



Manannah Daze
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EDEN VALLEY WATKINS
VOICE
YOUR VOICE..... BE HEARD



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QUICK HITS

Boat parade on Rice Lake

Independence Day will be celebrated with a boat parade on Rice Lake on Thursday, July 4, at 1:30 p.m. The parade leaves from Fisher's Resort in rural Eden Valley.

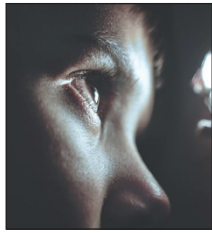
Watkins trying to save grocery store in town

The Watkins Economic Development Authority will hold a meeting on Monday, July 8, at 7 p.m. at Watkins City Hall to discuss options to save the grocery store in town. With the current grocery store for sale, Watkins EDA wants to insure that a buyer is found. Watkins EDA is inviting all interested people to discuss options and ideas to maintain a grocery store in Watkins. The object is to avoid the loss of the grocery store, which can be devastating to small towns.

Blood drive coming next week to Watkins

A Red Cross blood drive will take place from 1 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, July 10, at the St. Anthony Church social hall. The need for blood is crucial, so local residents are asked to consider donating. Returning donors are appreciated, and first-time donors are encouraged to attend. To make an appointment, visit www.redcrossblood.org, download the Blood Donor app, or call 1-800-REDCROSS or Theresia at 320-764-7251. Appointments help keep the flow of donors moving, but walk-ins are welcome. Those with appointments have priority. Bring an ID. For questions about donating, call 1-866-236-3276.

PREYING ON THE VULNERABLE



Sex trafficking: It happens around here

Editor's note: This is the first of a two-part series examining sex trafficking in central Minnesota. The series examines how vulnerable people can become easy targets for human traffickers, who disguise themselves as nice people with good intentions. Part 1 examines a scenario involving a teen victim. Part 2 will examine a scenario involving what the victim initially perceived to be a romantic relationship.

Speakers shed light on trafficking and exploitation at presentation in Eden Valley

By Ellarry Prentice

When Taylor invited Jenna to a party with some college guys, Jenna was excited. A junior in high school, Jenna was the new girl in town, and Taylor was her only friend. Taylor had been so nice to her.

At the party, Taylor said if she and Jenna did a private dance for a few of the guys both girls would go home with some cash. Jenna felt awkward saying no when Taylor was "being so cool about it." Plus, Jenna trusted Taylor, so she agreed to do the dance.

At the next party, Jenna felt pressured again, this time to perform lap dances for extra cash. Jenna continued to perform erotic dances at parties when asked by Taylor.

Then, Jenna was told she needed to have sex with guys at parties they attended. "Don't worry about it," Taylor

said. "You'll still get some of the money. But don't even think about telling someone or trying to get out of this because I have a video of you from the last party that I'll send to everyone in school."

Desperate to fit in, Jenna was willing to do anything – even sacrifice her body – to make friends in her new town. Instead, she became another victim, gaining only scars – the emotional ones that play over and over like the clip her perpetrator threatened to leak.

Jenna's story was crafted for educational purposes, but similar situations do happen to real people, stressed Cherie Lindman, an advocate for sex-trafficked and sexually-exploited women and girls.

"That stuff really does happen," Lindman told an audience of about a dozen people who attended a June 27 presentation about sex trafficking in Eden Valley.

And it happens in central Minnesota. Human trafficking for sex and labor is happening frequently in St. Cloud and surrounding areas, according to the presentation.

A false assumption is that
TRAFFICKING - Page 4

MANANNAH DAZE



Good times were had in the little town of Manannah on Saturday during the annual Mannannah Daze celebration.

LEFT - Riley Beck, 7, of Eden Valley, placed first in the pedal tractor pull, qualifying for the state pull in Redwood Falls.

BELOW - Dennis Kietly (left) was crowned the 2019 Miss Manannah after the parade...giving literal meaning to the Shania Twain song.

Photos by Adrienne Lipinski

Man! I feel like a...Miss Manannah!



NEW BUSINESS

Berg opens Maximum Nutrition in Watkins

Becky Berg promoting health and wellness in her hometown

By Ellarry Prentice

Becky Berg's smile is as bright as a neon-green sign promoting her new satellite nutrition club in Watkins. She's just as passionate about meeting the people who visit Maximum Nutrition as she is about promoting health and wellness in her hometown.

Offering nutritious shakes, teas and digestive-supporting shots of aloe, Maximum Nutrition is open two days a week – Wednesdays from 7 to 10 a.m. and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 12 noon – in downtown Watkins. Berg is renting space inside the Village Hall (110 Central Ave. S.) until she finds a permanent location in town.

"I love to see everybody's smiling faces in the morning," said Berg (née Vossen), a 2009 Kimball High School graduate who grew up just outside of Watkins and now lives in town with her husband, Randy, and daughter, McKinley. "I know a lot of people in the community, but I've met a lot of new people, and they're awesome."

