in the commercial sex industry struggling to get out, or who have gotten out and are now trying to work their different programs or placements, [the Empowerment Conference is] their first exposure to other women who have gotten out and have gone on to thrive in their lives in different ways and who are willing to talk about it in a way that’s empowered and not full of shame—and that’s even sometimes with laughter. Many of them have never had that experience.”

- Nola Brantley, Founder and CEO,
Nola Brantley Speaks



KELSI YEAKEL
Clinical Intake Coordinator, Aviva Family and Children’s Services

Kelsi Yeakel, LCSW, currently works at Aviva Family & Children’s Services, where she is responsible for intake and therapy. Since the beginning, she has been an integral part of making the annual Empowerment Conference a successful event for youth in Los Angeles County.

Champion

Phelps (Attorney/Advocate); Audrey Morrissey (My Life My Choice, Boston, MA); Leah Jonet Albright-Byrd (Activist, Author, and Artist; formerly Bridget’s Dream, Sacramento, CA); Harmony Dust-Grillo (Treasures, Sherman Oaks, CA); Rachel Thomas (Sowers Education Group, Long Beach, CA); Kristina Fitz, Josie Feemster and more. Many organizations have partnered with Probation to support the Empowerment Conference, including DCFS, foster care providers, CLC, Nola Brantley Speaks, Saving Innocence, and NCYL.

The conference includes survivor panel discussions, keynote speeches, survivor-

led breakout sessions, and creative workshops. Throughout the conference, youth ambassadors—youth survivors who have shown leadership and growth in their programming—assist in the facilitation of the workshops and panels, and are given the opportunity to cultivate new leadership skills. While adults—survivors and allies—largely facilitate the first two days of activities, on the final day, the youth run the show. Through creative performances of spoken word, dance, and visual artwork, both the adults and the youths’ peers are offered a glimpse into youths’ talents and passions. The youth decide what

“
It makes me emotional to reminisce on the past 8 years of being a part of the Empowerment Conference. It has truly been an honor to be a part of the conference and to walk beside the young ladies who attend. They are truly the most inspirational, resilient, strong, brave, and beautiful people you will ever meet. I will never take for granted what these young women have taught and shown me. It has been an absolute privilege to have a small part in the conference and something I will carry with me for life.

”
KELSI YEAKEL



“The annual Empowerment Conference is a special place where a community of women come together each year to uplift and empower young girls who need that extra support, love and encouragement. These young girls also meet and connect with survivor leaders who share their stories and guidance. It is also a wonderful and unique opportunity for the girls to engage with professionals in the field who truly want to help them succeed in life.”

JENNY CHEUNG MARINO
Firm Director, Children’s Law Center



“The honesty, raw emotion and talent shown through the youths’ performances left us speechless. Yet perhaps the most meaningful moments were the small, seemingly insignificant ones that we shared with youth. Sitting on a picnic table near the creek, taking a bike ride, dancing around the bonfire and making s’mores. These are the moments that remind us that despite what they have experienced and underneath their oftentimes tough exteriors, they are just kids—our kids. These moments are what inspire us to keep working for a world where others recognize them as such—and for a world where they feel safe every day of the year, not just for three days in the mountains.”

- Allison Newcombe, Attorney & Associate Director,
Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative, National Center for Youth Law,
a reflection from the 5th Annual Empowerment Conference, 2016



EMILY WILLIAMS
Senior Deputy for Human Services and Child Welfare, Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors

Emily Williams, the Senior Deputy for Human Services and Child Welfare for Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, has advocated for this issue to be a priority for the Board of Supervisors. She has been a dedicated supporter and attendee of the Empowerment Conference since 2015.

Champion

“The Empowerment Conference is an emotionally profound experience. Attending the conference has opened my eyes to the long-term emotional costs of this type of abuse, even after years of intervention and support.”

EMILY WILLIAMS

to share and how to express it—some share about their exploitation and personal struggles, while others share their hopes and aspirations for the future. Given the impact of this conference, several jurisdictions across the country have reached out to the County for guidance, expressing a desire to replicate the event.





Hania (Cardenas) Bocklen (Probation), Rachel Lloyd (GEMS), and Michelle Guymon (Probation) at the 2012 Empowerment Conference.

Dear Michelle and Hania,

Just want to thank you for inviting me to participate in the empowerment conference this week. I came away feeling inspired and humbled and definitely empowered! It was such a moving experience and honestly the most respectful experience I've had at any conference as a survivor leader. Thank you for that and for ensuring that survivor leadership really meant just that. More importantly it was clear how incredibly meaningful it was for the girls. It was such an honor meeting them and I've been thinking of them all this week!

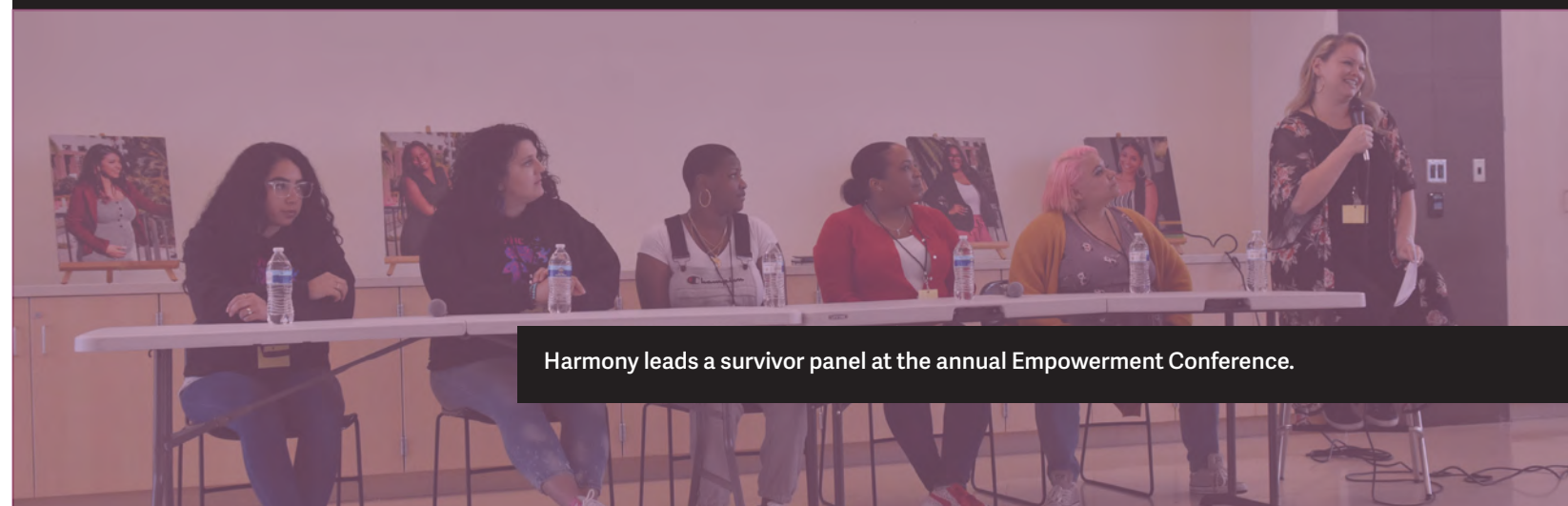
It was also a real pleasure to meet so many folks who are clearly so dedicated and committed to the girls. Y'all have some great people out here and there was a lot of love in the room which the girls obviously felt. I keep thinking about [youth] saying she thought it was going to be every Monday and Tuesday!!! It was both a little heartbreaking and such a testament to how important this conference was for the girls. I'm looking forward in supporting in any way I can this ongoing work and continuing the incredible momentum.

Congratulations on all your hard work and making the vision come to life. I hope you're both recovering from the exhaustion and intensity and feeling very proud!!! It was really special and I'm so glad I was able to be a small part of it. Thank you again!

Warmly,
Rachel

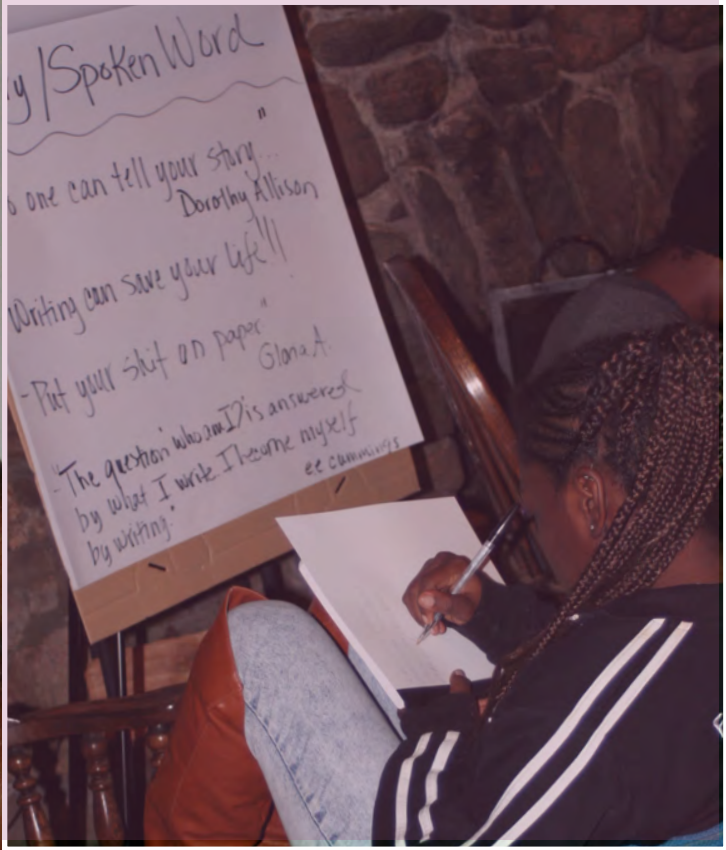
"[The annual Empowerment Conference] is really important to young girls like me. I was a victim of abuse as a child at the age of 13. I was manipulated into the world of child sexual exploitation. I was trafficked to San Francisco, Las Vegas and many other places. But most of my exploitation was here on Figueroa and western, Long Beach Boulevard and all across the County. Finally I was able to escape. For my safety I spent nine months in the state of Iowa building a new life. I will graduate from high school in June and plan to attend [college] in the fall to study cosmetology and business. I hope to open my own business someday. I have attended all three Empowerment Conferences, twice as a youth ambassador. It is a chance for young women like me to understand our past doesn't define our future. Going back to that life is not an option. On behalf of our other youth ambassadors and all the young women who attended this weekend, I want to thank everyone who created and supported the Empowerment Conference. It is an inspiring and motivating event which helps survivors to face forward, set high expectations for ourselves and move on to a path of achieving the dreams that we desire."

- Survivor, to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors on
November 12, 2014



Harmony leads a survivor panel at the annual Empowerment Conference.

Spoken Word Creative Workshop



GINA LORING

Poet, Vocalist, and Activist

Gina Loring has facilitated the spoken word creative workshop at the Empowerment Conference for the past six years. Her creativity and passion inspires youth to express themselves through poetry, singing, and spoken word.

Champion

Dance Creative Workshop



DINEYTRA LEE-PEREZ

Clinical Counselor

Dineytra Lee-Perez has led the dance creative workshops since the very first Empowerment Conference. Her talent and energy encourages youth to challenge themselves to learn new choreography and to enjoy the journey, which culminates in an incredible performance each year.

Champion

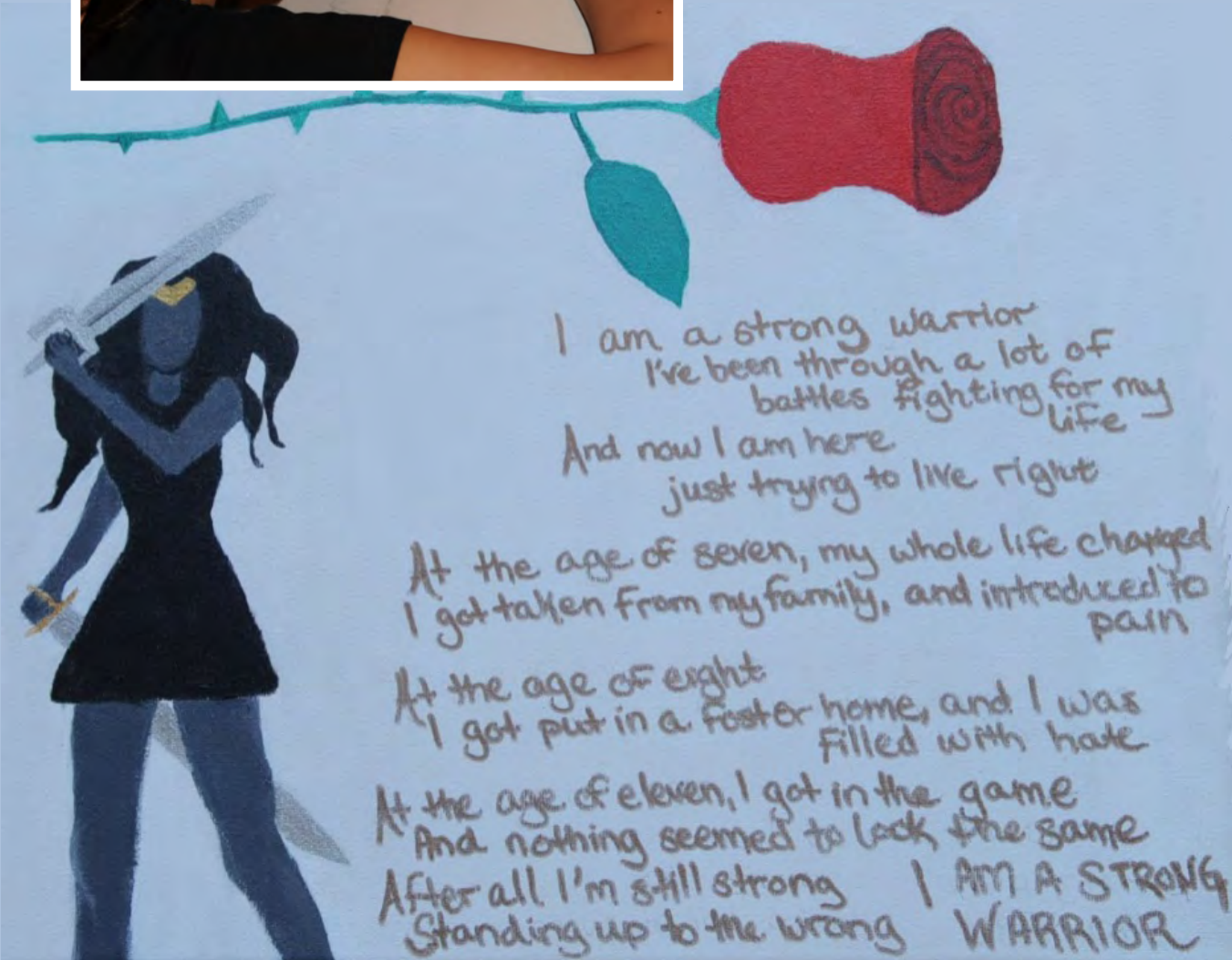


Art Creative Workshop



DANA WYSS
Director of Training, Star View Adolescent Center

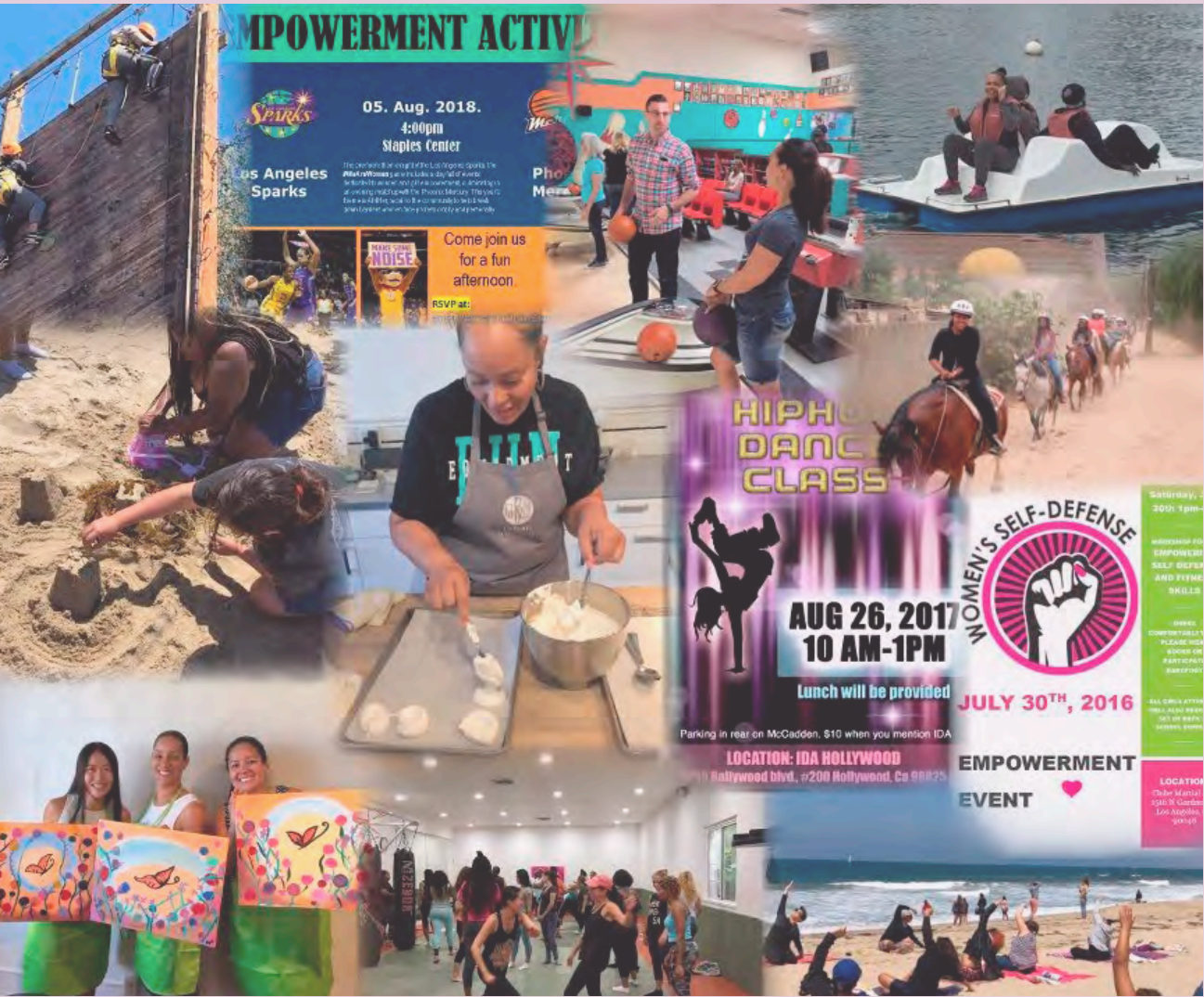
Dana Wyss has led the art creative workshops at the Empowerment Conference for the past six years. Her compassion, enthusiasm, and creativity empowers youth to express themselves through various art forms, including painting, drawing, and collages.



Monthly Empowerment Events

Soon after the Empowerment Conference began, many youth expressed interest in more frequent events and get-togethers, where they could continue to connect and engage with other survivors and adult allies who attended the conference. In response, Probation created monthly empowerment events, which include a variety of activities like ropes courses, painting,

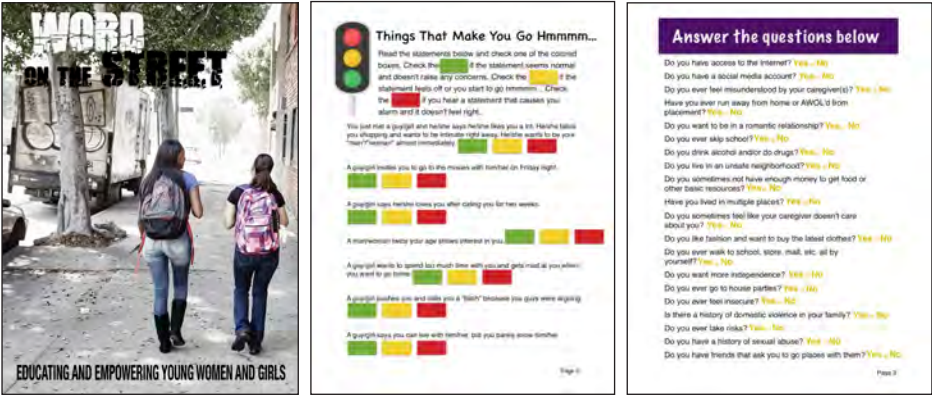
self-defense classes, beach outings, bowling, and more. Now hosted by a rotating group of county agencies and community partners, these monthly events offer the opportunity for survivors to gain new experiences in healthy environments and have created a strong community of survivors and adult allies.



Photos of several monthly empowerment events, including cooking, a hip hop dance class, painting, beach yoga, and more.

Prevention Curriculum (“Word on the Street”)

In 2015, upon examining data from the preceeding three years, staff of Probation's CTU were alarmed by the sheer number of young women who had been arrested for prostitution-related offenses. Feeling as though providing intervention services to every youth under Probation jurisdiction experiencing CSE was only one side of the coin, the CTU decided to also dedicate resources towards prevention efforts, recognizing that large numbers of youth supervised by Probation were at risk of exploitation. The CTU, in collaboration with several partners, spearheaded the development of a comprehensive CSEC prevention curriculum. The curriculum, “Word on the Street: Educating and Empowering Young Women and Girls” (WOTS), was authored by Nicole Klasey, and additional contributors included: Probation staff, Nola Brantley Speaks, DCFS, Saving Innocence, Alliance for Children’s Rights, Crittenton Services for Children and Families, David and Margaret Youth and Family Services, Maryvale, and Jessica Midkiff.



VIEW PREVENTION CURRICULUM

“

The training on the Word on the Street CSEC prevention curriculum came at a critical time for Plymouth County, Massachusetts. We were facing a growing number of referrals for children at risk of being exploited and had very limited options for prevention. Now, thanks to WOTS groups being run throughout the county, we have great psychoeducational options for the children we serve.

The WOTS curriculum is very accessible to a variety of our multidisciplinary team members including clinicians, law enforcement, medical providers and more. I cannot wait to see how this incredibly valuable curriculum benefits the children of our county over the years to come as the Train the Trainer model allows for more and more professionals to be trained to run groups.

”

HILLARY M. KOZLOSKI-SMITH

Forensic Interviewer, Education & Outreach Coordinator,
Plymouth County District Attorney's Office & Children's Advocacy Center

Specifically aimed at girls ages 13 to 18, the purpose of the “Word on the Street” curriculum is to educate, equip, and empower youth, and provide them with tools and opportunities for discussion to help them protect themselves from exploitative situations. The curriculum provides an overview of CSEC, which includes definitions, examples, the CSEC “business model,” and an overview of the objectification and sexualization of women and girls in society. The curriculum also discusses risk factors for involvement in CSEC, strategies to safely

use the Internet and social media, and the differences between a healthy relationship and the relationship with an exploiter. Additionally, the curriculum discusses different types of exploiters and recruiters, their tactics, and modes of recruitment. Each session includes information about safety and community resources the youth can access, should they find themselves in an unsafe situation. The curriculum is often co-facilitated by survivor advocates.

"I learned a lot from the workshop today especially about how music can be a big influence on us. On the way to the workshop we were all listening to the music we always listen to...the beat, singing the lyrics and after the workshop on the way back to the group home we told the staff that maybe we should listen to something different. I'll be paying more attention to what I listen to—I just wished that the music I like didn't talk so negative about us."

- Youth

Wanting to make the curriculum available to as many youth as possible, and mindful that youth in different settings have different capacities regarding the amount of time they're able to invest in such a program, Probation and Nola Brantley Speaks designed four formats by which facilitators may present the curriculum:

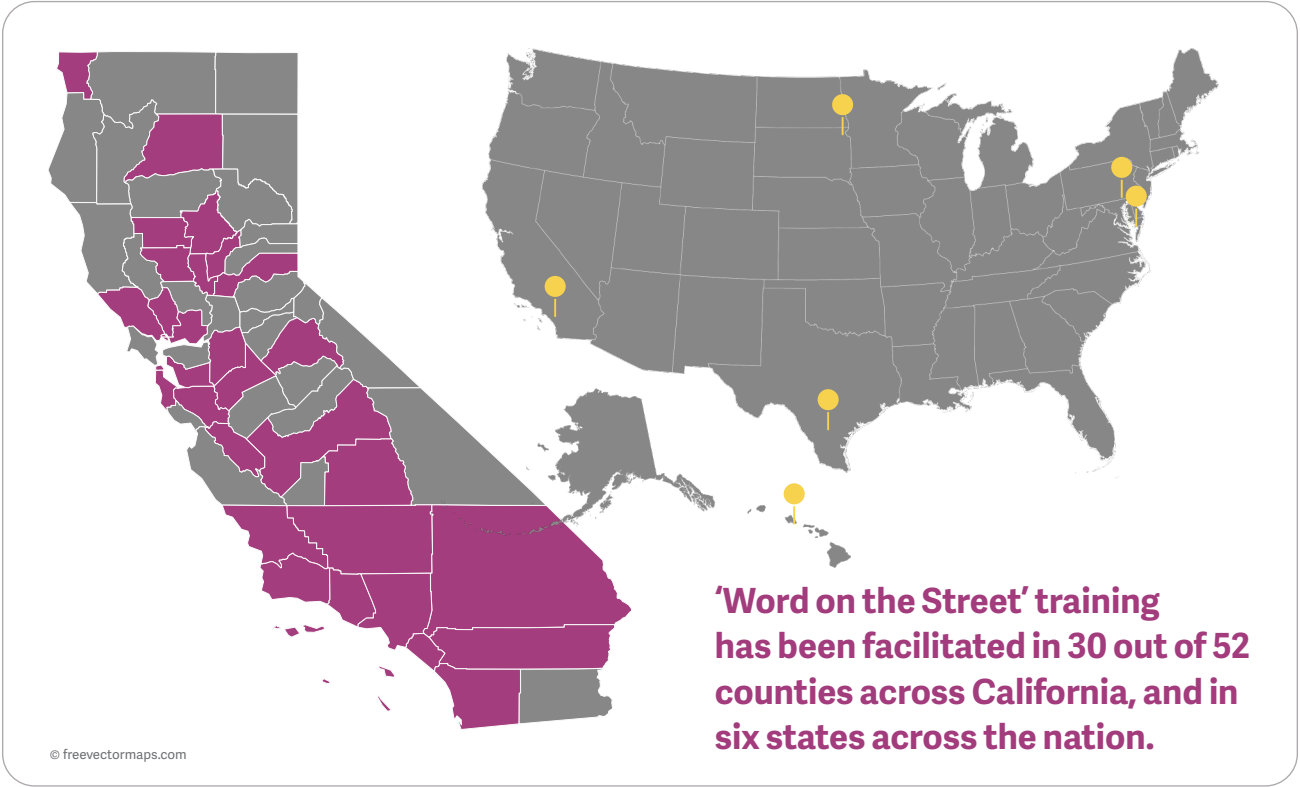
- Six-week group series;
- One-day conference presentation;
- Brief ninety-minute workshop; and
- Set of four interactive, engaging workbooks that a youth can review monthly with a dedicated professional in a one-on-one setting (such as a probation officer or social worker).

The flexible nature of the curriculum and its four formats allows it to reach more youth through community advocates, probation officers, and social workers; in classrooms, places of worship, shelters, juvenile halls, and group homes; and more. To advance these efforts, Probation and Nola Brantley Speaks have

trained over five hundred facilitators across Los Angeles County, the state of California, and the nation who can now independently provide the training. Thousands of youth have now received this prevention curriculum in some form and are armed with the knowledge to spot exploitive behaviors, think critically about their relationships, and get help if they need it. The curriculum is also now available in Spanish.

"I have friends at my school that I think are victims. When I watched the video at the end of the group today it made me sad and I didn't know that Jessica was a survivor of trafficking until I saw the video. I would like her to come to my school and talk to my class because my friends need to know what's really going on."

- Youth



Intervention Curriculum ("Becoming Me")

In addition to developing a prevention curriculum, Probation wanted to focus attention on creating a curriculum to support youth who have already experienced commercial sexual exploitation. As a result, an intervention curriculum, "Becoming Me," was developed by Probation in partnership with survivors and service providers including: Nola Brantley, Nicole Klasey, Amber Davies, Luisa Sease, and Leah Jonet Albright-Byrd.

"Becoming Me" is a trauma-informed intervention curriculum for youth and young adults who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. Designed for individual or group use with the oversight of a trained professional, each volume of this six-volume curriculum provides interactive activities, videos, and psycho-education tools to support participants as they traverse the journey



towards healing and establishing identity. Each section of "Becoming Me" has a strengths-based focus and highlights a specific healing quest that corresponds with the objective of each volume.



Filming "Becoming Me" videos.

Volume One prompts youth to develop self-awareness through the exploration of their unique strengths, needs, and values, while helping them examine vulnerability and the events that preceded their victimization. It lays a foundation that will be built upon in the following sections.

Volume Two prompts self-compassion as participants examine who they have become as a result of their victimization. The objective of this section is to help them understand the influences of culture, the continuum of abuse, the manipulation and tactics traffickers employ, as well as the psychological impact.

