



Rotary

ROTARY DISTRICT 5180

NEWS RELEASE

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Rotary Fights Sex Trafficking

Sacramento, CA

"It doesn't happen here." This is the most common response when someone mentions sex trafficking in our area. But the Sacramento region is considered to be a hotbed for sex trafficking in the United States with California recording the highest volume of what many call "modern day slavery." With the recent approval of a significant, ground-breaking grant from The Rotary Foundation, Rotary is stepping up to work with local agencies and governments to combat this problem through prevention efforts.

The funding for this project from The Rotary Foundation is unique in that Foundation funding usually goes to projects in developing countries in the world. Rotary's mission is to tackle some of the world's biggest challenges, locally and globally, through the collective leadership and expertise of its 1.2 million members. With the awareness of sex trafficking in our area, local Rotarians stepped up to lead and organize education and public awareness efforts and bring Rotary Foundation funding to our community.

District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert welcomes Rotary's partnership in the effort to prevent sex trafficking in the Sacramento region. "This Rotary partnership is a testament to how strong community collaborations can make a significant impact in preventing victims of human trafficking and other crimes" said Schubert.

Rotary District 5180, consisting of 41 Rotary clubs in the greater Sacramento area, Walnut Grove, Yuba City/Marysville, Gridley and Oroville, will fund both an education and a public awareness campaign with approximately \$340,000 in combined grant and local funding. The vision is to create a sustainable large-scale project in the Sacramento region to fight human trafficking and then replicate the project globally through Rotary's over 1.2 million membership network of 35,000 clubs worldwide.

The education portion involves training school administrators, educators and students in the 5th, 7th, 9th and 11th grades on human trafficking. Rotary District 5180 will partner with *3Strands Global* (<http://3strandsglobalfoundation.org/>) to provide their **PROTECT** program (PREvention Organization To Educate Children on Trafficking), which has the approval and support of the Office of the California Attorney General and the Department of Education. The delivery of this program raises awareness and helps both teachers and students understand and recognize human trafficking to create a generation less susceptible to victimization. It is important to relay the message to teens and young adults about how to prevent becoming a victim of human trafficking as well as instilling values that discourage sex consumerism.

The public awareness portion will be accomplished through a partnership with *The Voices and Faces Project* (<http://www.voicesandfaces.org/>) through their Ugly Truth campaign. According to Anne K. Ream, founder of *The Voices and Faces Project*, the campaign was piloted in Illinois in 2013 where it contributed to legislative reform through the passage of three new state laws regarding human trafficking. It is a proven media model that has been adopted by seven U.S. cities with measurable success.

The goal of the campaign in the greater Sacramento area is to raise the level of public awareness of human trafficking and is aimed at informing the public as well as effecting change in public policy. Until the public understands the truth about the conditions that girls, boys, women, and men live in when being trafficked, this issue will persist and grow. Resources and 800 numbers will also be advertised to give those being trafficked support to reach out for help. "If you're paying for sex, you could be paying for someone's pain" is just one example of a headline from their advertising.

The education segment will begin in early 2018 and will be provided in schools in Sacramento, Sutter, Placer, Yolo, Yuba, Butte and El Dorado counties. It is anticipated that the Ugly Truth campaign will roll out in within the same time frame.

To enhance the efforts of Rotary and increase the impact and breadth of both the education and public awareness pieces, additional funding is still being sought. Corporate and individual donations may be made at <http://rotary5180.org/>. This link also provides additional details on the initiative.

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