Four years ago, Berg started using the nutrition products that she now distributes. A dental assistant who works four days a week in offices in Dassel and Litchfield, she achieved "awesome results" after using some of the company's targeted nutrition, weight management, energy, fitness, and personal care products that are available



Photo by Ellarry Prentice

Becky Berg, a resident of Watkins, where she grew up, and a 2009 Kimball High School graduate, has opened Maximum Nutrition, a satellite nutrition club offering nutritious and low-calorie shakes and teas, as well as shots of flavored aloe, in Watkins.

exclusively to and through independent distributors.

In April, Berg decided to take her health and wellness to the next level and open a nutrition club in Watkins, where she prepares a hand-picked selection of flavorful drinks and shows people how to make their own at home using the products she sells. She also provides personalized meal planning assistance and one-on-one support

with nutrition and weight management goals.

"I wanted to bring this to this community," Berg said. "I just want to share my results with everybody and help others get awesome results as well."

Maximum Nutrition will be housed in the Watkins Village Hall until the end of October – and possibly longer if Berg gets approval to continue renting the city-owned space.

Customers can place orders at a window located to the left of the main entrance. "It works really well here," she said.

Berg offers shakes in four flavors that can serve as a meal replacement or healthy snack. She offers 11 tea flavors that boost energy and metabolism.

Berg said her shakes – made with ice, water, and a powdered nutritional formula – are loaded with up to 21 essential vitamins and minerals

and are perfect for people who want to satisfy their hunger, and taste buds, on the go.

Berg's shakes are rich in protein, one of the essential building blocks for many cellular components in the body. She can add a protein drink mix to shakes to boost energy, help satisfy hunger; build muscle tissue, and maintain lean muscle mass.

Prepared fast and made to order, shakes and teas can be purchased together or separately. Kids can enjoy them, too, Berg said. Some drinks can also be made hot.

Popular shake flavors are Cherry-Dipped Cone and Caramel Cheesecake. As for teas, "everybody loves the Unicorn tea," Berg said. "Captain America tea is also popular."

Berg offers "shake of the week" specials, which in June included Sea Salt Caramel and Fried Ice Cream. Grape Stomp tea also joined the menu last month.

So far, one of the most rewarding aspects of starting Maximum Nutrition for Berg has been the reactions of her customers. "Their face just lights up, and they're like, 'Oh, it's so good,'" she said.

Customers who order both a shake and tea also receive a soothing shot of flavored aloe. "It's really good for the digestive system," Berg said.

Maximum Nutrition, according to Berg, is all about making healthy, balanced nutrition taste great. Sipping nutrition-packed shake or refreshing low-calorie tea is a great way to start the day, she said. "Just a healthy way to get good nutrition in your body," she added.

\$1



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TRAFFICKING – from Page 1

“These traffickers are really good at picking out the young person who has vulnerabilities.”

A false assumption is that all victims of sex trafficking become so by way of being grabbed, blindfolded, and thrown in the back of a van. Truth is, traffickers also find victims by posing as nice people...as trusted friends or potential lovers, according to co-presenter CeCe Terlouw.

Similar human trafficking experiences have progressed from vulnerability to victimization rather quickly. “These traffickers are really good at picking out the young person who has vulnerabilities,” Terlouw said. “They’re approaching someone who could use a boyfriend...They are looking for vulnerabilities that can get them in there and to say they will meet the need of the young person.”

Terlouw and Lindman are with Terebinth Refuge, central Minnesota’s first shelter for trafficked adult women. Terlouw is its executive director and has been speaking in central Minnesota cities to raise awareness about criminal sex and labor industries.

Based in the St. Cloud area, where more than 200 victims of sex trafficking have been identified since law enforcement began tracking them a few years ago, Terebinth helps women over 18 out of a life of sex trafficking/exploitation by providing shelter and a variety of services to aid in their recovery and newfound independence.

Sex trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery and sexual exploitation in which individuals perform commercial sex through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. Sex traffickers frequently target victims and then use violence, threats, lies, false promises, debt bondage, or other forms of control and manipulation to get victims involved in the sex industry for their own profit, according to information from the National Human Trafficking Resource Center.

Sex trafficking involves three people: most often a pimp (trafficker), a buyer of sex, and the victim, according to Terlouw, who shared some of the tactics traffickers use on victims:

Force – Physical restraint, physical/sexual assault, violence, domination, torture, confinement, abduction. Example: Holding someone down and forcing them to

comply with orders.

Fraud – False promises, withholding wages, lying, tricking. Example: Promising someone better living or working conditions. “I’ll get you a modeling career.”

Coercion – Threats, blackmail, guilt, pressure, obligation, manipulation. Examples: Threatening the safety of someone’s family members if they don’t comply with orders; charming someone who wants to be in a relationship; or pressuring a teen who wants to make friends or “be cool.”

Traffickers will also target victims of sexual abuse, saying, You did it for free before; now you can get paid, according to Terlouw.

“Some of the ways traffickers or pimps, or ‘Taylors’ get what they want is through force. That could be physical assault,” Lindman said. “Sexual assault or rape. It’s very sad to say, but not only are they being used by their men, but if they don’t do what they’re supposed to do, their trafficker will actually sexually assault and rape them.”