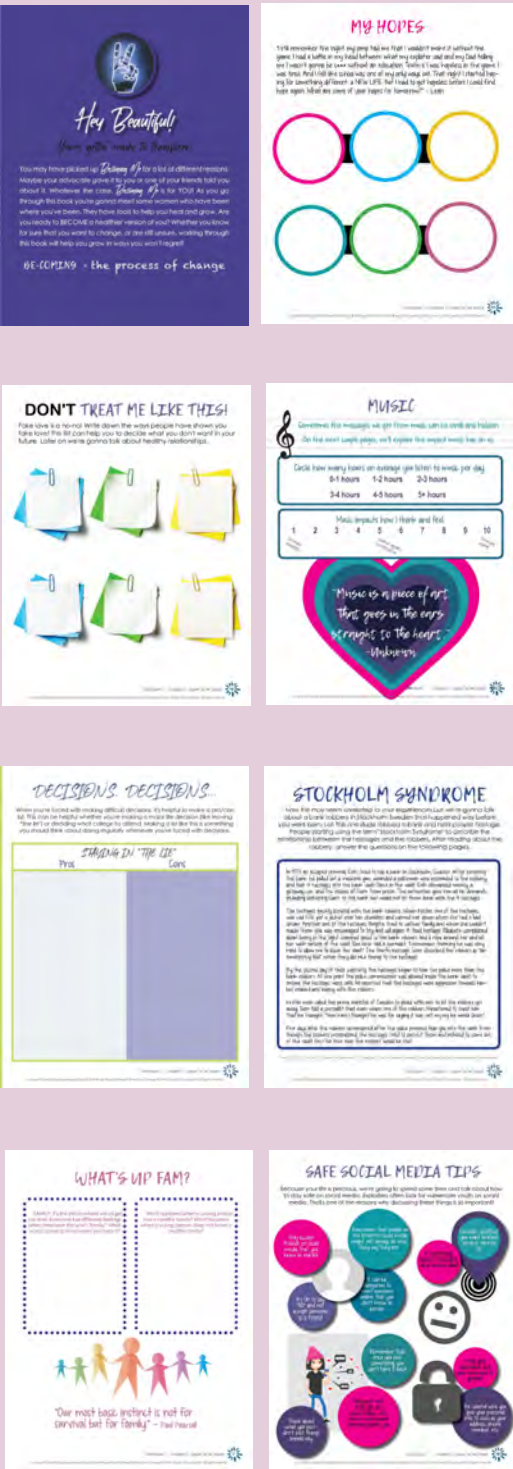
Volume Three inspires participants to examine the process of change, to understand what they will face as they start to change, and to be aware of the obstacles associated with change including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Volume Four seeks to help participants embrace a new beginning by helping them understand the role of trust and boundaries, and how to handle triggers. This section also includes a discussion about healthy relationships and healthy communication.

Volume Five expands on the previous section by engaging youth in a discussion about being loved, coping with trauma, developing new routines, and identifying healthy role models.

Lastly, Volume Six goes beyond healing and explores the role of economic empowerment, discusses finding one's purpose, and fosters hope and expectation for a future without exploitation.

Each section of the curriculum can be used independently and/or selected to correspond with the Stage of Change that most accurately reflects where the youth/young adult currently is in their healing process. Facilitator trainings are available and required before using the curriculum.



“When I think of ‘Becoming Me,’ I think of legacy. I was honored and excited to participate in the development of this curriculum but had no way of knowing that this project would become so dear to my heart. This intervention curriculum for CSEC gradually began to feel like a carefully crafted love letter full of wisdom and hope for girls and young women I may never meet. Those who have contributed to ‘Becoming Me’ have shared their years of experience in serving vulnerable youth and I have added my expertise as someone with lived experience and clinical insight. I believe that ‘Becoming Me’ is one of the many powerful gifts that Los Angeles County has to offer to its community and the youth who benefit from it will have one more practical tool to help them mitigate and conquer the residual effects of their traumas. This curriculum is a testament to the heart of LA County and its commitment to providing dynamic keys that help unlock the door to lasting freedom for those who have been victims of commercial sexual exploitation.”

LEAH JONET ALBRIGHT-BYRD



Champion

LEAH JONET ALBRIGHT-BYRD

Activist, Author, and Artist

Leah Jonet Albright-Byrd is an activist in the fight against human trafficking. In addition to founding Bridget's Dream in 2011, an organization that provided services to child and adult survivors of human trafficking for five years, she has engaged in lobbying and legislative advocacy, including appearing on television and radio shows to educate the public. Currently, Albright-Byrd provides consultation and training to social workers, law enforcement, and other youth services providers across the U.S.



VIEW INTERVENTION CURRICULUM FACT SHEET

Parent Empowerment Program

After experiencing the trauma associated with exploitation, young people are likely to have complex reactions that their parents or caregivers may not understand, such as shutting down, isolation, or “acting out.” Youth may argue with their caregivers or even run away from home—sometimes back to their exploiter, leading to re-victimization.

However, if a parent or caregiver knows what CSE is and how experiencing it can affect a youth’s emotions and behaviors, this can powerfully change how they interact with their child. In late 2017, County champions examined the CSEC training curricula available and found that none were specifically designed for parents and caregivers whose child had experienced CSE. On November 28, 2017, the Board of Supervisors passed a motion which instructed DCFS and Probation, in consultation with other county agencies and CBOs, to research best practices and programs that serve parents of youth who have experienced CSE in order to develop a program in Los Angeles County. Six months later, on June 8, 2018, the County launched the Parent Empowerment Program (PEP).



“Los Angeles County needs to develop specialized and targeted services for the parents of commercially sexually exploited children. In order to facilitate safe reunification, these services must focus on the parents and above all, the unique needs of the child.”

SUPERVISOR HILDA SOLIS
November 28, 2017 Board Motion

Through the PEP, parents and caregivers have the opportunity to meet in a supportive environment for ten weeks to learn about how and why youth are impacted by CSE; why youth might continue to return to their exploiter; who the exploiters and traffickers are; how to communicate with and support a child who has experienced CSE; and how parents and caregivers can take care of themselves and their family as they support the child who has been exploited.

After completing the PEP, parents have reported having increased feelings of support from their community, increased awareness of resources to help their family, a better understanding of how and why a child might be impacted by commercial sexual exploitation, and more confidence in knowing how to help their child. One-hundred percent of the parents who completed the PEP stated that they felt respected and heard throughout the program, and all stated that they would recommend the program to other parents and caregivers.

Q

What did you appreciate most about the program?

A

“Interactions with others that are experiencing the same concerns”

“Sharing information with the other mothers”

“The support given in class”

“The process of sharing; the feeling of stress relief by expressing emotions that everyone understood.”

Q

What are the most important things you learned?

A

“Sex trafficking is not the child’s fault”

“I learned I have a big support system in the legal system and in the group and that my daughter was a victim.”

“The social media risks”

“I learned from the Survivor Advocate who came in to tell her story”

“The Parent Empowerment Program is beneficial because it provides a space where parents can connect with other parents about what they are going through and the challenges they are experiencing—it helps parents to know that they are not alone.”

SYLVIA LACY-MILLER
Parent Advocate, Human Trafficking Advocacy Program, ZOE International

Since 2018, the creators have updated and refined the program’s curriculum, and are developing a one-day CSEC 101 workshop for families as well as an ongoing support group for parents of youth who have experienced CSE. In addition to English, PEP classes and materials are now being offered in Spanish. As of March 2020, nearly 50 parents have completed the 10-week program.

“PEP was created out of the need for parents to understand what happened to their children and for their children to feel understood. PEP provides a safe space and the opportunity for parents to learn about and discuss the dynamics of CSEC, discover ways to support and connect with their children, and share resources that parents may need to help increase their capacity to care for themselves and their families.”

- Adela Estrada



Champion

ADELA ESTRADA

Children’s Services Administrator III, CSEC Program Administrator, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services

Adela Estrada serves as Children’s Services Administrator III for the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, and since 2018, she has served as the CSEC Program Manager. Estrada also chairs the Los Angeles County CSEC Steering Committee. She spearheaded the effort to create the County’s Parent Empowerment Program.



“I want to own my own group home for CSEC girls. I love working with kids and with my experience living in many, I have an abundance of ideas that will motivate my youth to stay strong, become independent and determined to accomplish their dreams.

*I am strong and independent
I am beautiful and determined to succeed
I am becoming an entrepreneur
I am becoming a phenomenal woman*

”
Brittianna

How to provide safe, stable housing options, including supporting youth and families in their homes, is a question the County has grappled with since the beginning of its journey. The section below describes the significant work it has undertaken to answer that question. The County started by bringing together providers to understand the unique challenges facing youth impacted by exploitation and come up with solutions, and has more recently conducted groundbreaking research to explore the impact different housing types and specialized services have on youth who have experienced CSE. It has further delved into the findings from the research to come up with a plan for changing practices that is responsive to the findings, and is now exploring how to expand housing for Transition Age Youth.



EXPLORING THE HOUSING QUESTION

“With the County’s support, we conducted a first-of-its-kind study to better understand what housing options provide more stability for youth who have experienced exploitation. Not only does this study have the potential to impact youth in Los Angeles County in terms of identifying safe and stable housing and expanding services, the robust data and the mixed method approach, which truly elevated the youth voice, means the work also has implications for better serving youth across the nation who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation.”

*- Dr. Carly B. Dierkhising, PhD, Assistant Professor
School of Criminal Justice and Criminalistics, California State University, Los Angeles*

Background: the Complexities of Housing

The move away from criminalizing and detaining children and youth who have experienced CSE, and, instead, serving them using a multidisciplinary approach highlighted the need for an array of appropriate housing options and services to address the varied, complex, and multifaceted needs of all children and youth who have experienced exploitation. The availability of safe and stable housing is of critical importance for both preventing the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth, and supporting youth to live full lives outside of exploitation.

There is no consensus among experts, practitioners, or survivors on a single solution that can address the complex and unique housing needs of youth who have experienced CSE. As a result, it has been a challenge for Los Angeles County to develop a comprehensive housing strategy for those impacted by CSE. Initially, some had advised the County to focus on developing an array of services and housing options to correspond with the various stages of change that youth who have experienced CSE face. Those advisors felt that survivors who are further removed from their exploitation should remain safely within their families and communities and receive local, community-based CSEC specific support services. On the other hand, they believed that youth who are still experiencing exploitation would benefit from remote, less-populated placements far away from their home environment. There, it was reasoned, youth would be less vulnerable to the manipulative practices and lure of their exploiters, less likely to contact their exploiter or leave care without permission, and would be more able to focus on their own healing. However, when Probation reported back on these efforts, they had found that although youth did leave care less when they were living

in an out-of-state group home, they tended to leave care once they returned to Los Angeles County. A hypothesis emerged that out-of-state group homes may not be preparing youth with the necessary independent living skills to re-enter their communities of origin—including the necessary community connections, support, and coping skills to live independently once returned to their communities. No one in the country has a clear sense of what works, but Los Angeles County has taken steps to learn more about what challenges youth face in out of home care and what solutions have promise.

Provider Roundtable

Because many youth who have experienced CSE have histories of child welfare and probation involvement, and many will receive services and be placed in out of home care, Los Angeles County has devoted significant resources to educating and supporting out of home care providers, like congregate care settings and foster families. Resources and training for providers has been focused on identification, engagement strategies, prevention tools and, for those working with youth who have experienced exploitation, how to minimize the risk of revictimization. In 2012, the County began convening a CSEC Foster Care Provider Roundtable workgroup (Provider Roundtable), designed to foster communication and collaboration among foster care providers, Community Care Licensing (CCL), and County representatives from Probation and DCFS. The goal of the Provider Roundtable is to build capacity for foster care providers to better serve youth who have experienced CSE, including improving acceptance and retention rates, as well as general engagement and support of youth in their programs.

The Provider Roundtable participants have addressed a range of topics relevant to the provision of housing and services to youth who have experienced or are experiencing CSE in the County, including: building countywide capacity to provide CSEC-informed services and housing options; changing perceptions, biases, and language; incorporating trauma-informed practices into service provision; promoting and ensuring safety for youth while in residential placements; providing the CSEC prevention curriculum to youth; developing practices to increase stability for youth placed in out of home care; preventing recruitment among youth; supporting youth who testify as witnesses in criminal proceedings against their traffickers; understanding changes to legislation and state and county policies related to CSEC/Y; promoting safe and healthy social media use; and discussing challenges related to cell phone policies.

In addition, the Provider Roundtable has served as a forum for participants to share information concerning safety planning for

youth, support for staff, and professional development that providers need to effectively serve youth who have experienced CSE, such as: addressing vicarious trauma and boundary setting among staff; protecting against staff burnout and turnover; identifying training needs at all organizational levels; protecting provider agencies and their staff from high-risk situations with exploiters; and CCL requirements and their impact on agencies' willingness and ability to accept youth who have experienced CSE into their programs.

Since establishing the Provider Roundtable, the group of participating providers has grown from five in 2012 to over forty providers in 2020. Moving forward, the Provider Roundtable will continue to convene quarterly. As the County continues to develop its capacity to provide services and out-of-home care to youth who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing CSE, the Provider Roundtable will continue to be an important space for support, collective problem solving, and collaboration.



Ed Fithyan (DCFS), Michelle Guymon (Probation), Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas (Second District), Carly B. Dierkhising (CalState LA), and Kate Walker Brown (National Center for Youth Law) at a presentation of the housing report to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

Research on the Impact of Specialized Services and Out of Home Care

It became clear that more research was needed to better understand which types of housing options and services are the most effective, and that research needed to be grounded in youths’ experience and perceptions of those homes and services. On May 12, 2015, the Board of Supervisors directed DCFS, Probation, DHS, DMH, DPSS, the Public Defender and the Alternate Public Defender to report back on the feasibility of developing housing options for children and youth who have experienced exploitation. In an October 16, 2015 Board Letter, the Chief Executive Officer recommended dedicating funds to evaluate the availability and efficacy of programs for children and youth who have experienced CSE. In 2016, in response to the Board’s directive, Probation conducted an initial review of housing options, which included focus groups with 40 youth being served through Probation regarding their out of home care preferences, including size and location of the homes. The findings of these focus groups showed that a majority of youth preferred smaller settings, such as six-bed group homes or foster homes that are local. The majority of youth interviewed also preferred an integrated setting, not a home exclusively for youth impacted by CSE.

“
We were so proud to partner in this research to help build the knowledge base about what works for kids who have experienced CSE. As we’re getting better about identifying CSE, there’s a desire to be able to provide the best services, supports, and housing options to the youth we identify. Our research showed that the County’s specialized services are working—youth feel more supported and cared for when they have coordinated teams of trusted, well-trained adults around them. It also highlighted areas of opportunity where the County can continue to innovate. We’re excited to keep working with LA to develop an array of housing options and services that meet the diverse needs of youth who have experienced CSE.
”

MAE ACKERMAN-BRIMBERG
Attorney, Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative,
National Center for Youth Law

The information gathered through the focus groups represented a starting point for evaluating housing options for children and youth who have experienced CSE in Los Angeles County. In July 2016, the Board of Supervisors approved a related motion directing further research to better understand the impact of different housing options on outcomes for children and youth, including housing stability. Additionally, researchers examined whether access to specialized services and supports—including assignment to the specialized CSEC units through Probation and DCFS, referral to a specialized court, and connection to a community-based advocate—were supportive for youth.

Two years later, the County, in collaboration with California State University, Los Angeles (CalState LA) and the National Center for Youth Law, released a groundbreaking report detailing the results of a first-of-its-kind study exploring housing instability, housing preferences, and perceptions of services among young people who have experienced CSE in Los Angeles County. The study examined administrative data from Probation and DCFS, along with insights from youth in their own words through surveys and interviews. The findings of the study pointed to eight important recommendations.



Champion

MAE ACKERMAN-BRIMBERG
Attorney, Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative, National Center for Youth Law

Mae Ackerman-Brimberg brings her multidisciplinary background in law and social work, and experience with child welfare and juvenile justice reform, to facilitate thoughtful cross-system collaborations across the County and the state. Ackerman-Brimberg was one of the primary authors of the Housing Report and also helped in the development and implementation of the Detention Protocol.



VIEW HOUSING REPORT

VIEW RESEARCH TO ACTION BRIEF

Summary of Recommendations from Research Report

1 Recognize and Address the Impact of Trauma

As the findings of this study indicate, many girls and young women who have experienced CSE have experienced significant trauma, including childhood physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, and traumatic loss, both prior to and following their exploitation. Trauma-informed practices should be employed throughout all out of home care programs and services for children and youth who have experienced CSE. Agencies must remember that being “trauma-informed” does not mean simply understanding that youth have experienced trauma. Agencies must have specific practices and policies in place that promote and support the use of evidence-based, trauma-specific tools such as, but not limited to, screening, assessment, and treatment.

2 Promote Consistent, Healthy Relationships: Both Through an Expansion of Services and Connection to Other Caring Adults and Peers

The children and youth in these studies routinely reported that their close, consistent relationship with at least one caring adult was the primary factor that helped them to move from exploitation to safety and stability. The County and provider agencies should adopt policies that promote healthy and consistent relationships with service providers while also facilitating connections to family and other supportive adults or peers for youth in out of home care. This also includes ensuring additional avenues for prosocial activities and relationship-building.

3 Center and Promote the Child and Youth’s Perspective

The young people in these studies routinely reported feeling a lack of agency and control over their lives, and the benefit of being included and feeling heard in decisions that affect them. Facilitating inclusion of youth voice, choice, and meaningful participation in multi-disciplinary team meetings, court proceedings, and other decision-making points is necessary to support youth. The County should also establish or build upon existing youth advisory boards and other youth-led entities to gather regular feedback from youth on both individual and system level issues.

4 Require Comprehensive Training and Staff Supports

A main finding of our research is that children and youth respond more positively and are more engaged with individuals who are genuine, caring, and non-judgmental, and who are trained on CSE so that they understand the common issues facing children and youth who have experienced CSE. At the same time, youth stressed the importance of being recognized and supported as whole people beyond their experiences with exploitation. Staff training must be coupled with regular, comprehensive coaching and supervision, as well as self-care opportunities to promote sustainability and continuity among staff.

5 Establish Multidisciplinary Collaboration

These studies highlighted how children and youth who have experienced CSE interact with multiple systems—including child welfare, juvenile justice, physical and mental health, and education—often both before and after their exploitation. Effectively addressing youth’s holistic needs and supporting them to achieve their goals requires collaboration among these systems, community partners, caregivers and families, and, most importantly, youth themselves.

6 Build Capacity in the Placement Types That Provide More Stability for Youth

While the research identified several trends with respect to the types of housing options that appear to provide more stability as well as youth’s preferences, capacity must be built across placement types that can address the individual needs, goals, and preferences of youth. The emphasis should be on reducing reliance on large group homes, increasing home-like options, and providing a range of services and activities to meet youth’s needs.

7 Address Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality and Provide Culturally Appropriate Services

These studies highlight the stark reality of severe racial disproportionality of African American youth in the population of young people who have experienced CSE and are involved in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems. It also highlights the under identification of Latinx youth in these systems with histories of CSE. Because of the complex interaction of exploitation and other systemic racial and ethnic disparities, we recommend that agencies examine existing County strategies for addressing racial disparities and providing culturally appropriate services, their effectiveness, and potential opportunities for expansion to address CSE specifically.

8 Build a Robust Data Collection and Evaluation System

There are no standardized outcome or process measures used systematically by agencies that are necessary for a robust evaluation which led to several limitations in the current research. Integrated data systems, standardized measurement tools, and improved tracking of youth’s experiences, and health and resilience outcomes are needed to better understand and serve system-involved youth who have experienced CSE.

Foster Care Provider Think Tank

In August 2019, DCFS and Probation hosted a two-day intensive Foster Care Provider Think Tank to capture innovative ideas, solutions, and best practices for working with youth impacted by commercial sexual exploitation. Participants included survivor advocates and former foster youth, as well as representatives from DCFS, Probation, Short Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs), Community Care Licensing (CCL), DMH, the National Center for Youth Law (NCYL), and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). Throughout the two days, participants discussed a variety of topics including: initial engagement, efforts to prevent leaving care without permission, recruitment, cell phones and social media, engaging youth

in treatment, and staff support and training. While participants discussed their challenges and best practices regarding these topics, they also brainstormed new ideas and strategies for better supporting youth who have experienced exploitation. Key takeaways and ideas from the Think Tank were integrated into the Research to Action Plan recommendations, submitted to the County in Summer 2020.

Research to Action Summit

The recommendations of the research report detailed above served as the basis for an interdisciplinary gathering, the Research to Action Summit, held in November 2019 at Cal State LA, co-hosted by Cal State LA, the National Center for Youth Law, Probation, DCFS, and the Board of Supervisors. The Summit brought together a broad range of experts from across the state and country. The goal of the Summit was to develop an Action Plan for Los Angeles County to improve, create, and prioritize safe and stable housing for children and youth impacted by CSE. The Summit was structured around eight breakout sessions, each focused on one of the recommendations from the Housing Report and moderated by an individual with knowledge in that area. In the breakout sessions the participants, which included service providers, attorneys, adult survivors, policy makers, clinicians, and system-involved youth with histories of CSE, worked together to generate practical ideas and strategies for putting the recommendations into action. These collaborative discussions informed the Research to Action Plan, which outlines specific policy and practice solutions for the County.

Expanding Housing Options for Transition Age Youth

The need to support and provide stable housing for youth who have experienced CSE does not end when the youth turns 18. It is crucial to continue to support these young people as they navigate the transition to independent living. Without adequate supportive housing options for transition age youth (TAY), these youth are vulnerable to ongoing exploitation, both at the hands of a trafficker and out of necessity to meet their basic needs. Recognizing this particular vulnerability, on November 20, 2018, the Board of Supervisors instructed the Director of DCFS, the Chief Probation Officer, and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA) to research housing availability for TAY in the County, and to develop recommendations to expand housing options for TAY. On July 9, 2019, the Board approved a motion by Supervisors Hilda Solis and Janice Hahn to allocate additional funding to create and support existing housing and Intensive Services Foster Care placements for youth identified as having experienced CSE or being at risk of experiencing CSE.



[VIEW BOARD MOTION 7/9/19](#)

A group of women are participating in a tug-of-war competition on a grassy field. They are all pulling on a thick rope with effort and determination. The women are dressed in casual athletic wear, including t-shirts, hoodies, and jeans. The background shows a line of trees and some residential buildings under a clear sky. The text "LESSONS LEARNED & NEXT STEPS" is overlaid on the right side of the image, flanked by two horizontal white lines.

LESSONS LEARNED & NEXT STEPS

Lessons Learned

Since Los Angeles County started this work, there has been a continuous need to respond to new issues as they arose, adapt policies, and improve practices to address them. Through nearly a decade of experience, the County has learned many lessons that may be useful for other jurisdictions engaging in this work.

Center Survivor Voice

Perhaps the most crucial lesson is the value and importance of centering and amplifying survivors in this work. **There is simply no substitute for lived experience**—survivors are the experts and have unparalleled insights into how communities can best respond to this issue and support youth. As such, the state, counties, organizations, and individuals should maximize their efforts to support and center

survivors’ voices when doing this work. One-off speaking engagements and focus groups are not enough. True commitment to centering survivor voice means creating leadership opportunities and permanent positions within agencies and organizations. This also means ensuring that survivors are not put in positions where they are expected to relive their own experiences and trauma.

Survivor leadership is extremely important when working with survivors of commercial sexual exploitation because we have that firsthand view into what the child has gone through. Even if our experiences are not the same, and even if our experiences have affected us differently, letting a child know that we have been through something similar allows the child to open up a lot quicker and feel more comfortable.

JESSICA
Survivor Advocate, Saving Innocence

Be prepared to listen and realize that you don’t have the answers. No matter what your experience and background is, the real experts in how to turn this around are the kids that are involved.

SHARONDA BRADFORD
Deputy Public Defender III, Deputy in Charge of the Compton Branch
(former Deputy Public Defender in STAR Court)

Survivor advocates can empower these youth—youth can look up to them and think, ‘If she got out, then I can get out too.’

AMBER
Senior Director of Clinical Programs,
Saving Innocence (former Deputy Public Defender in STAR Court)

Partnerships and Collaboration are Key

No individual, no unit, no agency, can do this work alone. Collaboration among diverse partners—partners who may not traditionally work together—has been necessary to support the multifaceted needs and strengths of youth who have experienced CSE. Every agency and organization, and every individual within each, can contribute something unique to these efforts. And it takes everyone to provide the best care possible to these youth. Thanks to champions across the County who have stepped up and come together, more youth have been identified and better supported. Youth identified as experiencing CSE in Los Angeles County now have a team of agency and community providers by their sides supporting them, recognizing at different times, kids will want and need different things. Los Angeles County firmly believes this team approach has led to better stabilization for youth.

“Don’t reinvent the wheel—look to a system that already has something in place that’s working, like Los Angeles County. What Los Angeles County learned is that it is crucial to build an interdisciplinary team of partners, including survivors, where everybody is an equal partner at the table.”

- Loretta Worthington, Medical Hubs Clinic Program Manager, Los Angeles County Department of Health Services

Start with Training— and Train Everyone

When addressing CSE, start with training—and train the masses. Efforts in Los Angeles County have been successful, in large part, by beginning with training, and then developing policies and practices. Training spreads awareness, increases understanding of the issue, and empowers agencies and individuals across the County to take action in whatever capacity they can—whether law enforcement, medical providers, teachers, or hotel staff. Armed with knowledge, these individuals can then inform the development of policy by providing input as to what they are seeing in their day-to-day work. Broad training has also allowed for a fundamental shift in how these children are viewed—as victims of abuse rather than as perpetrators of a crime.

Focus on Building Strong Relationships with Youth

When it comes to supporting youth, building trusting relationships is foundational. Youth have shared that having someone they can count on, someone who will listen and be empathetic, makes a tremendous difference in their ability to heal and thrive. Countless youth and adult survivors vividly recall the kindness or compassion of one individual as the reason they were able to get out of “the life.” To provide an alternative to the unhealthy relationship that a youth has with an exploiter, it is important for individuals working with youth who have experienced CSE to foster healthy, trusting, consistent, non-judgmental relationships with youth. There is an opportunity for all individuals to make a difference in the lives of youth who have experienced CSE simply by being there.

“It takes a community. It doesn’t just take one individual, or one individual organization or agency, to help someone in the recovery phase. Like they say, it takes a village.”

TIKA
Crisis Response Case Manager & Survivor Advocate, Journey Out

“By collaborating with professionals in other agencies, we can better understand their approaches to solving problems. And by doing this, we can learn how to help, rather than hinder, those efforts. Ultimately, this will allow us all to be successful in serving youth to the best of our ability.”

DR. JANET ARNOLD-CLARK
Senior Physician,
Los Angeles County Department of Health Services





“

I try to find out who the person is—not just what their issues are. Being more personal is a game changer.

”

TIKA

Crisis Response Case Manager & Survivor Advocate, Journey Out

Be Patient

This work takes time—one must exercise patience in working directly with youth and in approaching major policy changes and mindset shifts. Healing is a continuous journey that takes time. Individuals across the County have learned to understand their role as “planting seeds” by supporting youth in any number of ways, such as with a consistent, supportive relationship.

In its work to better support youth and families impacted by commercial sexual exploitation, the County has persisted through the years, recognizing that these enormous shifts require many partners at the table to coalesce around a shared approach. This too requires relationship building, trust forging, and thus significant time.

“Creating systemic change on complex issues requires partners from across the County to work together. Inevitably this means confronting diverse interests and differing opinions. Learning to overcome our differences and trust one another takes time. But investing this time is crucial, as building strong relationships will ultimately lead us to identify effective paths to brighter futures for children who have been exploited.”

*- Leslie Heimov
Executive Director,
Children’s Law Center of California*

“

This population just takes longer to heal because they’ve been through so much.

”

GINA GIACONE

Deputy Probation Officer, Child Trafficking Unit, Los Angeles County Probation Department

Address Vicarious Trauma and Encourage Self-Care

Over the years, the County has learned that, because youth who have experienced CSE have experienced tremendous trauma and staff have daily interactions with these youth, it is important to be mindful of vicarious trauma and its impact on the individuals doing this work every day. The County has increased its efforts to address staff’s vicarious trauma and prioritize self-care, by offering training on vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue and ensuring that supervisors regularly check in

with staff on their cases and their own well-being. Focusing attention on and addressing vicarious trauma helps ensure staff can provide the best care possible to youth and engage with this work long-term, without having negative consequences on their health and personal well-being. And ultimately, by supporting staff, attrition rates decrease, which allows youth to maintain relationships.

“ We need to take a real hard look at trauma—both from these young girls’ perspectives and from police officers’ perspectives. It’s important to understand our own trauma in order to recognize how we might be coming across to these young girls. If you can have a better understanding of all of that, you’re less likely to mistakenly interpret a survivor’s words or actions as anything more than just defending themselves and you can be a much more successful advocate. ”

CASEY GRACE
Investigator, Los Angeles Police Department



Next Steps

While Los Angeles County has made tremendous progress over the past ten years to better identify and serve youth who have experienced CSE, there is much more work to be done. The County looks forward to its next steps in addressing this issue.

Programming for Transition Age Youth and Adult Survivors

Once a youth turns 18, their need for comprehensive supports and services does not end. The County hopes to expand programming for TAY (ages 18-24) to ensure these young adults have the support they need to continue their healing process and successfully transition into adulthood and independence. To do so, the County plans to dedicate more attention to helping youth build life skills and self-confidence, identifying and securing stable housing, and supporting youth with meaningful educational support and workforce development. The County hopes to engage and promote youth’s personal interests and to help youth with case planning to achieve their goals, both big and small. The County also plans to prioritize helping youth build and maintain connections within their community, with the goal of promoting a larger support network for each youth outside of the system.

