



# Brighter Futures

Meeting Summary: July 21, 2009

For information:

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## *Youth face serious abuse on the streets, as victims of 'human trafficking'*

Workers in Brighter Futures agencies have a role to play in rescuing persons from being enslaved into human trafficking schemes. That was the message at the July Brighter Futures meeting.

Human trafficking is indeed "modern-day slavery," Mary Jo Joyce, of Practical Strategies, said. The U.S. State Department estimates that each year some 600,000 persons are trafficked throughout the world, with 14,000 to 17,000 coming to the US. She said that often the victims come from less developed countries, where job opportunities are lacking and they face a life of poverty; therefore the lure of a job in another nation offers some hope for them, making them easy targets for human traffickers.

Practical Strategies is the Wisconsin subcontractor for the Federal government's Rescue and Restore program, developed to assist in rescuing the victims and then restoring them to a positive life standard. She said the program assists the persons to find the resources needed to live free in the United States, or to be returned to their home countries, if they wish.

Social workers in community agencies

are in good position to identify potential persons in need of rescue and to prove that the person is a true victim of human trafficking, Joyce said. She also asked the BF participants to become active in the Rescue



**BF agencies were told they have a role to play in protecting youth from being victimized.**

and Restore coalition.

Joyce said there are resources available from the Federal government

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**Some 14,000 to  
17,000 youth annually  
are 'trafficked' in USA**

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and the coalition to assist victims. Victims who have chosen to stay in U.S. and to get on the track to citizenship must cooperate with the law enforcement communities. The program will not cover "illegal aliens."

Minors are exempted from cooperating requirement.

Human trafficking activity is both organized and unorganized, she said, and it's the third most lucrative crime in the world, after drug and arms trafficking.

Joyce said that Wisconsin is often attractive to such crime, since it's viewed as a "sleepy area."

Claudine O'Leary, president of Rethink Resources, discussed the realities of teens involved in the Milwaukee sex trade. She said much of her knowledge comes from personal experience as a

teen and some 18 years of community experience. She founded an organization for girls in the sex trade called Project Empowerment, a group now largely being run by the girls themselves.

"It's a reality here," she said of human trafficking.

O'Leary described the progression of a young person, usually a girl, who begins first with dealing in transactional sex, where the girl trades sex for "getting your hair done, getting a cell phone paid or clothes." She quoted from a poster created in Zim-

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# Young people subject to false lures that lead to slavery

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babwe which said: "Sugar daddies are only interested in you ... until someone new comes along."

Next, it's "Survival Sex," where the young person performs sex to satisfy needs for food, shelter, and other basic needs

Then, she said, there's the commercial sex industry, such as dance clubs, legal porn sites, lingerie and bachelor parties, chat lines and phone sex, etc. Such activities are illegal for minors, but legal for adults, she said.

Finally, she identified "underground sex trade," which is street-based, including hotel escorts, gentleman clubs, massage parlors, photos and videos with minors, and truck stops.

The interstate corridors are full of child prostitution; one of the hottest areas is Toledo, Ohio, due to the interstate driving patterns. She said there have been reports of youth from such locations as Duluth migrating to Milwaukee. There are people who call themselves "promoters" who promise modeling or acting careers, but are really recruiting for prostitution.

To learn more about the young person's situation, she said her agency asks when somebody made money off of the young person.

O'Leary said it's important to recognize that street-based sex trade can occur all over the community, even within the apartment where the youth lives,



**Mary Jo Joyce outlines human trafficking issues**

About 25% of the girls she works with first got involved in sex within their own families, some as young as five, O'Leary said. Many enter the trade by being offered to go to other areas to model, to act or to gain other opportunities.

The girls often do some "game-playing" by providing their phone number for money, or providing other "teasing" done by the girls.

Some persons serve the sex trade in "support roles," she said. Those involve people answering the phones, driving youth around, security, childcare, serving drinks, recruitment and being a recruiting tool, she said. "This is a way of guiding someone into the trade," she said.



**Christine O'Leary outlines features of sex trade**

When dealing with a person who is part of the sex trade business, she urged social workers about two actions that might curb their ability to assist the persons. They are: 1) Stop being judgmental (Very often social workers transmit a feeling that the person herself or himself is the problem); and 2) Making it about "bad choices" by teens.

She urged that workers should focus on:

- Offering safety and identifying options for the youth. (Many teens are unaware of resources)
- Providing resources. (There are not enough resources, she said.)
- Offering support. (She urged the workers to act as this "in-between person" that may have to choose between "letting go," or trying to hold on to the youth.)

## Teen Pregnancy Prevention Network Report:

Anthony McHenry, chairperson, reporting. There will be NO meeting in August and the next meeting will be held at noon, Thursday, Sept. 10, at Silver Spring Neighborhood Center. Family Unity Night is to be held Thursday, October 8 and it is urged that all agencies involve their families in planning to have a family meal.

He said it has been shown that the children in a family that eats together on a regular basis are far less likely to be drop outs, use drugs and practice other damaging behavior. He said the Network is hoping the event will be a major media event.