Another “huge vulnerability,” Terlouw said, is homelessness. “If you don’t have a way to feed yourself or have a roof over your head, then you are vulnerable to these exploiters.”

People struggling with mental health issues such as depression and anxiety are also targeted, as are people with limited education/skills that may prevent them from getting jobs, people exiting the foster care system, and single parents. Traffickers, Terlouw said, have lured single parents into their trap by offering to provide food, housing, and other support for them and their child.

Sex trafficking exists within diverse sets of venues and businesses, including fake massage businesses, escort services, residential brothels, in public on city streets and in truck stops, strip clubs, hostess clubs, and hotels and motels.

A woman who attended last week’s presentation said she works at a convenience store that is one of many chains teaming up to fight human trafficking. The woman said her store is partnering with “Convenience Stores Against Trafficking (CSAT)” to train employees and place stickers



Stock photo

Human trafficking for sex and labor is a growing problem in central Minnesota. Eden Valley and Watkins aren’t exempt from the potential dangers, according to speakers from Terebinth Refuge, a St. Cloud-based shelter for sex-trafficked and sexually-exploited adult women.

in bathroom stalls with numbers for victims to contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline. Organizers say the idea of this partnership is to provide a collective neighborhood watch and safe haven at places that are located in small and midsize communities and are often open 24 hours a day.

Commercial sexual exploitation, Terlouw said, is when someone trades any type of sexual activity – such as prostitution, nude photos, or porn – for survival, money, drugs, alcohol, shelter, transportation, medication, or anything of value.

Terlouw knows a victim of trafficking who was picked up as a young person and exploited for many years. A runaway who was cold, she was coerced by a handsome man. “She said that within just a few days, she was being forced to go out and sell herself. But, she said, before that happened, another woman who did not make her ‘quota,’ was beaten mercilessly in front of all the other women and was told, ‘If you think you’re not gonna do what I tell you, this is what’s gonna happen,’” Terlouw said.

“Kids who run away from home often end up participating in survival sex,” Terlouw said. “It’s only a matter of time until someone says, ‘You look cold. You can come and stay at my place, but you’re going to have to do this for me.’”

Minnesota has decriminalized underage prostitution. The state’s Safe Harbor law

ensures young people who are exploited sexually, up to age 24, are treated as victims, not criminals engaging in prostitution, Terlouw said. The law also requires that youth be offered shelter and support rather than be locked up.

An Easy Target

What made it easy for Jenna to be taken advantage of?” Lindman asked, referring to the opening story.

Some reasons shared, included:

- She trusted Taylor, her only friend.
- Moving to a new school as a junior in high school would have been hard on her emotionally.
- She was the new girl at school and didn’t know many people.
- She wanted to fit in.

When did vulnerability progress to exploitation? Lindman asked.

- Jenna was trying to please her friend.
- The prospect of money and attention from college boys was involved. Teen girls often crave attention from boys, especially older boys.
- When Jenna decided to do the inappropriate things for fear it would sabotage the “friendship” if she didn’t.
- “Friendships are huge in your teen years,” Lindman said.

Who could have done something? The audience said Jenna, Taylor, the people at the party, and Jenna’s parents.

Looks Can Be Deceiving

During the presentation, Lindman and Terlouw handed each attendee a photograph

– CeCe Terlouw, director of St. Cloud-based shelter for trafficked women

and asked if they thought the person pictured was a sex trafficker. Participants who thought the person in their photo was a sex trafficker were asked to stand on the left side of the room, while those who did not think they were a trafficker stood on the right.

The photos encompassed people of both sexes and a myriad of ages and ethnicities. One of the photos appeared to be of a cheerleader; another a firefighter; and another a member of the military. One was even a priest.

One participant commented that the person whose photograph they were given looked “very nice.” Another person said their photograph looked to be of a person who was “innocent” and “kind of sad.”

“I just think he looks like he’s a rich guy that probably did fraud,” said one woman who stood on the non-trafficker side. “If I went to a wedding, he’d be the guy up at the free bar,” she said, laughing.

“My guy looks guilty,” said one woman. “...His eyes.”

“Looks like a shoplifter to me,” said another participant. “Maybe a sweet talker.”

Turns out, everyone should have went to the left.

“The pastor, he’s a trafficker. He was convicted,” Lindman said. “The cheerleader...convicted of trafficking, actually here in Minnesota.”

“Actually,” Lindman said, “every single one of your pictures was somebody convicted of trafficking.”

Eyes enlarged. A couple jaws dropped. Chatter filled the room.

