

What Is **SEX TRAFFICKING** In Grand Rapids

Sex trafficking happens when someone is exploited for sex through force, fraud, coercion or when someone under 18 is engaged in commercial sex. Sex trafficking is a form of modern slavery.

You'll know if an activity is sex trafficking if you see human beings treated as possessions to be controlled and exploited such as by being forced into prostitution. Sex trafficking happens throughout Grand Rapids on the street, at truck stops, hotels, motels, residential brothels, strip clubs, phone sex operators, massage parlors, pornography and through online ads or escort services. Victims can be U.S. citizens, foreign nationals, women, men, children and LGBTQ individuals.

The situations that sex trafficking victims face vary dramatically. Many become emotionally involved with someone who then forces or manipulates them into prostitution. Others are lured in with false promises of a job, such as modeling or dancing. Some are forced by their parents to sell sex or other family members. They may be involved in a trafficking situation for a few days or weeks, or may remain in the same trafficking situation for years.

EVENT PROGRAM

Tuesday January 23, 2018

Refreshments served

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 6:00 PM | Video vignettes
Short stories on identifying sex trafficking |
| 6:15 PM | Commissioner Senita Lenear |
| 6:20 PM | Spoken word Rachel Gleason
Will share a poem on the subject |
| 6:30 PM | Film screening of <i>Break the Chain</i> |
| 7:35 PM | Community Expert Panel Discussion |

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City of Grand Rapids Human Trafficking Work Group



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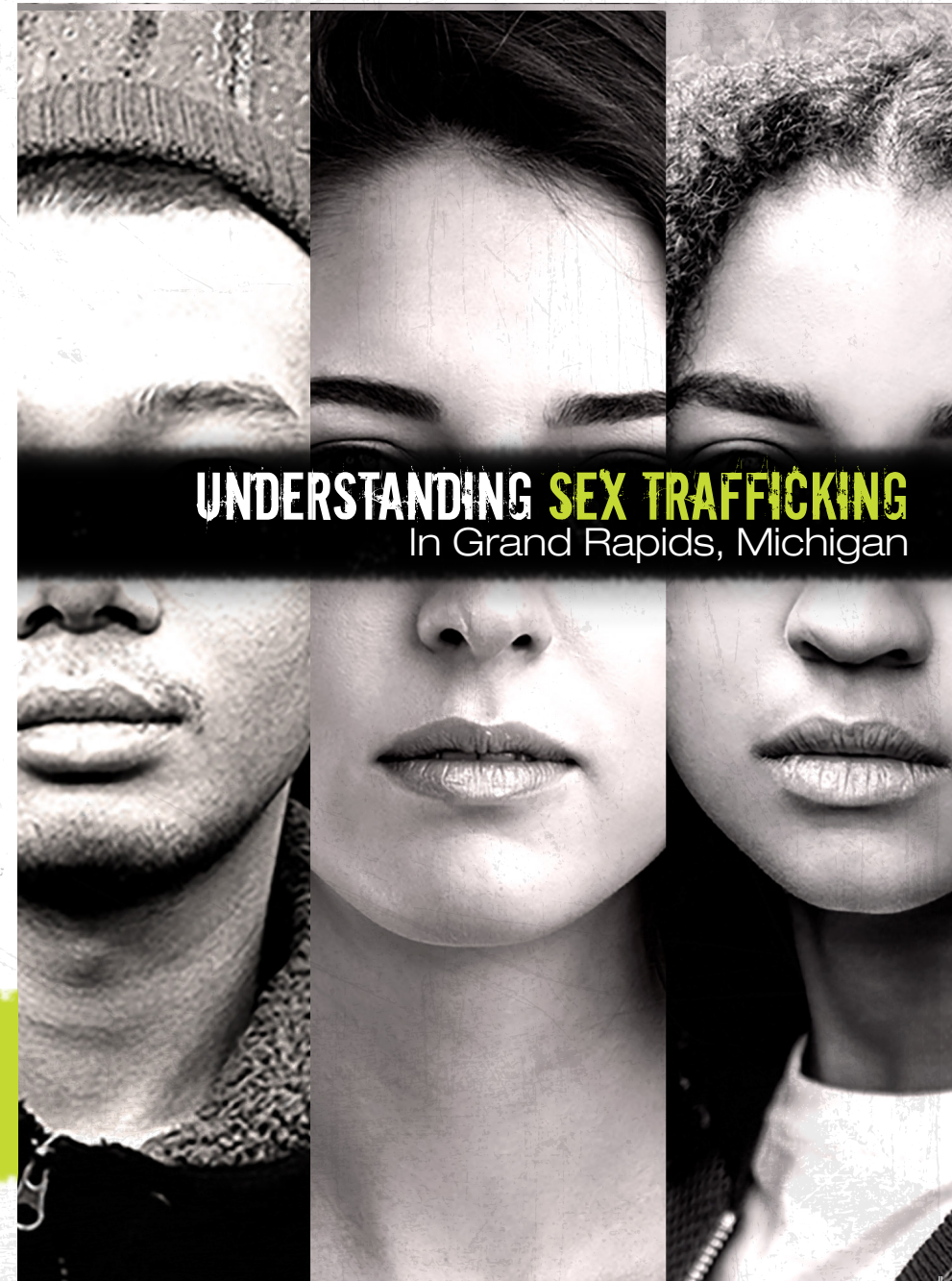


NEED HELP?

National Human Trafficking Hotline

1 (888) 373-7888

UNDERSTANDING SEX TRAFFICKING
In Grand Rapids, Michigan



The VICTIMS & SURVIVORS

- Runaways are particularly vulnerable
- Estimates over 1,000 individuals were victims of online sex trafficking in Grand Rapids last year*
- 90% of those interviewed in Grand Rapids reported being first trafficked as a minor*
- Age 15 is the average age of entry into commercial sex trade in Grand Rapids*
- 100% of those in the commercial sex trade in Grand Rapids experienced barriers to access helpful services (examples: health care, rehab, law enforcement, emergency housing, faith based community)*
- 100% of those interviewed reported experiencing violence*
- 89 million people had experienced modern slavery in the past five years**



Why THIS HAPPENS

- Depressed
- Drug addiction
- Low self-esteem
- Few friends
- Disowned by family
- Abused by family

15 years-old is the average age of entry into commercial sex trade in Grand Rapids*

Learn the WARNING SIGNS

- Evidence of physical abuse, such as burn marks, bruises
- Unexplained absences from class
- Less appropriately dressed than before
- Sexualized behavior
- Overly tired in class
- Withdrawn, depressed, distracted or checked out
- Brags about making or having lots of money
- Displays expensive clothes, accessories or shoes
- New tattoo (tattoos are often used by pimps as a way to brand victims. Tattoos of a name, symbol of money or barcode could indicate trafficking)
- Older boyfriend or new friends with a different lifestyle



40.3 MILLION VICTIMS of modern slavery** in 2016

3RD LARGEST international crime industry***

80% ARE FEMALES trafficked across international borders***

*Source: Sexual Exploitation Data Project report summary **Source: International Organization of Migration, Walk Free Foundation, International Organization of Migration ***Source: dosomething.org