

## ROTARY ACTION GROUP AGAINST SLAVERY

# RAGAS NEWSLETTER

<https://ragas.online/>

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

## 3 STRANDS GLOBAL & SEATTLE 4 ROTARY CLUB EVENT

Ashlie Bryant is an innovator, leader, social entrepreneur and advocate for children around the globe. She believes in the power of the human spirit and the ability for anyone to thrive and achieve.

In 2010, Ashlie founded 3Strands Global Foundation in response to a trafficking incident in her small suburb. Over the past thirteen years, she has led the organization to exponential growth. She was integral in the development of global anti-trafficking training and curriculum PROTECT, implemented in eight states and several countries. To date, the program has reached over 115,972 adults and more than 800,157 youth. Ashlie expanded 3Strands programming to include a suite of seven programs that deliver holistic prevention. These programs cover primary through tertiary prevention. The direct services tertiary program called Employ + Empower has placed over 879 survivors and at-risk individuals in sustainable jobs in the last four years in Sacramento, San Francisco, and San Jose.

A frequent panelist and keynote speaker, Ashlie has presented to groups around the world. Her presentations have covered topics ranging from data and impact to prevention to system collaboration to address root causes of exploitation. She also frequently consults with legislators on anti-human trafficking legislation, having helped author and pass multiple bills into law, including AB1227, The Human Trafficking Prevention Education Act, the first legislation of its kind in the U.S., SB 198 in Utah, SB14, AB1394, and Federally The Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act.

Ashlie holds an MPA from Cornell University and a B.A. in International Relations and French from the University of California at Davis and has completed the Nonprofit Leaders Program at Stanford University and the Public Leadership Credential at Harvard Kennedy School. She sits on the Human Rights for Kids and Cornell Public Policy School's advisory board. She is also a Board Director for the Rotary Action Group Against Slavery and 3Strands Global Foundation.



**Wednesday, October 4 at 12:30PST**  
Seattle #4 Rotary

**Guest Speaker:** Ashlie Bryant, CEO of 3Strands Global  
**Zoom link:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85487905655>

<https://www.3strandsglobalfoundation.org/>

## ZONE INSTITUTE 30-31 IN MEMPHIS “FEEL THE BEAT”

Very inspiring zone institute 30-31 in Memphis “feel The Beat” we met a so many Rotary superhero’s at the institute. Thank you to Past RI President’s Mark Maloney, Barry Rassin, John Germ and RI President Gordon McInally, thank you for your support. Two breakouts on Human Trafficking, special to RAGAS coordinator Arkansas Shawnee Cooper for doing a fantastic presenting in her breakout for RAGAS. Such an inspiring event and we made so many great contacts and signed up so many that want to join the movement with RAGAS.





## CONCORDIA STUDENTS ANNUAL FRESHMAN WELCOME PARTY

8.25.23 Concordia University invited the SACT Team to come and talk about their prevention courses against child exploitation and trafficking. The Student Hall was packed with over a dozen vendors and Concordia University students to share in the excitement of the new year.

Concordia students talked to Charity Galiana and Curtis Dodd both Copperas Cove High School students who supported the SACT table and shared the story of their campus that started a SACT Ambassador Program to empower students while learning how to detect, defend, and disrupt against any predators. With recent occurrences in the area and the movie Sound of Freedom, students wanted to know how they could learn to protect themselves.

"What was amazing about this event was the number of students and vendors that were so aware of the issues surrounding the campus area and that that SACT had a great program to help stop predators.' remarked Charity, PACT Board Member and student. "We were honored to be a part of their program and we had almost 30 students register to take the free course" commented Curtis.

"This was a great event for us as students too, as we got to meet with vendors that also wanted to take the SACT training especially after hearing of their own personal experiences. It was eye opening" remarked Charity who is currently filming students on her campus to build more content with new students.

It was a great day!

Thank You Concordia

**Please visit our Website:**

<https://www.pactedu.org/sact-students-against-child-trafficking>.



## ROTARY ACTION GROUP AGAINST SLAVERY PROVIDES PROJECTS FUNDING SUPPORT IN 2023

The RAGAS Board has for a second year provided Project support funding to a number of Rotary Clubs / Districts with initiatives and projects supporting Community Awareness and Prevention Education (CAPE).

