

## ROTARY ACTION GROUP AGAINST SLAVERY

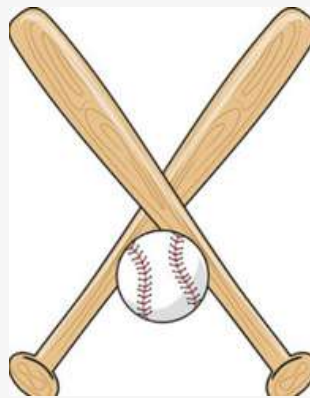
# RAGAS NEWSLETTER

<https://ragas.online/>

This Rotary Action Group is not an agency of, or controlled by, Rotary International.

## EVENTS TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

**Event 1: Rotary Strike Out human trafficking Day** with the 1st place Atlanta Braves Baseball team amazing event we had over 100 attend the game in support of the cause, including amazing partners, Delta, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Ga Attorney General's office, NCMEC, Students from International School and club, special thanks Rotarians that showed up to support this very important cause. Thanks to the Braves hosting us and shining a light on human trafficking they showed the hotline and our contact information on the digital banners during the game. Very successful event so many that want to get involved. Together we are making a difference and saving lives. **Email me at [ashley.rotarytoendht@gmail.com](mailto:ashley.rotarytoendht@gmail.com) to submit your event. Events need to be either RAGAS or ending human trafficking events**



## EVENTS TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

YOU'RE INVITED, TO BE A PART OF  
*historic change*



Join Rotarians across the nation in attending a free webinar designed to inform and educate us as we launch this historic and first ever, Canada wide, Rotarian led initiative to fight human trafficking. The event will be hosted by the Rotary Action Group Against Slavery and is slated to last for 90 minutes. Drew Kessler, Rotary International Director of Canada's Zones 28 and 32 says: "Join me, a proud champion of this movement, as we fight to restore hope and end human trafficking here in Canada and beyond".

**DATE: AUGUST 29, 2023.**

**TIME: 11:00 AM EST**



**GUEST SPEAKERS FROM:**

International Justice Mission Canada  
The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking  
The Mekong Club  
RAGAS International: Dave McCleary and Bob Deering



**90  
MINUTES**



**Human Trafficking and Slavery is a \$200 billion industry  
and one of the fastest growing crimes in Canada.**



**Event 2:** You are invited to a Zoom webinar.

When: Aug 29, 2023 11:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Topic: Join Rotarians across Canada about what Rotary is doing to combat Human Trafficking. Register in advance for this webinar:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_X2eJEJL-QLWRLaz2UR0uog](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_X2eJEJL-QLWRLaz2UR0uog)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

## EVENTS TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

### Event 3: Run to Benefit End Human Trafficking in Georgia USA.

AREA 13.1 and Terrestrial 5K/10K is an Out of this World Running Event. 13.1-10K-5K is a night race in Roswell, GA. One of the most popular courses to run in the US this year we had 2500 Runners for all over the county. The runners learned how they can help in the fight against human trafficking. So many people signed up to help the movement and were thankful for Roswell Rotary and all the volunteers, We're also thankful for the two international students in Georgia for their tech support and for helping out.



## ZONE INSTITUTE 2023

**Event 4:** Zone Institute 30-31 in Memphis Sept. 19-21 will be represented by RAGAS Coordinator Shawnee Cooper, Arkansas and RAGAS Chair Emeritus Dave McCleary please go to our breakout and visit our House of Friendship.

<https://rizoness30-31.org/>

<https://rizoness30-31.org/institute/2023-memphis/>



## RAGAS AMBASSADORS AND COORDINATORS

Over the past year, RAGAS has put the Coordinators and Ambassadors program on hold due to several reasons. This program was a successful outreach in the past but due to changes in RAGAS's emphasis, it was put on the back burner. It is time to bring it back and to get our members in the many corners of the world to help combat modern slavery/human trafficking. We are reaching out to our members to ask them to become active not only in your clubs, but throughout your region.

A coordinator is a person who works with the districts in your region to help them develop human and technical skills and to support the development of sustainable projects. Their region could be a zone, country, state, or part of a state depending on the geographical area or expanse that is covered. Each region will be worked out by those that would like to be a coordinator and the Coordinators and Ambassadors Committee in RAGAS.