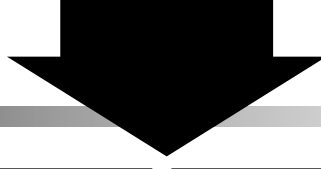
“This just goes to show that these are all people that are disguising,” Lindman said. She pointed out a comment that Eden Valley police chief Junker had said earlier, about his photograph of a firefighter: “He was a perfect disguise...Who was going to suspect him, right? Who’s going to suspect a pastor? Who’s going to suspect a cheerleader? So, the disguises and masks are something personally used to hide themselves or pose as something they are not, *just like Taylor.*”

Long-lasting Trauma

Parents be wary, and extra vigilant: Taylor, the girl mentioned in the opening story –

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the one who coaxed a vulnerable Jenna to have sex with men in exchange for money – is a prime example of a trafficker who preys on the vulnerable, Lindman noted. “Taylor would actually be convicted of trafficking,” she said.

Taylor used guilt as a tactic to coerce Jenna, Lindman said. Then, the threat of sharing the video. “They send it to one person, and that person can say, ‘Well, I’m going to send it to the whole school,’” Terlouw said.

Conversely, Jenna would likely suffer for years emotionally and psychologically. Quickie sex becomes long-lasting trauma.

Jenna was victimized, not only sexually but by being threatened and blackmailed. Jenna would feel intense guilt, shame, and fear, as well as poor self esteem. She would also likely feel used, attendees said, and, with the video of her erotic dancing in someone else’s hands, she could be subjected to internet bullying and further exploitation if it was leaked elsewhere.

“So can you see how something that went from just a vulnerability took a wrong turn, and now it’s caused all these negative experiences,” Lindman said.

Dangers of the Internet

Today’s Internet-centered world, with its chat rooms, texting abilities, and social media platforms, has given predators even more opportunities, especially in terms of victimizing children and teens, Terlouw noted.

Young people in Eden Valley and Watkins aren’t exempt from the potential dangers, no matter how safe these small communities appear. Junker, who hosted the presentation along with library staff, couldn’t stress that enough. He encouraged parents to know where their teens are at all times and to monitor their phones. “Have access to it at all times,” he said.

Girls, especially, Terlouw said, can fall for someone online who’s pretending they’re an attractive young boy. “Suddenly they are being asked to meet.”

“Have total control of that phone and all access,” Junker reiterated. “If (your kids) aren’t giving you all access, they’re hiding something.”

Parents were advised to enforce a rule that phones not go to bed with their children. Other tips when encountering suspicious people online: take screenshots of messages/contacts, block them, and report it to the proper authorities.

When using chatrooms, always use a screen name that’s different from your real name, Lindman said. Never disclose your location to people you don’t know; be careful about what you post online, especially photos; and stay in safe online places. “Be a tiny bit paranoid. ...Always follow your gut, and don’t walk down the alleyways of the internet,” she said.

“If you are ever made to feel uncomfortable or think you may be in danger, tell someone you trust,” Lindman said. “It’s better to get help than to wait until it becomes a bigger problem.”

“I always tell parents, ‘Always have open dialogue,’” Terlouw said. “It’s really important to be communicating,” she added.

Bringing Curriculum to EV-W Schools

Lindman said “Not a Number” is a new curriculum about human trafficking available to youth. “It’s one hour a week for five weeks, and we talk about healthy relationships, red flags, vulnerabilities, sexual assault,” she said.

Junker would like to bring the curriculum to EV-W schools. The curriculum could be implemented into health classes for junior-high or high-school students.

“It would be nice to reach them at that middle-school age,” Junker said.



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Wednesday, July 10, 2019

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Volume 8, No. 27

QUICK HITS

Blood drive this week in Watkins

A Red Cross blood drive will take place from 1 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, July 10, at the St. Anthony Church social hall. The need for blood is crucial, so local residents are asked to consider donating. Returning donors are appreciated, and first-time donors are encouraged to attend. To make an appointment, visit www.redcrossblood.org, download the Blood Donor app, or call 1-800-REDCROSS or Theresia at 320-764-7251. Appointments help keep the flow of donors moving, but walk-ins are welcome. Bring an ID. For questions about donating, call 1-866-236-3276.

Free pie and bingo by EVC4P

The community is invited for free bingo games and pie from 1 to 3 p.m. on Wednesday, July 10, at the Eden Valley Community Center. The event is sponsored by Eden Valley Citizens for Progress.

Free movie at EV Library

A free showing of the movie "Bumblebee" will take place at 6 p.m. on Friday, July 12, at the Eden Valley Community Center. Free beverages and popcorn will be served. A free craft activity starts at 5 p.m. Mega Movie Night is sponsored by Eden Valley Citizens for Progress.

Free pie and bingo by EVC4P

The EV-W Class of 1989 will have their 30-year reunion on Saturday, July 27, at Dino's Eden Lakeside. Social hour begins at 5 p.m. and a buffet dinner at 6 p.m. Cost is \$15. Checks can be made payable and mailed to Becky Lohmeyer, 11145 Co. Rd. 3 NW, Pine Island, MN 55963. For questions, e-mail Steve Thielen at s1thielen@yahoo.com, Becky (Schneider) Lohmeyer at bec_28@yahoo.com, or Brenda (Geislinger) Prah at prahlbrenda@yahoo.com.