RAGAS is committed to connect, empower and equip Rotarians to engage their communities to eradicate all forms of Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking locally and around the globe.

**RAGAS Strategy:** [https://ragas.online/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/2021-RAGAS-CAPE\\_Public-Final.pdf](https://ragas.online/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/2021-RAGAS-CAPE_Public-Final.pdf)

As part of the Strategy RAGAS created a RAGAS Toolbox with lists and links to organizations and resources to help Rotarians and Rotary clubs find ways to support anti trafficking and modern slavery initiatives and projects. (Update in progress.)

**RAGAS Toolbox:** <https://ragas.online/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Draft-Toolbox-02-03-22.pdf>

RAGAS initiated a Request For Proposal (RFP) opportunity which offered some support for Rotary Club / District CAPE related Projects. Successful applications receive US \$1000-towards their Project. The intention is to provide Project reports and updates to RAGAS members. RAGAS membership subscriptions and donations support project funding.

### **Applications to 30th June 2023, Approved:**

#### **1/ District 7950 - R C Falmouth Cape Cod - Nepal School**

The project is to support a remote mountain school in Nepal where human trafficking to India and child marriage are accepted ways for uneducated girls. Education is essential for opportunity and future choice. An NGO Her Future Coalition assists the Hasta Memorial School operations. RAGAS has supported educational materials. The current project is supported by a District grant, other Rotary Clubs and the Environmental & Sustainable Rotary Action Group (ESRAG) which has facilitated the installation of solar panels and a battery at the school to support continuous power for computer use and zoom education facilities and after dark learning. Total Budget US \$12,700

#### **2/ District 6170 - Little Rock Arkansas**

The project is to support a multi-district seminar D 6170, 6150, and 6110 in January 2024 to help inform and educate communities on prevention and awareness to combat human trafficking. There is also District and Club funding project support. An aim is to also secure support from the Arkansas Governor and Dept of Human Services. Total Budget US \$4000

#### **3/ District 9800 - Rotary Passport Club Melbourne Australia - for Cambodia**

The project is in the Sien Reap Province, Cambodia - Cambodia Rural Students Trust <https://www.cambodiaruralstudentstrust.org/> It is focused on Empowering girls through female university student educators to gain and share knowledge and information with rural high school students through a program "Ambassador for Women's Health and Human Trafficking", including washable and long lasting feminine hygiene kits. The Human Trafficking workshops have been designed in collaboration with Chab Dai a Cambodian NGO. The 2023 program plans to educate 8000 rural high school students. Budget US \$28,000.

#### **4/ District 5710 Topeka Kansas.**

The Rotary Satellite Club of Ending Forced Organ Harvesting (FOH) project is to promote and conduct the screening of films and documentaries to local Rotary Clubs, University and community groups to raise public awareness of this atrocity. The project is to have film screenings in Jersey, Delaware and Melbourne. The funding is to cover events operational costs including film licences.

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### **5/ R C Calcutta Chowrenghee, Kolkata India**

This project is conducted by The Missing Link Trust <https://www.savemissinggirls.com/> which is an anti -trafficking NGO focused on prevention of sex trafficking and exploitation through awareness education and empowerment. The education programs use innovative methodology through curriculums and art for efficiency and impact. The course includes an explanation of online trafficking methods, psychological grooming by predators and social media engagement and digital awareness along with false job promises. The project is working with the West Bengal State Education Board.

### **6/ D 6790 N E Florida - City of Jacksonville**

The project is to promote the Students Against Child Trafficking (SACT) peer to peer online prevention education program to both Interact and Rotaract students within District 6970. The RC North Jacksonville has sponsored and successfully implemented SACT in multiple high schools in Jacksonville Florida and aim a new project at additional schools. Partners Against Child Trafficking (PACT) <https://www.pactedu.org/> is a partner in the program. It is anticipated that students will speak at Rotary Clubs and schools and in the longer term be a self-perpetuating program in schools with potential for use in other countries.