An ambassador is a knowledgeable advocate to combat modern slavery/human trafficking in each Rotary District that wants to be responsible for the development of programs either district wide or with individual clubs. This person will work closely with the coordinator for the region their district is in.

In September we will be having a meeting over Zoom with those members who want to be involved and will give more details and answer questions about responsibilities. Please contact me at [bob.d@ragas.online](mailto:bob.d@ragas.online) if you have an interest in being part of the team.



## CONNECT WITH RAGAS MEMBERS!

RAGAS uses the iMember database powered by DACdb to connect with our members - and you can too! To access it, simply go to: <https://imembersdb.com/index.html?accountid=10621>. Your Username is your email, then click Forgot/Reset Password to set your password if you forgot it. Once you are in, take a look around and update your profile by going to the My Data tab at the top of the page and click the "Edit Member" on the left side. You can add your photo, addresses, etc. so you can best connect with other members. If you ever get stuck, go to the Support tab at the top and you can get the help you need. If you have problems logging in, please email Dan Goodrich at [dgdango2122@gmail.com](mailto:dgdango2122@gmail.com).

If you scan the QR code on the home page, you can also download and save the mobile version so you have access to the database on the go!



# Rotary North Jacksonville, FL

Rotary Action Group Against Slavery (“RAGAS”) announced a grant award of \$1,000 to the Rotary Club of North Jacksonville and their partner PACT who summited the bid. North Jacksonville President-Elect, Denny Winkelman, along with Madison Edwards, a former Interact Club at First Coast and now an intern at PACT.

The grant calls for PACT, Partners Against Child Trafficking, to bring this online training SACT Education and Training Program to more schools based on the success of the implementation at First Coast High School in Jacksonville. “Our North Jacksonville Florida Rotarians are highly focused on creating a world where every child is safe and free from exploitation through this program.

“I’m excited to be the Present -Elect for the is Rotary Club, but even more excited as to the Rotary organization has stepped to this issue together: from John Tabor, District Governor to Club President Tom, Meissgeier, a retired US Army Special Forces Lieutenant Colonel.” Winkelman went on to say. “This all started over a year ago with North Jacksonville Club Leaders like Pat Mulvihill, who had the vision.

“We believe this project will have a very significant and lasting community impact in the protection of our vulnerable youth” stated Pat Mulvihill. “We also want to thank RAGAS for this grant to empower young leaders to combat child trafficking and help eradicate modern human slavery.” “PACT is clearly the innovator of this peer-two-peer SACT Training Program and see how it is impacting Interactor students and Rotaract Rotarian members. The key is to have a relevant project and subject matter that empowers these students. I certainly enjoyed this program as a Senior at First Coast High School, and we can’t wait to bring it everywhere in Jacksonville.” Edwards concluded.

Please come alongside these Rotarians to help support students all over the world.



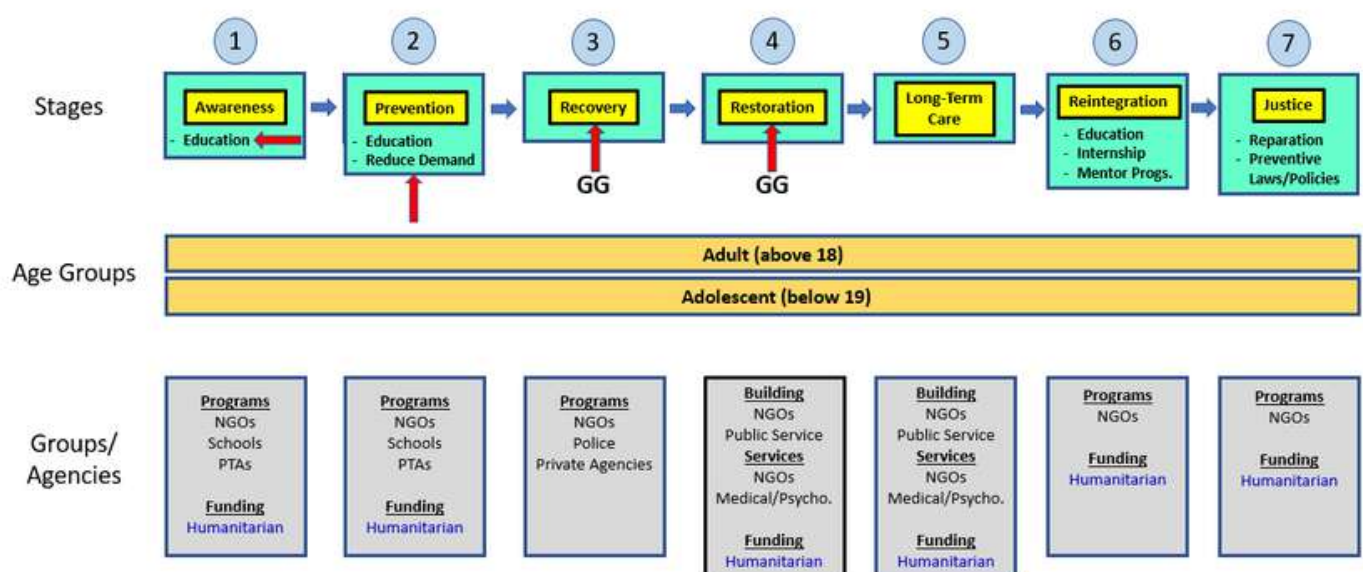
# OPERATION SAFE LAUNCH (A RECOVERY CENTER FOR GIRLS RESCUED FROM SEX-TRAFFICKING)

