

Capstone Paper

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### **Identify the Problem**

Today the unthinkable is happening. According to the International Labour Organization (2012) close to 2 million children are being exploited in the commercial sex trade. Within this trade they are subjected to routine sexual and physical violence.

Those in refugee camps are especially at risk. Slave traders posing as businessmen come and seek out the most despondent families and offer to buy their child for sometimes as little as twenty or thirty dollars. They then promise to send back a remittance to the family, which in turn helps meet their basic needs for survival. In the book, "Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery" (2009) such an account is shared. A 19-year-old girl named Maya was interviewed. She had been a sex slave for four years previous. She was born in Nepal where the annual income per capita was just fifty cents a day or \$180.00 a year. Her family was desperate when propositioned from a local business man. She was sold for \$55 with the promise that she would have a good job in a carpet factory and would be able to send \$10 a month home to her family. The night Maya left, she was resold to a trafficker in India. The next day she and another girl crossed the border on foot, and in two days were in Mumbai, where they were sold to a brothel boss. She was told she owed him \$780.00 and would have to earn her freedom by having sex with men. She refused. She was then raped several times and not given food for days. Actions such as these are strategic and meant to precipitate the so called "softening phase" of the victims.

When she agreed to sex, they fed her and gave her needed medications. She was in a brothel with as many as one hundred other young women and children. She reported that she was forced to have sex twenty times a day for two years. At that time she tried to escape, but was found two days later. The treatment and abuse she received for running away was so

unimaginable, unspeakable, and deplorable that she did not attempt another escape for two more years. She continued to work in the brothel. She became pregnant multiple times and was forced to abort the babies. She finally successfully escaped from her nightmare to a shelter. It was there she learned she had HIV. They also helped her contact her father. She said, “My father told me not to come home. He said I can never be married, and because I have HIV, I will only bring shame” (Kara, 2009).

Maya’s experience is not uncommon. Every year, hundreds of thousands of women and children are abducted, deceived, seduced, and sold into forced prostitution. One factor that encourages the sex trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation is that it is a very profitable, low-risk trade. According to Phinney (2001), “These trafficked sex slaves form the backbone of one of the world's most profitable illicit enterprises and generate huge profits for their exploiters, for unlike narcotics, which must be grown, harvested, refined, and packaged, sex slaves require no such processing, and can be repeatedly consumed”.

Additionally, the abundance of unregulated orphanages feeds the industry overseas. In a number of countries there are grassroots, unregistered orphanages. While many are above board and are tirelessly trying to meet the demand to care for orphaned, neglected, and/or abandoned children, others’ intentions are not so pure. Some orphanages are a front and are the beginning of a child’s worst nightmare. They are nothing more than a mere holding cell where perpetrators come to “buy” their next victim, or pimps come to make their next investment.

Many people would like to think sex trafficking is only a problem in remote and faraway places. However, this problem also exists in America. The National Report on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking, estimates that at least 100,000 and as many as 300,000 American juveniles are victimized through prostitution in America each year. Domestic minor sex trafficking is

considered child sex slavery, child sex trafficking, prostitution of children, commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), and rape of a child (Smith, Vardman, & Snow, 2009).

### **Three Areas of Integrated Studies**

To receive my Bachelor of Integrated Studies, I have chosen three areas of emphasis: Child and Family Studies, Psychology, and Criminal Justice. Let's take a look at how knowledge in each field of study is applicable.

#### Child and Family Studies

A knowledge of Child and Family Studies has been most helpful as I have worked with Operation Underground Railroad. Acquiring knowledge about the human basic needs in my course "Human Growth and Development", as well as concepts in "Family Relations" and "Diverse Families" has strengthened my foundation and understanding of the complexities of the family. The family is the basic unit of society; it essentially makes up the world we live in. While each family is unique, there are some circumstances that lend themselves to higher risk factors associated with such crimes as childhood slavery. There may be as many contributing factors as there are crimes; however, there are some commonalities, especially when examining families of the same country and culture. I have learned about a variety of different cultures around the world from my CHF 3350 class, "Diverse Families". Certain countries are so impoverished that out of desperation the family may consider selling their own child. This would be hard for any first world country to understand, but given the poverty and unique circumstances that some find themselves in, this is a heartbreaking decision that is all too often a reality for some families. It is recorded that 15 million parents sell children in India to the carpet weaving industry. Such dark

stories shed light on the plight and circumstances affecting millions of individuals and families around the world (Kara, 2009).

