

VOL. 3 ISSUE 3 · MAR 2021

# THE RED COURANT

Official Newsletter of The Red Cord

## Woman's History Month

"FEMALE HUMAN TRAFFICKING HEROES."

This month, we want to give a huge shout-out and thank you to all of the women - past and present - who have impacted the anti-human trafficking initiative over the years. Women like Rebecca Bender, Laila Mickelwait, and Coco Berthman are using their voices to speak up for the oppressed, the defenseless, and the victims of human trafficking every day. These women inspire us and we hope their stories and work will inspire you as well!

So, throughout the month of March, we encourage you to lift up and share the stories of ladies who have impacted your life and the lives of our broader communities!



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## Gala 2021 - It's In The Books!

Thank you so much to everyone who came to this year's gala! A few months ago, we were praying and hoping that we would be able to put this event on in spite of Covid-19. Those prayers seemed to have worked! 250 of you graced us with your presence for another amazing and moving night. Thank you to Ilonka Deaton for coming and sharing her story of pain, healing, and redemption as a survivor of child sexual exploitation. We were blown away by her testimony. Be sure and visit her website for more information on her journey and work: <https://www.ilonkadeaton.com/about>



This year's theme was centered around the stories of survivors, and how they have gone beyond surviving to thriving. As a society, there needs to be more effort in helping our survivors get on their feet again. Unfortunately, when most victims leave trafficking, they refer to the "hopeless" feeling they experience upon entering the free world. Many do not have social safety-nets to support them as they try to navigate in this new world. They need you and me to step up and offer a caring hand.

If you would like to see all of the gala pictures, visit our Facebook page at The Red Cord! There you can find all the images for viewing and sharing purposes.

Thank you again to all of you who made it possible. YOU are the change agents we need!

**"A kind gesture can reach a wound only compassion can heal."**

STEVE MARIBOLI



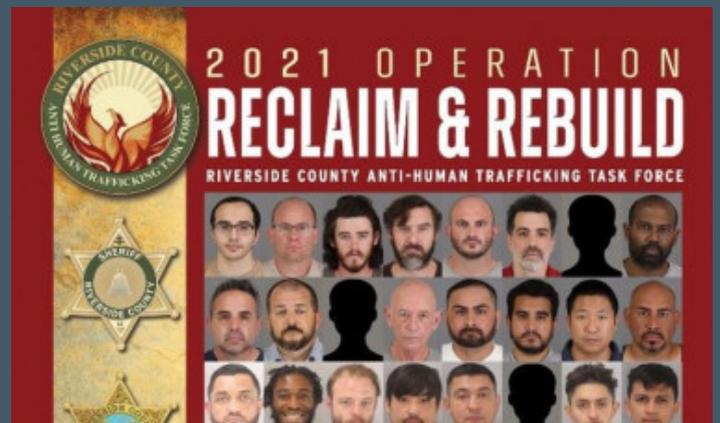
# Trafficking News



"317 Nigerian School Girls Abducted; Hunt Continues."



"64 Arrested in MASSIVE Trafficking Bust."



"Child Victims of Pornhub Speak Out in Canadian Hearings."



"Human trafficking wasn't always a crime."

"How False Trafficking Stories Hurts the Fight."

# UPCOMING PROJECTS

## Butterfly Garden Project

**WE NEED SEEDS!**



THE RED CORD IS SUPPORTING *HUNGRY HEARTS FEEDING MINISTRY* AS THEY MOVE FORWARD WITH THEIR EFFORTS TO PLANT A COMMUNITY GARDEN. THIS GARDEN WILL BE LOCATED AT CAMERON UNIVERSITY AND WILL FEED THOSE IN NEED!

IN ORDER FOR THESE PLANTS TO GET THE POLLINATION THEY NEED, WE ARE GOING TO BE PLANTING A BUTTERFLY GARDEN, AROUND THE ACTUAL GARDEN, TO PROMOTE BUTTERFLY ACTIVITY IN THE AREA.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO DONATE VEGETABLE OR FLOWER SEEDS, YOU CAN DO SO BY DROPPING ALL DONATIONS OFF AT BUFFALO GROVE COFFEE CO., IN LAWTON. OR BY MAILING THEM TO 341 NW 2ND ST #166, LAWTON, OK 73507.



Ensure Justice 2021: Being Crushed is a two-day virtual conference for people who want to study the issues, be a voice, and make a difference in the fight to end human trafficking.

Our annual conference considers the unique experiences of vulnerable people to exploitation and trafficking, which have intensified during Covid-19 uncertainty. Being Crushed will focus on early intervention solutions that build resilience, strengthen communities, and provide hope. Speakers will address topics such as resource scarcity, substance abuse and family violence, public health and mapping resources, and Adverse Childhood Experience tools.

This year, we are offering a variety of registration options. In addition to General Registration and Student Registration, you can register as a Supporter. Your contribution as a Supporter gives you complete access to the conference and fuels our mission to end human trafficking. Additionally, you can add a Sponsor ticket to your order at checkout to pay it forward. Each Sponsor ticket allows one student to attend Ensure Justice free of cost.

General Registration: \$40 Early Bird (\$60 after January 15th)

Student: \$10 Early Bird (\$20 after January 15th)

Supporter Registration: \$100

Sponsor Registration: \$20



## Women Who Dared: HT Heores

As the adage goes, "Quiet women rarely make history." While, yes, this may not always be true, it speaks to a reality that needs to be acknowledged: women with something to say are powerful.