One of the TAKE ACTION initiatives identified in last month’s RAGAS Newsletter was “Initiate a Global Grant project to fight against modern slavery”. This article describes a recent effort within Rotary that took the route of a Global Grant to construct a project addressing the need for recovery and restoration of sex-trafficked victims.

As statistics show, over the past decade, Child Sex Trafficking has grown by unprecedented proportions in Texas (Univ. of Texas Study reports that at any given time, over 79,000 minors and youth are being sex-trafficked in/through Texas). This increase was first attributed to the metropolitan port of call (Houston) and the sizeable overlay of interstate transportation routes, I-10, connecting the U.S. West Coast with the U.S. East Coast, and I-45, a major artery connecting Canada with the Gulf of Mexico. Moreover, the situation has been exacerbated by the recent influx of illegal immigrants across the Mexico-U.S. border. Hence, Texas has become a region overwhelmed by the human sex-trafficking trade.

For the past two years, Rotarians within Districts 5890 and 5910 (Houston and surrounding counties) have been studying the problem and initializing awareness programs with the cooperation of local city, health and school organizations. In their research and consultation with State Government Officials and experienced NGOs, a comprehensive “landscape” of the human sex-trafficking dilemma was drawn up (see Figure 1), allowing Rotary projects to be crafted and initiated.

**Anti-Human Sex Trafficking Landscape**



→ Where Rotary is presently focusing resources



## OPERATION SAFE LAUNCH

What was learned through all the interviews with State and City Law Enforcement officials, Healthcare and NGO workers, and Child Protection Agencies, was that there was no “safe” place to take the victims once they were free from their captors. Most facilities or agencies were not open 24-hours, or capable of forensic testing, or did not have the segregated capacity or skilled personnel to handle the trauma-plagued victims. Hence, a Stabilization and Assessment Center (SAC) or a Short-term Recovery Center (SRC) was needed.

The Rotarians concluded that a large GG was needed to create such an environment and would probably require an architectural design/study or renovation effort put in place. Since both paths did not fit well or meet the framework of a Rotary Foundation GG, a search commenced to find an already constructed facility, with appropriate living, education, counseling, recreation, and food service space. This past Spring (2023) just such a facility (newly named, Tharseo Place) located in a relatively isolated part of East Texas was qualified, and the solicitation and hiring of skilled staff began. Due to the urgency to operationalize the facility, the limited time to craft/submit a GG (all the while fundraising for it), and then acquire TRF approval before the end of the RY, a multi-District Tiger Team was assembled, and the work began in mid-April.

### Tharseo Place Initiatives

Experience leaders in trauma-victim recovery were identified early on, and they began critical work to a) contract the necessary number of Administrators, Counselors/Therapists, Educators, and certified Commercially Sexually Exploited Youth (CSEY) advocates, and b) negotiate contracts with Child Protective Agencies across Texas that can direct screened victims to their facility for the year-long treatment program. This was no easy undertaking. Together, these professionals adopted a model called SAFE that would be applied throughout the recovery program and designed to focus on:

- Single occupancy bedrooms
- Additional personnel for high staff-to-patient ratio
- Frequent access to interventions
- Enhanced accountability measures.

