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# Protecting Our Youth

University of Dayton

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*Wednesday November 2, 2016*

## Protecting Our Youth

The University of Dayton's Human Rights Center and Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine's Human Trafficking Commission are providing Ohio schools, youth counselors, after-school programs and anti-human trafficking organizations with a free online manual for developing anti-human trafficking education for children.

The Human Trafficking Prevention Education Guidance for Implementation of Youth Programs, aimed at middle and high school students, can be presented by educators or counselors in one or two hours or class periods depending on the setting, according to human rights lecturer Tony Talbott, who also works in the University of Dayton Human Rights Center. The materials also support the human trafficking awareness training required for all Ohio public school personnel which includes what to do if a child alerts them to suspected human trafficking.

"Yes, 'slavery' still exists in America, and Ohio is unfortunately a fertile ground for it because of major interstates 70, 75 and 80/90," Talbott said. "Many think this just happens in developing nations and it's 'their problem.'

"This is 'our problem.'"

Talbott and other members of the Ohio Attorney General's Human Trafficking Commission's Prevention, Education and Awareness Subcommittee have distributed the materials to high schools in Montgomery and surrounding counties. The materials also are available online via the related link.

Talbott emphasized this is not any part of state curriculum standards, but guidelines, resources and best practices for anti-human trafficking education for youth. The variety of situations, educators and districts requires a more customizable approach to anti-human trafficking education and outreach, Talbott added.

"Human trafficking is happening all across this country and right here in Ohio, but the signs of human trafficking can be easy to miss," DeWine said. "By providing this manual, we hope that more schools will incorporate human trafficking education in their lesson plans to help teach students how to recognize this terrible crime."

In school settings, the information can be seamlessly woven into most classes. Math classes can analyze statistics and learn how to use them to produce accurate estimates. Social studies classes can examine laws, investigative techniques,

and migration and trafficking flows. English classes can analyze survivor narratives and identify cultural forces that enable trafficking. Health classes can discuss prevention, awareness, health and safety related to trafficking, and grooming techniques used by traffickers.

The National Human Trafficking Resource Center reports approximately a third of all cases reported to its hotline involve minor victims.

"The U.S. Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Education both recognize human trafficking as a form of violence against children that needs to be addressed in school settings," the subcommittee wrote in its report released this week.

Immigrant and migrant youth, children living in poverty, foster children, children with disabilities or behavioral health concerns, and students who transfer schools frequently are among those at high risk to become ensnared in trafficking. Warning signs include truancy, running away, frequent travel, withdrawn behavior, depression, anxiety or fear; lack of control over a personal schedule, identification or travel documents; coached or rehearsed responses to questions; and a significant other who is noticeably older and/or controlling.

Federal law defines human trafficking — often referred to as "modern-day slavery" — as sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

Talbott also heads Abolition Ohio, the regional anti-trafficking campaign. Based at the University of Dayton Human Rights Center, the University created Abolition Ohio at the request of local and state law enforcement agencies and social service organizations under the auspices of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Campaign to Rescue and Restore Victims of Human Trafficking.

University of Dayton human rights studies faculty and students also were instrumental in advocacy that led to the enactment of Ohio Senate Bill 235, which made human trafficking a criminal offense in Ohio.

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