### Psychology

The field of Psychology has enhanced my understanding of how the individual mind develops, functions, and reacts. The courses “Child and Adolescent Psychopathology” and “Abnormal Psych” have particularly given me a plethora of information about the mind and how the brain reacts when one is subjected to stressful or traumatic situations. The psychological impact of events such as childhood sexual exploitation is no doubt profound. According to Rafferty (2008),

“Child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) are egregious crimes, extreme forms of child maltreatment, and major violations of children’s human rights. Although empirical research is sorely lacking on the impact of such crimes on children’s developmental well-being, numerous reports describe the physical and emotional trauma, humiliation, violence, degradation associated with treatment as a commodity, and unrelenting fear and abuse. Findings suggest that trafficking and CSE present grave risks to the physical, psychological, spiritual, and social–emotional development of young victims” (p.13).

The book “Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery”, describes some outcomes of this practice. These include: debilitating physical injuries, malnutrition, psychological trauma, posttraumatic stress disorder, and infections by scourge of STD's and HIV (Kara, 2009). As one would suppose, providing recovery programs for such victims are essential to their well-being and the betterment of their life outcomes.

## Criminal Justice

Another field of study that has added to my understanding is that of Criminal Justice. It is necessary to have laws to protect victims, and with these laws we have the ability and the responsibility to prosecute the perpetrators of such crimes. In my studies I have learned about the “Theories of Crime”, “Criminal Law and Courts”, “Criminal Investigations”, as well as “Ethical Issues” in the Criminal Justice System.

“The trafficking of young women and children for prostitution and other forms of sexual exploitation is one of the most significant human rights abuses in contemporary society” (Hodge, 2008). The Legislature has responded to the trafficking of children by passing the Trafficking Victims Protection Act in 2000. “The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) is arguably the most important anti-trafficking law ever passed. The TVPA, and its reauthorizations in 2003, 2005, and 2008 define a human trafficking victim as a person induced to perform labor or a commercial sex act through force, fraud, or coercion.” Any person under age 18 who performs a commercial sex act is considered a victim of human trafficking, regardless of whether force, fraud, or coercion was present (Trafficking Victims Protection Act, 2011).

Operation Underground Railroad (OUR) addresses these issues. In October 2014, the Jump Team coordinated with the country of Colombia and the US Embassy to run a successful operation freeing 123 victims and arresting 10 perpetrators. That team also included Utah’s Attorney General, Sean Reyes. Reyes became aware of our community fundraiser for the OUR organization. He came and spoke to all those in attendance that evening. He reported that this sting operation was so successful and well known throughout the industry in Colombia that it virtually shattered the existence of the organizations there. Sean Reyes told the crowd, “Many are too afraid of the repercussions and know the American Jump Team will take them down.” He

also educated us as to which countries are the most involved in the perpetuation of such crimes. The production and consumption of pornography, particularly child pornography is associated with behavior leading to this type of exploitation. Shamefully, US citizens have the second largest appetites for such atrocities. Many who seek sex with children are Americans traveling to other countries (Reyes, 2015). These criminals need to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

### **Operation Underground Railroad Process and Mission**

Many individuals are unaware how prevalent of a problem we have when it comes to the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children. Some are aware, but would rather turn a blind eye to the situation and continue living their own lives. However, Tim Ballard, is not one of those individuals. Tim is keenly aware. As an agent for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, Tim was trained to fight terrorism until he was later asked to join the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. Initially he declined, citing the emotional toll it would surely take on him. His boss encouraged him to reconsider and assured him that his “religious background would strengthen him against the horrific crimes he would be facing” (Ballard, 2015).

