



## *In This Issue:*

January was designated as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, but we feel that the topic is so important that we shouldn't limit our awareness to one month. In this edition of The Pulse we will:

- Define human trafficking
- Help you understand how to keep your children safe
- Tell you how to spot trafficking victims while traveling
- Suggest helpful apps, and alert you about those to avoid

### DEFINING HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is a modern-day form of slavery involving the illegal trade of people — including children — for exploitation or commercial gain. It can take the form of forced prostitution, forced marriage, domestic servitude, forced labor, organ harvesting, child soldiers, drug trade or forced criminality. California is one of the nation's top destination states for trafficking human beings.



Approximately 300,000 children are lured into commercial sexual exploitation annually within the United States, on average by the age of 12. From the time of recruitment, life expectancy of that child is a mere seven years. Foster and runaway children are the most vulnerable; however, traffickers do not discriminate and actively target across all social and economic boundaries.

### HOW TO KEEP YOUR CHILDREN SAFE

Recruitment is occurring via certain apps/social media, gaming sites, and — most eerily — by peers. We as parents and guardians need to have frank discussions regarding this topic with our children. We need to educate ourselves on how to recognize the signs of sexual exploitation, and we need to stay actively involved in our children's lives through the tween and teen years by not only paying attention to them, but also to all those who come in contact with them.

The following are **some** of the indicators that a child is being exploited:



- A significant change in behavior, including increased online behavior, or associating with a new group of friends
- Presence of an overly controlling or abusive “boyfriend” or older female
- Has multiple cell phones or electronic devices
- Carries large amounts of cash or prepaid credit cards
- Has a name or a symbol tattooed, burned, or branded on his or her body
- Has hotel keys, hotel receipts, or other items from a hotel/motel

## HOW TO SPOT TRAFFICKING VICTIMS WHILE TRAVELING

With spring break and the summer holidays coming up, many of us are bound to be doing some traveling in the near future. When you’re on the road or in the air, keep your eyes open to children who might be victims of human trafficking in airports, hotels, restaurants, gas stations and supermarkets..



### What are some signs that a child may be trafficked?

- They are dressed inappropriately for the travel destination
- They are traveling with someone dressed more appropriately for the destination
- They are carrying very little luggage or no luggage at all
- They show signs of malnourishment, bruises, or have an unusually large appetite
- They are unable to provide information about their destination or flight
- They give ‘rehearsed’ answers to questions, or ones lacking consistency
- They avoid answering questions altogether, and let their companion speak for them
- They are accompanied by someone who has no obvious relationship to them

**What should you do if you spot a child you suspect is being trafficked?** Alert local law enforcement right away, or call one of the following numbers:

- The National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888
- The National Runaway Switchboard: 1-800-RUNAWAY
- The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children: 1-800-843-5678

## HELPFUL APPS, AND THOSE TO AVOID

You can help detect and disrupt trafficking with the help of technology. Here are some smartphone apps\* that you can install:

- [The STOP APP](#) allows anyone to report suspicious activity that may be related to human trafficking.
- [The Lifeboat ACT Game app](#) is an interactive game designed to help young people recognize real-life situations in which they might be at risk of trafficking.



*\* Inclusion of these apps does not imply endorsement nor support by California State PTA*

The following apps are the ones most commonly used by traffickers to recruit children. If your children use them, you should closely monitor their usage in order to help to keep them safe:

- WhatsApp
- Bumble
- Ask.fm

- MeetMe
- Kik
- Grindr

To get more information on human trafficking, visit <https://capta.org/focus-areas/community-concerns/child-trafficking>

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