Jody Rhodes, of the Neu-Life Center, outlined the Youth Summit which was to be held all day on Tuesday, Aug. 18 at the Silver Spring Neighborhood Center.

The entire program, she said, was planned by the Youth Ambassadors and it is expected some 200 youth will attend. "The teens have put their stamp on it," she said.

# Stakeholders discuss options for BF programming

Intense discussion was the order of the day as more than 50 stakeholders discussed community issues and suggested topics for future consideration by Milwaukee Brighter Futures. The "Looking to the Future" forum was held July 24 at the Children's Health Education Center.

Jan Wilberg, BF evaluator, used an interactive Power Point presentation to outline the results of the recent Youth Survey conducted this Spring among some 330 youth who participate in programming at BF agencies.

Stakeholders, including public officials, law enforcement, community workers, BF agency leaders and others, were asked to come up with ideas that could bring improvement in the areas of youth development and the prevention of child abuse and neglect. More than 75 suggestions were received and will be reviewed as Brighter Futures coordinators and staff set future goals for the network.

Joe Volk, executive director of Community Advocates, the lead agency for Milwaukee Brighter Futures, opened the



All eyes are on the screen in discussions at BF's "Looking to Future" forum

session by urging participants to set aside their agency agendas and look at solutions from the point of view of best serving the people of the community. He urged all to recall the client or person that motivated them to become involved in community work.

Racquel Bell, BF coordinator, expressed the hope that the participants found the session informative. She assured the group that their comments will be reviewed carefully and used to help direct the formation of the coming RFP process for Milwaukee Brighter Futures.

## Mark Your Calendar: Family Unity Night (F.U.N.) Thursday, Oct. 8th

*Note to all agencies: Make plans to involve your families in planning a family dinner that night. The family that eats together has a greater chance of assuring their children will have a decent future.*

**VISIT**

**Our website**

<http://www.milwaukeebrighterfutures.org>

## Brighter Futures Meetings

### General Meetings:

No Meeting in August

9:30 a.m., Tuesday, Sept. 15, at Aurora Family Service, 3200 W. Highland Blvd.

### MCAPS Public Policy

No Meeting in August

2:30 p.m., Monday, Sept. 14, at United Way, 225 W. Vine St.

### Teen Pregnancy Prevention Network

No Meeting in August

Noon, Thursday, Sept. 10, at Silver Spring Neighborhood Center, 5460 N. 64th St.

### Teen Parent Work Group

1 p.m., Monday, Sept. 14, at United Way.

## Meeting Attendance July 21, 2009—Hillside Family Resource Center

First Name	Last Name	Agency
Sheryl	Bartczak	Alliance for Healthy Families
Terri	Strodthoff	Alma Center Inc
Priscilla	Neal	Aurora Family Service
Christina	Treiber	Big Brothers Big Sisters
Sandy	Malone	Boys and Girls Club
Kari	Nervig	COA YFC - Riverwest Ctr
Andi	Elliott	Community Advocates
Aricka	Evans	Community Advocates
Joe	Volk	Community Advocates
Kenneth	Germanson	Community Advocates
Racquel	Bell	Community Advocates
Wendy	Mc Carty	Dept. of Children and Families
Maytong	Chang	HAWA
Matricia	Patterson	IMPACT
Clarence	Rice	Innerworks
Betsy	Heinen	La Causa FRC
Cristina	Ledezma	Latino Community Center
Joanna	Love	Marquette Univ. Behavior Clinic
John	DeMott	Marquette Univ. Center for Peacemaking
Natalie	Fleury	Marquette University
Eilene	Buege	Marquette University - Penfield
Deborah	Bryant	Milwaukee Adolescent Health
Lenora	Shaw	Milwaukee Adolescent Health Program
Kathi	Boyce	Milwaukee Christian Center
Shirley	Senaya	Milwaukee Health Dept.
Julie	Bock	Milwaukee LGBT
Terry	Grazer	Modjeska Youth Theatre Co.
Jody	Rhodes	Neu-Life Community Resource Ctr
David	Scholl	Ombudsman
Kevin	Layde	Parents Plus
Trudy	Ranallo	Parents Plus, Inc.
Lisa	Gumm	Pathfinders
Sherri	Daniels	Pathfinders
Joseph	Stanley	Pathfinders Youth Shelter
Michelle	Brock	Pearls for Teen Girls
Yvette	Dotson	Pearls for Teen Girls, Inc.
Claudine	O'Leary	Rethink Resources
Jessica	Watson	Safe & Sound, Americorps Vista
Margie	Oltman	Schlitz Audubon Nature Center
Anthony	Mc Henry	Silver Spring Neighborhood Center
Theresa	Post	Sojourner Family Peace Center
Angela	Ellis	The Parenting Network
Kelly	Young	Vincent Family Resource Center
Marissa	Lopez	Walker's Point Youth and Family Ctr.
Sally	Ladky	WI Abstinence Coalition
Connie	Schulze	%Sen.. Darling's Office

**NOTE: All Brighter Futures funded agencies are expected to attend monthly MYFDA meetings, according to their contract**

### Milwaukee Brighter Futures: A better community through prevention

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