Throughout world history, we see the influence women can have when they passionately speak out on issues that matter to them. The anti-trafficking world is not lacking in such women. From survivors sharing their stories to medical and legal professionals lobbying for safer tomorrows, we witness the work of thousands of capable women every day in this field. Here, we are going to highlight a few. We encourage you to click on their images and follow the links to their full stories and work, and share them throughout this month on your social media pages.

### REBECCA BENDER



Rebecca Bender is the CEO and founder of Rebecca Bender Ministries and Elevate Academy. Rebecca was trapped in the dark, violent world of sex trafficking. When she escaped her trafficker, she knew she wanted to fight to change culture and offer hope to survivors, so she launched Elevate Academy, currently the largest online school for human trafficking survivors in the world. With students in 430 locations and 11 countries, Elevate provides 866 survivors with professional development, mentoring, specialized curriculum, and the tools they need to thrive. A college graduate with a master's degree in religious studies, Rebecca works on the front lines as a sought-after speaker, social influencer, consultant, and podcaster. Her memoir, "In Pursuit of Love" was published by Zondervan in January 2020. She currently lives in the beautiful Pacific Northwest with her husband and four daughters, and a variety of pets.

**"But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame."**

1 PETER 3:15-16





### HELEN TAYLOR

Helen Taylor is the Director of Intervention at Exodus Cry. Originally from London, UK, she has been involved in the fight against sex trafficking for 10+ years and done outreach to those in the sex trade in red-light districts around the world. Her US team reaches individuals on the streets, strip clubs, brothels, online, and in a local jail, offering loving support, resources, and assistance.

Helen is the primary author of Exodus Cry's Intervention Manual: a guide for reaching those in the sex industry, which has been used to train hundreds of organizations, churches, and teams worldwide in how to start and sustain outreach to those in commercial sexual exploitation.



### DEIDRE PUJOLS

Deidre is a powerhouse of a personality. From her work in the legal world to her advocacy on Instagram, she is not shy in her work to end trafficking one step at a time. She is a driven philanthropist and dedicated entrepreneur with a passion for giving a voice to the voiceless and advocating for those in need. The United Nations Women for Peace Association (UNWFPA) recognized Albert and Deidre Pujols with the Humanitarian Award in February 2019 for their efforts to combat human trafficking.



### COCO BERTHMANN

Coco Berthmann is the Founder and President of the Coco Berthmann Scholarship Fund. She was born and raised in Germany. She is a counter-trafficking specialist and aspiring international civil-rights attorney. Coco enables all segments of society to fight human-trafficking by educating and speaking internationally and teaching law enforcement, first responders, forensic staff, and communities about the horrific reality of human trafficking.

As a survivor, Coco has made it her personal aim to free other victims out of the hands of traffickers. Her personal traffickers were her parents in Germany. As a consequence of life-long abuse, Coco's sister died from continued trauma. Coco, not wanting to die, made a courageous decision to outsmart and ultimately fight her way free from her living-hell. These unique experiences of bondage and escape have enabled Coco to share her story hundreds of times. Through her testimony and personal guidance, multiple agencies have been able to free and rescue enslaved victims.



### CHONG KIM

Author, activist and world-renowned speaker, Chong Kim has been working to end sexual exploitation and human trafficking for nearly two decades. Focusing much of her time on activism and human rights, her dedication and passionate expertise is fueled by her lived experience as a survivor of child rape and sexual exploitation.

Chong settled in Oklahoma City by way of Pyeongtaek, South Korea when she was an infant. From childhood, she battled numerous life hardships, including being born with a disability, bullied throughout school and being a victim of sexual child abuse. The trauma of her childhood forced her into a lot of new beginnings including being ensnared by deception into the sex trade by the age of 19. Being equipped with life's challenges paired with innate instincts afforded Kim lessons of survival that in the end, kept her alive. Through healing and gaining confidence, her ability to share her story helped pave the way for her to be recognized as one of the most compelling voices as a survivor.

Having an edge, Chong Kim began working alongside law enforcement to offer a ground-level perspective into sex trafficking. Her intelligence became the touchstone of catching predators, essentially tilting the multi-layered corruption toward justice. Her dedication to the full spectrum of human rights led to public speaking appearances for colleges and universities, Human Trafficking Taskforces, and rescue centers, locally and abroad. She has appeared on several major daytime talk shows and has been decorated with many honors throughout the United States.

Kim's liberation swelled to empowerment as she began to write her experiences into art. She began penning several poems and articles on social injustice. She followed with her first movie production based loosely on her experience, *Eden*, which was released in select theaters in 2012. "Eden" moved into streaming platforms from 2013 to date, including YouTube, Netflix and Amazon Prime. In 2017, she wrote and published her memoir "Broken Silence." She has currently completed her scripted TV series, "Every 40 Seconds" that is soon to be released.

Today, Chong Kim's reach encompasses an international turn toward spreading awareness. She is working to solidify her foundation Velvet Brick and innovations to end social injustice, systemic racism and child abductions.

(Psst... don't forget to follow these ladies on social media! Click their images or the links in their names to visit their websites and Instagram pages!)

# Meetings and Interviews

## Have you been catching our interviews?

Did you know that we post monthly interviews on our Facebook page and Youtube?

This month, we will be interviewing Adrienne Davis, founder of Hungry Hearts Feeding Ministry.



You will be amazed at the work they are doing on a daily basis in Lawton, Oklahoma. We will discuss their mission as an organization, new projects they are working on, and what they are seeing in the field as it relates to human trafficking, vulnerability, and possible steps for prevention.

Join us for another great episode!

You can listen and watch prior episodes archived on our page The Red Cord on Facebook.

More interviews every month; amazing people every time.



## Support what we do?

Please consider making a **tax-deductible** donation on our website at  
[www.theredcord.org](http://www.theredcord.org)

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