### Ending Result and Expectation

After multiple drafts and Rotary Cadre consultation, the GG Application, totaling \$126,333 was formally submitted to TRF on 6 June. Subsequent questions and answers followed, and the GG was officially APPROVED on 22 June. In addition, a critical level of staff was hired and put into place by the end of June, with a solid plan to scale over the coming months as more residents come into their care. This was a herculean effort by multiple DGs, Regional Foundation and District Grant Coordinators, and the new management of Tharseo Place.

# OPERATION SAFE LAUNCH

Please note, for any Rotary Club/District pursuing a goal(s) similar to this project, it is this GG Team’s intention to:

- document all preliminary steps taken and present operational procedures applied over the next year, and
- extensively publish them so as to share “lessons learned” with other Rotarians.

It is hoped that what has been achieved here, can be replicated elsewhere ... where sex-trafficked victim recovery and restoration is a Community goal.

Final Note: As of this publication, the shortfall in target funding for this GG has nearly been cut in half by subsequent RC cash donations, and it is expected that full funding closure to take place NLT the end of the calendar year. Hence, if any RC wants to make a contribution to close this gap, they can forward a check to:

The Rotary Club of Space Center  
P.O. Box 58862  
Houston, Texas 77258-8862  
Attention: For the GG 2352037 Account

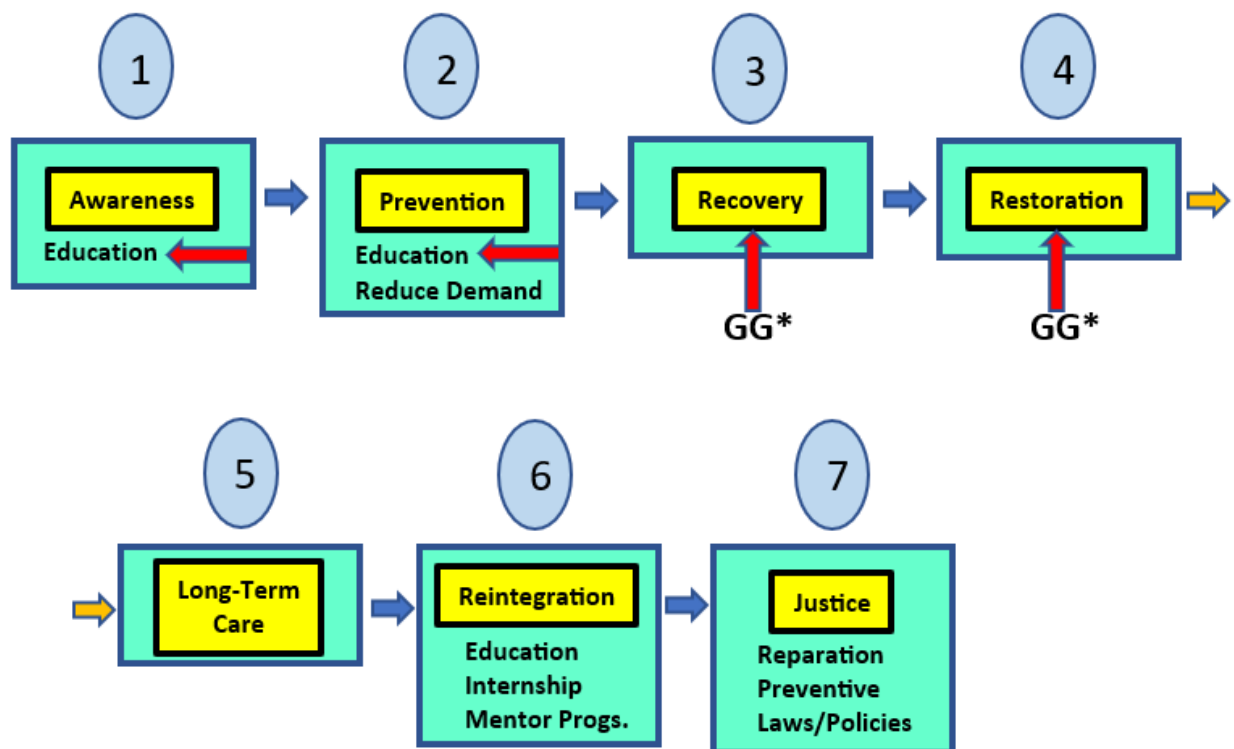


Figure 1 – Stages of the Anti-Sex Trafficking Landscape

## CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING - INFORMATION YOU NEED FROM THE US NATIONAL TRAFFICKING HOTLINE

What most Americans know about child sex trafficking generally involves stories – of young girls and boys being kidnapped by strangers, forced into windowless vans, then driven to another city or state where they are kept drugged and chained in a brothel.