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BUSINESS CLOSURE

Ugly Tom's Valley Quick Stop to close on Saturday

After 35 years in business, the site will no longer be a gas station

By Ellarry Prentice

The final batch of infamous breakfast sandwiches will be served this week at what has been a Eden Valley landmark for three and a half decades. Patrons will enjoy one last brew with their morning conversation. Motorists will fill up one more tank. Kids will bike over for one more treat.

Ugly Tom's Valley Quick Stop, situated on the corner of Highway 55 and Meeker Avenue in Eden Valley, will close its doors for good at the end of the day on Saturday, July 13, when owners Tom and Kathy Inselman will retire. The Inselmans have sold Ugly Tom's to Jack's Companies, which owns the other convenience store in Eden Valley, opened in March 2017.

Valley Quick Stop, co-owned by the Inselmans and Schmidt's Stores, won't remain a gas station. Pumps



Photo by Ellarry Prentice

Ugly Tom's Valley Quick Stop in Eden Valley will be closed indefinitely at the end of the week. The last day of business will be Saturday, July 13. Co-owned by Tom and Kathy Inselman and Schmidt's Stores, the convenience store and filling station has been in business on the corner of Highway 55 and Meeker Avenue for 35 years. The couple plans to retire.

are expected to be removed soon. Plans for the building have not been disclosed.

Prices on most grocery and automotive items in the store (excluding pop and cigarettes)

have been reduced. Several are priced two-for-one. "People have been really,

really good to us in this town," Kathy said of their patrons.

UGLY TOM'S - Page 3

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Red, white, and blue make a splash at Rice Lake boat parade



The Rice Lake Association celebrated Independence Day with the annual boat parade on Rice Lake on Saturday, July 6. More than a dozen watercraft participated. The Lano family took first place; the Lyon family took second; and the Rosckes took third in the boat parade, which started and ended at Fishers Resort. Turn to Page 3 for more photos.

Photo by Ellarry Prentice

LEFT - Cousins Gabby Helget, Julia Helget, and Lainey Braulich, whose family has a cabin on Rice Lake, cruised in the boat parade on a jetski. The girls carried an American flag and wore red, white, and blue beads. Julia's headpiece matched the patriotic garland on their jetski.

PREYING ON THE VULNERABLE

Sex trafficking: It happens around here

Editor's note: This is the second of a two-part series examining sex trafficking in central Minnesota. The series examines how vulnerable people can become easy targets for human traffickers, who disguise themselves as nice people with good intentions. Part 2 examines a scenario involving what the victim initially perceived to be a romantic relationship.

By Ellarry Prentice

Sarah's best friend introduced her to David, and their relationship quickly became serious. Just a month after they met, David asked Sarah to move in with him. It felt like a big step. Sarah was nervous.

After giving it some thought, Sarah decided moving in with David would be an improvement from her current living



When 'girlfriends' become victims

situation. Her parents were strict, and they never let her have any freedom. They gave her everything she wanted, except for affection and praise. They wanted only perfection from her.

David gave her more...butterflies every time she saw him. Her told her she was beautiful and kind, and he said he'd do anything for her. She felt a connection with him that she had never experienced.

Shortly after Sarah moved in with David, he asked her to have sex with one of his friends. He acted like he felt bad about it but said that he owed some money and it would really help him out. Sarah didn't understand how David could be OK with her having sex with

TRAFFICKING - Page 4

News Brief

Candidates sought for Little Miss Watkins

Watkins is looking for the next Little Miss.

The Watkins Lions Club will again sponsor the Little Miss Watkins pageant during the Kraut 'n' Wurst celebration on Friday, Aug. 2.

All girls who are full-time residents of Watkins with a Watkins address who have completed kindergarten through second grade qualify for the pageant. The deadline to register candidates and sponsors is Monday, July 15. To register a candidate, contact Emily Piccerillo at 320-224-3562. Please be prepared to supply the candidate's name, parent(s)' names, sponsor's name, and the last grade of school they completed.

Each eligible candidate must find their own sponsor. All candidate sponsors will be required to pay a \$25 entry fee for their candidate and have a Watkins address as well. Checks should be written to Watkins Lions Club and mailed to 250 Western Ave. Watkins, MN 55389.

All sponsor checks must be received prior to the Little Miss Watkins Tea Party at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 17, at the Watkins Lions Club skating rink. At least one parent or guardian should attend the tea party with the candidate. Candidate pictures, pageant practice, and dance routine will be explained at the tea party, so all sponsored candidates must attend.

The Little Miss Watkins pageant will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 2, at the grand stand in McCarthy Park. The alternate location, in the case of rain, will be the Watkins Village Hall.

Traffickers will pose as a caring boyfriend to lure their victims

another guy, but she loved David and wanted to help. Afterward, David told Sarah how much he loved her.

A week later, David asked for another favor: This time, he asked her to have sex with a few strangers to help pay the rent. When Sarah said she didn't want to, he yelled at her and told her that she was stupid and lucky he was even willing to take care of her.

Considering all David had done for her, Sarah felt bad once again, so she agreed to have sex with the strangers.

