



NEWS RELEASE

www.marincounty.org/news

For Immediate Release

January 13, 2021

Through Challenges, Anti-Trafficking Work Grows

Local efforts to stop exploitation coordinated through DA's Office

San Rafael, CA – When the [Human Trafficking Prevention Education and Training Act](#) (AB 1227) became law in 2017, California jurisdictions didn't receive any money to implement the new program. But that hasn't stopped the County of Marin from making impressive progress.

For instance, the [Marin County District Attorney's Office](#) has worked closely with key stakeholders to make sure local teachers and students are learning about the red-flag warnings of human trafficking, reporting and support, and ways to prevent child exploitation through an online curriculum that provides all classroom materials and lesson plans. Through an education model called [PROTECT](#), about 200 local teachers have been trained over the past two years and a new youth team was created in 2020 – despite the pandemic.

In addition to sexual health education, California schools must provide instruction at least once in middle school and once in high school on:

- the nature and prevalence of human trafficking;
- strategies to reduce the risk of human trafficking;
- how to safely seek assistance; and
- how to set healthy relationship boundaries from the start.

Marlene Capra of Mill Valley serves as the PROTECT liaison in Marin and works closely with the DA's Office staff. She assisted with local fundraising for educational efforts, then pivoted to providing learning sessions online instead of in person.

The progress wouldn't be happening without the [Marin County Coalition to End Human Trafficking](#) (MCCEHT), the [Marin County Office of Education](#) and the [3 Strands Global Foundation](#), a nonprofit that mobilizes communities to combat human trafficking through prevention education and reintegration programs.

To raise awareness of the topic, the Marin County Board of Supervisors [passed a resolution](#) January 12 to proclaim the month of January as National Slavery & Human Trafficking Prevention Month.

-more-



**Contact:
Lori Frugoli**

DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Marin County Civic Center
3501 Civic Center Drive
Suite 145
San Rafael, CA 94903
415 473 6450 T
CRS Dial 711
lfrugoli@marincounty.org
[DA webpage](#)

Rosemary Slote

CHIEF DEPUTY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Marin County Civic Center
3501 Civic Center Drive
Suite 145
San Rafael, CA 94903
415 473 6450 T
CRS Dial 711
rslope@marincounty.org
[DA webpage](#)

District Attorney Lori Frugoli said human trafficking is difficult to detect and rarely reported. Many victims are moved from county to county or state to state, a tactic that makes it easier for the trafficker to avoid detection and makes the victim feel isolated and unfamiliar with surroundings, Frugoli said.

“In addition to not understanding that they may be the victim of a crime, many are reluctant to report the crime as they are genuinely in fear for their life or that of their family,” Frugoli said.

More and more, trafficking has moved online where the exploiters can take advantage of lots of people at the same time and track the most vulnerable people. One in five youths will be exploited on a digital platform, Capra said.

“Especially during COVID-19, it’s all connected – mental health, isolation, loneliness, substance abuse, and exploiters combing the dark web,” said Capra, who is on the steering committee of MCCEHT. “We’ve seen cases where exploiters created profiles online and started to groom relationships with kids. So education about safe use of the web is critical to our efforts right now. That’s one of our focuses with parents, teachers, students, and the community.”

Adults should pay close attention to changes in the actions of young people, such as:

- signs of being fearful, anxious and or depressed;
- a sudden change in attire, behavior, relationships, or material possessions; and
- an inability to attend school on a regular basis and/or unexplained absences.

Through the PROTECT program, teachers and students are learning about red flags, protocols, and ways to prevent child exploitation through an online curriculum that provides all classroom materials and lesson plans.

Labor trafficking indicators include a lack of freedom to attend school, paying off a large debt, and not being allowed to come and go freely.

The MCCEHT Steering Committee meets monthly and convenes a quarterly general meeting to further educate the public and features local leaders, human trafficking experts, and educational presentations.

Interested in participating in anti-trafficking efforts? See the [MCCEHT website](#), the [PROTECT website](#), call the DA’s Office at (415) 473-6450 or [emailing Capra](#).

###