Increasing Supports and Services for Under-Identified Populations

For ten years, the specialized CSEC services developed by the County have largely focused on supporting girls and young women, yet the County recognizes that boys are being exploited, too. Additionally, the County recognizes that youth who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning (LGBTQ) youth as well as Native American youth face unique vulnerabilities and are disproportionality affected by CSE. The County is taking steps to learn more about these populations and what unique needs they may have. Once the County deepens its understanding, appropriate services to support these youth can be developed and implemented. This includes efforts aimed at both prevention and intervention.

“We’ve learned that problems don’t end when a survivor turns 18—they just turn into different problems. We need to adjust our laws, policies, and programs to provide holistic services to survivors after they turn 18, ensuring they have access to the help they need for as long as they need it.”

- Susie Baldwin MD, MPH, Medical Director, Office of Women’s Health, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Focusing Attention on Labor Trafficking

In addition, while the County has largely focused on the issue of commercial sexual exploitation, it recognizes that children and youth are also impacted by labor trafficking. The County is taking steps to better understand the scope of the issue, as well as strategies to enhance the identification of labor trafficking and responses to it. In late 2020, the County began to host trainings on labor trafficking, and is working to incorporate labor trafficking into its protocols and agency mandated reporting policies.

Supporting Boys and Young Men With Programming Focused on Prevention

The County is also taking steps to support boys and young men. In early 2020, the County partnered with I AM Training and Consultation LLC to train facilitators to work with boys

and young men on a prevention curriculum. The curriculum is designed to create an environment for boys and young men to explore many topics, including peer group inclusion, violent masculinity, media influence, as well as sexual exploitation and trafficking, and to address the vulnerabilities that boys and young men face which may put them at greater risk for becoming involved in the criminal justice system or for perpetuating violence against others. The County recognizes that many of the boys and men who become exploiters have backgrounds very similar to the youth who are exploited—riddled by community violence, abuse and/or neglect, poverty, and diminished opportunities. By supporting boys and young men and ensuring they address their own traumas, the County hopes to reduce the number of youth who fall victim to exploitation.

Continued Training

While the County has already facilitated in-person CSEC training to over 26,000 County employees and community partners and online training to more than 70,000 individuals, it acknowledges that, due to the size of Los Angeles County, more training to County employees and partners must be offered. The County will continue to encourage more training on the issue, in hopes to inspire and encourage individuals in all agencies, and all capacities, to step up and ensure our children and youth receive the support they need. The County will also increase training provided to the broader community, with the goal of expanding basic understanding around the issue. Whether or not an individual works directly with youth, it is important for everyone in the County to be informed on what CSE is and how it impacts individuals, families, and the community. By fostering a more informed community, Los Angeles County

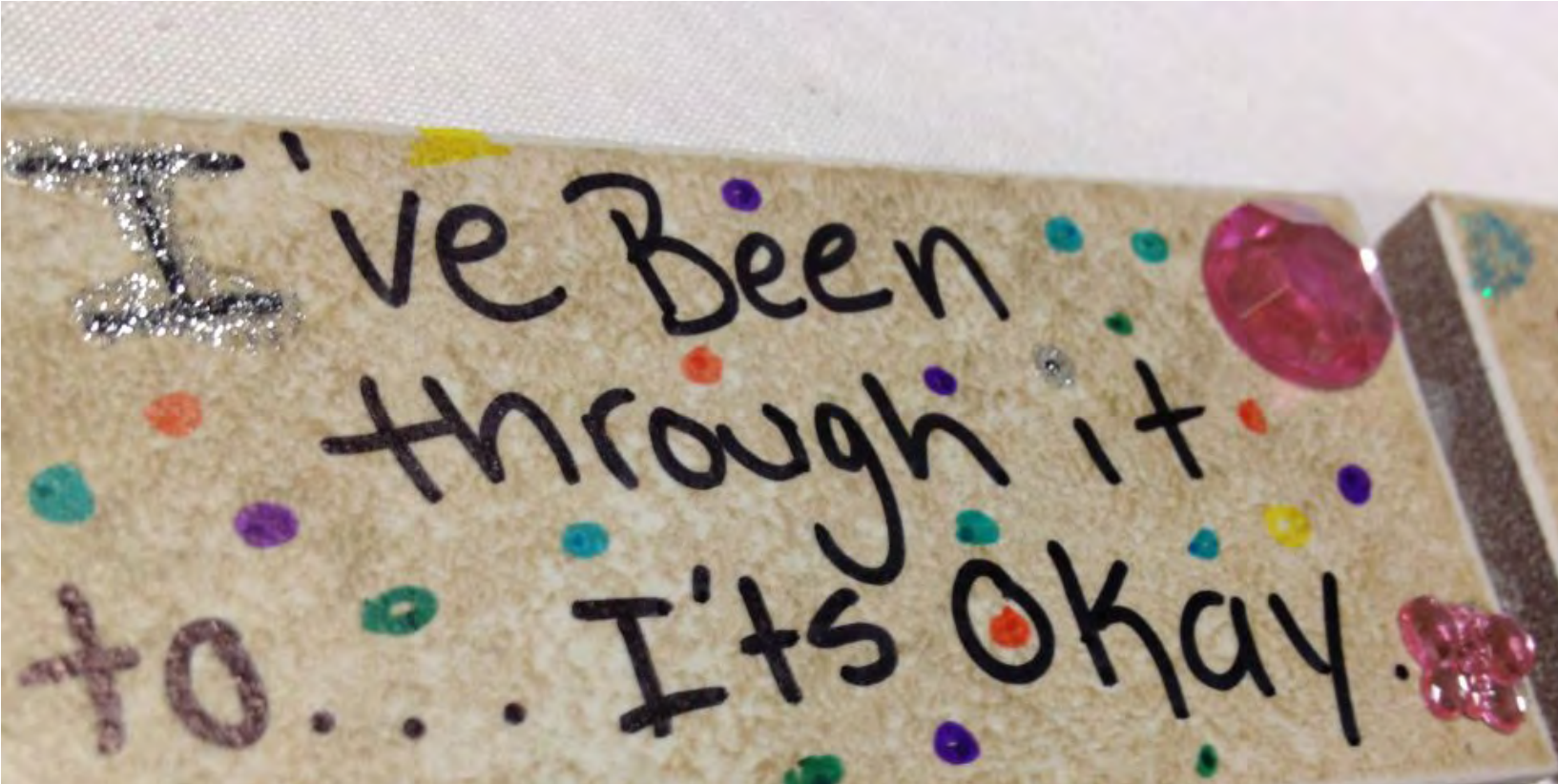
hopes to inspire individuals across the County to galvanize around this issue and push the County's efforts forward to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth.

Collaborating With Other Communities

As Los Angeles County continues to build its capacity to identify and serve children and youth affected by CSE, it is eager to continue sharing what it learns while also collaborating with other states and counties. The leveraging of knowledge, information, and practices will ensure that youth throughout the country have access to effective supports and services.

“
There are a lot of broken boys out there who just missed being fathered. Often what these boys need is to have a voice, to feel loved and supported, and to not feel judged or ashamed. Providing these missing pieces can help them to open up and cope with what they’ve experienced, lessening the risk that they will perpetuate violence against others.
”

JASON PLUNKETT
Western USA Regional Director, ZOE International



COUNTY AGENCIES + COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Los Angeles County learned early on that this work requires all hands on deck, and that no one agency or organization on its own could possibly meet the multi-faceted needs of youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. Collaboration from a number of county agencies and community partners along with the youth, their families and caregivers is crucial to successfully ensuring youth have what they need to achieve their goals. Recognizing the importance of consistency and a need to develop and improve internal policies and practices to reflect this collaborative and youth-centered approach, the county agencies and community partners highlighted below came together to coordinate efforts across the County and embarked on internal initiatives to better support those who have experienced CSE. Here, these agencies and community partners describe the tremendous efforts they have undertaken to support youth who have experienced CSE. Thank you to each county agency and community partner for their ongoing commitment to this work.

COUNTY AGENCIES

<i>Probation Department.....</i>	<i>176</i>
<i>Department of Children and Family Services..</i>	<i>187</i>
<i>Sheriff's Department</i>	<i>196</i>
<i>Department of Health Services, Medical Hub Clinics.....</i>	<i>205</i>
<i>Department of Mental Health</i>	<i>210</i>
<i>Department of Public Health.....</i>	<i>214</i>
<i>District Attorney's Office</i>	<i>218</i>
<i>Department of Health Services, Juvenile Court Health Services</i>	<i>221</i>
<i>Public Defender's Office.....</i>	<i>224</i>

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

<i>Nola Brantley Speaks</i>	<i>226</i>
<i>Saving Innocence.....</i>	<i>230</i>
<i>National Center for Youth Law</i>	<i>237</i>
<i>Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking... </i>	<i>242</i>
<i>Children's Law Center of California</i>	<i>245</i>
<i>Forgotten Children</i>	<i>250</i>
<i>Gems Uncovered</i>	<i>254</i>
<i>Journey Out.....</i>	<i>258</i>
<i>Restoration Diversion Services</i>	<i>263</i>
<i>Treasures.....</i>	<i>268</i>
<i>ZOE International.....</i>	<i>273</i>

Probation Department

The Los Angeles County Probation Department (Probation) is the largest probation services agency in the U.S., with over 5,000 employees, two-thirds of which are sworn officers, operating 50 fully-staffed, individual facilities throughout the County including two juvenile halls and six residential treatment programs. The Department currently supervises approximately 37,000 adult probationers under active supervision, 4,400 juveniles in the community including youth in foster care, 208 youth in residential treatment facilities (juvenile camps), and 319 youth within the two juvenile halls—an all-time historic low. The Department’s objective is to develop an environment within the County where communities can participate in its efforts to rebuild lives and sustain healthy families.*



*Numbers are as of September, 2020

In the Beginning...

2010 was the start of a sea change within Los Angeles County’s Probation Department. Probation began to recognize a large number of youth within its care who had experienced commercial sexual exploitation. At that point, these youth were typically detained in juvenile hall on prostitution and related charges. Through training and developing relationships with these young people, the Department began to shift its thinking—and there was a newfound recognition that these youth were victims of child abuse. In response, Probation created the Child Trafficking Unit (CTU) and CSEC coordinators within the Department’s detention facilities to provide specialized support and services for youth involved in the juvenile justice system who had experienced exploitation. Soon, Probation became a leader in several countywide initiatives to better identify and support youth who had experienced exploitation. And today, Probation continues to lead the nation in thinking differently about how we respond to the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth.

Involvement on CSEC Initiatives

Leading Countywide Initiatives

Since 2012, Probation has led a number of countywide, collaborative CSEC initiatives. This includes leading CSEC-related task forces; helping to develop and implement the Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol for CSEC; convening the CSEC Foster Care Provider Roundtable workgroup; organizing the annual CSEC Empowerment Conference; developing gender specific prevention and intervention curricula; and exploring housing options for youth who have experienced CSE. This also includes assisting in the expansion of the Safe Youth Zone Program; creating a CSEC Child Abuse Poster; and developing the Victim Witness Testimony Protocol. Through its leadership and collaboration with agencies and providers across the County, Probation has helped ensure effective policies and practices are in place to best serve youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation.

Improving Internal Policies and Practices

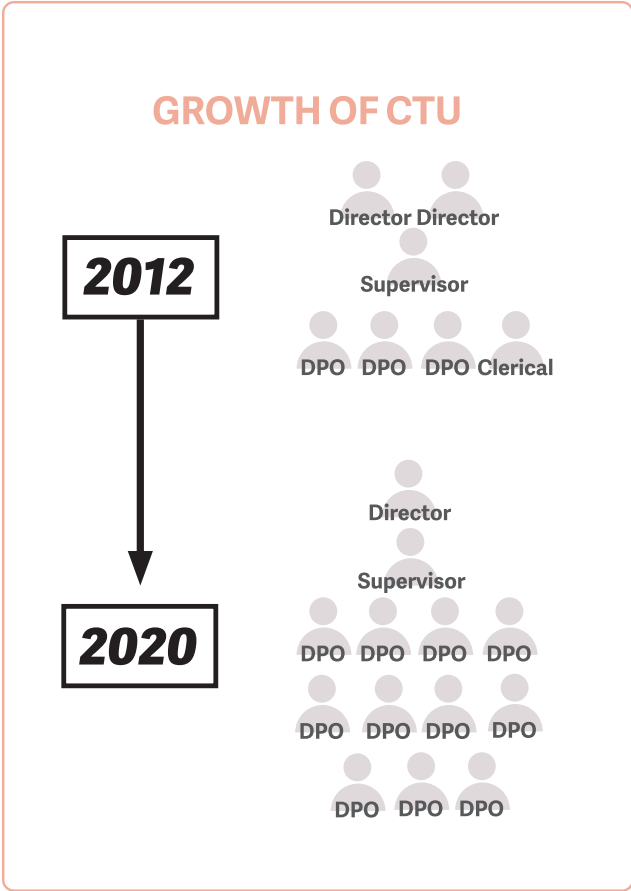
In addition to leading countywide efforts to better identify and support youth who have experienced exploitation, Probation has committed to improving its own internal policies and practices to better serve this population. Its efforts include developing the specialized Child Trafficking Unit, creating services and programming within juvenile halls and the Dorothy Kirby Center (a therapeutic, residential treatment center), and increasing efforts to hold exploiters and buyers accountable. Additionally, Probation is memorializing all of these practices in its internal operational manuals—outlining its assessment process, the unique multidisciplinary teaming approach, and all other components of the specialized Unit, to serve as both a training tool internally as well as a resource for partners.

Child Trafficking Unit

When Probation, in collaboration with the delinquency court, was awarded grant funding in 2011 to develop a specialized unit within Probation, the Child Trafficking Unit was born.

The CTU’s Director, Michelle Guymon, determined at the onset that the foundation for the Unit would be strong, positive relationships with youth. Because these youth had endured extreme trauma and abuse, the CTU was built on the premise that strong relationships, rather than stronger sanctions, would be most effective when working with this population.

In order to accomplish this, the Department knew it was important to bring on the right people, establish clear expectations for engagement with youth, and provide ample support to enable staff to fully dive into the work. Guymon developed several components of the Unit that differentiate it from other juvenile probation units, including increased engagement, consistent deputy probation officer, extensive multidisciplinary teaming with other agencies, and more, as outlined below.



JOAN PERA

Director of Community Relations, Los Angeles County Probation Department (former CTU Supervisor)

Joan Pera previously served as Supervisor for the Child Trafficking Unit from 2014 to 2018. As Supervisor, Pera oversaw the CTU as it grew and evolved, and is responsible for creating a tight knit unit that has made a significant difference in countless youths’ lives.

The CTU provides intensive, strengths-based support and case management services to youth involved in Probation who have been identified as CSE. CTU's staff have been carefully selected and trained to support youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. The CTU began with just four individuals and has expanded to thirteen. Today, the Unit includes: a Director, a Supervising Deputy Probation Officer (SDPO), a Staff Assistant, and ten Deputy Probation Officers (DPOs), including the STAR Court Liaison & Probation MDT Coordinator, one DPO who specializes in Transition Age Youth services, and eight case-carrying DPOs.

Increased Engagement

In order to facilitate closer relationships with youth and their families, CTU DPOs maintain lower caseloads than traditional DPOs, with each DPO responsible for working with approximately 12-15 youth at any given time. This allows them to devote more time to each youth, through both in-person visits and other forms of communication (such as texting, phone calls and social media). CTU DPOs are required to visit with youth at least two times each month and have some type of additional communication at least once every three days, however most CTU DPOs connect with youth on their caseloads

“These kids amaze me -- the fact that they get up every day and face the world, given what they’ve endured.”

TIFFANY ESQUEDA
Child Trafficking Unit Deputy Probation Officer
Los Angeles County Probation Department

“The best part of the job for me is continuing to have a relationship with my girls who are no longer on probation.”

SHANTEL CRUM-HILL
Child Trafficking Unit
Deputy Probation Officer
Los Angeles County Probation
Department



VIOLET DAWSON
Deputy Probation Officer II, Child Trafficking Unit, Los Angeles
County Probation Department
Violet Dawson has been a Deputy Probation Officer in the Child Trafficking Unit since 2013. Dawson goes above and beyond the expectations of a CTU DPO, and is selfless in the amount of time and energy she devotes to building and maintaining relationships with the youth.

“I love this Unit. The structure gives me the freedom to actually spend quality time with the youth and really develop a relationship—it wouldn’t be the same somewhere else.”
- Violet Dawson

much more frequently than that. In addition to formal visits, CTU DPOs also attend other important events, such as school graduations, birthday celebrations, baby showers, and empowerment events. CTU DPOs also spend time helping youth develop practical life skills, including assistance with interview preparation (for transitional housing and job interviews), grocery shopping and food preparation, and budgeting.

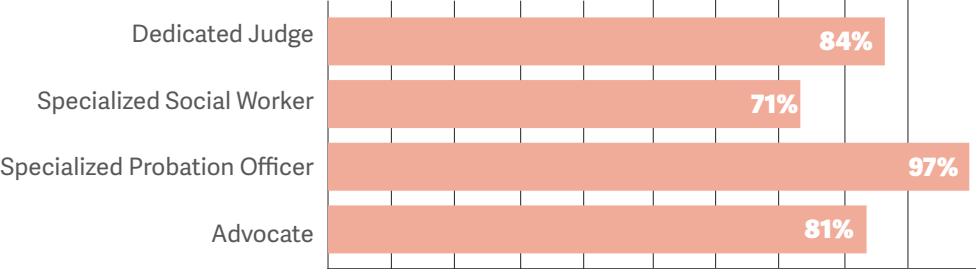
Case Consistency

CTU promotes case consistency, meaning that when a youth is first referred to the Unit, the CTU team is thoughtful about which Deputy Probation Officer would work best with the youth. Once a DPO is assigned, there is an effort to ensure that they remain with the youth until they exit Probation jurisdiction. This means that regardless of where the youth is placed (from home to a local group home or an out of state placement), they will have the same DPO. In contrast, for youth on probation supervised by other units, it is common that they would have a different DPO assigned based on their placement and other changes in circumstance. For youth in CTU, having a consistent DPO throughout several life transitions makes a tremendous difference in their ability to connect, heal, and thrive.

CTU DPOs meet with youth two times per month, and communicate with them at least once every three days

“[E]ven though I was not open with [my] PO at first, having the same PO the entire time has given me the chance to develop a relationship of trust.”
- Survivor13

In a recent study, CSE girls and young women were asked whether it helped to have a specialized probation officer; **97% reported that it was.** In their responses, youth emphasized the importance of consistency with their specialized Probation Officers and that they were non-judgmental and trustworthy.¹⁴



Weekly Multi-Disciplinary Meetings

Recognizing that youth are more than just their exploitation or their court case, and that system-involved youth have myriad needs spanning across several agencies, Probation developed a weekly multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meeting for all youth involved in Probation who have been identified as having experienced CSE. The Weekly Probation CSEC MDT brings together professionals from across multiple agencies and organizations to better meet the needs of youth by collaborating, setting and discussing progress towards goals, problem solving, and sharing information.

Participants include child welfare, mental health, public health, children’s attorneys, educational liaisons, service providers and specialized community-based advocates. All participants have engaged in in-depth training on the dynamics and impacts of CSE and have experience working with youth. The participants remain consistent each week, which has allowed the team to develop rapport and comfort with one another, ultimately enabling them to more effectively work together and better support youth.

Through the MDT, the team works together to identify services and supports that would be helpful for the youth and their families or caregivers, and facilitates warm referrals, when appropriate. For example, services may include specialized advocacy, education advocacy, connection to physical or mental health clinics and services in the community, or assistance with identifying and applying for housing, including transitional housing programs.

“I am encouraged by the CTU—by how deeply the CTU Probation Officers have taken this as their call and have been flexible, creative, and available in every context.”

- Sara, TAY Program Manager & Case Manager, Saving Innocence

“ We’re all experts in our own discipline, so it’s always important to have different people at any table - who have different opinions than you, who have different backgrounds than you...Having other people at the table, having other resources, is really important...Having a team of different people in different disciplines is really important for a child. ”

URSULA CASTILLO

Child Trafficking Unit, Deputy Probation Officer
Los Angeles County Probation Department



“ There’s just no way we could do this on our own...Teamwork, and everyone coming together to support each youth, makes our work do-able. ”

LILLIAN JIMENEZ

Child Trafficking Unit Deputy Probation Officer
Los Angeles County Probation Department



Kiesha Durham, Jane Oshiro, Lucrezia Carter, Katrina Wade, Terrika Woolfolk, and Jennifer Salveson (not pictured) were the first individuals in the CTU (from front to back).



“We work well together because we step up where we know we’re strong, and where we’re weak, we ask [each other] questions—we’re not afraid to ask for help.”

KAMILAH DENNIS-CAMPBELL
Child Trafficking Unit Deputy Probation Officer,
Los Angeles County Probation Department

Support for Transition Age Youth (TAY)

In 2016, the Unit recognized that while youth shared that they felt incredibly supported while under Probation jurisdiction, they really struggled with the transition to independence at 18, often feeling ill-equipped to learn about and access the resources available to them. With this realization, the Director advocated for and secured a new position in the CTU to specifically support the TAY population. The TAY DPO works closely with youth as they approach their 18th birthdays, providing secondary support to the Primary DPO on the case so as not to interrupt the continuity of care. The TAY DPO meets with youth to educate them on what resources are available through the Independent Living Program (ILP) and Extended Foster Care (EFC) programs, and works closely with youth to apply for and access these resources.

Assessment

Not all youth under Probation jurisdiction who are identified as having experienced CSE are transferred to the CTU. Given the high number of youth being identified and referred to the Unit, in 2019 the CTU developed a formal assessment process to determine whether a youth’s case would be transferred and supervised by the CTU. There are several factors taken into account when making this determination, including the youth’s preference, their age, mental health needs, gang involvement, and relationship with their current Deputy Probation Officer.

“The heart of the Unit—It’s Michelle’s heart.”

GINA GIACONE

CTU Deputy Probation Officer, Los Angeles County Probation Department

CTU’s Internal Culture

Over the past nearly decade, CTU staff have remained consistent, with minimal turnover. CTU staff maintain strong relationships with one another and rely on each other often for support. Moreover, the leadership within the CTU has also helped to ensure staff have the support they need to serve youth, such as weekly supervision and regular training and support to address vicarious trauma and triggers from the work. This continuity has enabled CTU staff to develop a deep understanding of the complex and interconnected issues involved with exploitation, and develop effective tools and strategies for building relationships and supporting youth.

Serving Youth in Detention

In addition to developing a specialized Unit to provide supervision to youth who are on Probation and being supervised in the community, the Probation Department has also developed specialized protocols and programs within their detention facilities to improve identification and services for youth who have experienced exploitation.

Juvenile Hall

In 2011, after attending the County’s first CSEC training with Nola Brantley, CTU leadership met with staff from Central Juvenile Hall (CJH) to discuss what next steps CJH could take to better identify and serve youth under their care who had been CSE. One of these individuals was Markese Freeman, a senior detention services officer over the girls’ unit in CJH. From that moment on, Freeman became a champion for this issue, working hard to change the culture and perceptions around the issue, creating services and programming within juvenile hall, and rallying staff in his unit to take steps to support youth who have experienced CSE. He hoped to create an environment

“We don’t have a Unit—we have a family.”

JOAN PERA

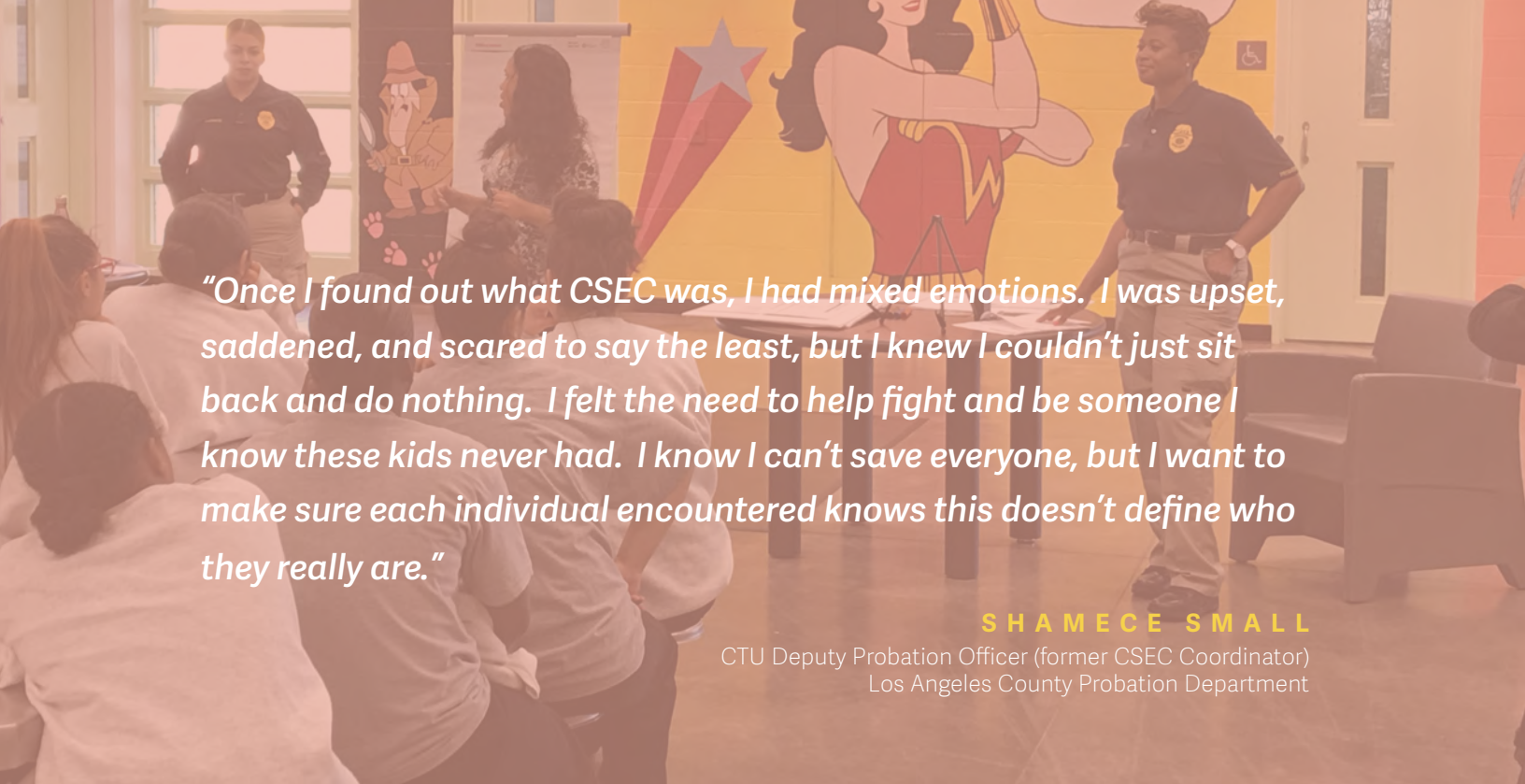
Director of Community Relations
Los Angeles County Probation Department
(former CTU Supervisor)



Original Central Juvenile Hall CSEC Champions.

where youth felt comfortable sharing their lived experiences and asking for help without feeling shame.

Freeman believed that youth who had experienced CSE would feel more comfortable and safe working with staff who were well-trained on the issue and who could devote more one-on-one time with them, so he spearheaded the development of a specialized role within the juvenile halls—CSEC Coordinators. CSEC Coordinators serve as the pointpeople for youth who have been identified as CSE; they provide additional, individualized support to youth and coordinate efforts between the CTU, specialized advocates, and other juvenile hall staff. They help to ensure that youths’ needs are heard and met.



"Once I found out what CSEC was, I had mixed emotions. I was upset, saddened, and scared to say the least, but I knew I couldn't just sit back and do nothing. I felt the need to help fight and be someone I know these kids never had. I know I can't save everyone, but I want to make sure each individual encountered knows this doesn't define who they really are."

SHAMECE SMALL

CTU Deputy Probation Officer (former CSEC Coordinator)
Los Angeles County Probation Department

In addition, juvenile hall staff and survivor advocates began co-facilitating a comprehensive CSEC prevention curriculum in the hall, "Word on the Street: Educating and Empowering Young Women and Girls." Advocates, including survivor advocates, also began coming into the hall two to three times a week to meet one-on-one with youth.

Additional programming, aimed at both prevention and intervention, included: discussions on inner and outer beauty; visits from lawyers, who would educate youth on their rights; yoga classes; domestic violence

education; birth and parenting classes and counseling for pregnant girls; art therapy; acting classes; ballet; and more.

These efforts helped facilitate discussions about the issue of CSE in the community, eventually leading to disclosures from youth who had been brought into the hall for charges other than prostitution-related offenses. These disclosures eventually led to the development and implementation of the "Los Angeles County Detention Interagency Identification and Response Protocol for Commercially Sexually Exploited Children and Youth."



MARKESE FREEMAN

Supervising Detention Services Officer, Cental Juvenile Hall

Markese Freeman served as a senior detention services officer over the girls' unit at Central Juvenile Hall from 2009 to 2018. Through Freeman's initiative, compassion, and commitment to this issue, he has created lasting change in the programming available, which has impacted the lives of countless young people. Freeman also played a key role in the development of the Detention Protocol.