From that point on, David said this was how Sarah was expected to earn money for her portion of the rent and other living expenses.

If she didn't cooperate, she would pay the price.

One often thinks of the pre-Civil War era when the word "slavery" rolls off the tongue. In actuality, that word describes what's happening right now in central Minnesota – to vulnerable people just like Sarah.

Desperate to be loved, cared for, and validated, Sarah was willing to sell her body to please David in order remain in the "relationship." If she was able to escape, she'd realize later that his seemingly-genuine acts of love and affection were a lie – part of an elaborate scheme that's used frequently in a multi-billion-dollar criminal industry.

I love you. I'd do anything for you. I want to take care of you. I have a much nicer place for you to live. These are forms of coercion used to manipulate thousands of people around the globe who are falling victim to the commercial sex trade.

David didn't have to grab Sarah, tie her up, and force her to go with him. All he had to do was charm her.

You're so beautiful. The guilt trip – financial woes – would soon follow.

Have sex with my friend for cash. It would really help me.

Women and children – reportedly some boys and men now, too – are being forced into sexual servitude, part of a web of illegal crime known as human trafficking. The third-largest international crime industry, human trafficking for sex and labor is happening frequently in St. Cloud and surrounding areas, according to a presentation held in Eden Valley in June.

Sex trafficking is a form of

modern-day slavery and sexual exploitation in which individuals perform commercial sex through the use of force, fraud, or coercion. Sexual exploitation occurs when anything of value or promise of value – money, drugs, food, or a place to stay – is given to someone in exchange for any type of sex.

In the opening scenario, crafted for educational purposes, David used false promises to coerce Sarah to move in with him, a plea for pity to prostitute her, and abuse and control to trap her.

Similar situations really do happen, according to Cherie Lindman, an advocate for sex-trafficked and sexually-exploited women and girls who spoke about sex trafficking and exploitation in Eden Valley last month.

"So, here's a man, fulfilling every single need or desire that she has, and he used it as a bribe," said Lindman, who was joined by CeCe Terlouw, executive director of Terebinth Refuge, central Minnesota's first shelter for trafficked adult women.

Based in the St. Cloud area, where more than 200 victims of sex trafficking have been identified since law enforcement began tracking them a few years ago, Terebinth Refuge helps women over 18 out of a life of sex trafficking/exploitation by providing shelter and a variety of services to aid in their recovery and newfound independence.

The women who come to Terebinth are broken. After suffering years of exploitation, abuse, and shame – most at the hands of men who seduced them into the sex trade by posing as a partner in an exclusive relationship – these women want to be made whole again. "I came from a dark place of despair and loneliness," one said in a testimonial. "Every second, victims of sex trafficking die an emotional and spiritual – sometimes physical – death."

Terlouw and Lindman stressed the importance of human trafficking awareness. The earlier, the better, they said of education and intervention, adding that the average age of entry into sex trafficking is 12 to 13.

Terlouw and victim advocates have been traveling to central Minnesota towns to educate the public about how human traffickers often target

"The trafficker has a perfect disguise he can use to fulfill and tell that person everything they want to know."

– Cherie Lindman, human trafficking advocate

Resources

If you or someone you now has experienced human trafficking – for sex or labor – or is in a potential human trafficking situation:

National Human Trafficking Resource Center: 888-373-7888 • Text: 233733

If you are a victim of trafficking/sexual exploitation and need local shelter and supportive services:

Safe Harbor: 866-223-1111 • Text: 612-399-9995

Terebinth Refuge (For women 18 and older): 320-828-7192 on weekdays or 320-428-4707 on evenings and weekends

vulnerable people. Their targets include the focus of this article: Women who want love and affection and to be in a romantic relationship.

Boyfriend to Bondage

Some relationships with signs of abuse and control, as well as those with promises of a better life, may have the potential to develop into situations of human trafficking.

Sex traffickers frequently target vulnerable people with histories of abuse and then use violence, threats, lies, false promises, debt bondage, or other forms of control and manipulation to get victims involved in the sex industry for their own profit, according to information from the National Human Trafficking Resource Center.

As many as 90 percent of the women who come to Terebinth Refuge were trafficked by someone who posed as a romantic partner or close friend, according to Lindman.

As the story of Sarah and David demonstrates, victims of sex trafficking often aren't abducted; rather, they are coerced into a relationship. They're people who are lonely, have been victims of neglect, and have low self-esteem. They're people who are down on life and people who desperately want to find the love and affection they didn't receive growing up. And they're people who are living in poverty (often on the streets), with mental health issues, and with a history of physical and/or sexual abuse and bullying.

Several trafficked women have children, and traffickers prey on vulnerable single mothers, promising them that they'll not only meet their

needs, but the needs of their children as well, according to Terlouw.

"The trafficker has a perfect disguise he can use to fulfill and tell that person everything they want to know, and all of a sudden there's a connection," Lindman said.

"When you are vulnerable, and if you are homeless, you now have this person who is showing you what he can do (for you)," Terlouw said.

When the "nice" guy shows up and showers them with compliments, praise, and promises for a better life, including improved living conditions, they fall into the trap.