Tim talked to his wife Katherine about it. He said, “I told my wife, ‘I can’t do this.’ These children are being kidnapped and raped. There is nothing worse on earth. There is nothing worse in hell.” But after much prayer, they both felt a powerful confirmation that this was what he was supposed to do.

One of his first cases led to the rescue of a 5-year-old boy, “This little boy was being violated in the worst possible way,” he recalls. “I was the first agent on the scene, and he jumped into my arms and wouldn’t let go. I came home that night and collapsed on the floor and cried

like a baby.” I made a commitment to God and to that little boy that I would do everything I could, even if it killed me.”

Not long after that, Operation Underground Railroad was born. Much like the Underground Railroad of the past, the mission is to free those from the bonds and chains of slavery. “I have seen the face of modern-day slavery”, said Tim, “and it is every bit as outrageous as the slavery of Abraham Lincoln’s day in the 1800s.” He and his specialized team liberated more than two hundred children the first year. Their team consists of former Navy Seals, CIA agents, law enforcements officers, medical personnel, and military veterans. Others on the Board include Ed Smart and Elizabeth Smart-Gilmore. Many will remember Elizabeth as the 14 yr. old girl who was kidnapped out of her bedroom of her parents Salt Lake City, Utah home in 2002. Elizabeth was held captive as a child bride and repeatedly raped for 9 months before she was found. Her addition to the Board has ensured that the children they rescue are rehabilitated through skilled organizations.

In helping children out of sexual slavery, Operation Underground Railroad (OUR) has developed a methodical three step process. The first step is to formulate the strategy for rescue using the background experiences of covert military intelligence and law enforcement operations. This includes research, coordination and cooperation of government officials. Then they work together to find safe, legal and sustainable care for the children.

The second step is to take action. This involves the undercover sting operation lead by an experienced Jump Team. The Jump Team is trained in understanding the mentality of each individual situation, as well as hand to hand combat and the use of firearms. They are the Warriors that confront the evil face to face. They physically put their lives on the line to safely



rescue the children. With the assistance of the local law enforcement the perpetrators are then arrested.

The third step is the follow up care. This involves the monitoring of the case to be sure the perpetrators are prosecuted. They also train the local governments how to infiltrate and dismantle existing organizations that are involved in Child Slavery. “Most governments want to fix the problem of child sex slavery, but many lack sufficient infrastructure and resources to address it” (OUR, 2014). Operation Underground Railroad provides software and trains governments how to use the technology to catch the traffickers. After completing a mission together, the local government then has a working model for addressing sex slavery and sex tourism to continue future rescues on their own.

The story of Emmanuel is an example of one of their rescue operations. In 2014 Emmanuel lived in an illegal orphanage in Haiti which was notorious for selling children to traffickers. Those children would then be forced into the illegal sex trade. OUR formulated the strategy and coordinated with the local government officials to plan the sting operation. When the undercover rescue team arrived, the abusive ringleader told them, “These kids are all for sale” (OUR, 2014).

Luckily Emmanuel’s story ended well. OUR rescued him. Unfortunately, there are many more children out there. And to those children, Operation Underground Railroad has made a promise: “To the children – Hold on, we are on our way. To their captors – Be afraid, we are coming for you” (OUR, 2014).

### **Development of Capstone Project**

Accounts such as these are inspiring. Though such depravity does exist, there are many good and heroic people in the world. Some, however, feel powerless to make a difference when they become aware of its existence. For thirty years I have had a favorite saying attributed to Edmund Burk, a political theorist. He states “Evil flourishes when good men do nothing.”

When I first learned about the new non-profit organization, Operation Underground Railroad, I knew I couldn't sit by and do nothing. I felt compelled to do something. The first thing I did was enroll as a supporter. With a donation as little as \$5 a month, one becomes an “abolitionist”. This enables one to get updates through their newsletters and to follow their missions more closely. Also a text message is sent every time a victim is rescued. As I continued to follow this organization, my desire to do something more increased. I discussed some possible ideas I had for my Service Learning Capstone Project with my professor, Melinda Russell Stamp, in March 2015, when I asked her to sit on my board. By the time summer 2015 arrived, I had the strong impression that now was the time to act, but I still wasn't sure how.