Dorothy Kirby Center

When efforts to better identify and serve CSE youth began in juvenile hall, a group of dedicated staff at Dorothy Kirby Center (DKC), a therapeutic, residential treatment center, were also moved to take action. One of these individuals, Sadiyyah Abdul, wanted to increase efforts to train staff on the issue of CSE and create programming to support youth at DKC who experience CSE.

While youth in juvenile hall stay for an average of 15 to 19 days, youth at DKC stay for longer periods of time, often six to nine months. Because of this difference in duration of stay,

programming needed to look different at DKC. DKC staff recognized that while youth were safe and stable for an extended period of time at DKC, it was important to provide support and services throughout their stay that would assist in their treatment and healing. These services not only address the trauma and abuse that these youth experience during their exploitation, but also the trauma and abuse many often experience prior to their exploitation.



SADIYYAH ABDUL-MUMIN

Supervising Deputy Probation Officer, Child Trafficking Unit, Los Angeles County Probation Department (former Supervising Deputy Probation Officer, Dorothy Kirby Center)

Sadiyyah Abdul-Mumin is responsible for overseeing the Child Trafficking Unit, supporting staff, and ensuring that the CTU provides youth the care and support they need to lead healthy lives.

“For too long we, as a society, shut our eyes to the reality of CSE; but now, we know better. And we must do everything we can to support our youth through prevention and intervention.”

SADIYYAH ABDUL-MUMIN

Deputy Probation Officer, Child Trafficking Unit, Los Angeles County Probation Department

Holding Exploiters Accountable

In addition to these efforts, Probation has worked to enhance current strategies and protocols in the identification and supervision of adult probationers identified as exploiters and buyers. These efforts include assigning a dedicated DPO to the Human Trafficking Task Forces of the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department and Los Angeles Police Department; reviewing current and incoming cases for human trafficking related offenses to ensure the level of supervision is appropriate; creating an internal steering committee to address the identification, assessment, and supervision aspects of all cases identified as exploiters and buyers; and providing human trafficking training to DPOs who supervise adults.

Message of Commitment

“When Los Angeles was identified as a major hub for the commercial sexual exploitation of children, the Probation Department resolved to take action. Since 2011, the Probation Department has been a leader in developing innovative and collaborative solutions to identify and support the strength and resilience of children and youth who have experienced this horrific abuse. Probation’s commitment to this population will continue moving forward in our efforts to better identify and support survivors, empowering them to go on to lead incredible lives beyond their exploitation. So long as these young people are in Probation’s care, we will be unwavering in our dedication to supporting them.”

- Ray Leyva, Interim Chief Probation Officer
Los Angeles County Probation Department



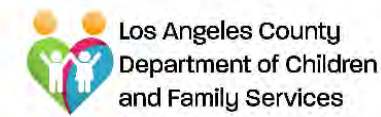
FOR MORE INFORMATION

VISIT <https://probation.lacounty.gov/child-trafficking-unit/>

EMAIL childtrafficking@probation.lacounty.gov

Department of Children and Family Services

As the largest child protective services agency in the nation, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is responsible for ensuring the safety of more than two million children across 88 diverse cities in Los Angeles County. DCFS promotes child safety and well-being by partnering with communities to strengthen families, keeping children at home whenever possible, and connecting them with stable, loving homes in times of need. DCFS partners with other government agencies, community-based organizations, advocates, philanthropies, faith-based organizations and communities to connect families in times of crisis to a wide variety of services designed to protect and support children and youth. DCFS’ Child Protection Hotline is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week for individuals to report suspected or known child abuse and/or neglect.



DCFS is comprised of approximately 9,000 staff across 20 DCFS regional offices. Currently, DCFS serves close to 35,000 children and youth.

In the Beginning...

DCFS began its journey to better identify and support youth who have experienced CSE in 2012, when the DCFS Multi-Agency Response Team (MART) joined human trafficking operations with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Probation Department. In order to better support children and families impacted by commercial sexual exploitation, DCFS began to create specialized policies, programs and services, with the support of specially trained staff. These efforts included the creation of specialized CSEC units, a dedicated courtroom for youth in the dependency system who have experienced CSE, and specialized programming for youth, parents, and caregivers impacted by CSE.

Involvement on CSEC Initiatives

Leading Countywide Initiatives

DCFS has been committed to working collaboratively with a wide array of stakeholders and partners in order to effectively respond to the needs of children and youth impacted by CSE. DCFS has been a leader in the County’s First Responder Protocol implementation efforts, chairs the CSEC Steering Committee, and leads the development and monitoring of the CSEC Interagency Memorandum of Understanding that outlines LA County’s approach to identifying, reporting, documenting, and serving children and youth utilizing a multi-disciplinary, victim-centered, strength-based approach with a trauma-responsive and resiliency building lens. DCFS has also led efforts to partner with the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department (LASD) and the Los Angeles

Police Department (LAPD) in developing and implementing Locate and Recovery Services to assist Children’s Social Workers (CSWs) in safely locating and recovering youth who have gone missing or have runaway.

In addition, DCFS led the development and implementation of the Parent Empowerment Program for parents and primary caregivers of children and youth that have been commercially sexually exploited, and developed and implemented specialized skills-based training and recognition events for caregivers and placement providers. DCFS recently initiated contracts with CSEC advocacy agencies to

provide services to not only children that have experienced CSE, but also children, youth and Non-Minor Dependents (ages 18-21) who are at-risk of CSE, as well as their parents.

DCFS is also leading efforts to develop housing options for commercially sexually exploited youth in foster care to meet the various levels of needs and to be able to provide intensive services in family-like home environments. DCFS’ efforts related to housing are grounded in the research and recommendations it worked on in partnership with CalState LA, the National Center for Youth Law, and the Probation Department.

“Our youth need to know that they have a community who is protecting them—a community who is going to fight for them. Together, we will make sure our youth and families who have been impacted by commercial sexual exploitation have the support and services they need to heal and thrive. It takes a village to raise and protect a child.”

XIOMARA FLORES-HOLGUIN
Children’s Service Administrator II,
Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services



Improving Internal Policies and Practices

In addition to its collaborative efforts with the County, DCFS has also committed to improving its internal policies and practices and building capacity from many angles to better serve children, youth, families and caregivers impacted by CSE. They have prioritized collaboration and teaming, training, coaching around the LA County Shared Core Practice Model and Core Principles of Trauma and Resilience Informed Care, creating programs specifically designed for children and youth who have experienced CSE, as well as developing specialized policies and practices to better serve this population.

CSEC Policy Committee

DCFS created a CSEC Policy Committee to review, update and/or create policies to better serve commercially sexually exploited children. Policies were updated to be in alignment with SB 794, which codified the Federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act in state law, and requires child welfare to expeditiously locate any child who receives child welfare services and is missing,

and develop interventions to address the causes of runaway behavior. The mandatory reporting policy was updated requiring that commercial sexual exploitation as well as labor trafficking be reported to the Child Protection Hotline. DHS Medical Hub policies were updated to include requirements for CSEC Medical Clearances and CSEC Initial Medical Examinations. DHS Hub policies were also clarified to ensure that children in foster care as well as children who were being supervised while in the home of their parents would be able to access specialized exams, free of charge to the parents. DCFS is currently working on finalizing an Assessment of Exploitation policy, to include both commercial sexual exploitation and labor trafficking, as well as an updated Child Protection Hotline Policy that includes up-front assessment of possible CSE activity. In addition, a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) policy and protocol was created, outlining how MDTs and the CFT process work together to strengthen the support of children, youth and families impacted by CSE.

Child Protection Hotline

The Department’s Child Protection Hotline (CPH) receives calls reporting suspected child abuse, neglect, and exploitation 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. CPH social workers assess and analyze the information presented, determining how the information is processed and the type of response necessary, if any. Depending on the potential danger to the child(ren), reports taken are forwarded to protective service offices throughout the County and/or to law enforcement for an in-person investigation. In 2015, as a result of Senate Bill 855, the Department’s mandatory reporting policy was updated to include commercial sexual exploitation as well as labor trafficking as allegations requiring a report to the CPH. The Department is currently working to update the CPH policy to ensure CPH social workers are trained on how to identify and assess warning signs of CSE as they field calls. The CPH has two CSEC Liaisons who review and analyze CSEC referral data. The Child Protection Hotline received 4,600 CSEC referrals from Fiscal Year 2013-2014 through Fiscal Year 2019-2020.

“I didn’t recognize how many children in LA County were impacted by commercial sexual exploitation until I started my role at the hotline. I really started seeing the calls coming in, opening my eyes to how prevalent this issue is throughout the County and the strong correlation to our youth who are not in a stable placement. The hotline plays a vital role in being one of the first points of contact with the system and helps determine the appropriate response.”

GINA HAMILTON



Champion

GINA HAMILTON

Supervising Children’s Social Worker, Child Protection Hotline, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services
Gina Hamilton has worked with DCFS for 21 years. For the past seven years, Hamilton has been working with the Child Protection Hotline. Hamilton has been a committed representative for the First Responder Protocol Multi-Agency Review Committee since 2014, and is dedicated to improving responses for youth impacted by CSE.

Specialized CSEC Units

CSEC Continuous Services Units

DCFS also created three specialized CSEC Continuous Services Units—each unit is comprised of about 6 Children’s Social Workers (CSWs), with each unit being supervised by a Supervising Children’s Social Worker (SCSW). These units are trained to respond and provide client-centered, trauma-informed intervention services for youth who have experienced CSE and their families. CSEC Units carry a reduced caseload in order to engage and connect more deeply with youth. Oftentimes, CSWs in the specialized units visit youth multiple times each week to stabilize and support the youth, and also work with the caregiver to support the youth, which is far more frequent than a CSW with a typical caseload. CSEC CSWs work diligently to collaborate with the youth, family, placement providers, CSEC Advocate, DMH, Public Health Nurse, minor’s attorney, county counsel, Probation, DHS, educational liaisons, wraparound providers, and others who play an important role in the youth’s life, to develop a case plan that will result in improved safety, permanency, and well-being. The CSW, and the SCSW, ensure that the youth and their Child and Family Team meet regularly to discuss what has been working and what needs to be adapted in order to meet the critical needs of the youth.

The specialized CSEC units connect survivors with a variety of support services, including referrals to CSEC advocacy services, as well as other interventions that are needed. The CSEC Units work in collaboration with law enforcement and other CSEC survivor organizations to support those who have been identified as being commercially sexually exploited or are at risk. CSEC CSWs also work closely with the Runaway Outreach Unit’s (ROU) CSWs whenever a youth is missing in order to diligently search, locate, and recover youth.



DCFS hosts monthly empowerment events for youth.



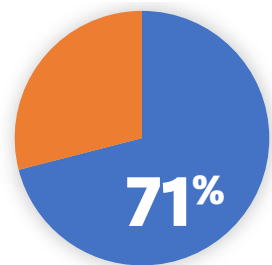
Champion

DIANNA GREENE

Supervising Children’s Social Worker, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services
Dianna Greene serves as a Supervising Children’s Social Worker for DCFS in one of the specialized CSEC units. Greene’s unit works with youth who are in the specialized Dependency DREAM Court, and her team is out-stationed at the LASD Human Trafficking Taskforce to facilitate greater collaboration with partners.

“
I take great pride in my role as a supervisor in implementing strategies and carrying out trauma focused efforts with dedicated and trained personnel from our department to change the trajectory of these youths’ lives and help them preserve, heal, and transform into survivors with a life that is safe, positive, and full of opportunities.
 ”

DIANNA GREENE
 Supervising Children’s Social Worker, Los Angeles County
 Department of Children and Family Services



of youth said it helped to have a specialized DCFS Social Worker

In a recent study, 71% of surveyed youth who have been CSE reported that it helped to have a specialized DCFS Social Worker. In response to why it was helpful, youth explained that specialized Social Workers were more helpful or understanding. For example, youth stated: “yes because we need someone on our case to really help & understand,” “yes because they understand us more,” and “yes so you won’t have to keep opening up to people.”¹⁵

AB12 CSEC Unit

In addition to the three specialized continuous services units described above, DCFS created the AB12 CSEC Unit, comprised of eight CSWs and one SCSW, who are focused on serving Non-Minor Dependent (NMD) youth, ages 18-21. AB12 CSEC social workers support youth in achieving self-sufficiency and well-being by providing consistent guidance, mentorship, support and services to become equipped with the knowledge, skills and ability to care for themselves, achieve their educational and employment goals, and maintain a safe and stable lifestyle. AB12 CSEC social workers specialize in knowing the various opportunities available to NMDs and work closely with youth to ensure they have what they need to move past their trauma, including transitional

housing, independent living skills training, job readiness programs, and CSEC Advocacy Services.

CSEC Guide for DCFS Social Workers

The CSEC Guide for DCFS Social Workers was created to provide helpful tips and suggestions for best practice when working with children and families that have been impacted by commercial sexual exploitation. It offers guidance for social workers that serve various functions—including Child Protection Hotline workers, Dependency Investigators, Emergency Response and Continuing Services workers—so that they have an understanding of how they can best assess, investigate, report and serve youth impacted by exploitation.

Multi-Agency Response Team

DCFS’ Multi-Agency Response Team (MART) is a specialized unit of Emergency Response CSWs that works in collaboration with law enforcement to provide emergency protective services. The goals of MART are to:

- Provide an expedited and trained response to law enforcement referrals in order to minimize the traumatic effect on children and families;
- Forge a better partnership between DCFS and law enforcement to protect abused and neglected children through shared guidelines, established protocols, ongoing training and the sharing of information;
- Develop a plan to consistently respond to at risk children in narcotic and/or gang related warrant executions, victims of commercial sexual exploitation, parole/probation search investigations and in other high profile “intelligence sensitive” investigations.

When a law enforcement agency identifies a youth as having been exploited through the County’s First Responder Protocol, a MART Children’s Social Worker will respond, within 90 minutes, alongside a specialized advocate. The social worker, specialized advocate and law enforcement officer will work collaboratively to assess the youth’s safety and determine the most appropriate placement.

All youth that are identified through the First Responder Protocol and for whom DCFS files a petition due to safety concerns are assigned to the specialized CSEC dependency court, DREAM Court.¹⁶



Runaway Outreach Unit

The Runaway Outreach Unit (ROU) is a dedicated team of Children's Social Workers focused on locating, placing and stabilizing missing youth by developing rapport and offering alternative service plans for youth under 18 who have runaway who are dependents of the court. The ROU works collaboratively with the case-carrying CSW to provide more intensive case management interventions in locating and stabilizing high risk youth, including those who have experienced CSE.

ROU CSWs work diligently to search and locate missing and runaway youth by conducting social media site searches on a monthly basis; actively searching the case records for possible leads to locations for the youth's whereabouts; conducting educational and social welfare investigations; reaching out to caregivers, family, and friends; conducting database searches; and documenting efforts. ROU may also refer to LASD or LAPD to help locate and recover youth.

The Team Approach to Supporting Commercially Sexually Exploited Children

Recognizing the importance of a collaborative and multidisciplinary approach, DCFS holds both specialized CSEC Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings as well as Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings for youth who have experienced exploitation. This allows partners across disciplines to work together using the Core Practice Model approach, which calls for collaboration around assessment, engagement, case planning and evaluation of interventions for children, youth and families.

The MDT members are comprised of representatives of the various systems, including Child Welfare, Probation, DMH, DPH, Los Angeles Unified School District, Los Angeles County of Education, Department of Health Services, County Counsel, minor's attorney, CSEC advocacy agencies, and, at times, wraparound service partners. The Child and Family Team includes the youth, parent/ legal guardian, foster caregiver/resource parent, service providers, and others that the youth

and family have identified as a support. The MDT serves as an advisory team that helps the Child and Family Team overcome challenges to receiving services and achieving case plan goals.

The information and discussion at the initial MDT helps the CSW prepare the youth and family for the initial CFT. The CFT is designed to center the youth and family and to identify strengths, concerns, needs, goals, and interventions to achieve the case plan goals. The approach is strength-based, solution-oriented, youth-centered, and interventions are done with a trauma-informed and resiliency building lens.

During the CFT, the team tries to create a space where the youth can feel comfortable, supported, and heard—and the youth is given choice whenever it is possible to do so. The youth has the option to use whatever form of communication is most comfortable—they can share their perspective themselves, identify another person to help communicate their needs, and/or they can share through written expression.



Message of Commitment

"The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services holds an unwavering commitment to support children, youth, and families impacted by all forms of commercial exploitation. We will continue to collaborate with a wide array of partners to continuously strengthen our collective efforts to identify and serve this vulnerable population through a trauma-informed, resiliency building approach to effectively support children and youth through their journey towards healing and recovery. We will continue to ensure that the Survivor's voice remains front and center while we work to address prevention and intervention efforts. We are honored to walk along with the youth who have survived commercial exploitation. We will continue to remain diligent and steady in our efforts to stand beside them and support them in overcoming challenges and meeting their full life potential."

- Bobby D. Cagle, Director
Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services



FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT
<https://dcfs.lacounty.gov>
CSECAAdmin@dcfs.lacounty.gov

Sheriff's Department

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD) is the largest Sheriff's Department in the U.S., with nearly 18,000 budgeted sworn and professional staff. The mission of LASD is to partner with the community, proactively prevent crime, enforce the law fairly, and enhance the public's trust through transparency and accountability.



In the Beginning...

In 2015, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's Detective Division was tasked to develop a strategy to combat the ever-growing and enormous challenge of sex trafficking. This was in response to evidence that sex trafficking was widespread in the region—the National Human Trafficking Hotline reported more calls from California than any other state. Additionally, LASD's own investigations revealed that child sex trafficking had become a common source of revenue for criminal street gangs.

With this new direction, the Department began an organizational change, forming new strategic partnerships, enforcement tactics, and language. Recognizing that juvenile victims of sex trafficking could not consent to sex, LASD stopped using the term "child prostitute" and adopted the mantra, "There is No Such Thing as a Child Prostitute."

Involvement on CSEC Initiatives

Leading Countywide Initiatives

Los Angeles Regional Human Trafficking Task Force

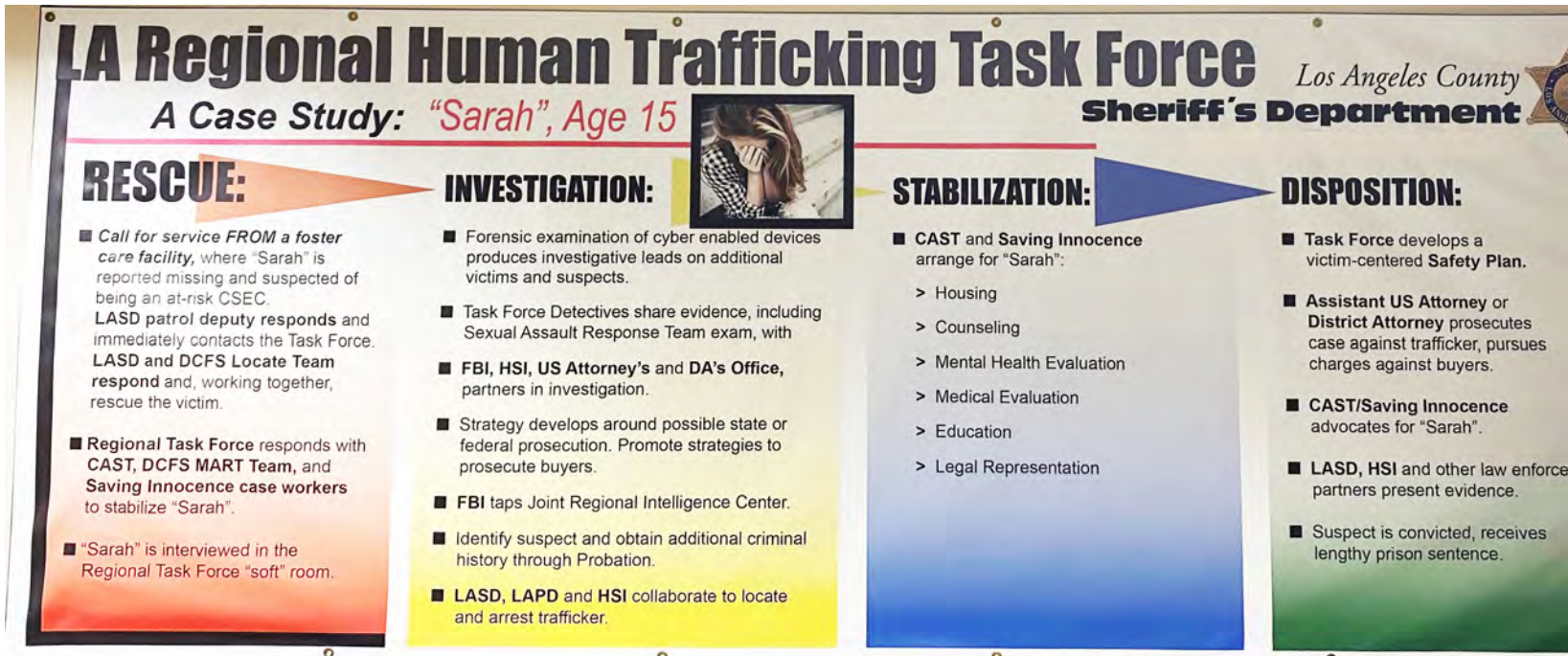
In October of 2015, LASD formed the Human Trafficking Bureau and launched the Los Angeles Regional Human Trafficking Task Force (LARHTTF). Co-led by LASD and the Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking (CAST), in partnership with Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and the United States Attorney's Office, the LARHTTF is a multi-agency collaboration of co-located federal, state, and local law enforcement, social service agencies, and community-based partners that endeavor to rescue juvenile and adult victims of commercial sex and labor exploitation. The task force's mission is to increase early identification of victims of all forms of human trafficking within Los Angeles County, to strengthen investigation and prosecution of labor and sex trafficking cases in the County, and to address the individualized needs of trafficking victims through the provision of comprehensive services.



The physical location of the LARHTTF supports a co-located model for investigators, victim service providers, prosecutors, and other support staff and contributes to a collegial environment that fosters immediate collaboration, trust, and openness. This enables generative discussions about overlooked pieces of evidence, missed opportunities in investigations, and unintended but detrimental impacts of investigations on victims. It also allows the partners to generate many more leads by developing systematic and proactive detection and investigation strategies. As the task force operates across jurisdictions and a large geographical region, it has set an essential goal to identify or develop a secure case information-sharing platform for law enforcement.²

Simultaneously with the launch of the regional task force, LASD received a federal Department of Justice (DOJ) grant to combat human trafficking. In partnership with CAST, the grant allowed for task force members to provide immediate wrap-around, victim-centered services to victims that are recovered in the field, while leveraging relationships with the United States Attorney's Office, HSI, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to prosecute traffickers and buyers to the fullest extent of the law. In addition, the task force included Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) as a sub-contractor in the grant process, thus enabling the two largest policing agencies in Los Angeles County to partner more effectively to combat human trafficking.

The LARHTTF also works in conjunction with LASD's Sexual Assault Felony Enforcement (SAFE) and Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) teams to monitor the County's sex registrant population, identify child pornography sites, and investigate reports of child exploitation reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC).



Additional multidisciplinary efforts include:

- Partnering with the County Board of Supervisors and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) in the “Don’t Be Silent” campaign to raise employee and public awareness of human trafficking around the County’s vast transportation system.
- Working with a large insurance corporation to provide risk mitigation and education strategies to hotel and motel owners throughout Los Angeles County and the country.
- Expanding investigative outreach into jails by providing training into the recruitment of victims for sex work and utilizing a detective assigned to the Jail Investigations Unit (JIU) to better understand the relationship of gang involvement and the flow of money and resources to support individual and organizational criminal efforts in the human trafficking trade.
- Reaching out to the Los Angeles County Chiefs of Police to rotate detectives from the County’s 46 independent cities into the LARHTTF. This practice serves as an investigative force multiplier while also establishing a regionalized, best practices focus to end human trafficking.

In 2016, in its first full year, the LARHTTF identified more than 95 victims, including 62 juveniles. Investigators logged more than 370 arrests and nearly 400 search warrants in support of their investigations.

In 2017, in recognition of January as Human Trafficking Awareness Month, the LARHTTF joined forces with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies from throughout California for the annual “Operation Reclaim and Rebuild.” Individual law enforcement agencies



and joint task forces conducted operations to identify victims of trafficking and provide them with needed services, arrest exploiters and traffickers, and disrupt the demand by targeting buyers. Government social service agencies, as well as community-based partners including Cast and Saving Innocence, coordinated the emergency response services for victim care and collaborated with similar victim service organizations throughout the state. The operation resulted in the identification of 55 victims, including 28 children who had been commercially sexually exploited, and more than 450 arrests, including 36 exploiters/traffickers and 142 buyers of commercial sex. Through this operation, the message was reinforced that law enforcement shared the unified mandate of intolerance for human trafficking across California.

In November of 2017, The Human Rights Center from the University of California – Berkeley School of Law published **Building Trust: Perspectives on a Victim-Centered Approach to Human Trafficking Investigations in Los Angeles County**.¹⁵ This study focused on the inaugural year of the LARHTTF and concluded that the anti-trafficking model was laying the groundwork for improving care for victims and prosecuting traffickers. The comprehensive analysis recognized the significance of the co-located task force model and recognized the many accomplishments while outlining areas for needed improvement.

In April of 2018, the United States Congress passed FOSTA-SESTA (Fight Online Sex Trafficking Act and Stop Enabling Sex Traffickers Act) making it illegal to facilitate or support



sex trafficking online. Just prior to its passage, Craigslist.com shutdown their “Personals” section, which had become an extremely popular online marketplace to buy sex. The more infamous Backpage.com was seized and shut down by federal law enforcement agencies on April 6, 2018. The rapid loss of two of the most popular commercial sex websites left a significant void in the online commercial sex industry. With this void the task force saw an increase in street level activity and adjusted course by conducting more street level enforcement, while also providing diversion opportunities to victims. The task force also began to scour the internet searching for the websites aiming to fill the void left by “Backpage” and “Craigslist.”

The LARHTTF was awarded another three year grant cycle which started in 2019 and will conclude in 2021. During the next period, the task force looks forward to seeing growth in collaborations with other agencies to further task force work, and also growth in collaboration within the Leadership Team by working together to develop additional protocols and goals for the task force future.

PARTNERS TO DATE	
FEDERAL	STATE
United States Attorney's Office	California Attorney General
Homeland Security Investigations	California Department of Corrections (State Parole)
Federal Bureau of Investigation	California Employment Development Department (EDD)
United States Marshals Service	California Highway Patrol
United States Department of Labor	
COUNTY	CITY
LA County Sheriff's Department	Los Angeles City Attorney's Office
LA County District Attorney's Office (DA & DA Investigator)	Los Angeles Police Department
Department of Children & Family Services	Los Angeles Unified School District Police Department
LA County Probation Department	
Department of Public Health	
NON-GOVERNMENT/COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS	
Alafia Mental Health	San Fernando Valley Community Mental Health Center
Alliance for Young Women and Girls	Saving Innocence
Asian Americans Advancing Justice	Southern California Partners for Global Justice
Bet Tzedek	Star View Community Services
Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking	Strength United
East Los Angeles Women's Center	Valley Oasis Sexual Assault Response Service
Faith Initiative to Abolish Trafficking	Virtuous Woman Inc
Human Trafficking Legal Network	Volunteers of America Los Angeles
iEmpathize	ZOE International
Journey Out	
Northridge Hospital Center for Assault Services	

First Responder Protocol

LASD has also partnered with the County in the development and implementation of the First Responder Protocol (FRP) for CSEC. In 2016, the FRP progressed beyond the initial pilot area and was implemented throughout all LASD patrol areas. LASD continues to participate in the monthly FRP Multi-Agency Review Committee (MARC) meetings, helping to ensure the smooth implementation of the protocol and to address any issues as they arise.

“

The collaborative efforts between the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, Probation Department, and Department of Children and Family Services, are truly setting the national standard in best practices involving commercially sexually exploited youth. The forged relationships have inspired innovative ideas which have helped mold the First Responder Protocol.

”

LT. DAN STANLEY

Los Angeles Sheriff's Department

Improving Internal Policies and Practices

Building Internal Capacity

Since LASD launched the Human Trafficking Bureau, it has continued to grow and evolve. In 2016, LASD added nine new investigative positions to the Human Trafficking Bureau, including a lieutenant and sergeant, which facilitated the formation of a second team exclusively dedicated to investigating trafficking cases. In addition to the expansion from within, the LARHTTF added five state and local law enforcement agencies, who dedicated investigators to co-locate with the team.

416
total victims
identified

Of which, 307 were under 18 (CSEC), 109 were adults

*Statistics since formation on November 16, 2015 through August 31, 2020

2,111 total
arrests

- 701 male sex buyers
- 822 human trafficking related
- 392 female adult commercial sex workers
- 430 traffickers
- 373 arrested for internet crimes against children
- 215 arrested for other crimes
- 2,608 search warrants
- 12 Federal cases filed

Developing a Victim-Centered Approach

In an effort to further develop a victim-centered approach to address human trafficking, the task force designed and established a “soft room” at its headquarters, with couches, stuffed animals, snacks, and other comforting items, to use as an alternative to a traditional interrogation room. This soft room provides victims a comfortable space to rest and talk with detectives, advocates, and social workers. The room was designated as “Don’s Space,” in honor of retired Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe, who was a leader in the County’s stand against trafficking.

