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## New Rotary club takes aim at human trafficking



By [Usha Reddi](#), president, Rotary Club of Community Action Against Human Trafficking

**A**s a teacher, I have heard about children in my school as young as six years old being sexually exploited for money, and I felt powerless to do anything about it. This was happening within families as a business and to support drug habits. Children would be removed

from a household for a couple of days but would be placed back again with the same family.

I've also talked to college students who shared their experience of being recruited to "model" or "dance" under the guise of modeling agency or dance studios. Most of the students regardless of age felt ashamed and scared to tell anyone, especially law enforcement.

### Cause-based e-club

Human trafficking is a real issue and it is closer to you than you probably think. In the summer of 2019, Patti Mellard called a meeting of Rotary members from several clubs to meet in Topeka to discuss the social injustice of human trafficking and what we could do about it. Two years later, [Rotary Club of Community Action Against Human Trafficking \(CAAHT\)](#) was created and officially chartered on 27 January 2021 as the first cause-based E-club in Kansas and one of the first in the world focused on eradicating human trafficking.

I am honored to be the first president of the club. The issue is personal to me. A few years ago, as a member on Law Board for the Riley County Police Department (RCPD), I attended a conference on Human Trafficking and was astonished at how prevalent sex trafficking was in our community and how little was being done about it.

*"Human trafficking is a real issue and it is closer to you than you probably think"*

In 2019, as city commissioner, I collaborated with our former mayor, Linda Morse, to work with massage therapists, city staff, district attorney, and RCPD to pass an ordinance called [Massage Therapy License to prevent human trafficking](#). This was unregulated business and some sex traffickers were using this industry for human trafficking. District Attorney Barry Wilkerson wrote a letter about sex trafficking in our community and supporting city legislation to work toward putting an end to it in our community. It is one piece of the solution, but it gave me hope and inspired me to work diligently with individuals and organizations to eradicate human trafficking and sexual exploitation at all levels.

### Sex trafficking can target anyone

Human trafficking is a complex issue and is often underreported. Anyone can become a victim regardless of race, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, education or age. Our cause, our mission, is to put an end to human trafficking.

Our club is currently a partner on a global grant application for Reintegrating Survivors of Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking. Patti Mellard from the [Rotary Club of Topeka South](#) and Lynette Stassen from the [E-Club of Cape town](#) in collaboration with [Governor Faron Barr](#) of District 5710, and the Rotary clubs of [Leawood](#), [Lenexa](#), and [Melkos](#) plan to provide services, training, resources, mentoring and support to assist survivors at [Rended Heart](#).

I am thrilled to be part of this new journey. Rotarians are **People of Action** and I know this club will act to end human trafficking.




For more information visit [Rotary Club of CAAHT](#) or follow us on <https://www.facebook.com/CAAHTRotary> or [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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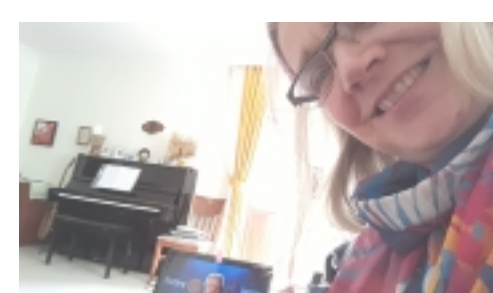
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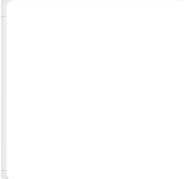
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3 THOUGHTS ON "NEW ROTARY CLUB TAKES AIM AT HUMAN TRAFFICKING"

 Dr K Ravi Appaji on [April 17, 2021 at 21:42](#) said:

A very important problem which needs practical solutions and glad you have thought of this work As Rotarians am sure we can address this issue effectively  
I support this  
Good luck in your efforts  
PDG Dr K Ravi Appaji RID 3181 INDIA

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