Just days after that experience, I was speaking with a friend about the organization. She said she had just recently become aware, and was equally disturbed to learn this was happening to innocent children around the world. She and her sister in law had already instigated a front yard bake sale to benefit the children, striving to do something to help. I said that I felt the same and wanted to jump on board. It did not take long to have others willing to help as well.

We had a core group of five organizers. Our goal was to raise awareness as well as funds. We meet together to discuss the needs and to brainstorm ideas. As we talked with others about the event, the simple bake sale grew and grew. In the short time frame of four weeks, we had

organized what is now considered the most successful fundraising event of its type for Operation Underground Railroad.

(Attached is a more detailed list of the time and effort I personally put in to contribute to its success and complete my Service Learning Capstone Project.

### **Words of Inspiration**

Being involved in the organizing of this event was inspiring to me in many ways. It helped me realize the goodness of the community I live in. Each person or business I talked to was willing to help in the great cause of liberating children out of sexual slavery. I was asked why I thought this was my experience. First, the core to that answer is that people are good. Secondly, is that children are involved. It is our duty as citizens to protect those that cannot protect themselves. People realize that children are a vulnerable population and that we as citizens have a responsibility to protect them. Children are our most precious resource. Issues such as the sexual slavery of children bring down all the boundaries that often separate us. Things such as religion, political affiliation, race, sexual preference, marital status, or income level, suddenly do not separate us anymore and we unite in our effort to free these children.

A third reason that might have had an impact on the willingness of people to help was that I was passionate about the cause and the need to act in urgency. I also assumed everyone would want to help and I think this came across in my confidence in asking. Sometimes one will feel a desire to help, but not know how. I was sure to give them options of how they could make a difference with their time, talents, money. I also asked, "In what way would you like to help?" For some it was as simple as baking a batch of cookies, for others passing out flyers. Some businesses were willing to let us advertise by leaving flyers at their check stand, and others

donated their product for us to sell. I can honestly say that not one of the many, many people or businesses I approached declined to help. Each was willing to do something. To me, that is the greatest lesson in all of this.

Sometimes our hearts faint at the reality of the injustices in the world we live in. We may not think that there is anything we can do, and we ask ourselves, “Who am I to make a difference?” We tend to think that what we have to offer will not have much impact. We need to realize that though our part may be small, it is of value; and once we see the value in the gifts and abilities we do possess, a powerful force for good is unleashed. Additionally, when we unite our gifts with other like-minded individuals the results can be over-powering.

This Capstone Project experience reminds me somewhat of a symphony. All were invited to play a part. Each player alone had over time developed skills, talents, and abilities. All were willing to share whatever gift they had to offer, no matter how large or small. Uniting those offerings had a synergistic effect, and consequently an enormous undertaking came off with beautiful success.

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## **For BIS Department**

### **Supplemental information:**

#### **Details of the Operation Underground Fundraising Event**

Sean Reyes, a remarkable rarity - I had the thought to invite our Attorney General, Sean Reyes to the event. In some recent news coverage of Operation Underground Railroad, it showed live footage of him actually participating in a sting operation in Colombia. I was so impressed that a politician would involve himself in this way. Politicians seems quite capable of talking a good talk, but rarely do you see one willing to put himself/herself on the front line in such a manner as this. I was inspired greatly by his courage and his example which actually heightened my willingness to act in behalf of these children. I am a County Delegate for my area in Pleasant View, UT. I know my Representative, Justin Fawson, from North Ogden is actually related to Sean Reyes. I sent Justin a message telling him about our event. I included the story of how Sean had inspired me to act and do what I could to try and make a difference. I asked that he extend the invitation to Sean as well as my sentiments for his inspiration. Two days later I received a response that he would be able to attend. Needless to say, I was overjoyed. We actually were able to publicize that he would be in attendance and I believe that also inspired many others to step up and get involved. I am most grateful to leaders that are out front not dictating in theory how to do things, but those that are willing to show us with their actions how to be aware, involved, and participatory citizens.