By working collaboratively, detectives and advocates can help ensure victims’ needs are being met throughout the process.



Also, since June of 2016, LASD has worked in partnership with the Pet Prescription Team, a certified therapy dog organization staffed by volunteers who visit local hospitals, assisted care facilities, mental health facilities, schools and more. The Pet Prescription Team volunteers their therapy dogs to provide emotional support to victims of human trafficking, often bringing the support animals to the Human Trafficking Bureau Headquarters and to the courthouse to support youth through these difficult processes.



Creating New Enforcement Tactics

The LARHTTF has made a significant transition in the model in which human trafficking is investigated. Because marketing of this crime has shifted largely from in-person to online, the LARHTTF now places a substantial investigative focus in the cyber and social media realm. Detectives and analysts within the task force, scour the web looking for sexually exploited youth being advertised on commercial sex websites.

The internet has furnished new opportunities for traffickers, commercial sex buyers, and pedophiles who believe they operate anonymously. To combat this, specially trained deputies were deployed to interact with suspects online. These decoys, newly hired deputy sheriffs, set up profiles to look, sound, and act as a minors. The operatives developed and posted fictitious profiles on social media websites, chat rooms and dating platforms, posing as vulnerable teenagers who traffickers and offenders were anxious to exploit. Once the suspects committed crimes directed toward the

decoys, a meeting was arranged in which they were apprehended while attempting to meet with their victim.

During 2017, LASD joined the CEASE (Cities Empowered Against Sexual Exploitation) Network in partnership with Demand Abolition, to form CEASE-LA. The collaborative goal was to implement new technological strategies to reduce the demand for commercial sex by disrupting buyers. These strategies significantly advanced LASD’s internet enforcement efforts, where trafficking, exploitation and commercial sex have grown significantly because of the anonymity afforded by the internet. Utilizing these new techniques has allowed LASD to employ deterrence strategies towards potential buyers and also has provided LASD with a new outreach tool to potential victims.



Members of ILT and Former Supervisor Don Knabe celebrate the launch of “Don’s Space.” From left to right: Ed Fithyan (DCFS), Diane Iglesias (DCFS), Chris Marks (LASD), Former Supervisor Don Knabe, Philip Browning (DCFS), and Michelle Guymon (Probation).

One tool introduced through the partnership was the electronic bot program, which interacts with sex buyers via text messages. When an online sex buyer responds to a decoy ad placed by investigators, the robot engages the target in a cyber text conversation. When the buyer makes an agreement to pay for sex the program delivers a message with the goal of deterrence—indicating that their activity is illegal and exploitive, and that they have been exposed. This prevention effort maximizes efficiency by utilizing computer programs instead of manpower.

This disruption technique was specifically designed to “let the buyer beware” that law enforcement was aware of their actions and warned them of the consequences. During the first month of deployment, 1,896 separate conversations were conducted with sex buyers, resulting in 30,727 text messages, sent and received between the bot and potential buyers.

Partnering with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department

Aware that many victims in Los Angeles were being trafficked in Las Vegas and vice versa, in November of 2018, the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department and the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department entered into an Information Sharing Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU allows both agencies to share pertinent investigative information with each other and work collaboratively on developing and federally prosecuting those who traffic victims between the two jurisdictions. By sharing information, the task force hopes to be able to locate victims and bring them home.

Message of Commitment

“The Los Angeles Regional Human Trafficking Task Force’s approach to the exploitation of others has always been threefold. Identify and rescue commercially sexually exploited children, identify, arrest, and prosecute traffickers, and conduct online and street operations to curb the demand for commercial sex. The Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department along with our task force of investigators, social workers, service providers, and advocates, is committed to end the trafficking of Los Angeles County’s most vulnerable, our children.”

- Sheriff Alex Villanueva



FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT
VISIT <http://lahumantrafficking.com>

**Department of Health Services
Medical Hub Clinics**



The Los Angeles County Medical Hub Clinics provide high quality, coordinated health care for children who are involved with the Department of Children and Family Services. There are seven Medical Hub Clinics in Los Angeles County, including six operated by the Department of Health Services (DHS) and one operated by the Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles (CHLA). The Medical Hubs offer services for children in all stages of DCFS involvement, and work closely with other county agencies to ensure that identified health, mental health and developmental needs are addressed. The Hubs handle approximately 33,000 medical appointments every year.

In the Beginning...

DHS has been at the table from the beginning of the County’s efforts to address CSEC. This started when the County’s initial CSEC Task Force reached out to DHS to become involved in the committee. DHS staff participated in early meetings to strategize the County’s overarching approach to the issue, and helped to shape the medical component of the First Responder Protocol for CSEC.

Involvement on CSEC Initiatives

Partnering with the County

DHS Medical Hubs signed onto the Los Angeles County First Responder Protocol for CSEC to provide comprehensive medical exams to youth identified through the protocol. DHS Medical Hub representatives still participate in the FRP’s Multi-Agency Review Committee (MARC), which meets monthly to analyze data, discuss challenges and ongoing needs, and amend the Protocol, as necessary. In collaboration with MARC, DHS Medical Hub staff identified areas of need, and in response developed a new, specialized protocol to ensure youth identified through the FRP are offered timely and comprehensive medical services, including increasing the areas of focus for

FRP Medical Clearances to include sexual health services, such as HIV post-exposure prophylaxis, emergency contraception, and testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections. These services are currently only provided to youth within the DCFS system, because that is the population of youth the Hubs traditionally serve. However, as a result of the FRP and discussions in MARC meetings, the Hubs are working with Probation to develop a new process to provide these important healthcare services to youth on Probation who are placed at home with their parent or caregiver. Involvement in the FRP has proven to be symbiotic; not only has the Hub provided expanded services for youth who have experienced CSE and made the process more seamless, but medical staff at the Hub have also been able to develop a deeper understanding of the issues and needs of this population of youth because of the insights of the diverse group of partners around the MARC table. Hub staff are also involved in various other CSEC-related workgroups throughout the County.

Improving Internal Policies and Practices

Internally, DHS Medical Hubs have prioritized CSEC training for staff. To improve Hub staff’s ability to recognize the warning signs of CSE, a significant number of staff have attended the Nola Brantley Speaks CSEC 101 and 102 trainings. Staff have also attended the Probation-facilitated Think Trauma training to better understand the connection between trauma and sexual exploitation. These trainings have informed the internal policies and practices that DHS Medical Hubs have developed to ensure youth who have experienced exploitation are identified and provided with adequate health care services. Since DHS Medical Hubs first became involved with the FRP, they have developed new protocols and procedures within the Medical Hub System that ensures all DCFS and Probation CSEC-identified youth are receiving time sensitive medical exams upon recovery. The team of forensic providers in the Hubs understand that these vulnerable youth may require an increased level of care, and ensure that all CSEC-identified youth are also linked to specialty care when needed, as well as mental health.

“The Medical Hubs were formed to provide high-quality medical care to vulnerable children in our community. The Hubs participation with the FRP Multi-Agency Review Committee has been a very productive collaborative experience. Utilizing feedback from our agency partners, we have improved and standardized our clinical practice guidelines for providing sexual health services and comprehensive medical care to CSEC youth. We have also helped build partnerships with community providers such as the High Risk Teen clinic at the Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles (CHLA).”

DR. JANET S. ARNOLD-CLARK, MD

Senior Physician
Martin Luther King, Jr. Pediatric Hub

“CSEC-identified youth are a particularly vulnerable population, at high risk for multiple medical complications and highly deserving of comprehensive and culturally competent medical care. By facilitating timely access to competent, understanding providers who are able to counsel on risks and benefits of interventions and provide medically necessary treatments, including reproductive health services, empiric/symptom directed treatment for sexually transmitted infections, and HIV prevention, and linkage with mental health, the youth are better served. Additionally, the CSEC-identified youth can be linked to ongoing medical care to engage in an ongoing therapeutic relationship.

TRACEY SAMKO, MD

Adolescent Care & Transition Clinic, Internal Medicine – Pediatrics, LAC+USC Medical Village



LORETTA WORTHINGTON
Clinic Program Manager, Medical Hubs, Los Angeles County Department of Health Services
As the Medical Hub Program Manager, Loretta Worthington has participated in the MARC as well as several other CSEC workgroups since 2016. Worthington assisted the Hubs in developing new ways to track CSEC patient visits and collect some initial DHS CSEC data, and is a staunch advocate for the LGBTQ+ community.



In order to ensure improved data collection and continuity in services, the Medical Hub staff created new methods of tracking CSEC appointment types within the E-mHub database system. This has provided Hub providers with a more efficient way to track appointments, follow up, and provide ongoing care for these youth.



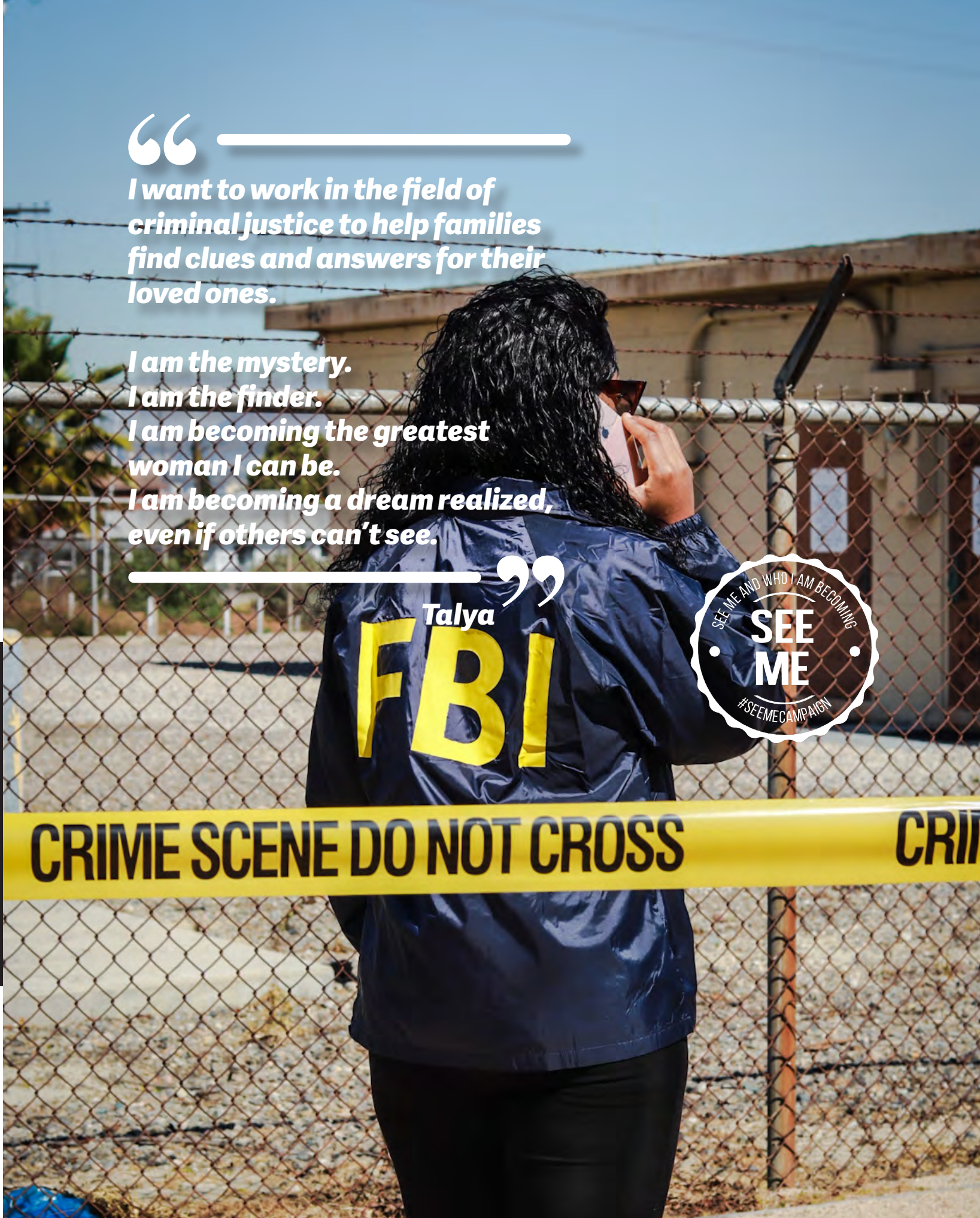
DHS Hub Staff, from left to right: Joseph Rojas (Medical Director, Olive View Regional Medical Hub); Kelly Callahan (Medical Director Harbor-UCLA K.I.D.S. Medical Hub); Claribel Vargas (Medical Director, ESGV Medical Hub); Janet Arnold-Clark (Medical Director, MLK Peds Medical Hub); Loretta Worthington (Medical Hubs Clinic Program Manager); Jorge Fuentes (Medical Director, LAC+USC Medical Hub). Not pictured: Phil Hyden (Medical Director, High Desert Regional Medical Hub).

Message of Commitment

DHS Medical Hub staff are dedicated to ensuring a high quality of care for youth who have been commercially sexually exploited. Involvement with the efforts of the FRP and MARC has provided the Hubs with a collaboration and team approach that led to the identification of needed improvements, and the development of solutions that create more efficient processes for improved healthcare. DHS Medical Hubs remain committed to ongoing County partnership and collaboration, as well as the continuing improvement of internal policies and practices, to ensure that youth who have been commercially sexually exploited receive the health care services they need.



FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT <http://lahumantrafficking.com>



Department of Mental Health

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) directly operates programs in more than 85 sites, and provides mental health services through contract programs at approximately 300 sites co-located with other County departments, schools, courts and various organizations. Each year, the County contracts with close to 1,000 organizations and individual practitioners to provide a variety of mental health-related services around the County.



In the Beginning...

DMH has been involved in the County’s efforts related to CSEC since 2011, initially brainstorming ideas about how to most effectively serve this population of kids, training staff, and eventually becoming a champion for several CSEC initiatives.

Involvement on CSEC Initiatives

Partnering with the County

Since 2013, DMH has developed and maintained effective, collaborative relationships with county agencies to holistically support youth impacted by commercial sexual exploitation. DMH has also collaborated with higher education institutions, such as USC and UCLA, community-based organizations and advocacy groups, such as Saving Innocence, Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking, Journey Out, and ZOE International. Throughout all of these collaborative efforts, DMH has remained committed to serving youth holistically and from a trauma-informed approach, utilizing harm reduction practices when possible.

DMH joined the CSEC Steering Committee when it was established in 2015, and since then, has



KAREN STREICH, Ph.D.

Mental Health Program Manager III, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health

Karen Streich has supported Los Angeles County’s efforts to address CSE since the beginning. Today, she oversees mental health services in Probation juvenile halls and camps, ensuring that youth in detention settings have access to the support and services they need.

participated in its quarterly meetings. DMH also participates in countywide efforts related to service provision, including the development and implementation of the specialized CSEC Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT) for both Probation and DCFS, to ensure that each youth’s mental health needs are taken into account. DMH supported the development of the Prevention and Intervention Curricula for CSEC/Y, and has played a role in the development and implementation of countywide protocols, including the First Responder Protocol for CSEC, Victim Witness Testimony Protocol, and Detention Interagency Identification and Response Protocol. It has supported the Parent Empowerment Program and helped develop resources for youth who have experienced CSE. In addition, DMH maintains a list of agencies with CSEC/Y

trained staff as a resource for DCFS, Probation, advocacy groups, and the department’s specialized Foster Care units.

Over time, DMH’s collaborative partnerships have only strengthened. These partnerships have been pivotal in advancing the identification of, and early intervention for, youth who have experienced exploitation. Through the involvement and participation in workgroups, training, community outreach, engagement, and consultation, DMH and its partners have helped move forward efforts to promote stigma-reduction and wellness to youth victimized by commercial sexual exploitation.

“In the weekly MDT meetings, I was amazed by the willingness of so many diverse partners to come around the table to discuss how to support each youth. Even when we disagreed, we did so respectfully. And at the end of the day, we all knew we were there for the same purpose: to provide each youth with the best support possible.”

ERICA REYNOSO

Supervising Psychologist, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health



Erica Reynoso, Supervising Psychologist, DMH, and Myla Lampkin, Mental Health Clinical Supervisor, DMH, at Compton Community Street Outreach “Take Back the Night” Event.

“Over the last 7 years, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health has recognized that commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth is a form of violence and abuse against children and youth. This severe form of abuse amounts to complex trauma, resulting in long-term consequences on a child’s mental and physical health, as well as their developmental and cognitive abilities. Consistent and early intervention is critical to address and minimize the impact of trauma on a child’s development. To protect youth from this prolonged and violent abuse, the exploitation must be recognized as early as possible to address their multiple needs.

The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health stands firm in our commitment to provide quality mental health services to victims of sex trafficking throughout Los Angeles by equipping our staff with the innovative trainings and strategies to work with the CSEC/Y population. DMH is also committed and actively collaborating with our partner agencies to enhance the holistic treatment approach, which continues to yield positive outcomes for this extremely vulnerable population.”

- Dr. Jonathan Sherin, Director, DMH

Improving Internal Policies and Practices

DMH has also focused attention on improving its internal policies and practices to better support youth who have experienced CSE. To educate staff on this issue, DMH has facilitated department-wide training. To date, DMH has facilitated training on CSEC 101 to over 2,000 mental health providers, and over 400 community members.

In order to identify youth who have experienced exploitation as early as possible, DMH participated in the validation of a screening tool (Commercial Sexual Exploitation-Identification Tool, or “CSE-IT”) designed to identify risk factors of children and youth who may have experienced, or are at risk of, CSE. This screening tool, developed by the WestCoast Children’s Clinic, is recognized nationwide as one of the first screening tools that can be used by mental health professionals for aiding

in their clinical assessment and, ultimately, in the treatment of youth who have experienced CSE. In addition, DMH has advocated for increased mental health consultations for youth who may have experienced, or are at risk of, CSE. Through these measures, DMH aims to identify youth who have been exploited as early as possible in order to connect them to appropriate supports and services.

DMH is committed to not only supporting youth who have experienced CSE, but also to supporting mental health providers and supervisors who work with these youth. DMH holds a monthly CSEC/Y Clinical Roundtable to support direct service providers and provides training and resources to mental health providers on vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and self-care.

Message of Commitment

DMH is committed to ongoing collaboration with the County, and to remaining at the forefront of projects, initiatives, and opportunities that will support the wellness and recovery of those who have been commercially sexually exploited.



DMH’s Specialized CSEC Team, from left to right: Carmen Condon, Myla Lampkin, Vicky Rosales.



FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT <https://dmh.lacounty.gov/our-services/transition-age-youth/csecy/>

Department of Public Health

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) works to prevent disease, and protect and promote health and well-being in Los Angeles County. DPH is committed to reducing health disparities through collaborations with a wide-range of partners, and strives to support policies, practices and programs that lead to healthier communities.



In the Beginning...

In 2010, after volunteering with a local anti-trafficking organization and learning more about the needs of people who are trafficked, individuals at DPH began recognizing that youth who experience commercial sexual exploitation are in critical need of quality health care, yet may face barriers in accessing health care services. DPH began to brainstorm ways that the agency could better serve this population. Before long, DPH joined the County's efforts and since then has led and participated in a number of initiatives to improve access to and quality of health services for youth who have experienced exploitation.

Involvement on CSEC Initiatives

Partnering with the County

Interested in fostering collaboration and coordination across the County to effectively address the commercial sexual exploitation of youth, DPH joined the County's efforts, including participation on the early CSEC Task Force and Steering Committees. During this same time, DPH participated in the development of the Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol for CSEC, helping to strategize the County's 72-hour response after a youth is identified as having experienced CSE, with a focus on ensuring timely access to physical, mental, and sexual health services.

"Collaboration is essential to addressing the issue of trafficking. Not one of our agencies, not one of our sectors, can do this alone. We all rely on each other to holistically support youth who have been trafficked."

*- Susie Baldwin, MPH
Medical Director, Office of Women's Health, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health*

To learn more about the issue, DPH leadership looked to their staff on the ground who interact with at-risk populations. They soon learned from those working in juvenile detention facilities—individuals who provide case management to youth who test positive for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)—that 17% of girls with STDs had disclosed exploitation, stating that they had either sold or traded sex for something of value. These youth also commonly had experiences of sexual assault and other forms of violence, running away, and risky sexual and drug use behaviors. DPH determined that these youth needed not only STD prevention education, but also to be connected to comprehensive wrap around services. In partnership with Probation and the County's CSEC Steering Committee, DPH has worked to provide these comprehensive services to youth in detention facilities over the last 5 years. And in 2016, DPH joined Probation to deliver a special Saturday seminar on sexual health for girls at Central Juvenile Hall. DPH has also participated in the development of the Interagency Detention Protocol for CSE Children and Youth.

Additionally, DPH has attended the annual CSEC Empowerment Conference and, one year, facilitated a workshop for youth on sexual health.

Improving Internal Policies and Practices

In addition to partnering with County agencies, DPH established an internal DPH Human Trafficking/CSEC Committee in 2014, focused on improving internal policies to better serve youth who had experienced exploitation. By 2016, the DPH Human Trafficking/CSEC Committee had designees from all DPH divisions and programs whose staff provide direct services or interact with the public, and since that time has spearheaded internal initiatives around training, data collection, and improving identification and service delivery for youth.

First, the DPH Human Trafficking/CSEC Committee focused on ensuring staff within DPH were adequately trained on CSEC—encouraging staff within the Department to attend the countywide CSEC 101 and 102 trainings by Nola Brantley Speaks, and also facilitating internal CSEC trainings through a public health lens. The Human Trafficking/CSEC Committee also facilitated and provided leadership on training given to healthcare providers across the County. As DPH's internal staff trainings accelerated, conversations evolved and staff began to more clearly recognize the intersectionality of CSEC with different forms of violence. Together with the DPH Gender Based Violence Workgroup, the



SUSIE BALDWIN MD, MPH

Medical Director, Office of Women's Health, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Dr. Susie Baldwin has dedicated much of her career to supporting victims of human trafficking. Today, in her role as Medical Director of the Office of Women's Health, Dr. Baldwin works with a great team to address gender based violence, improve sexual and reproductive health, and understand women's health inequities. She co-chairs the DPH Human Trafficking/CSEC Committee with Dr. Anna Long. She is also co-founder and Board President of HEAL Trafficking (Health, Education, Advocacy, Linkage).

CSEC Committee moved toward incorporating trauma-informed approaches with patients and clients, including universal education around violence and improved linkages with community-based service providers.

In January 2020, DPH hosted its inaugural Human Trafficking Summit, “Engaging Public Health in Human Trafficking Solutions.” DPH hosted a half day event, funded by the DPH Division of Substance Abuse Prevention and Control. Approximately 250 staff attended. Presentations were delivered by 16 experts, including four human trafficking survivors, two of whom were survivors of CSEC. Almost 100% of attendees (97%) indicated that after the Summit they had a greater knowledge of human trafficking and a greater understanding of human trafficking as a public health issue. Almost 95% said that information from the Summit was relevant to their work, and 87% planned to incorporate what they learned into their work. Given this excellent response, DPH expects to engage more of its colleagues in anti-trafficking efforts and further improve DPH’s, and LA County’s, ability to support CSE youth.

The DPH Human Trafficking/CSEC Committee also focused attention on collecting relevant data to better inform the Department’s practices. The Committee collected and reviewed intake forms throughout the Department to understand what data was currently being collected, and then recommended modification of intake forms to better assess patients’ risk for being trafficked. Eventually, the Committee recommended that CSEC and trafficking-related assessment questions be added to the County’s Electronic Health Record, Online Real-time Centralized Health Information Database (ORCHID).

In addition, based on guidance from the California Child Welfare Council’s CSEC Action Team, the DPH Human Trafficking/CSEC Committee established an internal framework to identify and support youth who have experienced exploitation within DPH. Public Health Nurses in DPH’s Health Care Program for Children in Foster Care, within the Division of Children’s Medical Services (CMS), assess children and youth in foster care for indications of CSEC risk, provide reproductive

and sexual health education to youth who have experienced or are at-risk of experiencing CSE, and offer other resources, support, services, and/or referrals to youth, as needed. In addition, the CMS Court Pediatrician and Nurse Liaison are available to consult with the specialized DCFS CSEC multi-disciplinary team, as needed.

Most recently, the DPH Human Trafficking/CSEC Committee created indicator lists for sex and labor trafficking, which will be shared with all DPH programs in the form of posters and laminated desk references. In addition, DPH’s Office of Women’s Health is working on clinical protocols for DPH doctors, advance practice clinicians, and nurses to use for addressing violence with patients, including

trafficking, codifying processes that they have been trained on. And DPH’s new Office of Violence Prevention is working to coordinate and support existing efforts across Los Angeles County to prevent multiple forms of violence and to ensure that strategies are trauma-informed and responsive to the community.

Legislative Advocacy

The DPH Human Trafficking/CSEC Committee continuously monitors and evaluates policy proposals and legislation pertaining to human trafficking and CSEC, particularly policies that involve or impact health, submitting recommendations to leadership on which bills to support.



2020 LA County DPH Human Trafficking Summit.



FOR MORE INFORMATION
EMAIL OWH@ph.lacounty.gov

Message of Commitment

“The Department of Public Health has been involved in Los Angeles County’s efforts to identify and support commercially sexually exploited children (CSEC) and youth since 2013. We work to educate DPH staff on the issues of sex and labor trafficking, improve specialized services and referrals for trafficked youth, and provide trauma-informed services to all DPH clients. We remain committed to working with our County and community partners to address child trafficking as an important public health issue in Los Angeles County.”

- Dr. Debby Allen
Deputy Director for Health Promotion, Department of Public Health

District Attorney's Office

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office is the largest local prosecutorial office in the U.S. Nearly 1,000 attorneys, known as Deputy District Attorneys, prosecute more than 71,000 serious crimes (felonies) and roughly 112,000 less serious crimes (misdemeanors) throughout Los Angeles County each year.



In the Beginning...

The District Attorney's Office prosecutes all human sex trafficking crimes involving minor and adult victims committed in Los Angeles County. While the District Attorney's Office has aggressively prosecuted sexual exploiters of minors for over ten years, the passage of Proposition 35 (Californians Against Sexual Exploitation Act) in November 2012 provided prosecutors more tools to combat this issue, protect victims in court proceedings, and hold sex traffickers accountable. Since then, the District Attorney's Office has both collaborated with other county agencies and developed internal policies and practices to more effectively address this issue.



District Attorney Jackie Lacey speaking at a press conference.

"The exploitation of our children is unacceptable and those who are perpetuating this crime need to be held accountable. More importantly, for those who want and are able to leave these situations, they need to know that there is a safe haven for them. The sexual exploitation of our youth is not just a crime against the person, it's a crime against our community. The amount of time and resources that go into prosecuting these cases is fueled by our desire to see this problem resolved, as we recognize that the amount of damage these types of crimes do to a child is immeasurable."

- District Attorney Jackie Lacey, speaking at a recent anti-trafficking Summit in Los Angeles

Involvement on CSEC Initiatives

Partnering with the County

The District Attorney's Office recognized that partnering with other county agencies was key to furthering its goal of efficiently and effectively prosecuting human sex trafficking cases, while offering victims supportive services. In 2015, the District Attorney's Office became a member of the Los Angeles Regional Human Trafficking Task Force, which partners with numerous government and non-government agencies to efficiently investigate and prosecute sex traffickers, while also ensuring the needs of those exploited are addressed. This collaborative approach has been instrumental in locating youth that are being exploited and bringing traffickers to justice.

The District Attorney's Office has also played a key role in the development of Los Angeles County's Victim Witness Testimony Protocol. Attorneys from the office have participated regularly and have helped think through challenges that youth might experience testifying against their exploiters. They have worked closely with DCFS, Probation, DMH, the Children's Law Center, and the Public Defenders and Alternate Public Defenders' Offices to develop a collaborative protocol, and have provided training to partners on how to best support victims during the testimony process.

Improving Internal Policies and Practices

Within the District Attorney's Office, District Attorney Jackie Lacey developed new policies and practices to more effectively prosecute traffickers and provide victims with comprehensive services. In February 2014, District Attorney Lacey introduced the First Step Diversion Program—a voluntary program that was available to youth who had been charged with prostitution or prostitution-

related offenses. By completing a one-year program of therapeutic services and treatment, as well as an educational component, the youth's original charge would be cleared.

In June 2014, District Attorney Lacey created the Human Trafficking Unit (HTU), designating senior prosecutors to handle the most serious sex trafficking cases committed in Los Angeles County. In 2016, District Attorney Lacey secured funding to expand the HTU and renamed the unit the Human Sex Trafficking Section (HSTS). The HSTS is staffed with three specially trained Deputy District Attorneys, a supervising Deputy District Attorney, and two District Attorney Investigators who are responsible for assisting in the investigation of sex trafficking cases. Prosecutors selected for the HSTS have substantial experience prosecuting domestic violence and sexual assault cases, which ensures they are prepared to work compassionately with victims who have experienced extreme trauma and abuse. Recognized as a best practice approach, all sex trafficking cases are required to be vertically prosecuted, which means that one prosecutor stays with the case from start to finish.



Deputy District Attorney Theodore Swanson, Deputy District Attorney Christmas Brookens, District Attorney Jackie Lacey, Deputy District Attorney Trudi White-Black, Deputy-In-Charge Guillermo R. Santiso.