## HERE COMES THE SUN

The project described here showcases how Rotary and RAGAS have magnified the efforts of an ordinary club to further Rotary's mission to empower girls and women. Solar power is now providing reliable electricity to a hostel in the mountains of Nuwakot, Nepal, thanks to the encouragement, assistance, and financial support from RAGAS, and another Rotary Action group called ESRAG (Environmental Sustainability Rotary Action Group), district 7950 and individual clubs in Rhode Island and Southeastern Massachusetts.

This has enabled Rotarians from the Rotary Club of Falmouth, Cape Cod to teach English, Math, Science, Geography, self esteem and computer skills to girls who have had no or limited access to quality education. The aim is for prevention education to inoculate them from the all too common scourges of child marriage and sex trafficking through false employment promises, which are endemic to this area of Nepal.



A Rotary Magazine article on RAGAS first brought Falmouth Rotarian Robin Singer, (who headed up this solar project) into Rotary. Robin had been volunteering since 2006 for the anti-trafficking NGO, Her Future Coalition, founded by Sarah Symons. Sarah and HFC have helped thousands of girls and women in India and Nepal find alternatives to brothel work through education, skills training, counseling, and economic empowerment.

After meeting then president of the Falmouth, Ma. Rotary club (Paul McCadam) and reading about RAGAS (then lead by Dave McCleary) in her cousin's Rotary magazine, Robin realized that Rotary, with over a million members, active clubs, Rotary Action groups, focus on the Empowerment of Girls and Women, and grants and connections, could be a wonderful way to bring powerful resources to bear for the anti-trafficking cause.

## HERE COMES THE SUN

In the fall of 2022, the Falmouth Rotary of Cape Cod Zoom Teaching program, while effective, was being interrupted regularly due to power glitches. Through ESRAG, Robin and her committee found Ohm Energy Nepal, a wonderful Kathmandu solar company whose dedication and competence ensured a smooth design and installation for the rural Nepal hostel buildings.

With technical help from ESRAG, Robin started the process by asking Anjali Tamang, founder of the Hasta Memorial School and the Freedom and Hope program (affiliated with HFC), who founded and runs the Nepali hostel, to specify the hostel's energy needs. They chose to include a Victron remote monitoring inverter in the system so that solar and battery backup status can be monitored from anywhere in the world. All users are thrilled with the reliable power that now allows uninterrupted lessons for the hostel's preschoolers, younger children, teens, and Hasta Memorial Nepali teachers, who are getting lessons in English, math and technology and more over the internet. The Falmouth club and their partners are delighted to be able to monitor the system in real time from their own computers and to be able to ask Ohm Energy Nepal to tweak the controls when necessary.

RAGAS had already helped the Rotary club of Falmouth, Cape Cod provide hundreds of books to children at the Hasta Memorial school and the associated hostel, for prevention education, associated with the zoom program. In the latest round of RAGAS funding, money was allotted for 3 solar panels to supplement the 5 panels currently supplying energy to the inverter, batteries, and hostel electrical load. This will round out the solar and battery system, allowing the zoom prevention education teaching at the hostel and school to be robust and uninterrupted. The bright, courteous, and curious girls at the hostel are learning so much on a daily basis, including lessons about the power of the sun and the harnessing and storage of solar energy through photovoltaic panels and batteries.

In the words of another song, "Let the Sun Shine. Let the Sun Shine In." relevant links:

- RAGAS <https://ragas.online/>  
chairman Robert Deering
- ESRAG <https://esrag.org/>  
chairman Yasar Atacik
- ESRAG Renewable Energy Task Force <https://esrag.org/renewable-energy-taskforce/> Co-chair Aur Beck
- Rotary Club of Falmouth, Cape Cod <https://falmouthrotary.com/>  
chairman Amy Lionardi
- Her Future Coalition  
<https://herfuturecoalition.org/>  
founder and CEO Sarah Symons
- Hasta Memorial School <https://www.hastamemorial.org/>  
founder and director Anjali Tamang
- Ohm Energy Nepal  
<https://ohmenergy.org/> Rakesh Shrestha, Sales Manager



## TRAGAST HOSTING FREEDOM WALK

The Thailand Rotary Action Group Against Slavery Team (TRAGAST) will host the Chiang Mai A21 Freedom Walk on Saturday 14 October. We are very pleased to be working with the great staff from A21 Thailand. This event is made possible by our generous partner and sponsor Atherton Legal.