"They're approaching someone who could use a boyfriend... They are looking for vulnerabilities that can get them in there and to say they will meet the need," Terlouw said.

Once they're in, it's hard to get out. Some victims have been stuck for years. Threats, beatings, and guilt trips keep them trapped. The women, Terlouw said, fear what will happen if they try to escape. And several resolve that escaping the trafficking ring wouldn't be worth living back on the streets.

According to Safe Harbor, a network developed by the State of Minnesota that provides specialized services to sex-trafficked youth and champions awareness of the commercial sexual exploitation of youth, women and teens often say they didn't want to be prostituted, but they were afraid their boyfriend, aka trafficker, would leave them if they didn't, and they had nowhere else to go.

One woman who was victimized for years said her trafficker (pimp) flew her, unaccompanied, to Las Vegas to perform sex for money. She wired all the money back and then flew home, again unaccompanied. "Most people go, 'You have all this money... why didn't you just go to another state or something?'" She said that he said, "I've got people watching you, and don't think you're going to leave with my money, or I'm going to kill you."

That woman still has a bullet lodged in her ankle. "She knows the violence that exists, that can happen in this life," Terlouw said.

Abused Become Abusers

Several people who've become human traffickers were at one time victims themselves. The vicious cycle of physical and sexual abuse is repeating itself.

"The abused become the abusers," said Eden Valley police chief Ernie Junker, who facilitated the presentation along with representatives from the Eden Valley Area Library. "I've dealt with stuff where it's generational."

"If they were sexually abused at a young age, their control was taken away from them," Lindman said. "That's their way of gaining control back."

Hope and Healing

According to information from Terebinth Refuge, investigators have reported that the number of human traffickers and victims is on a steady rise in Minnesota. For many victims, hope is unfathomable, and they often die on the streets. With no safe place to escape, this cycle won't end.

Most victims have been trafficked since childhood, according to Terlouw. She said their complete brokenness requires trauma-informed care and holistic healing in order to transition to healthy life.

That type of facility did not exist until Terebinth Refuge, according to Terlouw. She founded the faith-based non-profit shelter and transitional home in 2016. It provides safe, short-term shelter and longer-term transitional housing for sex trafficked and sexually exploited women.

Women are transitioned "from bondage to a life of health, wholeness, and independence," Terebinth's website said.

Services provided by Terebinth include in-house mental health therapy; chemical dependency services; physical health/wellness programming; life and job skills education; support groups; education and employment training and coaching; and spiritual guidance.

Life skills offered at Terebinth include parenting skills and finance and budgeting classes. Classes teach women how to identify signs of violence, exploitation, and manipulation in interpersonal relationships, and how to prevent future unhealthy relationships.

For more information about Terebinth Refuge, or to make a donation, visit www.terebinthrefuge.org or call 320-828-7721.

TRAFFICKING – continued on Page 5

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Prevention & Escape



Potential Red Flags

The following are some other scenarios – provided by the National Human Trafficking Resource Center – that might be red flags for relationships that may develop into human trafficking, but the list is not exhaustive.

The intimate partner:

- Comes on very strongly and promises things that seem too good to be true;
- Denies contact with friends or family or attempts to isolate you from your social network;
- Constantly checks on you and does not allow you access to your money;
- Asks you to do things outside of your comfort zone (this includes performing sexual favors for friends);
- Displays signs/characteristics of a dangerous person, which include attempts to control movement and behaviors, exhibiting jealousy, lashing out, or delivering punishment in response to noncompliance, and being verbally/emotionally/physically abusive.
- Uses threats or violence to create a culture of fear.

Tell Someone

If you feel you're in danger, "tell someone," Lindman stressed. "It's better to talk to someone now, even if you have to confess something you did or it's difficult to share."

Get help; don't wait until it becomes a bigger problem, Lindman added.

Other safety tips for suspicious or controlling relationships, which may have the potential to develop into situations of human trafficking:

- If your partner asks you to do things you are uncomfortable with (forceful sex or sex acts, videotaping sexual activity/nudity, engaging in commercial sex or sex acts with his/her friends/strangers, abusing drugs/alcohol, etc.), let your partner know that it

makes you uncomfortable and tell a trusted friend or relative.

- Make sure a trusted friend/relative knows where you are when with your partner, especially if you are traveling with this person or going to an unfamiliar location.
- Maintain access to all of your documents (driver's license, ID card, birth certificate, passport, or visa), your bank account, and all important phone numbers and do not provide this information to your partner if you do not feel comfortable.

Breaking Free

In some cases, leaving or attempting to leave a trafficking situation may increase the risk of violence. The National Center for Human Trafficking says it is important to trust your judgment when taking steps to ensure your safety.

- If you are unsure of your current location, try to determine any indication of your locality such as street signs outside the residence or place of employment, or newspapers/magazines/mail that may have the address listed. If it is safe to go outside, see if the address is listed anywhere on the building. If there are people nearby and it is safe to speak with them, ask them

about your current location.