Appreciating the need for a multifaceted and compassionate approach to handling sex trafficking cases, District Attorney Lacey also designated three specially trained victim services advocates within the Office’s Bureau of Victim Services to assist with these cases. Known as the Human Trafficking Victim Assistance Program, the Program provides minor and adult victims of trafficking with the specialized services and support they need during and after the prosecution process. Services are offered to assist victims as they rebuild their lives, including help with obtaining housing, counseling, tattoo removal, job training, and financial compensation from the California Victim Compensation Board. The Deputy District Attorneys in the HSTS work closely with victim advocates to help minimize the re-traumatization experienced during the criminal process. Facility dogs, who are trained to provide comfort to crime victims, are also

available to make testifying against a trafficker less traumatic for a victim.

In addition to its prosecutorial responsibilities, the HSTS conducts training for prosecutors, law enforcement, and other government and non-government agencies. The HSTS also engages in community outreach by educating the public on sex trafficking awareness through presentations at local schools, churches, and community groups.

Since the creation of the Human Trafficking Unit in 2014, more than 250 defendants have been charged with human sex trafficking of a minor, and numerous traffickers of children have received substantial state prison sentences, including life sentences. In addition, one Deputy District Attorney received the 2018 “Local Hero Award” from Saving Innocence, recognizing his compassion with minor victims, as well as his effort to help victims feel empowered through the testimony process.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

VISIT <https://da.lacounty.gov/operations/human-trafficking>

Message of Commitment

“The Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office has a demonstrated commitment to holding traffickers accountable for the heinous crimes they commit against the vulnerable children from our community. The wealth of experience and compassion of the deputy district attorneys assigned to the Human Sex Trafficking Section ensures victims are treated with respect, appropriately supported throughout the criminal process, and connected with resources and services they need to thrive. We proudly work alongside our community and county partners and will continue to tirelessly fight against the sexual exploitation of minors.”

- District Attorney Jackie Lacey

Department of Health Services Juvenile Court Health Services



Juvenile Court Health Services (JCHS) is a unit within the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (DHS). JCHS provides comprehensive health services to youth in county Probation camps and detention settings.

In the Beginning...

Recognizing a call to action after attending a CSEC 101 training, in 2014 JCHS formed the Nurses and Physicians CSEC Champions Committee (“CSEC Champions Committee”). This team focuses on identifying youth who have experienced CSE, ensuring they receive specialized, comprehensive healthcare while in custody, and connecting them with necessary health services when they transition back to the community. As of May 31, 2020, there were 641 youth identified in custody who had previously experienced CSE; the JCHS team is responsible for identifying 191 of these youth, accounting for nearly 30% of all youth in custody who have been identified as having experienced CSE.

“

JCHS is proud of its healthcare providers for their dedication and commitment to providing the best possible care for all of our youth. Our JCHS Nurses and Physicians CSEC Champions Committee has led the way in not only guiding our staff on the identification and response to CSEC, but also in shifting the culture surrounding CSEC.

”



Champion

DR. DAVID OH

JCHS Interim Medical Director

“
As nurses, we have the tools and opportunity to help sexually exploited youth receive compassionate and comprehensive healthcare. It is our responsibility to be their advocate and liaison by connecting them with the resources Los Angeles County has to offer.

”
ALMA OTEY
Registered Nurse



Involvement on CSEC Initiatives

The CSEC Champions Committee has collaborated with County partners over the years to ensure that the health needs of youth in custody are prioritized when developing new protocols and services. Representatives from the Committee helped conceptualize the Interagency Detention Protocol for CSE Children and Youth, and have been an invaluable voice at the table throughout the development and, more recently, the implementation of the Protocol. Additionally, the Committee developed a specialized internal policy, the JCHS Policy on CSEC, which outlines

healthcare practices for detained victims or survivors of CSE. Through this policy, JCHS seeks to ensure that these youth receive “whole person” support, meaning that JCHS will work to not only ensure the youth receives appropriate medical attention but also that the youth is connected to resources and support while detained and when they transition back to their communities. Additionally, the policy requires that all staff, including all physicians, nurses and new hires, receive an initial CSEC training, and a refresher training every two years.

“For far too long, medical providers had the privilege of listening to the stories and seeing the wounds of our CSE youth without knowing how to meet their needs. Our youth were being re-victimized unknowingly by a system untrained to help them. Working together with our county partners has given me the knowledge and tools needed to create change. And together, we’ll continue the good fight as advocates for our youth.”

DR. MARYA MONARES
JCHS Nurses and Physicians CSEC

Message of Commitment

JCHS understands that an individual’s medical care is only one aspect of a person’s wellbeing, and that a person’s history of CSE is only part of their story. JCHS is committed to continuing to work with community partners and surrounding each youth with a village of support.



FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT <https://lacounty.gov/human-trafficking/>

Public Defender's Office

Founded over one hundred years ago, the Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office was the first legal office in the nation dedicated to representing those who cannot afford their own legal representation. With 36 office locations throughout the County, the Public Defender's diverse staff includes more than 1,000 employees, including more than 700 dedicated attorneys, and is the largest defense firm in the nation. Sixty attorneys in the Juvenile Division of the Public Defender's Office represent over 20,000 youth throughout Los Angeles County every year. The Public Defender's Office is a recognized leader in providing holistic services to youth, focusing its efforts on early intervention by both recognizing and addressing the underlying causes of delinquent behavior such as trauma, mental illness, and developmental and learning disabilities.



In the Beginning...

The Public Defender's Office first became involved in working with the County to address the commercial sexual exploitation of children in 2011 when the Juvenile Court partnered with the Probation Department to submit a grant to support the development of a specialized, collaborative juvenile delinquency court—the Succeeding Through Achievement and Resilience (STAR) Court. While there was admittedly some skepticism in the beginning about the viability of a highly collaborative court, the Public Defender's Office took a leap of faith and agreed to assign a dedicated attorney to the STAR Court. This attorney remains consistent with the youth from the point of disposition through the entire period of probation supervision, and is responsible for safeguarding and representing the youth's interests throughout.

"It was a welcome change to be in a room where everyone understood the trauma my client endured and sought to help and not punish."

- Sharonda Bradford, Deputy Public Defender III,
Deputy in Charge of the Compton Branch
(former Deputy Public Defender in STAR Court)

Involvement on CSEC Initiatives

Partnering with the County

With its collaborative underpinnings, the STAR Court proved to be a worthwhile endeavor. Recognizing the value of the collaborative approach and the additional services and supports their clients can access as a result of the partnership, the Public Defender's Office has remained committed to the success of the Court ever since. This includes participation in the weekly Probation CSEC multidisciplinary team (MDT) meetings held for every youth involved in the Court. At these MDT meetings, the Public Defender's Office collaborates with other county agencies, such as DCFS, DMH, DPH and Education, as well as community partners, such as Saving Innocence, to ensure that each youth is receiving the support they need to not only fulfill their terms of probation, but also to meet their needs and goals around education, placement or transitional housing, health care, extracurricular activities, and more.

In addition to its involvement with the STAR Court and MDTs, the Public Defender's Office has played an instrumental role in the development of the Victim Witness Testimony Protocol (VWTP), a collaborative multi-agency protocol intended to support youth who are called to testify against their traffickers in adult criminal court. The VWTP brings together agencies from across the County, including DCFS, Probation, Mental Health, and advocates. The Protocol also brings the Public Defender's Office and District Attorney's Office—two agencies that are typically on different sides of the table—together to support youth through the testimony process, aiming to minimize the retraumatization that can occur from testifying.

Additionally, the Public Defender's Office has attended the annual CSEC Empowerment Conference.

“

I love being part of a team that helps the youth begin to imagine a new identity, addresses their trauma, and puts them on the path to recovery.

”

LORI HARRIS

Deputy Public Defender in STAR Court

Improving Internal Policies and Practices

The inaugural STAR Court public defender, Sonja White, set the bar high for the representation of youth in the Court, making herself available around the clock and working hard to build a connection with each of her clients. This became the internal model for the level of engagement and commitment that STAR Court representation required.

Since 2011, the Public Defender's Office has continued to carefully select the dedicated attorney assigned to the STAR Court, and has provided the dedicated attorney with additional support from upper management. This is not an assignment that is given lightly. The most recent Public Defender assigned to the STAR Court is a 25-year veteran of the Public Defender's Office with extensive trial experience. The dedicated STAR Court attorney manages a caseload of approximately 70 cases per month.

Message of Commitment

The Los Angeles County Public Defender's Office is dedicated to the continued success of the STAR Court program and to the broader County initiatives aimed at providing a holistic approach to addressing the traumas and unique issues of youth who have been trafficked.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT Pubdef.lacounty.gov**

Nola Brantley Speaks

Nola Brantley Speaks (NBS) was founded by Nola Brantley in May 2014. Nola Brantley Speaks is a survivor-owned and led organization, whose mission is to empower a community of advocates through training, curricula development, and event coordination, as well as to create a community of support for individuals either exiting or currently involved in the commercial sex industry.



In the Beginning...

Nola Brantley began her partnership with Los Angeles County in 2011 while she was serving as Executive Director at Motivating, Inspiring, Supporting and Serving Sexually Exploited Youth (MISSSEY) in Oakland, California. Between 2011 and 2014, Brantley traveled to Los Angeles County for one week every month to train professionals across disciplines, develop curricula, and assist Los Angeles County with launching CSEC initiatives. In the spring of 2014, Brantley founded Nola Brantley Speaks, and in 2015 relocated to Los Angeles, enabling her to provide more frequent training and fully dive into the partnership she had developed with Los Angeles County. Since 2011, NBS' trainings have helped to create a basic awareness of this issue across the County, which has served as the foundation for much of the work in Los Angeles County to better serve children and youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation, especially within public systems.



Nicole Klasey and Nola Brantley of Nola Brantley Speaks.



DR. NICOLE KLASEY
Lead Trainer, Nola Brantley Speaks

Dr. Nicole Klasey has been a part of NBS since 2016 and is the co-creator of the survivor-clinician trainer model. Dr. Klasey plays a key role in NBS's training delivery and curriculum development efforts.

Champion

Efforts to Identify and Support Youth and Adults Who Have Experienced Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Training

Nola Brantley Speaks offers a variety of trainings on commercial sexual exploitation, trauma-informed care, and other issues impacting youth and young adults impacted by the commercial sex industry. NBS provides several trainings on this issue for professionals serving the population of youth and young adults, including training on: CSEC 101, CSEC 102, Harm Reduction, Responding to CSEC Trauma, the Intersection of CSEC and Technology, the Healing Begins with You, Gay Cis-Males and Transgender Females, Caregiver Awareness and Word on the Street Prevention for Youth. The curricula for these trainings were developed in partnership with Los Angeles County, under the leadership of the Los Angeles County Probation Department. Some of these curricula are structured as a "train-the-trainer" model, wherein Nola Brantley Speaks trains participants to facilitate the training themselves, helping to increase the capacity of the County as a whole to respond to this issue and better support youth. Over the years NBS has also brought in experts from across

the country to raise awareness about specific topics such as internet exploitation, boys, and vicarious trauma.

Nola Brantley Speaks has developed a survivor-clinician training model in which participants learn the theoretical foundation of the major issues and dynamics present, while also hearing from someone with lived experience. NBS provides training to professionals and agencies throughout Los Angeles County who are serving children and youth who have experienced CSE or who are interested in learning more about the needs of youth and families impacted by exploitation.

Between 2011 and 2020, Nola Brantley Speaks provided approximately 250 CSEC trainings to professionals in Los Angeles County, training approximately 35,000 professionals across disciplines. In an ongoing partnership with Los Angeles County, NBS continues these training efforts today, which have now expanded to reach every agency serving children and youth in the County.

"Through my partnership with Los Angeles County I have truly been able to grow as a survivor-leader."

- Nola Brantley, Founder and CEO, Nola Brantley Speaks



ISMAIL BAYLOR
Training Coordinator, Nola Brantley Speaks

Ismail Baylor joined NBS in July 2018 as the training coordinator. Baylor is the smiling face that training participants see when they walk in the door and is also responsible for processing training data and requests.

Champion

Partnering with the County

Nola Brantley Speaks partners with Los Angeles County to implement the County’s CSEC training initiatives, to develop CSEC-related curricula, and to facilitate CSEC events and conferences to professionals across the County. Recently NBS partnered with Los Angeles County to develop the CSEC Online Training Module, which is used by Los Angeles County to train all County employees who are unable to attend in-person trainings.

“
Partnering with LA County gives us the opportunity to provide CSEC training to so many people who need this information and are working closely with the youth in LA County.
”

ISMAIL BAYLOR
Training Coordinator,
Nola Brantley Speaks



Nola Brantley presents a recognition award to Allison Newcombe, alongside former Supervisor Don Knabe, at a County CSEC Event.

Survivor Empowerment

As an organization led by a survivor, Nola Brantley Speaks has prioritized the centering of survivor perspective in all of its work and training. NBS partners with Los Angeles County to plan and execute the annual CSEC Youth Empowerment Conference and the monthly CSEC Youth Empowerment Events. NBS has worked closely with Los Angeles County over the past 8 years to provide these empowering and life-changing events to survivors of CSE in Los Angeles County. NBS also partners with Los Angeles County and Saving Innocence to mentor the young survivors that are part of the Survivor Leadership Academy for Youth (SLAY). NBS helps prepare the SLAY youth to emcee events, speak at conferences, and participate as panelists on panels. In addition, NBS focuses on encouraging the SLAY youth to become compassionate leaders who prioritize their own self-care.



PRAISE FOR NOLA BRANTLEY SPEAKS

*“Hello Nola! I completed the LA County CSEC training via our Learning Net Program. I will be honest—I initially questioned the applicability to my day job with the County, but much of Module 2 [risks, vulnerabilities, and pathways to entry] opened my eyes to different things to consider, watch for and report (if not intercede). I want to thank you for your passion *clearly* exhibited throughout the course.”*

“Excellent and very powerful training. The presenters’ content helped me to refocus on my purpose and increased my desire to engage more with clients.”

“Dear Nola, I attended your training on Monday 10/23/2017 and had to send you a message. I was deeply moved by the topic and by your personal story. I don’t think I have been to such a powerful training in a long time. Since Monday, I have talked about this to anyone willing to listen to me. I feel the need to keep the conversation going about this topic, throughout my agency and in any other possible place. THANK YOU!”

FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT www.nolabrantleyspeaks.org
EMAIL nbscoordination@gmail.com

Saving Innocence

Saving Innocence was founded in 2010 by Kim Biddle to support children who, at that time, were being arrested for prostitution-related charges and not recognized for their victimization. Saving Innocence provides critical support to children and youth who have been commercially sexually exploited 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Using a highly relational and collaborative approach, Saving Innocence gives children and youth on-the-ground help by utilizing strategic partnerships with law enforcement, social service providers and schools, and mobilizing communities to prevent abuse and increase neighborhood safety.



In the Beginning...

In 2012, Saving Innocence became the first community-based organization to be contracted by Los Angeles County—specifically by the Superior Court, Probation Department, and District Attorney’s Office—to provide a continuum of care for youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. Recognizing that youth would benefit from relationships with adults outside of the system, Saving Innocence built a team of specially trained advocates to support youth who have experienced CSE through crisis response, case management, and survivor empowerment opportunities.

By providing support and care to youth who have experienced, or are at risk of, CSE, and empowering survivors to become leaders in their own communities, Saving Innocence has been an essential partner in the work since the beginning.

“

We integrate the phrase ‘Can you believe we get to do this?’ into our work, to remind ourselves that it is a privilege to be invited into the moments of crisis and to support not only the youth, but also our social workers, probation officers, and law enforcement partners.

”

SAVING INNOCENCE

Efforts to Identify and Support Youth and Adults Who Have Experienced Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Training

In 2020, Saving Innocence, in collaboration with CASA, launched the “CSEC Advocacy Course,” an in-depth, online training specifically for professionals and volunteers working to provide supportive services for commercially sexually exploited children. The training is intended to help participants learn how to identify red flags and warning signs, understand the impact of commercial sexual exploitation, and learn how to become knowledgeable advocates who can support children with lived experience and make a meaningful difference. Chapters include but are not limited to: defining human trafficking; victim identification; buyers, traffickers, and recruitment; safety planning, engagement, and advocacy; core competencies and understanding trauma; impact of CSE and empowerment; and supervision and provider care.

Crisis Response

Saving Innocence’s team of specialized advocates provides crisis response, responding

with law enforcement and other public agencies 24 hours a day to support children and youth who have been commercially sexually exploited. After law enforcement first makes contact with a youth through Los Angeles County’s Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol for CSEC, an advocate from Saving Innocence responds within 90 minutes, alongside child welfare and probation (if applicable); initially provides food, clothing, and ongoing support as the youth is taken for a medical exam; and the team, along with the Saving Innocence advocate, determines the best short term housing and safety plan for the youth. The advocate stays in touch with the youth, providing case management for a minimum of 90 days, though frequently much longer.

Between 2014 and 2019, Saving Innocence responded to over 500 crisis calls to support youth when recovered by law enforcement partners through the First Responder Protocol. Today, Saving Innocence has capacity to respond to 200 crisis calls, annually.



HOW WE WORK

LAW ENFORCEMENT INTERVENES

First point of contact with the child.



SUPPORT PROVIDED

Clothes and food are provided, advocates support child through sexual assault exams that may be performed, and obtain medical clearances for child to be safely transported.



ONGOING CASE MANAGEMENT

Advocates build relationships over time through goal setting, connections to community resources, and love.



EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS

Provide youth with opportunities in building life skills, community connections, while celebrating milestones.



ADVOCATES

Respond alongside social workers or Probation Officers within 90 minutes of receiving a call.



SAFETY PLANNING

Advocates assist social workers or probation officers with ensuring the child is safe, and assists in closely supporting the child for the first 72 hours after recovery.



JUSTICE

Advocates support child through court processes, and testifying against exploiters.



Supportive Services

In addition to crisis response, Saving Innocence provides long-term case management for children and youth who have experienced CSE through a strengths-based and trauma-informed approach. Saving Innocence works closely with youth, their families and caregivers, and the system to ensure that the youth's myriad of needs are met—including major things such as their care or housing, education, and health, as well as more basic day-to-day needs such as clothing for school, a ride to the DMV, or just someone to talk with.

In addition to case managers, Saving Innocence's staff includes lived experience experts, who provide critical support to youth who have experienced CSE. Lived experience experts meet with youth one-on-one to offer ongoing case management and mentorship, and also facilitate prevention and intervention workshops in detention facilities. They also provide support to youth testifying against their traffickers in court, including helping the youth mentally prepare for trial, being there with them on the day of trial, and oftentimes even accompanying them on the witness stand during their testimony. Youth share that having an individual who can truly understand and relate to the experiences they've been through—a survivor—is invaluable.

Saving Innocence's advocates have provided long-term case management services to nearly 1,200 youth, as well as Prevention and Intervention Workshops to over 700 youth. Today, Saving Innocence has the capacity to provide case management services to 400 clients, annually.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019*
Crisis Calls	33	118	113	130	143
Case Management	109	173	216	350	385
Intervention and Prevention Groups	18	76	74	159	452

*As of December 31, 2019

"Advocates are able to provide youth with extra support and address needs that may be unmet by the system. We help them develop the skills they need to succeed as healthy adults, like building healthy relationships and being punctual. With support, we see improvement in how they interact with the world."

- Jasmine



JASMINE

Senior Lead Case Manager & FRP Coordinator, Saving Innocence

Jasmine joined Saving Innocence in May 2014, and is now a Senior Lead Case Manager and FRP Coordinator, working closely with law enforcement and County partners in the implementation of the FRP. The direct service she provides has made a tremendous difference in the lives of countless youth.

Champion

“

Saving Innocence is valuable because we have people here that are dedicated to the children no matter what time of day or night. When I was growing up, and I went through my exploitation and the abuse and everything, I could only wish and hope and dream that there would have been a program around like Saving Innocence because I could have gotten the help and the attention that I needed a lot earlier.

”

JESSICA

Lived Experience Expert, Saving Innocence

Partnering with the County

Saving Innocence’s team has built strong relationships with the many county agencies that youth intersect with, allowing for frequent and consistent communication to address the needs of youth, including both crisis management and long-term planning. In addition to the collaboration with law enforcement described above, specialized advocates work closely with Probation’s Child

Trafficking Unit (CTU) Deputy Probation Officers, who are primary points of contact for the youth, and participate in weekly CTU multi-disciplinary team meetings. Saving Innocence also maintains a strong relationship with the specialized trafficking unit within DCFS, communicating frequently with Los Angeles County Social Workers and participating in weekly DCFS multi-disciplinary team meetings.



Champion

AMBER DAVIES, LCSW

Senior Director of Clinical Programs, Saving Innocence

Amber Davies joined Saving Innocence in 2014, and today serves as Senior Director of Clinical Programs. She participates in many countywide initiatives to better identify and support youth who have been commercially sexually exploited, including the FRP and the annual Empowerment Conferences. She provides critical support and supervision to the team of Saving Innocence case managers who respond to youth in the field 24/7. Davies is always focused on ensuring that survivors’ experiences inform countywide responses to this issue.



Champion

ALAN SMYTH

Executive Director, Saving Innocence

Alan Smyth has served as Executive Director of Saving Innocence since 2016. Smyth has responsibility over direct services and business operations. His main focus includes financial and resource development, strategic partnerships, staff development and client services. He is passionate about seeking justice for children impacted by exploitation and providing a positive example to staff and clients, while supporting their growth, development, and ability to have fun in the middle of the challenging work.

“

I think we all need unconditional relationships in our lives—people who are willing to help us through whatever challenge comes next. That’s what these kids need. Advocates are there to fight for them, cheer them on, and celebrate them. Unconditionally.

”

ALAN SMYTH



“Sometimes our kids face problems that ice cream can solve, creating opportunities to talk about the rest.” - Saving Innocence

Survivor Empowerment

Saving Innocence also connects children and youth who have been commercially sexually exploited with empowerment services for years following their identification, helping them go from victims to survivors to leaders in their communities. In 2018, Saving Innocence created the Survivor Leadership Academy for Youth (SLAY) program to provide transition age youth (ages 18-24) with leadership and professional development opportunities. For more information on SLAY, see page 35.

“At its core, this crime takes away a youth’s belief in their inherent value as a human being. I just don’t know if there’s anything more worth fighting for than a human being to know their value and to know their worth.”

- Sara



SARA
TAY Program Manager & Case Manager, Saving Innocence
Sara joined Saving Innocence as a case manager in July 2013. In her seven years at Saving Innocence, she has provided CSE youth with critical advocacy, supporting them with consistent love, compassion, and mentorship. She both created and leads the SLAY program.

Champion



FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT <https://savinginnocence.org/>
EMAIL info@savinginnocence.org

National Center for Youth Law

National Center for Youth Law (NCYL) is a nonprofit organization that advances justice by amplifying youth power, dismantling structural inequities, and building the policies, practices and cultures foundational to a world in which all youth thrive. NCYL's work weaves together research, public awareness, policy development, technical assistance and impact litigation to ensure governmental systems adequately and appropriately support children and youth. NCYL's Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative (CRCSE) seeks to eliminate the commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth by bringing people together, changing perceptions, building trust, transforming systems, and empowering youth and survivors to thrive, both in California and nationally.



In the Beginning...

Early on in Los Angeles County’s work to better understand and address the commercial sexual exploitation of youth, the Probation Department connected with Kate Walker Brown, an attorney at NCYL. Walker Brown had recently released a report on the issue of commercial sexual exploitation of children and youth across the state, which highlighted the need for multi-system collaboration. Probation recognized that they couldn’t face this issue alone, and that collaboration with other County agencies and community-based organizations would be key to making an impact for youth, so they brought in NCYL to help in those efforts.



“I am so thankful to NCYL for their expertise, passion and continued guidance as we improve services for youth in our care who have experienced CSE. Our partners at NCYL have pushed the County to break down silos and to think expansively about the universe of support we can provide kids, working with us side by side as we build and implement new innovative approaches for identifying and supporting youth.”

MICHELLE GUYMON
Director, Child Trafficking Unit Los Angeles County Probation Department

Efforts to Identify and Support Youth and Adults Who Have Experienced Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Partnering with the County

NCYL, as an outside partner with expertise in the issue of CSEC and systems-change work more broadly, worked closely with Probation and DCFS to bring together diverse partners from across the County to brainstorm how to work together—in one of the largest counties in the country—to better support youth who were experiencing commercial sexual exploitation. NCYL has played a unique role in the County, helping to conceptualize innovative practices that build off of the most promising practices in the state and the country, and then assisting in bringing those ideas to life. This process is not linear and is often complicated, involving:

- Sitting down with agencies to better understand their individual needs, mandates, and existing roles;
- Working together with individuals across agencies to develop a collective approach that fulfills a shared goal of supporting youth;
- Developing creative solutions to a diverse set of problems facing youth;
- Listening to survivors to hear what their experiences have been and ensuring that their ideas and voices are reflected in new policies and practices;
- Synthesizing information and creating tangible, written protocols and policies to reflect multidisciplinary agreements and spelling out roles and responsibilities; and
- Supporting implementation and monitoring of new policies, including creation of training materials and roll-out strategies.

Over the past nearly decade, the partnership between Los Angeles County and NCYL has evolved into a truly symbiotic relationship, allowing for collective learning, problem-solving and innovation. NCYL has played a key role on several initiatives in the County, including:

- Authoring the Law Enforcement First Responder Protocol for CSEC;
- Assisting in the launch of the No Such Thing campaign;
- Authoring the Detention Interagency Identification and Response Protocol for CSE Children and Youth;
- Leading cutting-edge research to answer the question of what housing and services can best support youth who have experienced CSE; and
- Providing ongoing support to CTU leadership to expand and refine the CTU’s and the County’s service provision model.

“Los Angeles County has been a tremendous partner over the years. From agency leadership to the champions on the ground, we have seen such a deep commitment to young people and a willingness to think creatively, in collaboration with those who have lived experience, about how to best support youth. Our team is eager to advance this work together as thought partners and to continue to build innovative policies and protocols that improve the experiences of young people.”

-Allison Newcombe, Associate Director, Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative, NCYL



Kate Walker Brown, Allison Newcombe, Mae Ackerman-Brimberg, attorneys at the National Center for Youth Law, with Michelle Guymon, Director of the CTU, and former Chief Probation Officer Terri L. McDonald at the launch of the Detention Interagency Identification and Response Protocol for CSE Children and Youth.



Erin French, Legal Fellow at NCYL, Dana Wyss, Director of Training at Star View Adolescent Center, and Maria Contreras, Program Associate at NCYL, at the 2019 Empowerment Conference.

Statewide Advocacy

NCYL’s research and knowledge of this work at the state and national level has helped to inform the work on the ground in Los Angeles. Additionally, as the work in Los Angeles County has forged ahead, NCYL has shared the County’s innovative approaches with other communities across the state and through national coalitions and conferences, in an effort to push the field forward.

NCYL co-founded and co-facilitates the California Child Welfare Council’s CSEC Action Team, a multidisciplinary body comprised of substantive experts from across the state, dedicated to researching and identifying promising prevention and intervention practices, collaborating with survivors, providing guidance to county agencies and community partners, and conducting evaluation to ensure policies improve outcomes for children. NCYL has staffed and served on the executive team since its establishment in 2013.



Ed Fithyan (DCFS), Michelle Guymon (Probation), Kate Walker Brown (NCYL), Amber Davies (Saving Innocence), Casey Grace (LAPD), Scott Cardy (LAPD), Maria Contreras (NCYL), and Mae Ackerman-Brimberg (NCYL) at an event hosted by CDSS in January 2020 where Walker Brown was presented with an award for her leadership in improving services and supports for youth who have experienced CSE.



“
Our nearly decade-long partnership with Los Angeles County has been exciting and dynamic, encouraging us to challenge our thinking about how we can best support and serve children, not just in Los Angeles County but across the state and nation. We are grateful for the forward-thinking champions within the County who have continually prioritized the leadership, feedback and insight of survivors. We are incredibly proud of the collective impact we have made and the lasting partnerships and friendships forged.”

KATE WALKER BROWN
Director, Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative, National Center for Youth Law

Allison Newcombe and Kate Walker Brown, attorneys at NCYL, in front of the White House during the United State of Women inaugural convening in 2016.

In 2016, the CSEC Action Team launched the Advisory Board, comprised of 11 individuals, all of whom experienced commercial sexual exploitation as children or young adults. During board members’ two-year tenure, they provide ongoing guidance to the CSEC Action Team, governmental agencies, community-based organizations and other stakeholders regarding how to improve state and local policy for youth who have experienced or are at risk of CSE. In addition to this work, Advisory Board members are provided with professional development opportunities throughout their tenure. NCYL staffs and helps facilitate the Advisory Board, supporting board members’ consultations and connecting board members to professional development opportunities they are interested in.

NCYL has also served as a key partner in legislative advocacy resulting in the passage of three pivotal state laws that fundamentally altered the way that California views and serves children and youth who have experienced CSE (SB 855, SB 1322, and AB 2992). Since the passage of these laws, and others including SB 794, NCYL has worked closely with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) to develop regulatory guidance, create implementation tools, organize learning opportunities, and identify future policy improvements to support practitioners on the ground.

