Community Awareness

Stolen People, Stolen Dreams.

HOSA Against Human Trafficking

Anjali Sanichara, Rya Joshi, Manya Bhandary, Peyton Potter

Target Audience: Youth and Young Adults

Number of Participants in Target Audience: over 1,000 people

Chapter Name: Tampa Bay Tech-Academy of Health Professions

Chapter Number: 15172

Chapter Division: Secondary

Tampa Bay Technical High School
Florida
Selection of Topic: Human trafficking is modern day slavery and affects both physical and mental health. Traffickers force vulnerable people into committing acts they normally wouldn't, such as sex, labor, and domestic servitude. The United States is the largest consumer of Human Trafficking and Florida is ranked third in the nation for the most Human Trafficking cases. For victims to confess their experiences, they need to know that they have support to fight their traffickers. Without knowledge on the topic, people will not understand how they can make a difference. For instance, if you see suspicious activity, call the Human Trafficking hotline or inform local authorities, instead of approaching it. Living in one of the largest hubs of trafficking, we felt it was our obligation to make a difference.

Objectives and Goals: Experts informed us that the best way to fight against trafficking is by spreading awareness and informing people on what they can do to make a difference. At first, we decided to set our goal to reach out to at least 100 members within our community. We hoped to make it clear that this is not something that can be fought alone, and we need to work together as a community for there to be change.

Accomplishments and Effectiveness: For this project, we partnered up with many different organizations, including Blue Campaign, Buddy Bombs, Hillsborough Community College's American Medical Student Association (AMSA), Triumph over Trafficking (TOTS), Bridging Freedom, Naga Tea, Tampa Bay Technical (TBT) High School's Yearbook Committee, Key Club International, Progress Village's Performance Team, Pasco County's Board of Commissioners, and the U.S Institute Against Human Trafficking. Together, we ended up reaching out to over 1,000 people within our community.
October 22, 2018: Human Trafficking and Awareness Symposium

We teamed up with Triumph Over Trafficking (TOT) to promote and participate in this event at the University of South Florida (USF). Survivors of human trafficking and experts were present in order to educate the college students and adult population who attended. Our team was in charge of registration. In addition, we participated in a fashion show, which represented the various countries that are affected by human trafficking.

November 19, 2018: Human Trafficking Training

A couple representatives of our team attended a human trafficking training program with the Pasco County Board of Commissioners and TOT at USF. At this seminar, we learned several indicators of human trafficking, as well as ways to deal with different scenarios. Because this topic can be sensitive, one has to be licensed in order to distribute certain pieces of information. Fearing that this information might come to be in the wrong hands, we were not able to host as many events as we desired.

November 26, 2018: Clothing Drive

Members of our team donated, as well as encouraged others to donate clothing to Bridging Freedom. This organization provides shelter and resources to female survivors of human trafficking.
November 28, 2018: Cookies at Tampa Bay Technical High School

At our high school, we handed out cookies with labels stating, “Human Trafficking Crumbles the Dreams of Others”. We had two members run the booth, while the rest of the team marched around campus with signs that presented facts about human trafficking.

January 5, 2019: Lemonade Stand

At the Brandon Regional Library, we stationed a lemonade stand, as well as posters with facts about human trafficking that were appropriate for distribution. To everyone who approached us, we provided water with yellow food coloring in it, saying that it was lemonade. This represented the empty promises that many traffickers use to lure in their victims. When they realized that it was just plain water, we explained the reasoning behind it, and gave them an actual pouch of lemonade with a label stating, “Lemme-Aid in The Fight Against Human Trafficking”.

Additionally, we also handed out personalized wristbands and whistles with our project title (“Stolen People, Stolen Dreams”) and the hashtag (#HOSAAgainstHumanTrafficking).

January 17, 2018: Naga Tea

We teamed up with TOT to organize a fundraiser at Naga Tea. We posted flyers to invite people and inform them that if they mentioned that they were with TOT, the proceeds from their purchases will be utilized towards future human trafficking awareness events.
January 17, 2019: School Yearbook

For the work that we have been doing to promote awareness, our high school yearbook staff dedicated a page towards the fight against human trafficking.

January 19, 2019: Progress Village’s Performance Team

Since many trafficking victims are young girls, we educated a group of middle schoolers about the common indicators of this crime and what to do if they ever recognized these indicators in their lives.

January 25, 2019: “Stopping Traffic” Movie Screening

With the American Medical Student Association (AMSA), the Junior League of Tampa, and TOT, we coordinated a screening of the award-winning movie “Stopping Traffic. There, experts, including Siddhayatan Tirth, the director of the movie, were able to provide answer any questions that were asked.

January 26, 2019: High Tea

With the help of AMSA, Buddy Bombs, and Bridging Freedom, we hosted a high tea. As they enjoyed classy finger-foods, we equipped our audience with the information needed to lead the movement against human trafficking.

February 13, 2019: Toiletry Drive

In collaboration with TBT Key Club, we hosted a toiletry drive, where we asked for donations of much needed items, such as shampoos, soaps, razors, lotions, pads, tampons, deodorant, etc., which were given to survivors.
February 16, 2019: Car Wash

In partnership with Tampa Bay Technical High School’s Key Club, we organized a car wash. All proceeds from this event were donated to the U.S. Institute Against Human Trafficking.

February 23, 2019: Silent March

Attendees marched around downtown Tampa wearing all black, with blue tape over their mouths to represent the helplessness of the victims of human trafficking and the pain that they are forced to endure silently.

March 18, 2019: Meeting with Ross Spano from the U.S. House of Representatives

We met with Representative Spano, who is taking our ideas to craft, and eventually pass, a bill that would provide amnesty to survivors of human trafficking.

March 18, 2019: ABC Action News

After our meeting with Representative Spano, ABC Action News wrote an article, as well as telecasted our interview regarding our fight against trafficking.

April 12, 2019: Instagram Livestream

Alongside TOT, we conducted a livestream video, where we answered any questions our viewers had and informed them of indicators of trafficking, as well as how to combat it.

April 29, 2019: Boy Scouts Presentation

With the aim of emphasizing the fact that boys are often trafficked too, we presented to boy scouts and equipped them with knowledge on how to stay safe and report suspicious behavior.
May 7, 2019: Anne Frank Humanitarian Award

After hearing about our efforts to help end human trafficking, the Florida Holocaust Museum honored our team with the Anne Frank Humanitarian Award.

May 12, 2019: Human Trafficking Interpretation Painting

Similar to the way human trafficking is overlooked, various art pieces also have meanings that are overlooked. For this event, we hosted a painting session to have students illustrate the emotions associated with human trafficking. Although not all victims have a barcode or visible proof, the images produced still conveyed the sadness, heartbreak, and trauma that human trafficking causes.

In order to reach out to an even wider range of people and to give them something tangible in return, we customized a whistle with our hashtag (#HOSAStopsHumanTrafficking) and our project title (“Stolen People, Stolen Dreams”).

In addition, we designed wristbands to hand out during our events too. It has our project title (“Stolen People, Stolen Dreams”) and our hashtag (#HOSAAgainstTrafficking).

At our events, we also handed out key chains with information about the Blue Campaign, which works closely with the Department of Homeland Security to fight trafficking.

During the summer of 2020, we plan to take our Silent March to Washington D.C., with the hopes of influencing our legislators to pass laws that would help end human trafficking, as well as those that would aid its survivors.
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References