- Plan an escape route or exit strategy and rehearse it.
- Keep important documents on or near you to be ready for immediate departure.
- Prepare a bag with any important documents/items and a change of clothes.
- Keep a written copy of important numbers on you at all times in case your phone is taken or destroyed at any point. Memorize important numbers/hotlines.
- Think about your next steps after you leave the situation. Contact trusted friends or relatives to notify them or to ask for assistance if you feel comfortable. Contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline 24-hour hotline at 1-888-3737-888 to obtain local referrals for shelter or other social services and support. The hotline can also connect you with specialized law enforcement referrals. If you are ever in immediate danger, contact 9-1-1 first.

• During violent or explosive situations avoid dangerous rooms such as the kitchen (knives, sharp utensils, pots), garage (tools, sharp objects), bathroom (hard surfaces, no exits), basement (hard surfaces, no exits), other rooms

where weapons are kept, and rooms without an exit. Examples of safe rooms are the front room or apartment hallways, where a neighbor might see or hear an incident.

- Develop a special signal (lights flickering on and off, code word, code text message, hand signal, etc.) to use with a trusted neighbor, relative, friend or service provider to notify them that you are in danger: It is important to proactively communicate what action steps you would like taken (call 9-1-1, check-in, pick the children up, etc.).

• If you have children who are also in the trafficking situation, explain to them that it isn't their responsibility to protect you, and make sure that they know how to call someone for help, where to hide during a violent incident, and practice your plan of departure with them.

After the Escape

If you escape a human trafficking situation:

- Keep your residence locked at all times. Consider changing the locks if the controller has a key or may be able to access.
- If moving to a new residence, only disclose your address to people that you

trust and consider accessing the Address Confidentiality Program.

- Consider taking out a protective order against the controller. You can typically obtain a protective order civilly without involving police.

• Contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-3737-888 for help with long-term safety planning.

- If the controller has made unwanted contact, document contact made (calls, texts, showing up at work/home, etc.) and save any messages that are threatening in nature.
- Consider changing your phone number to one that is unknown by the controller or block them on your cell.

• Keep an emergency phone on you at all times. If you feel comfortable, tell your neighbors, employer, or friends to call the police if they see the controller near, in, or around the residence or you.

- Develop a special signal (lights flickering on and off, code word, code text message, hand signal, etc.) to use with a trusted neighbor, relative, friend or service provider to notify them that you are in danger or need help. This can be the same safety signal used while exiting the situation or something new. Be sure to communicate what action steps you would like taken if you use the signal (call 9-1-1, check-in, pick up your children, etc.).

• If you have children who were also in the trafficking situation, create a safety plan with them making sure they know what to do if the controller makes unwanted contact and how to call someone for help.

- If your child still has ongoing contact with the controller, discuss a safety plan and how to keep themselves safe while with the controller.

News Brief

Wat-Kim-Valley VFW Auxiliary sponsoring patriotic art contest

The Wat-Kim-Valley VFW Auxiliary Post #5460 is sponsoring a patriotic art contest for students in grades 9-12.

Started in 1979, the scholarship contest, called the Young American Creative Patriotic Art Contest, recognizes up-and-coming artists and encourages patriotism in youth. This is the first time Post #5460 Auxiliary is offering the program.

Local students from grades 9-12 (no older than 18) are invited to submit their two- and three-dimensional artwork for free for a chance to win a scholarship. Entries should be submitted to the Wat-Kim-Valley VFW by the end of March 2020.

Two-dimensional art must be on canvas or paper. Watercolor, pencil, pastel, charcoal, tempera, crayon, acrylic, pen, ink, oil, marker, or other media taught may be used. Three dimensional art can be paper, papier-mâché, pottery, clay, metal work, fabric, etc.

Pieces should be no larger than 18 inches in any direction and should weigh no more than five pounds. Digital art, photography, and jewelry are not accepted. See all the submission requirements by visiting www.vfwauxiliary.org. The page can be found under the "Scholarships" tab.

The first-place winner will be forwarded to the district level in mid-April 2020 and the national headquarters in May 2020. The first-place winner from each state competes for national awards of \$31,000.

Post #5460 will offer a free class for creating patriotic two-dimensional artwork for the contest. Rose Borman has offered to assist with painting. The time and place will be determined at a later date, when the auxiliary can better gauge the number of participants. To sign up, call Julie Hilsen at 320-398-5230 and/or text 320-980-7833.

The Wat-Kim-Valley VFW Auxiliary Post #5460 also sponsors a coloring contest for kindergartners, a Patriotic Pen essay contests for grades 6-8, and a Voice of Democracy audio/essay contest for grades 9-12. These will be offered again in the fall, with submissions accepted through the end of October. Local schools will receive the themes and dates in September.

Public- and home-schooled students are also encouraged to check out the VFW Auxiliary website for scholarship offerings, including a nursing scholarship.

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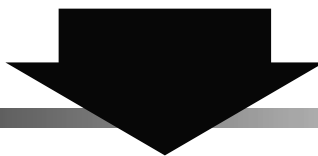
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