NCYL’s Collaborative Responses to Commercial Sexual Exploitation Initiative team includes: Kate Walker Brown, Allison Newcombe, Mae Ackerman-Brimberg, Maria Contreras, Erin French, and Jessica Valadez.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

VISIT <https://youthlaw.org/policy/ending-child-trafficking/>

EMAIL info@youthlaw.org

Coalition to Abolish Slavery & Trafficking

The Coalition to Abolish Slavery and Trafficking (Cast) is a Los Angeles-based nonprofit organization that is working to put an end to modern slavery and human trafficking through comprehensive, life-transforming services to survivors and a platform to advocate for groundbreaking policies and legislation. Cast’s mission is to end modern slavery through education, advocacy and empowering survivors of human trafficking. Cast was awarded the Presidential Award for Extraordinary Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons in 2014 for championing a survivor-centered approach to combatting human trafficking.



In the Beginning...

Cast was founded in 1998 by Dr. Kathryn McMahon, the Thai Community Development Center, and a group of community activists, in response to the discovery of 72 Thai workers that had been kept for seven years in slavery and debt bondage in Los Angeles County. Since 1998, Cast has provided a “continuum of care” to survivors of human trafficking and their families in Los Angeles County through survivor- and trauma-informed social and legal services. Cast supports survivors at every step of their journey: from helping them escape their trafficking situations and access safe housing, to supporting them to recover from trauma and to rebuild their lives, and even to become leaders in the anti-trafficking movement. Cast serves all survivors of human trafficking—no matter their age, race, gender, nationality or whether they experienced sex or labor trafficking.

“In the last few years, Los Angeles County has taken on the issue of human trafficking as one of its core focuses. It has been important for Cast as a nonprofit to have this buy-in from the County so that survivors can access as many resources and wraparound support services as possible. We are excited to see our partnership with the County grow and for them to lead the way as a model, as we work to ensure that survivors of all forms of human trafficking are supported.”

- Philip Gnaedig, Interim Co-Director of Empowerment Services, Cast



IMA MATUL MAISAROH

Survivor Leadership Program Manager, Cast

Ima Matul Maisaroh is a survivor advocate, mentor, consultant, powerful speaker, and currently the Survivor Leadership Program Manager at Cast. Matul Maisaroh oversees the LA survivor network, Resilient Voices, and the National Survivor Network, a network of human trafficking survivors who are now leaders in the fight to end human trafficking.

Efforts to Identify and Support Youth and Adults Who Have Experienced Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Supportive Services

Cast’s Youth Program was created in 2014 in response to an increase in referrals of youth survivors of trafficking and the specialized needs of minor and transition-age youth survivors. The Youth Program’s mission is to provide youth-centered, trauma-informed services to survivors 24 years and younger by empowering them to transform their trauma into their own story of healing and resiliency by supporting the youth and their support system. The Youth Program provides intensive case management services with youth-specific interventions, monthly youth activities, and a youth survivor internship program. The Youth

Program is made up of a team of Intensive Care Case Managers who provide an array of supportive services from crisis care to addressing long-term goals that reduce vulnerabilities and increase protective factors. These services include provision of basic necessities, advocacy, court accompaniment, housing support, goal planning, employment/school support, linkage to trauma-informed mental health and medical care, mentorship, and supportive counseling. The Youth Program adapted Cast’s 4-Phase Case Management model, a client-centered model with a proven track record in serving trafficking survivors, to focus on engagement, support, trust-building and interventions specifically for youth.



Members of Resilient Voices, Cast’s LA-based group of human trafficking survivors who have become advocates for policy change. L-R: Dewi Yeni, Jess Torres, Ima Matul, Lorena Barrios, Jimmy Lopez, Siti Pasinah, Angela Guanzon, Kanthi Salgado.



KAY BUCK

CEO, Cast

Kay Buck joined Cast as its CEO in 2003, bringing 25 years of experience leading anti-trafficking initiatives. Buck leads one of the longest-running anti-slavery organizations in the nation, serving thousands of survivors and their families with a continuum of services to rebuild their lives.

In addition to the youth-focused programming, Cast provides services to support youth and adults all along the continuum of a human trafficking survivor's journey. These services include: a toll-free 24/7 human trafficking hotline and emergency response, intensive case management, counseling and skills training, legal advocacy, shelter, and survivor leadership. For example, Cast's legal services program works collaboratively with survivors, community-based organizations, public-interest attorneys and numerous government agencies to ensure survivors of human trafficking are provided culturally-sensitive, victim-centered legal representation. Cast also operates two shelters for trafficking survivors: an emergency shelter serving up to 15 female-identified survivors for up to 90 days; and a transitional shelter for up to 10 female-identified survivors which offers 12+ months of housing, case management, a financial savings program, social and cultural activities, group therapy, supportive counseling and more. Cast also supports and encourages survivor leadership through programs including LA-based Resilient Voices (launched in 2003) and the National

Survivor Network (launched in 2011).

In the year ending 2019, Cast served 1,518 survivors of human trafficking and their families. 25% of these survivors were youth between the ages of 18 and 24.

Partnering with the County

In 1999, Cast established the Los Angeles Slavery and Trafficking Task Force, the first anti-trafficking task force in the U.S. The group eventually grew into the Los Angeles Metropolitan Area Task Force on Human Trafficking in 2005. Cast's leadership on the Metro Taskforce has since expanded to a countywide multi-agency partnership spearheaded by Cast and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department. The Los Angeles Regional Human Trafficking Task Force provides trauma-informed care to trafficking victims and investigates high-priority trafficking crimes. Its 90+ partner agencies have been actively collaborating on emerging cases, developing protocols for advancing taskforce objectives and implementing best practices in addressing the pervasiveness of human trafficking in Los Angeles County.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

VISIT <https://www.castla.org/>

CONTACT info@castla.org

Children's Law Center of California

Children's Law Center of California (CLC) is a non-profit, public interest law firm that provides legal representation for tens of thousands of children impacted by abuse and neglect. CLC's highly skilled, passionate and committed attorneys, investigators, and support staff fight to ensure the well-being and future success of their clients through a multi-disciplinary and informed approach to advocacy.



In the Beginning...

In January 2013, after the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors prioritized efforts to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Los Angeles County, CLC participated in the first kick off meeting called by the Board to develop strategies to address the issue. Recognizing that youth in the child welfare system are particularly vulnerable to CSE, CLC committed to improving the support and services available to this population. That April, CLC began providing mandatory CSEC training for all CLC staff, and that fall, CLC began co-leading the statewide California Child Welfare Council's CSEC Action Team and participating in several Los Angeles County committees related to this issue.

Since 2013, CLC has been a leader in Los Angeles County's continued efforts and dedication to eradicating CSE of children and has used its advocacy in a variety of different arenas to ensure these youth have what they need to thrive.



Children's Law Center CSEC team.

Efforts to Identify and Support Youth Who Have Experienced Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Partnering with the County

CLC has actively participated in various committees and initiatives in the County including the Los Angeles County CSEC Steering Committee, ICAN CSEC Committee, Los Angeles County Victim Witness Testimony Protocol Committee, Human Trafficking Task Force, and the Los Angeles County "No Such Thing as a Child Prostitute" campaign.

Since November 2013, CLC has also actively participated in and helped to organize the annual CSEC Empowerment Conference. And since January 2014, CLC has attended and helped organize the monthly CSEC Empowerment events.

Training

In order to expand awareness and increase depth of knowledge, CLC collaborated with Nola Brantley Speaks to establish mandatory CSEC 101 training for all CLC staff. CSEC 101 training is now mandatory for all new hires and CSEC 102 training is mandatory for all CSEC teams and staff required to work with high risk youth. In addition to CSEC 101 and 102, CLC has also provided training on additional topics to better inform staff, including: Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation; Commercially Sexually Exploited Children: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach; How to Engage with CSEC Youth and Placement Issues; Innovative, Multi-Disciplinary Approaches to Identifying and Supporting Victims of Human Trafficking; and Trauma Responsive Information Sharing: Key Lessons Learned with Specialized Courts and Multi-Disciplinary Teams Supporting CSEC Youth.

Committed to screening and early identification, CLC partnered with WestCoast Children’s Clinic (WCC) to train all staff on how to use WCC’s Commercial Sexual Exploitation-Identification Tool (CSE-IT). All staff now use this tool to conduct a CSE risk assessment for all clients age 10 and older.

Supportive Services

In 2015, CLC testified before the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to advocate for a specialized dependency court similar

to the Succeeding Through Achievement and Resilience (STAR) Court—a specialized delinquency court for youth on probation who have been commercially sexually exploited. CLC collaborated with the Presiding Judge’s Office, DCFS, and other stakeholders to help create a specialized courtroom calendar dedicated to serving CSE youth involved in the child welfare system—the Dedication to Restoration through Empowerment, Advocacy and Mentoring (DREAM) Court. In addition to the CLC attorneys and staff, CLC helped ensure that all DREAM courtroom staff, including clerks, bailiff, and attorneys, complete CSEC 101 and 102 training.

In January 2016, CLC created a speciality CSEC Team consisting of one CSEC Attorney and one CSEC Case Manager to staff the DREAM Court, which officially opened its doors in February 2016. Recognizing the critical importance of survivor leadership, in October, 2017 CLC hired a fulltime survivor advocate to join the DREAM team. CLC’s CSEC Team continues to grow. Today, the CSEC Team consists of: a Program Supervisor, three CSEC Case Managers, two CSEC Attorneys, a Firm Director, and an Attorney Supervisor. Since that time, 315 clients have been served by CLC’s CSEC Team.

"I am blessed to have my whole team of amazing strong women support me. When I first met my CLC case manager, I told myself to keep my wall up and tell her what she wanted to hear and go about my business. But once she started being consistent, I started to open a little bit more. She took the time to really get to know me, she never left me, she never lied to me, she never belittled me or made me feel less than what I really thought of myself. She made me feel comfortable in my own skin. She is a one in a million and I thank her from the bottom of my heart."

- Tiffany H.

FOSTERING PHOTOGRAPHY

One of CLC’s attorney supervisors, Chuck Agohian, volunteers his time at group homes to teach youth who are interested about photography through the Fostering Photography program. Youth are provided with cameras to use. These photos were taken by youth in the program.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF
CLC'S CSEC
WORK

- JAN 2013** LA COUNTY BOS declared CSEC a problem in Los Angeles County. CLC attends the first kick off meeting to develop strategies to address and combat CSEC
- APRIL 2013** CLC collaborates with Nola Brantley to provide (and make mandatory) CSEC training for all CLC staff
- FALL 2013** CLC co-leads the CSEC State Wide Action Team and LA County CSEC Steering Committee and participates in ICAN CSEC Committee, LA County Victim Witness Protocol Committee and Human Trafficking Task Force
- JAN 2014** CLC hosts CSEC Saturday Empowerment Events including horseback riding, paddle boarding, dancing lessons, self-defense classes and more
- NOV 2013** CLC participates in the CSEC Annual Empowerment Conference
- SEPT 2014** CLC participates in specialized training including: Human Trafficking and Child Exploitation, CSEC: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach and many more
- MAY 2015** CLC testifies before the LA County BOS to advocate for a dedicated dependency court for CSEC cases
- FALL 2015** CLC works with the Presiding Judge, DCFS, and other stakeholders to create a courtroom calendar dedicated to only serving CSEC youth DREAM Court
- OCT 2015** CLC participates in LA County's "No Such Thing as a Child Prostitute" Campaign
- JAN 2016** CLC creates specialty CSEC team consisting of one CSEC Attorney and one CSEC Case Manager
- FEB 2016** DREAM Court opened its doors serving CSEC clients
- OCT 2017** CLC hires survivor advocate to join DREAM Court Team
- TODAY**

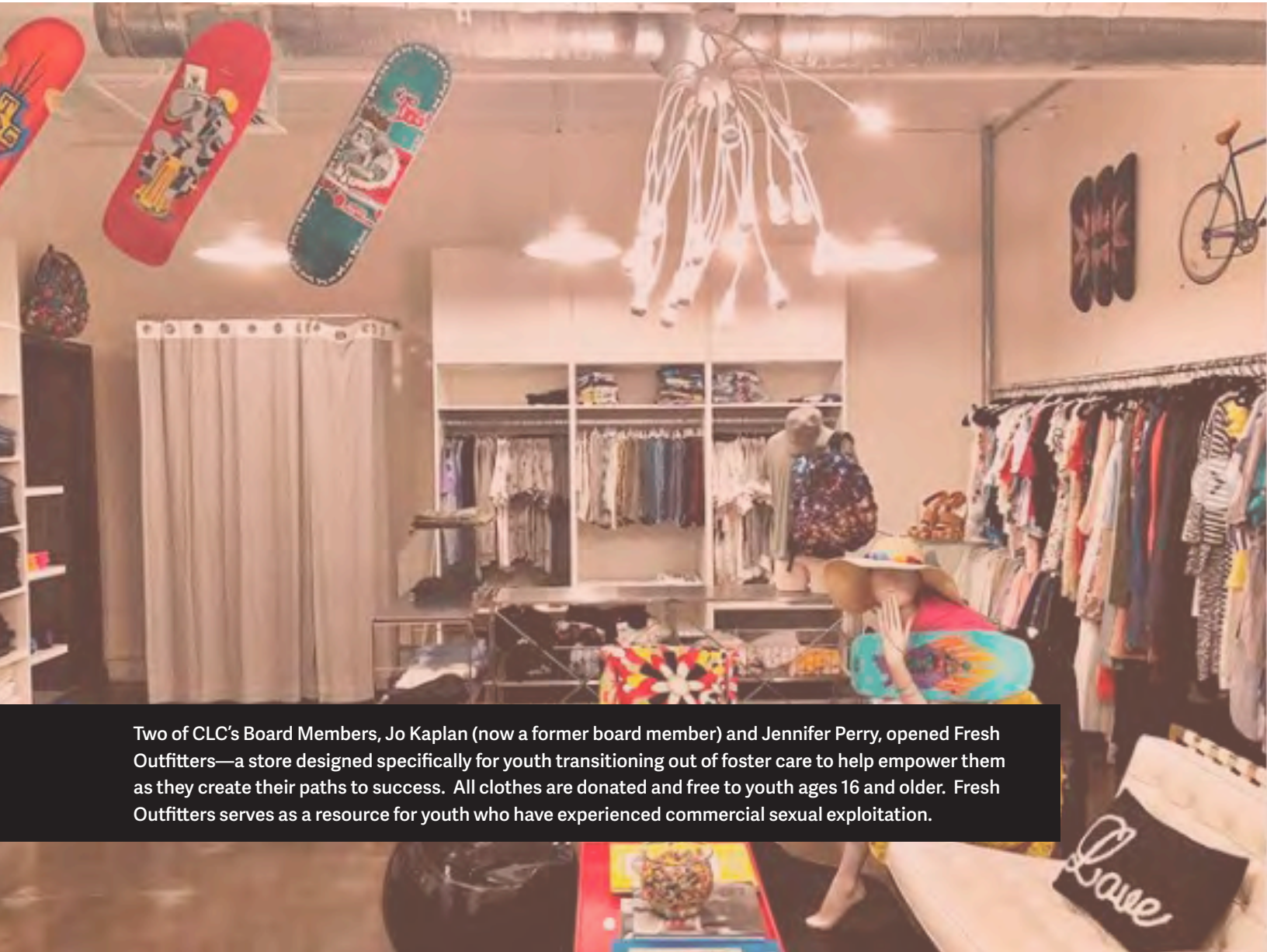
CLC's CSEC Team continues to grow and improve our practices to best serve the CSEC community. Our attorneys, and case managers are dedicated to building rapport with our clients and providing support as they navigate the system. Our team provides resources, helps clients find appropriate housing, attends meetings with our clients and provides support when they testify in court against their traffickers.

The CSEC Team provides intensive case management and courtroom advocacy with an emphasis on frequent and consistent contact. The Team is dedicated to building rapport with clients and providing support as they navigate the many systems they are involved in, including not only the child welfare system, but also the

juvenile justice, educational, and healthcare systems. The team provides resources, helps clients find appropriate housing, attends meetings with clients, and provides support when they testify in court against their traffickers.

"My attorney has supported me in so many ways. She has helped me completely change the way I function and helped me improve on my public speaking. All that has been a big help to me in my everyday life. She has supported me throughout the years with my new life as a mother. I have felt respected by her and I respect her as well."

- Kenya R.



Two of CLC's Board Members, Jo Kaplan (now a former board member) and Jennifer Perry, opened Fresh Outfitters—a store designed specifically for youth transitioning out of foster care to help empower them as they create their paths to success. All clothes are donated and free to youth ages 16 and older. Fresh Outfitters serves as a resource for youth who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation.

Legislative Advocacy

In 2014, CLC joined several organizations to form a small coalition, which advocated for legislation to improve California's response to CSEC, including Senate Bill 855 and Senate Bill 1322. Most recently, in 2018, CLC co-sponsored AB 2992, which requires the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) to create a specialized CSEC training for law enforcement. CLC has been working with POST on the development of this important training.

“CLC is committed to meeting the unique needs of our CSEC clients both in and out of the courtroom. In addition to our daily work in DREAM Court, CLC is engaged in efforts to reform our systems to better serve—rather than penalize—youth who are victims and need support to heal and move forward to successful independence. We are proud of our work sponsoring AB 2992 requiring law enforcement training to improve our state's response to CSEC, and of our ongoing leadership role in the California Child Welfare's work. Our advocacy prioritizes survivor advocates' voice in the development and improvement of policy and practice related to advocacy for CSEC, and we continue to provide our staff with training to hone our practice to better serve CSEC youth.”

LESLIE HEIMOV
Executive Director, Children's Law Center of California

FOR MORE INFORMATION

VISIT <https://lacounty.gov/human-trafficking/>

Forgotten Children, Inc.

Forgotten Children, Inc. (FCI) was founded in 2006 to combat the trafficking of women and girls. FCI takes a holistic approach to eliminating the effects of human trafficking, including street outreach and education, a Drop-in and Resource Center for those who have been arrested for prostitution-related offenses or sexually exploited, and a residential program for survivors focused on healing. FCI also prioritizes educating the public and increasing awareness by providing prevention education to schools, churches, and the community, as well as resources and support for law enforcement. Over the last 13 years FCI has served more than 8,000 people and housed more than 100 survivors in the Los Angeles Area.



In the Beginning...

Over 13 years ago FCI recognized that anti-trafficking resources were often devoted to either minors or sent outside the U.S., leaving limited funding available to support adult survivors of trafficking domestically. FCI was founded to provide trauma-informed, supportive services in a nurturing environment to transition-age youth between the ages of 17-24 who have been exploited, and to provide education to those at risk of exploitation. FCI focuses its efforts on areas in and around Los Angeles where a large number of victims are identified, including South Los Angeles, Inglewood, Compton, Lynwood, Willowbrook, and Long Beach, Orange and San Bernardino Counties.



Forgotten Children, Inc. team from left to right: Adrianna Koelzer, Vivian Shepard, Jacquie Hardiman, Tera Hilliard, Stephanie James, Shondra Barrett, Wendy Hamilton.

Efforts to Identify and Support Youth and Adults Who Have Experienced Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Training and Awareness

Since 2006, FCI has been focused on educating communities regarding sexual exploitation and human trafficking. FCI provides awareness trainings and workshops to churches, law enforcement and hospital personnel. FCI also offers classes to parents, educators and day care providers. And during the month of January—human trafficking awareness month—FCI provides additional education, resources and awareness workshops to Los Angeles County residents.

FCI also facilitates a Youth Ambassador Program (YAP), which empowers youth to become leaders in their community by enhancing their knowledge of human trafficking, teen dating violence, mental health, as well as other stressors youth face in today's society by utilizing interactive practices, education, and intervention tools.

Outreach

FCI conducts weekly street outreach to inform women and girls who are experiencing exploitation that there is a safe place where they can go, as well as programs that will assist them with employment and connect them with other resources, as needed. Every Friday

night, FCI's street team of 11 volunteers go to areas around Los Angeles and San Bernardino Counties where women and girls are known to be exploited to distribute "freedom bags" that contain gum, a small set of toiletries, and phone numbers for resources. FCI is currently training another street team to conduct outreach in the Orange County area.

Crisis Response and Supportive Services

FCI has a Drop-in and Resource Center, which is a safe place where survivors of trafficking can receive immediate support, resources, and information to help with their physical, mental, and emotional needs. Survivors are welcomed into an environment where they can relax, find comfort and feel safe. At the Drop-in and Resource Center, FCI provides survivors with clothing, hygiene products, hot meals and resources for short-term shelter, job placement, case management, and education. FCI ensures that anyone with a desire to leave "the life" is provided with the resources and tools they need to support that decision. Staff and volunteers are trained to provide emergency support and relocation services, as well as other appropriate services, as needed.



TERA HILLIARD

President/CEO, Forgotten Children, Inc.

Tera Hilliard has been the CEO of FCI for more than five years. She is trained in trauma counseling and believes in the complete restoration of one's spirit, soul and body. Hilliard works tirelessly to raise awareness of human trafficking and through her leadership, FCI has expanded its services to women incarcerated at the Lynwood County Jail.

"I've been trafficked for so long; I never knew what it meant to be FREE. Your program has saved my life."

-Survivor

Partnering with the County

FCI has partnered with Los Angeles County and key stakeholders on several events and programs. FCI works with Los Angeles County Whole Person Care to provide emergency resources and services, as needed. FCI has also provided awareness training to Los Angeles County Health Services case managers and staff. In addition, FCI partners with the Los Angeles County Regional Task Force and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department on bi-monthly Sting Operations in Compton, CA. FCI also contracts with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to provide diversion classes and resources. And FCI has also hosted a one-day conference with the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office to educate the community, parents, and churches about trafficking, grooming and resources available.

Diversion Programming

FCI provides diversion programming through Road to Freedom (RTF)—an 8-week re-entry diversion program designed for women incarcerated for prostitution and sexual exploitation. Through RTF, participants are provided with resources, education and tools to recognize factors that increased their vulnerabilities and to build a life free of exploitation. Upon successful completion of the program, participants receive a \$200 stipend.



Tera Hilliard, President/CEO, Forgotten Children, Inc. with Jackie Lacey, Los Angeles County District Attorney.

Housing

FCI also provides housing for survivors. Rachel's House of Healing (RHH) is a residential program for survivors of trafficking and sexual exploitation who are 18 years of age and older. Located in San Bernardino, RHH provides a safe, trauma-informed environment where survivors can heal from their abuse and trauma. RHH's full-time staff and counselors provide 24-hour counseling, addiction recovery, anger management and job training. Residents are paired with mentors to assist them with setting goals, and also to provide emotional and mental support.

RHH has the capacity to house five full-time residents, and each resident may stay up to 24 months, as long as they continue to meet the criteria. Additionally, each resident must be an active participant of the four-step 180-program that addresses the mind, body, soul, and spirit through health development, personal development, vocational development, recovery celebration, interpersonal skill development, spiritual development, community involvement, creative leisure activities, and independent living preparation and follow up.

RHH aims to be self-sustaining while empowering its residents to become self-sustainable through the social enterprise, Rachel's Sew N Sow (RSS). This program is designed to address barriers survivors face when trying to reenter society, providing job training and helping survivors to develop entrepreneurial skills. Residents also connect with job coaches and mentors that assist with resume writing, interviewing skills, and dressing for success.

"Being a resident in your program has brought me hope and I've been able to reclaim my life."

-Survivor



Garden products from the house.



VIVIAN SHEPARD
Program Director/Resident Manager, Forgotten Children, Inc.
Vivian Shepard has been leading the charge as Resident Manager for four years. She has been instrumental in the development of a social enterprise, establishing a healing garden and walking residents through their trauma with compassion and love. Shepard is dedicated to the restoration of each resident and preparing them to "launch" back into a life of healing and productivity.



FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT www.forgottenchildreninc.org
EMAIL info@forgottenchildreninc.org

Gems Uncovered Inc.

Gems Uncovered Inc. was founded in July 2011 as a volunteer run organization to combat human trafficking. Gems Uncovered is a faith-based organization committed to preventing human trafficking and providing aftercare to those who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation, including youth and adults. Its mission is to support those who have been impacted by human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation so that they can heal and feel empowered to lead a life of purpose.

Gems Uncovered is part of the advisory board for BRAVE Global, an organization based in Long Beach that aims to connect and empower vulnerable and at-risk youth across the globe in order to stop exploitation.



In the Beginning...

Gems Uncovered’s work started in 2011 with street outreach covering the areas of Long Beach, Compton, Lynwood, and Los Angeles. In 2012, it expanded its services by opening its very first drop in center in Long Beach. In 2014, Gems Uncovered initiated a partnership with the Long Beach District Attorney’s Office to run a diversion program, *Free 2B Me*, to help the women and girls that were being cited for prostitution.



Mary White, Founder and CEO, Gems Uncovered Inc., receiving the Recognition Impact Award from Long Beach Prosecutor Doug Haubert.



Champion

MARY WHITE

Founder and CEO, Gems Uncovered Inc.

Mary White, the Founder and CEO of Gems Uncovered Inc., provides case management and is on call 24/7 to support survivors of commercial sexual exploitation. White is a core leader of the Long Beach Human Trafficking Task Force and partners with the Long Beach Prosecutor’s Office and Long Beach Vice Unit to provide victim assistance.

Efforts to Identify and Support Youth and Adults Who Have Experienced Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Training

Gems Uncovered provides trainings on human trafficking to the Long Beach community, churches, and youth. Gems Uncovered hosts 20-25 workshops and tabling events annually. Gems Uncovered also has a youth rally—“Our Voice” campaign—that educates youth on the issue and inspires them to be part of the solution.

Outreach

Gems Uncovered also conducts street outreach to those experiencing commercial sexual exploitation. In 2019 alone, Gems Uncovered provided information and assistance to 574 women.

GEMS Uncovered is a trusted resource for human trafficking victims in Long Beach and we are grateful for their service.

DOUG HUBERT
Long Beach District Attorney



In the “Our Voice” campaign, youth, with parent consent, are educated about human trafficking and then share what they have learned with the community through a rally, alongside Gems Uncovered volunteers. Youth hand out brochures which include information about human trafficking.

Supportive Services

Through its drop in center, Gems Uncovered provides numerous supportive services to youth and adults who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. Services include:

- Free legal assistance to complete and submit paperwork for expungement of criminal records;
- Career development, including assistance with pursuing a GED, college applications, resume writing, and job search;
- Assistance identifying and obtaining short and long term housing, both in and out of state; and
- Referrals for trauma-informed mental health care, medical care, or substance abuse treatment programs.

Partnering with the County

Since launching its diversion program in 2014, Gems Uncovered has worked closely with the Long Beach District Attorney's office and the Long Beach Police Department's Vice Unit to identify individuals for the program and ensure

those individuals are provided with the services and support that they need to heal and thrive.

Diversion Programming

Gems Uncovered provides an 11-week sexual exploitation Diversion Program called *Free 2B Me* for women 18 and over. *Free 2B Me* is a Los Angeles County court-approved program designed to educate and empower survivors of commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking. The Diversion Program includes a 10-week survivor-created and informed curriculum, *Ending The Game* from Sowers Education Group. It provides the structure and framework needed to uncover harmful psychological coercion (a.k.a. "The Game") that victims may have been subjected to during or before their exploitation. By revealing a sequence of commonly-used, yet seldom-explained, coercive techniques used by traffickers, sexual abusers, media and others, the curriculum aims to empower victims to acquire skills and end "The Game."

“
The most rewarding aspect of being a part of this program is watching the transformation of the young ladies, leaving the program with pride and value because they accomplished something.
”
MYRA MILLER



MYRA MILLER
Program Director, Gems Uncovered Inc.

Myra Miller serves as Program Director of Gems Uncovered Inc. Miller facilitates the *Free 2B Me* program, the street outreach schedule, and training workshops.

Champion



Tangelia is a survivor and graduate of Gems Uncovered's *Free 2B Me* program. After graduation, she became a survivor leader and advocate for Gems Uncovered. She also attended and graduated from the Two Wings Qualified Academy. She went on to be named 2019 "Pioneer Woman of the Year" by LA Councilmember Curren D. Price, Jr. Tangelia is truly a success story.

In addition to the *Ending the Game* curriculum, participants have an option of selecting sessions such as: personal safety, education, and healing arts therapy. Gems Uncovered has also partnered with GoodWill Industries Career Program to assist in job placement and educational programs.

After completion of the 11-week program, Gems Uncovered celebrates participants with a party, gifts, and a recognition of the participants' accomplishment. In addition to completing the program, Gems Uncovered's goal is that participants have developed skills and strategies to achieve their dreams.

Over 200 survivors have completed the *Free 2B Me* program so far, leaving with employment, enrolling in school, completing their GED, and more.

In recognition of its diversion program, Gems Uncovered received the IMPACT Award from the Long Beach District Attorney's office as well as recognition from Supervisor Janice Hahn's office.

"You gave me hope.
This letter thanking you is for you to know I'm not damaged goods, but I am going to be a success."
- A *Free 2B Me* program graduate, in a letter expressing gratitude



FOR MORE INFORMATION
VISIT www.gemsuncovered.org

Journey Out

Journey Out (formerly the Mary Magdalene Project) was founded in 1980 with a mission to help survivors of commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking leave a life of abuse and violence, overcome their fears, and feel empowered to reach their full potential and achieve their goals. Journey Out provides outreach, emergency crisis response, job training, clinical therapy, emergency housing, legal referrals, survivor mentorship, and court approved diversion programming. Journey Out’s services are available for adults, including those who identify as LGBTQIA, women, and men.



In the Beginning...

In 2012, Journey Out began offering a prevention education program utilizing content from “My Life My Choice”—a prevention education curriculum developed in Boston, Massachusetts. Los Angeles County referred youth to Journey Out who would benefit from prevention education. The County—the Probation Department in particular—recognized Journey Out as an important resource for youth impacted by exploitation and began referring youth to Journey Out for support and services. Since then, the relationship between Journey Out and the County has continued to expand, growing to include other opportunities, such as training on CSE for probation officers.