You may register for the walk at <https://a21.org>. The first 20 people to register for the Chiang Mai walk will receive their very own freedom walk hat. We will gather at Thae Pae Gate at 09:30 a.m. The walk should finish around 12:00 noon. After the walk we may share a meal at a local restaurant.

On an international level RAGAS and A21 work together to end modern slavery / human trafficking. Learn more at <https://ragas.online>



## TERRIBLE MYTHS RELATED TO CHILDREN BEING SOLD FOR SEX

Over the years, I have come to conclude there are few things more evil than children forced into prostitution. During my initial public health work within South Asian red-light districts, we soon discovered to our horror that some brothels offered very young girls to clients. Some of them were less than 10 years old and were hidden away and lived on the upper floors in rooms protected by a reinforced door. I felt sick to my stomach when I learned that pedophiles weren't the only men interested in having sex with young children. There appeared to be three prominent awful myths associated with this practice that exist to this day.

1. Some believed that having sex with young girls would cure diseases such as gonorrhea or syphilis. This is obviously not true.
2. Some believed they could not catch diseases such as AIDS by having sex with someone much younger and seemingly healthy. In reality, the opposite often happened. Since these girls were undeveloped, sex with a child significantly increased their chances of becoming infected.
3. Some men thought that it would rejuvenate their virility as if the girl's youth would be transferred to them.

For these reasons, and the high prices they could command, the brothels highly valued selling children, but only until they turned 12 years old or so, and only as long as they remained healthy. The standard rate for sex with a 'child virgin' was sometimes more than half the entire price paid to buy the child.

One brothel boasted that rich middle-east businessmen were willing customers for child sex slaves, providing windfall profits for them. There was even an arrangement made that if a new child was brought in, the businessmen would fly in to spend a weekend. Due to the legal difficulties associated with keeping child sex slaves in brothels, these girls were isolated most of the time, seldom coming in contact with others. If caught and charged by the authorities, the brothel owner could receive up to 20 years in jail.

However, when a child sex slave would be found, arrests almost never occurred. The police could demand enormous bribes for turning a blind eye. The financial burden to the brothel madam could be tremendous. I never personally observed any of these very young children who had been forced into prostitution. Most brothel owners were careful enough to ensure that if either strangers or the police entered the building, steps would immediately be taken to hide them where they would not be found.

But on a few occasions, I observed a child's toy like a teddy bear in a brothel room. It is still traumatic and difficult for me to fathom that a girl child could be playing with a doll one minute, and then be forced to have sex with an adult a few minutes later.

What kind of evil allows this to happen?

-By: Matt Friedman- <https://themekongclub.org/>

## “TAKE IT DOWN” REMOVES A TEEN'S VIDEO & PHOTOS

I have some information that I want to share about the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). If you have never been to their website, you really should check it out ([missingkids.org](https://missingkids.org)). In addition to working to find missing children, NCMEC operates the Cyber Tipline where people (and internet providers) can report possible child exploitation, Child Sexual Abuse Material (child pornography) etc. They now have a program called Take It Down. (<https://takeitdown.ncmec.org>). Take It Down is for people who have images or videos of themselves nude, partially nude, or in sexually explicit situations taken when they were under the age of 18 that they believe have been or will be shared online. Take It Down works by assigning a unique digital fingerprint, called a hash value to these images or videos of people under the age of 18. Online platforms can use hash values to detect these images or videos on their services and remove this content. This all happens without the image or video ever leaving your device or anyone viewing it. Only the hash value will be provided to NCMEC. This is one of very few resources available to help young people and their parents get such pictures off the internet. There is a similar program for people who have such pictures or videos taken after age 18 that are or may be online. [StopNCII.org](https://stopncii.org) is a free tool designed to support victims of Non-Consensual Intimate Image (NCII) abuse.

By: Bernadette Rixner, Siouxland Coalition Against Human Trafficking Outreach Coordinator & NAHT board member





## 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](#)



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](#).