#### **Publicity**

Television - I also contacted KSL's Studio 5 with Brooke Walker. I had recently met Brooke as she and I spoke together at an event for youth over the summer. I wrote an e mail to the show

hoping she would get it. I included the full scope of the information necessary in hopes that she would be willing to spotlight the event and help us get word out. To my delight, the very next day it was being aired and publicized for us.

Radio - The next audience to try to capture was the radio. Another organizer had made contact with the Rod Arquette Show 105.7 FM and 570 AM. He asked if I would be the spokesperson for the group. I would have about 5-7 minutes to tell the audience about Operation Underground Railroad and the benefit we were hosting. I was very nervous to say the least. I was not familiar with this radio personality nor had I ever listened to his show and I did not have much time to prepare. However, I felt that since raising awareness was a part of our effort, I would be foolish to turn down the opportunity. When the time came, the host actually called me on my cell phone, we chatted for about one minute and then he said he was going to put me on the air. This was not a live recording, but rather it would be aired later in the day, at the 5 o'clock hour for all the commuters to hear. This gave me some comfort knowing that if I stumbled or messed up, it could be edited. I was able to complete the interview, and in so doing raise awareness, speak about why we felt compelled to organize this event, and invite all to participate by attending the benefit or donating online.

Flyers- Time was getting short and many of our neighbors and friends had not heard of the event yet and our event was just weeks away. We had to refocus our efforts on getting word out. We printed signs and flyers. We positioned signs at several major intersections in the area. Many, including myself went door to door delivering flyers to people in their neighborhoods. Our local grocery stores were kind enough to allow us to leave flyers at the check stands. The Standard Examiner ran an article days before the event and showcased a couple of women and youth working on their crafting projects to sell. This was a major help to us. We also were able to



advertise on the local marquee at Kirt's Drive Inn on Washington Blvd where there is a significant amount of traffic.

### **Performers**

Greg Simpson Band – Greg is a friend of my husband's and mine. Greg is a nationally known recording artist. His debut album on Highway Records - Seven Wonders - garnered him two nominations from the Faith Centered Music Association, including Male Vocalist of the Year and Contemporary Recording Artist of the Year. He likewise was more than willing to help this great cause by performing for free for the evening. The Amphitheater at Barker Park was the perfect setting for his music.

In our coordination efforts with the staff at Operation Underground Railroad, I asked if a member of their Jump Team might be able to take a few minutes that evening and describe how a sting operation might actually go down. They were happy to oblige and did so. I thought this added a new dimension to the evening. I thought it would be important for the group to hear about the seriousness and dangerous nature of the missions they take on. I also wanted all, especially the youth, to see what a true hero looks like, up close and personal. I feel many of the people that are looked up to in today world are not what I would call true heroes.

Local talent – We thought that if we had some local talent, especially youth, it would bring out more families and increase our attendance. I asked for a children's choir to participate, and they were happy to do so. I also was able to get the North Ogden Jr. High Cheerleaders to perform a few numbers.

### **Games**

At this event we organized many games for children. It was a carnival type atmosphere and children could go from one activity to another. The bounce house certainly seemed to be a favorite. Another responsibility of mine was to find volunteers to supervise and oversee this area. For safety purposes I felt like the volunteers need to be adults. For this reason, I solicited help from a group of Young Single Adults in our area. The leaders I spoke to were graciously supportive and even made it their weekly activity for the group. For the various other stations we had youth volunteers. We had a face painting, ring toss, Plinko, golf stations, all with small prizes.

### **Food and Drink**

Knowing that good food is key to making an event successful we contacted Bella's Fresh Mexican Grill. Bella's Restaurant is located in Pleasant View, UT. The owners were extremely generous to bring their portable trailer with a full kitchen. That evening they prepared over 400 meals on site. Each was sold and 100% of the proceeds went to OUR.