Journey Out’s group classes cover a host of survivor-curated content from fast money and self worth to relationships and dealing with stigma.



Journey Out provides groceries to clients in need.

Efforts to Identify and Support Youth and Adults Who Have Experienced Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Outreach

Journey Out conducts street outreach along the “tracks” in Los Angeles, the streets where commercial sexual exploitation commonly occurs, providing resources to those who are experiencing exploitation. Journey Out’s emergency crisis response team meets youth and adults experiencing commercial sexual exploitation where they are—providing hand sanitizer, hygiene products, a snack, condoms and cosmetics, along with Journey Out’s contact information. In addition to contact information, Journey Out includes resources for emergency shelters both within and outside of California. The street outreach is routinely conducted with a survivor case manager who understands the dangers of “the life” and other consistent staff. Thus, youth and adults along the “tracks” are familiar with Journey Out staff and feel comfortable engaging because of the relationship that has been built over time.

Crisis Response

Journey Out collaborates with law enforcement, serving as victim advocates during police task force operations including the FBI Innocence Lost Task Force Operations. During these operations, Journey Out’s crisis response case managers offer support to victims on the spot, immediately connecting them to programs and services in the community. Journey Out has established strong relationships with law enforcement, resulting in frequent referrals for victim advocacy and service provision for adult victims of sex trafficking.

In addition to working with law enforcement, Journey Out’s crisis response team handles emergencies that arise after regular business hours. Services range from securing emergency housing, family reunification services (coordinating travel, lodging, medical care, and other needs) for victims out of state, to crisis counseling and other critical after hours support.



Clients can choose from an array of wardrobe items for everything from job interview attire to everyday clothing.

Supportive Services

Journey Out also provides referrals for legal issues, housing, job placement, job readiness training, interview guidance and support, clothing, free transportation for job interviews, and HIV education and testing.

Partnering with the County

Journey Out is a resource for probation officers, social workers, mental health providers, and others, who believe their youth may have been sexually exploited. Through referrals to Journey Out, staff is able to connect with the youth, conduct an intake and identify what additional resources will be helpful to them. Journey Out

also provides in depth training for probation officers on human trafficking, including sex trafficking. Journey Out’s training encompasses an understanding of sex trafficking from several perspectives, from the victims to the traffickers, covering the full spectrum of individuals the probation officer may come across. The training covers firsthand accounts of manipulation, a review and analysis of various forms of manipulation, and recent trends in recruitment and exploitation, which is updated regularly based on what Journey Out staff see during street outreach and work directly with survivors.

“Having personal experience makes a huge impact with the girls. I’m not just someone who is knowledgeable about human trafficking. I’m a survivor who was exploited in the same city and on the same streets as them. My perspective is different from someone who doesn’t have that lived experience. And the fact that I have overcome those obstacles and worked on myself, and am now able to come back and talk to them about my experiences, shows them that there is life after exploitation.”

- Tika Thornton



Champion

TIKA THORNTON

Crisis Response Case Manager & Survivor Advocate, Journey Out
Tika Thornton joined Journey Out in February 2017 as a Crisis Response Case Manager. For the past three years, Thornton has worked extensively with the Probation Department’s Child Trafficking Unit, connecting youth with resources and providing support through mentorship. In addition to her work at Journey Out, Thornton serves as President of Long Beach Advocates for Change, is a council member of Long Beach GRIP, an organization that helps at-risk youth, and sits on the board of directors of the Two Wings Qualified Academy, a nonprofit organization that provides survivors job skills and resources to start careers, and co-facilitates trauma information training.



Clients work through their trauma in Journey Out’s art therapy classes.

Survivor Empowerment

Through Empowerment Groups, Journey Out’s survivor case managers and facilitators serve as a living testimony of what life can be, not only with regards to employment, but also in terms of mental state, self confidence, and overall well-being. Clients learn how to address and overcome the barriers of having a criminal record, discovering that they can still embrace life and find happiness. Survivor case managers teach clients how to be present for others, become involved in the community, and secure financial independence.

Diversion Programming

In collaboration with the Los Angeles City Attorney’s Office, Journey Out offers the Prostitution Diversion Program (PDP) as a way to earn dismissal of prostitution-related charges. Individuals who have been arrested and charged with a prostitution-related offense may opt into the PDP, which requires the individual to participate in a program led by Journey Out. The length of the program depends on the plea agreement between the judge and the attorneys. The requirement is typically to attend 8 or 12 classes and therefore usually runs 8 or 12 weeks long per client. Upon successful completion of the program, the District Attorney dismisses the charges.

98

provided with long term
survivor-mentorship

329

Clients Served

11,924

Services Provided

1,159

youth were provided with
prevention information

272

Clients provided with
case management

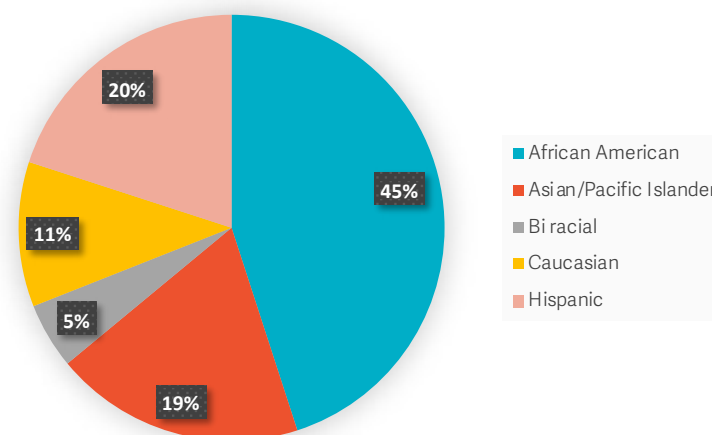
60%

of clients reported to be working
"Out of the Life"

25

individuals provided
with housing

Racial Breakdown of Clients



Data is specific to 2019



FOR MORE INFORMATION

VISIT www.journeyout.org

EMAIL info@journeyout.org

Restoration Diversion Services

Founded in 2009, Restoration Diversion Services, Inc. (RDS) is an anti-trafficking nonprofit based in Compton, California that is committed to helping survivors make healthy, positive choices and avoid falling into criminal activities. Its mission is to help young women who are victims of sex trafficking exit the life of exploitation by empowering them with knowledge, support, and services. RDS provides a range of services, including educational classes, mentoring, job preparation, clothing, and referrals to housing, medical and mental health providers.



In the Beginning...

RDS was established in 2009 by Sinetta Farley. Several women from churches throughout the community came together at Citizens of Zion Missionary Baptist Church, concerned about young women being exploited in their community. These meetings grew and support from Deputy City Attorney Sonya Dawson and Compton Sheriff Deputy Rafter Owens galvanized the interest in creating an organization. RDS was founded to provide assistance to a large number of girls and young women who were being sex trafficked in Compton. Before RDS was founded, there were no organizations in the area to help sex trafficking victims exit the streets.

RDS's initial focus was street outreach. Teams walked Long Beach Boulevard, engaging with young women and providing them with encouragement, support and resources. Very quickly, RDS realized that if it wanted to facilitate successful transitions from the street, it needed to offer meaningful connections to temporary shelter, long-term housing, and other critical supports. Today, RDS offers services through its drop-in center, as well as a variety of court-ordered and self-initiated programs for those who have been trafficked or arrested for

prostitution. RDS has helped countless young women exit the streets, find employment, and begin the process of rebuilding their lives.

Efforts to Identify and Support Youth and Adults Who Have Experienced Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Training and Outreach

RDS provides awareness and prevention education to inform individuals and groups about commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking. Most training opportunities are directed to young people ages 12 to 17, including youth placed in group homes, as research has shown that this age group and system involvement is the most targeted by and vulnerable to sex traffickers. The presentations promote youth advocacy, awareness, prevention information and safety strategies. In 2020, RDS facilitated seven human trafficking trainings and attended nine roundtables. These roundtables focused on issues relating to human trafficking and domestic violence and offered opportunities for RDS to connect with other agencies regarding resources and assistance.

“Working with RDS, we can bring the survivors’ perspective to law enforcement, schools, group homes and many other platforms. I have the opportunity to make a difference in people’s lives and tell my story as a learning tool. I never thought my experience could be turned into training.”

- Tkeyah Dupclay, Survivor Advocate, Restoration Diversion Services, Inc.

In addition, RDS conducts street outreach, which establishes rapport with victims, makes them aware of the drop-in center, and ideally fosters longer-term relationships and connections to support and services. In 2020, RDS interacted with 54 individuals through outreach, and was ultimately able to assist seven of them.

Drop-In Center and Supportive Services

In 2013, RDS opened a drop-in center to assist women (target age 18+) who are victims of sex trafficking—both as a respite and as a jumping off point to transition to a lifestyle that is not exploitive and provides safety, security, alternatives for financial stability and support to accomplish life-sustaining goals. The drop-in center is located on Long Beach Boulevard in Compton, CA, which has had the reputation



Group of RDS volunteers conducting street outreach on a Saturday night.

as a major prostitution “track” in Los Angeles County—thus, this location is accessible and convenient for victims. At the drop-in center, women can access a safe place to rest and shower, and are provided with snacks, toiletries, clothing, shoes and blankets. Additionally, the drop-in center provides funds for bus passes, spiritual and emotional support, and if someone is so inclined, immediate assistance to exit life on the “street.” The drop-in center also provides referrals for more permanent shelter/housing, mental and physical health services, educational and job training services. Between 2014 and 2019, individuals used RDS’s drop-in center 650 times.

In addition, RDS works in collaboration with other agencies to provide supportive services to victims of sex trafficking who are participants in the Prostitution Diversion Program (PDP) group sessions, drop-in center clients, and

non-court-ordered referrals. The Supportive Services complement the Diversion Program. All women in RDS will participate with PDP group meetings; however, referral for Supportive Services includes: mental health, anger management, parenting, domestic violence, GED preparation, substance/alcohol abuse, computer access, mentoring, job preparing, shelter referrals, STI workshops, and more.

Partnering with the County

RDS participates in Los Angeles Human Trafficking Task Force operations with the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department, serving as a resource for victims that have been detained in task force operations by LASD.

“Restoration Diversion Services is a game changer. As a survivor, not too many people want to give someone with no solid work experience a chance. I get the education and experience all together. Being in the field and being able to relate to other survivors is the highlight of my work week. I also enjoy doing outreach.”

-Tkeyah Dupclay, Survivor Advocate, Restoration Diversion Services, Inc.



TKEYAH DUPCLAY
Survivor Advocate, Restoration Diversion Services, Inc.

Tkeyah Dupclay has worked as a Survivor Advocate with RDS for the past six months. Dupclay graduated from the Two Wings Qualified Academy after successfully completing their two-year program.

Diversion Programming

RDS’s Prostitution Diversion Program (PDP), “Seeking Safety,” involves both court-ordered and self-initiated class sessions for women who are involved in sex trafficking and have been arrested for prostitution. When a victim has been arrested on a prostitution-related charge, she will be given the option to either accept or decline PDP.

The program lasts 1 to 18 weeks and is facilitated through individual and group sessions. The particular number of classes that each client must attend is determined by the judge. The goal of the program is to mentor and educate clients, thereby encouraging them to leave exploitative situations while providing them with the support they need to live self-sufficient, productive lives. To date, RDS has facilitated 350 diversion programs for 350 survivors.



Housing

RDS has established referral partnerships with other agencies that provide housing and collaborates with sheltering programs throughout Los Angeles County to provide housing for young women involved in prostitution. RDS works closely with the women in their program by matching a worker with them to assist through the housing

process, from identifying potential options to following through and securing placement in a secure housing program that best fits their needs. In addition, RDS will occasionally provide funds to victims on an emergency basis to assist with housing and other needs such as clothing, food, and transportation.

“ I really enjoy my work with this program, it’s very rewarding and has inspired me as well to continue to move forward in my life. ”
KESHIA BURL



Champion

KESHIA BURL
Volunteer, Restoration Diversion Services, Inc.

Keshia Burl works as a mentor with RDS and has helped facilitate presentations to young girls in a group home. Burl is committed to serving as an advocate and being someone that survivors can talk to. Coming from a similar background as many survivors, Burl is passionate about helping survivors thrive.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Treasures

Treasures is a survivor-led faith-based organization that equips and empowers women in the sex industry and survivors of trafficking to live healthy, flourishing lives. Treasures also uses their expertise to train other organizations to do the same across the globe.



In the Beginning...

Harmony Dust-Grillo founded Treasures in 2003, while she was completing her Master's Degree in Social Welfare at UCLA. Upon graduation, she worked as a case manager for DCFS. Although the term "CSEC" was not being used at the time, she recognized that many of her clients had stories similar to her own and were victims of trafficking. When she transitioned to working full-time on expanding the work of Treasures, Dust-Grillo continued to speak and hold workshops in group homes, juvenile detention facilities, schools and youth conferences in order to stay engaged in CSEC efforts on the ground. Since then, Treasures has led many efforts across the County to support and empower women and girls who have been trafficked.



Left to right: Lauren Schoonover, Tracy Nielsen, Harmony Dust-Grillo, Joy Collins-Brodthorn.

Efforts to Identify and Support Youth and Adults Who Have Experienced Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Training

Through the Treasures Training Program, the organization is committed to equipping people to reach and support survivors effectively. Treasures' trainings have spurred the launch of grassroots outreach programs (e.g. street outreach to survivors) in 120 cities on six continents. In January of 2021, Treasures will be releasing a digital version of its training program in order to make them more accessible to allies and service providers around the world.

"As a volunteer-driven organization, our staff is small but mighty! Each of the champions in this photo plays a vital and multi-faceted role in making sure that every woman we serve receives the excellent care she needs and deserves."

HARMONY
DUST-GRILLO

Founder and Executive Director,
Treasures

Outreach

Each year, Treasures reaches over 5,000 women and girls through its outreach program, which is focused on strip clubs, the porn industry (through HIV testing sites) and online forums (where women and girls are exploited and solicited for sex). As part of its outreach, Treasures provides women and girls gift bags filled with cosmetics and jewelry, and the message that they are loved, valued and have purpose and that support is available when they are ready. Treasures brings this same message of hope to commercially sexually exploited children through outreach in juvenile detention centers, women's detention centers, and group homes in the Los Angeles area.



89% of women in the sex industry said they wanted to escape but had no other means of survival. Treasures exists to help provide a pathway to freedom.



Supportive Services

Treasures provides opportunities for women to connect, receive support, and access services and programs, which are provided at no cost and with no faith requirements. Since 2003, Treasures has provided services to over 2,000 women. Treasures’ supportive services include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Mentoring:** One-on-one coaching, encouragement, resources, and a listening ear as women share their life experiences and challenges.
- **Survivor-led Support Group:** A weekly group for women who are, or have been, in the sex industry. This is a safe place where women can experience peer support, community, and an opportunity for healing and restoration.
- **Care Packages:** An individualized care package, including books and resources intended to support and inspire, provided to every woman who contacts Treasures.
- **Social Events:** Several social events throughout the year including movie nights, karaoke, and an annual Christmas party. These events allow the women in Treasures’ programs to connect with the Treasures team and each other in a safe, social environment and to feel part of a healthy community.
- **M4T Thanksgiving Dinner:** Every year Treasures’ male volunteers, “M4T,” organize and cook a ‘from scratch’ meal for the Treasures women. This opportunity allows women to observe and interact with men who are caring, supportive, and protective.
- **Emergency Financial Assistance:** A fund available to help in times of temporary financial crisis. Sometimes something as simple as a car repair can make the difference between employment and unemployment and even avoiding homelessness. It can also lessen the pressure to return to “the life” or the industry to meet basic needs.
- **Clothing Closet:** New and gently used clothing provided to women in Treasures’ programs to enable them to renew their wardrobe and obtain clothes for employment as they rebuild their lives.
- **Court Support:** Advocacy and support services provided by a Treasures advocate who accompanies women to court when they testify against their traffickers and attends custody hearings or DCFS hearings so that they are not facing these legal proceedings alone.
- **Referrals:** Treasures works with and provides warm referrals to a vast network of other service providers to ensure that women are connected with the tools and resources they need to thrive.

Partnering with the County

In 2014, Treasures began holding workshops in juvenile detention centers for youth who had experienced commercial sexual exploitation or were at risk of CSE. Treasures has also hosted workshops for youth through Saving Innocence, provided services to transition age youth, partnered in the development of the “Becoming Me” curriculum, and participates in the annual Empowerment Conference.

Survivor Empowerment

As a survivor-led organization, survivor empowerment is central to Treasures’ work. Many of the members of Treasures’ leadership and mentoring team are survivors and all of Treasures’ programs are designed to support survivors in their journey from victim, to overcomer, to leader. In addition, Treasures is currently launching a weekly online empowerment group for survivors.

Housing

Treasures’ emergency financial assistance program has helped many women who are actively participating in Treasures’ programs avoid homelessness and obtain permanent housing. Treasures also partners with Polaris, which operates the 24/7 U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline, to obtain hotel vouchers for immediate housing needs and has relationships with a network of residential programs.

“
We count it an incredible honor to partner with Los Angeles County in the efforts to serve youth that have been affected by exploitation and trafficking. The collaborative, innovative work that is being done in our county is something that I know will impact generations to come! We are beyond thankful to be a part of it!
”

HARMONY DUST-GRILLO
Founder and Executive Director, Treasures

"Since my time at Treasures, I found myself. I found freedom. I found hope. I found a life outside of my walls of shame and abuse. And for the first time, I'm living my dreams."
- A Treasure



“ **I felt seen for the first time with Treasures. It was a safe place where I could be myself without feeling judged. I would call and talk to whoever would answer the phone—and they’d just talk to me. There was always this kind person on the other end of the phone that would care and listen about whatever craziness was happening in my life. I felt really cared for and loved. And that love felt unconditional.**

”
MONIQUE

Survivor Advocate, ZOE International, and Survivor Leader, Treasures



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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ZOE International

ZOE International is a nonprofit faith-based organization founded in 2002 with a mission to reach every person with God’s love and rescue every child from human trafficking. In collaboration with law enforcement, government and nonprofit agencies, and other partners, ZOE works to combat human trafficking in five countries—USA, Thailand, Mexico, Japan, and Australia—through prevention, rescue, and restoration efforts.



In the Beginning...

In 2010, ZOE began researching the greatest needs for child trafficking victims in Los Angeles County and strategizing solutions to meet these needs and address the problem. In 2013, ZOE joined the Los Angeles County CSEC Task Force. ZOE’s early work in Los Angeles involved supporting system partners—including DCFS, Probation, DMH, and the FBI—serving youth identified as sex trafficking victims by providing case management, permanency planning, resource and referral, emergency needs, gift cards, holiday gifts, and gift bags for youth who attended the annual Empowerment Conference. Through this work, ZOE learned that one of the greatest needs is safe homes for survivors. In response, in 2016 ZOE purchased 50 acres of land to build a home and comprehensive program for child survivors of human trafficking.

“ **ZOE is inspired by the strength, courage, and resiliency of the young survivors of trafficking we have the privilege of serving in Los Angeles County. Our goal is to help them cultivate hope for a new future—a future where their dreams can be realized.**

”
ESTER YU

Assistant Western USA Regional Director, ZOE International



Efforts to Identify and Support Youth and Adults Who Have Experienced Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Training

ZOE provides trainings and presentations to system and community partners, including law enforcement, social workers, juvenile hall staff, mental health workers, task forces, hotels, schools, churches, community groups, and more, to raise awareness about human trafficking and provide tools to effectively meet the needs of survivors of trafficking. Topics include signs of trafficking, trauma-informed care, engagement strategies for survivors of trauma and trafficking, internet safety, the intersection of human trafficking and gangs, and cultural humility. ZOE also creates educational videos, brochures, cards, and other tools for the public. In 2019, through these

efforts, ZOE reached over 10,000 people in the US to raise awareness about human trafficking.

Outreach

ZOE's My Gen My Fight program mobilizes student and community groups to join the fight to end child trafficking. My Gen My Fight helps to organize high school and university clubs, as well as community events, to raise awareness about trafficking, provide safe places for victims to disclose exploitation, and connect victims to resources. In addition, ZOE provides prevention education art groups for youth in foster care settings to discuss vulnerabilities, recruitment tactics, and empowerment strategies to prevent victimization.

Crisis Response

ZOE is a partner in the County's First Responder Protocol. When first responders recover a child from sex trafficking in North Los Angeles County and notify ZOE, ZOE responds within 90 minutes—24 hours a day—to provide victim advocacy services alongside law enforcement and social workers or probation officers. In addition, any victims in crisis can call ZOE's 24-hour hotline directly to receive support.

Partnering with the County

ZOE is a member of the following Los Angeles County roundtables and task forces, working closely with County partners and providing crisis response and victim advocacy support:

- Los Angeles Regional Human Trafficking Task Force
- CSEC Placement Provider Roundtable
- CSEC Clinical Provider Roundtable
- Santa Clarita Valley Human Trafficking Committee
- Antelope Valley Task Force Combatting Human Trafficking
- Compton Human Trafficking Task Force
- San Gabriel Valley Human Trafficking Task Force
- District Attorney's Victim Services Roundtable

"For kids who are system-involved, it's important to have advocates who are outside of the system to support them. Being a community-based agency gives us more flexibility to meet the youth where they are—especially when they are in a stage of crisis. And once we build trust, we can help reconnect them to the County partners who they may have difficulty trusting initially."

ESTER YU

Assistant Western USA Regional
Director, ZOE International



In addition, ZOE supports DCFS, Probation, and DMH partners by providing its facility for meetings, trainings, and events. ZOE also helps coordinate gifts and emergency needs for survivors of child trafficking by reaching out to its community partners.

Housing

ZOE is in the process of building and licensing a 6-bed Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) on a 50-acre property in North Los Angeles County for survivors of child trafficking who are under the supervision of DCFS and/or Probation. This home will provide trauma-informed, restorative care in a secure setting for children 12-18 years of age, including mental health services, education, vocational and life skills support, permanency planning, recreational activities, and more. ZOE anticipates opening the home in early 2021.



Champion

ESTER YU
Assistant Western USA Regional Director, ZOE International

Ester Yu has been committed to serving vulnerable communities for over 20 years. As Assistant Western USA Regional Director for ZOE International, Yu oversees ZOE’s Advocacy Program, provides trainings for staff and community agencies, and develops ZOE’s relationships with government and community partners.

“ZOE is privileged to partner with law enforcement and Los Angeles County Departments of Children and Family Services, Probation, Mental Health, and other partners who are dedicated to help young survivors of trafficking experience hope and healing.”

DR. JASON PLUNKETT



Champion

DR. JASON PLUNKETT
Western USA Regional Director, ZOE International

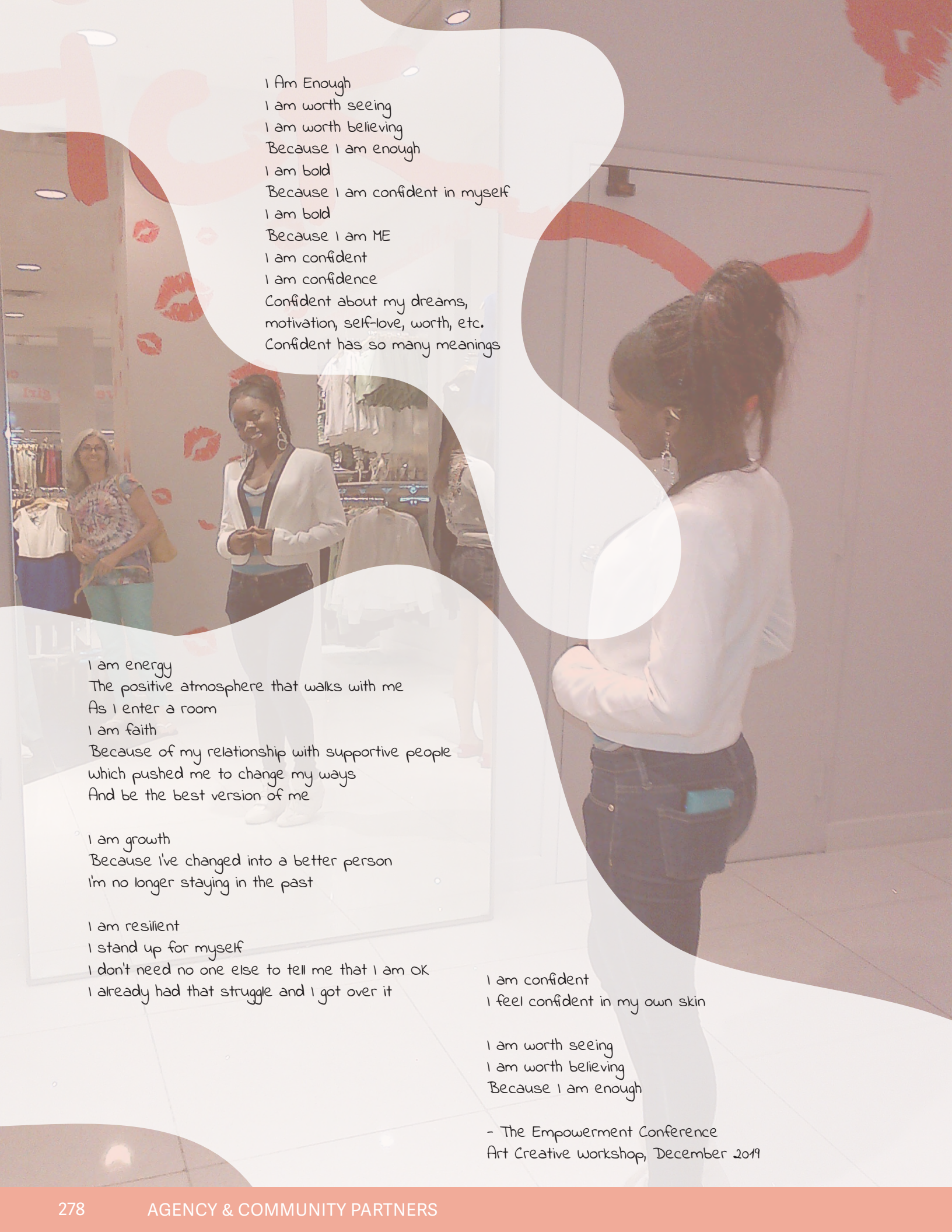
Jason Plunkett oversees the licensing and accreditation of the ZOE home, leading the compliance team that develops all policy and procedures for accreditation. Plunkett also helps identify and support the strengths of individual team members, encouraging all to reach their full potential, creates strategic relationships with agencies and organizations, and continually engages with community groups throughout Los Angeles County.





FOR MORE INFORMATION

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I Am Enough
I am worth seeing
I am worth believing
Because I am enough
I am bold
Because I am confident in myself
I am bold
Because I am ME
I am confident
I am confidence
Confident about my dreams,
motivation, self-love, worth, etc.
Confident has so many meanings

I am energy
The positive atmosphere that walks with me
As I enter a room
I am faith
Because of my relationship with supportive people
which pushed me to change my ways
And be the best version of me

I am growth
Because I've changed into a better person
I'm no longer staying in the past

I am resilient
I stand up for myself
I don't need no one else to tell me that I am OK
I already had that struggle and I got over it

I am confident
I feel confident in my own skin

I am worth seeing
I am worth believing
Because I am enough

- The Empowerment Conference
Art Creative workshop, December 2019

Endnotes

- 1 Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children*, <https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/programs/commercial-sexual-exploitation-children> (last visited Nov. 11, 2020).
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- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 Mark Ridley-Thomas, *Supervisors Support Posting Information to Help Victims of Human Trafficking*, County of Los Angeles (Feb. 11, 2014) <http://ridley-thomas.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/2-11-14-Supervisors-Support-Posting-Information-to-Help-Victims-of-Human-Trafficking1.pdf>.
- 6 Maya Paley & Yvonne Winchell, National Council of Jewish Women, *Implementation of Senate Bill 1193 in the City of Los Angeles: Final Report 2* (2019), https://www.ncjwla.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/HTOP-2019-REPORT-FINAL_NCJWLA.pdf.
- 7 *Id.* at 3
- 8 Carly B. Dierkhising, Kate Walker Brown, Mae Ackerman-Brimberg, & Allison Newcombe, *Commercially Sexually Exploited Girls and Young Women Involved in Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice in Los Angeles County: An Exploration and Evaluation of Placement Experiences and Services Received* 68 (2018), Nat'l Center for Youth Law; California State University, Los Angeles, https://youthlaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CSEC-Research-Report_Placement-Exp-Svcs-Recd_NCYL_Cal-State.pdf.
- 9 Los Angeles Regional Human Trafficking Task Force, <http://lahumantrafficking.com/about-us/> (last visited Nov. 19, 2020). CAL. PENAL CODE § 1347.1.
- 10 CAL. PENAL CODE § 1347.1.
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- 12 Dierkhising, *supra* note 8, at 52.
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 *Ibid.*
- 15 *Ibid.*
- 16 For more information on DREAM Court, see generally pgs. 100-105.
- 17 See generally Khaled Alrabe, Lizzie Fulton, Shahriar Raafi, Eric Stover, & Kevin Walker, *Building Trust: Perspectives on a Victim-Centered Approach to Human Trafficking Investigations in Los Angeles County* (2017) UC Berkeley School of Law Human Rights Center, https://humanrights.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/publications/la_report_2017_nov20release.pdf.