While situations like these do exist, they are more of an exception than the rule. A study analyzing press releases and online media reports from over a nine-year period found that fewer than 10 percent of cases involved kidnapping. The rest were far more complicated, far less "Hollywood." The danger of these misconceptions is that while we are on high alert for windowless vans and teaching our children about stranger danger, we may well be missing out on what is really going on. There is still a tremendous amount to learn about human trafficking in the United States and far more data and research is needed. But what we do know is a great deal about how victims – particularly young people – are lured into trafficking situations. The information below summarizes some of the best available research about how trafficking actually happens, so you can help to keep your families and communities safe.

Traffickers tend to prey on people who are economically or socially vulnerable such as youth who are living in poverty, or on the streets, or experience physical or sexual abuse, or addiction. They pose as a friend, offering to meals, gifts, or just a sympathetic ear. In some cases, traffickers may use another young person to befriend and recruit their victims. This recruitment can happen in public places such as malls or sporting events, as well as online, through social media sites, or through false advertisements or promises about job opportunities that might appeal to young people, such as modeling or acting. Although runaway and homeless youth are particularly vulnerable, there are also many examples of victims who were groomed and recruited while living at home and even attending school. Using these methods, over time the trafficker is no longer a stranger, but someone the victim knows and even trusts. With this trust in place, traffickers don't need to kidnap their victims. They can convince them to show up willingly. This perceived choice in the beginning often results in feelings of shame, guilt, or self-blame for victims and survivors who later try to leave their traffickers.

It is also not uncommon for parents and family members to sell children for sex in exchange for money, drugs, or something of value. In these situations, the trafficker is already someone with proximity to the victim and knows enough about the victim to even isolate and manipulate them. Being aware of and focusing on the ways in which traffickers gradually lure their victims is critical in recognizing and even preventing situations of child sex trafficking.

by George Belitsos

## RAGAS SOCIAL MEDIA

RAGAS communication

You can receive the information by following us on social media!

- [RAGAS Facebook](#)
- [RAGAS LinkedIn](#)
- [RAGAS Twitter](#)
- [RAGAS Instagram](#)
- [RAGAS YouTube](#)



**LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT?**  
帮助您的方法 ¿ESTÁS BUSCANDO UNA SALIDA? ¿NECESITAS AYUDA?  
**STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING**  
NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE  
**888-3737-888**  
or Text "Help" to 233733(BeFree)  
IOWA VICTIM SERVICE CALL CENTER  
**800-770-1650**  
IT HAPPENS HERE IN IOWA or Text "iowahelp" to 20121  
Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking & Slavery www.iwanaht.org Rotary

This was a sticker created by the Rotary District 6000 Prevent Human Trafficking Action Team. For more information or questions, contact RAGAS Board member Dr. George Belitsos at [gbelitsos55@gmail.com](mailto:gbelitsos55@gmail.com)

## TAKE ACTION

We are not defined by who we are, but by our actions. To contribute to ending modern slavery, you can:

- Become a RAGAS member from [here](#).
- Donate to RAGAS, or organisations working on ending modern slavery.
- [Contact your local Coordinator](#) to volunteer for RAGAS.
- Invite a RAGAS speaker to your local club meeting to talk about modern slavery.
- Initiate a Global Grant project to fight against modern slavery.

Engage with Rotary clubs that dedicates to ending modern slavery, including:

- District 5950 [Rotary eClub to End Human Trafficking](#),
- District 5710 [Rotary eClub of Community Action Against Human Trafficking](#),
- District 5280 [Rotarians Fighting Human Trafficking](#),
- District 5810 [Rotary Satellite Club of Greenville to End Human Trafficking](#)
- District 1260 [Ware Rotary Satellite Club Rotary for Slave Free Communities](#)
- District 5030 [The Pacific Northwest Ending Sex Trafficking](#)
- District 5840 [To Combat Human Trafficking](#).