I happen to have a strong contact at our local Pepsi Plant. I contacted them and they donated 400 cans of soda and water bottles. They delivered it all on ice which was fabulous. A local Scout troop was in charge of that station.

Shaved Ice was also available for sale.

### **Variety of Booths:**

Bake Sale – We had over 800 food items to sell including popcorn, cotton candy, cinnamon rolls, brownies, specialty desserts, cakes, cookies, pies, and much more, all nicely wrapped and ready

to sell. In order to satisfy the Health Department requirements our booth had to have multiple signs that read, “Handmade in a kitchen unregulated by the Health Department”.

(Others were in charge of these next two booths)

Silent Auction - This station was overflowing with contributions.

Craft booth - Some contacted wanted to contribute by donating their craft items to the cause.

### **Outreach**

In our effort to get as many people involved in this event as possible, we also reached out to the churches in our area. This was a little tricky as some churches stay away from anything that could be construed as political. However, we approached it in a non-threatening way. We asked that they please let their congregations know if they felt it was appropriate to do so, and we had flyers for them as well. It was easy for me to contact the church congregation that I belong to, but I also wanted to contact and include others. Another organizer and I made that effort. It was one of my favorite aspects of this project. I have a passion for religion and I enjoy experiencing other religions. I was able to make contact with the Baptist church in our area. I knew that the owner of our internet service attended that church so I went to him. We had a delightful conversation. As I explained the plight of these children in slavery, and asked for his help in getting information to his congregation, it was evident to me how similar we are. A bridge was built that day and our friendship has continued.

By now, our event was rapidly approaching and I had not yet made contact with the Lutheran Church. The benefit was actually in two days. I was feeling stressed with the details of the event and torn with how to spend my remaining hours best to prepare. It came to my mind that this particular church had “drive thru” prayer every Saturday morning. I knew if I left right

away, I would be able to talk with them again. I was greeted by four fabulous individuals. I thanked them for praying with me on the last occasion and told them why I was there. We had a benefit that seemed to be growing by leaps and bounds and we were worried we would not be able to meet the demand at hand. I asked for them to pass out flyers to their congregation and ask if any wanted to participate. They had a better idea. They invited me to come to church on Sunday and tell the congregation myself, which I did. It was a first for me to actually be able to speak from the pulpit of another church. I attended their service and was touched by their friendliness and devotion. I took a few minutes at the end of their service to express my feelings of gratitude for their drive thru prayer, as well as their welcoming nature. I then told them about the organization and the upcoming event, and invited all to participate. In reality, they only had one day and a half notice. They were gracious enough to lend support by attending the event as well as baking many items for our bake sale. Friendships were made and we united in a cause to fight evil. I was later informed that they were so touched by the experience that they wanted to do more for this great Organization. They recently organized a large garage sale and donated all the proceeds to OUR.

### **Evaluation of the Event**

The event went very well, not perfectly, but very well. I think with any large event some glitches are to be expected. We had a power issue for the shaved ice station. The soda company was late in arriving. We did not have a check in point for the volunteers which caused some confusion. We were short on cash to make change and had to make a run to the bank. It helped us to stay calm by keeping the mindset that we were all volunteers doing the best we could and we tried to keep a "Come what may and love it" attitude. I would define the evening as a success. Our primary goals of raising awareness and raising funds was accomplished.

Collectively thousands of people were educated as to the atrocities occurring to children and the organization that is passionate about freeing them. Initially, we thought it would be awesome to raise a few hundred dollars with the thought that something is better than nothing, and we can't sit by and do nothing. When the evening ended and the totals were in, we realized we had far exceeded our initial goal of a few hundred dollars. We raised over \$11,000.00 for the cause.

Many other successes occurred in the natural course of the planning and execution of these goals. Like-minded people came together like a magnet. People in the community united together to fight a pervasive wave of evil affecting our children. We don't fight darkness by shrinking from it. We fight darkness by lighting a candle.