

THE RED CORD

ISAIAH 61:1

MAY 2022

Monthly Newsletter of the Red Cord



HOW CAN YOU CHANGE CARRIE'S STORY?

THIS MONTH CARRIE* WILL TURN 18. WHILE MOST TEENAGERS CELEBRATE THAT AGE AS THE TIME THEY START TO ENTER ADULTHOOD, FOR CARRIE, THAT MEANS SHE WILL BE TOO OLD TO STAY IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM. FRIENDS IN HER HIGH SCHOOL (THE FIFTH HIGH SCHOOL SHE HAS ATTENDED), WILL GRADUATE IN A FEW WEEKS. NOT CARRIE. SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS. THE FAMILY SHE IS WITH THIS TIME SEEMS TO GENUINELY CARE FOR HER. NOT ALL THE FAMILIES SHE HAS LIVED WITH SINCE SHE WAS 10 YEARS OLD HAVE BEEN THIS CARING. SOME HAVE BEEN ABUSIVE AND SHE QUICKLY FOUND HERSELF IN ANOTHER HOUSE. SOON, CARRIE KNOWS SHE WON'T BE IN THIS HOME ANYMORE. OR ANYONE'S HOME. SHE ISN'T READY FOR THIS.

CARRIE REPRESENTS ONLY ONE OF THE 7,800 CHILDREN IN OKLAHOMA THIS PAST YEAR WHO HAVE A FOSTER CARE STORY. [HTTPS://WWW.FOSTERCARECAPACITY.COM/STATES/OKLAHOMA](https://www.fostercarecapacity.com/states/oklahoma) (CONT)

How can you change Carrie's story?



What could happen to Carrie? Because she has been in the foster care system, she is automatically vulnerable. She could be one of the 60% of children lured into sex trafficking.

YOU CAN BE ONE OF THE PEOPLE WHO SAY, "I WILL NOT LET HER STORY END THIS WAY."

Jacquetta Lenhardt, a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) of Southwest Oklahoma, describes what could happen to Carrie. "Children from foster homes are vulnerable because of instability. Because she doesn't know whom to trust. She has experienced trauma because she doesn't have a stable home. Children are looking for acceptance. They feel abandoned. Traffickers know this about foster home children. They know where to find them. They know where to search for them on the internet. They lure them with the promise that they will always be there to take care of them."

How can you change Carrie's story?

Jacquetta says you can train to be a CASA worker. You can learn how to build trust and friendship with a child and find out if harm is coming to a child in the foster care system. Learn more <http://www.casaswok.com/>

She also says to foster parents or those close to foster families, "Children want to know they are loved, valued, have worth, and are important. They need to know about the dangers of trafficking. You can be one of the people who say, 'I will not let her story end this way.'"

**Representative name.*

Ahsha Morin

President, The Red Cord



MAY Blog Why Should You Run Toward Pain?

She is 12 years old and looking for someone to trust. That's the normal age and desire for a girl entering into prostitution. Most likely lured through a trafficker.

This same girl could be in a foster home looking for someone to trust. She could be groomed and lured and become the victim of a trafficker, or she could find someone to trust in her foster home, her church, or perhaps your family.

According to the Department of Justice, most often, victims fall prey to traffickers who lure them in with an offer of attention, food, clothes, a safe place to sleep, friendship, and love. Once the trafficker feels they have successfully made the victim dependent on them, they will manipulate or directly force the victim into prostitution. They will often use violence to retain control. With the rapid growth of digital technology, traffickers now heavily rely on social media to recruit and start the grooming process.

<https://www.speakupnow.org/foster-care-and-human-trafficking/>

What can YOU do to change the course of a child's life?

Involve your church.

1. Make sure your church members are educated about human trafficking indicators and know how to identify and report. (Contact us for training. Use the warning signs checklist below to determine if a child is being trafficked.)
2. Help your church be people who run toward pain, not away from it, because they know Christ's presence is experienced in these places of darkness.
3. Host discussions in your church about how everyone can help support foster families. (CONT)

MAY Blog – CONT.

Scared or Safe?

Here are specific ways to help foster families:

- Volunteer to be a babysitter. In some states, you don't have to be a licensed foster parent to babysit a foster child. Check with your county offices.
- Support a foster family. Be friends with them, build relationships, make them a meal, and ask them how you can help.
- Host an event for foster families so they can connect with one another and receive encouragement.
- Invite your county's foster care coordinator to come to speak to a group of interested individuals at your church.
- If you are a foster parent, invite The Red Cord to come to speak at your foster parent support meetings. We know that many foster care parents need resources who are caring for children who have been trafficked or sexually exploited.



*WARNING SIGNS CHECKLIST – Is this child a victim of trafficking?

National Human Trafficking Hotline 1 (888) 373-7888 Or use the textline:
Text "BeFree" (233733)

- 1. Does the child appear disconnected from family, friends, community organizations, or houses of worship? This is a big vulnerability for foster care children who are being moved frequently from home to home.
- 2. Has a child stopped attending school? Foster care children change schools frequently.
- 3. Has the person had a sudden or dramatic change in behavior?
- 4. Is a juvenile engaged in commercial sex acts?
- 5. Is the child disoriented or confused, or showing signs of mental or physical abuse?
- 6. Does the child have bruises in various stages of healing?
- 7. Is the child fearful, timid, or submissive especially around specific people? Traffickers can be family members.
- 8. Does the child show signs of having been denied food, water, sleep, or medical care?
- 9. Is the child often in the company of someone to whom he or she defers? Or someone who seems to be in control of the situation, e.g., where they go or who they talk to? This goes beyond "adult supervision, or parenting care."
- 10. Does the child appear to be coached on what to say? Ask questions in different ways to see if you get the same answer.
- 11. Is the child living in unsuitable conditions?
- 12. Does the child lack personal possessions and appear not to have a stable living situation? This is a consistent issue with foster care children who are re-familied often.



THE ESSAY CONTEST IS CLOSED

Thank you to everyone
who participated!

Essays are now in the
hands of our judges!

COMING THIS MONTH

Upcoming Events - CONTACT us for more information! redcord@theredcord.org;
On Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/theredcord> or call: 405-294-2727

UPDATE—2022 Essay Contest CLOSED! The judges are reviewing them the first week in May and we will contact the winners the second week in May. Thank you to all who participated!

Duncan Parent Education Human Trafficking 101
Tuesday, May 3, 6:30 - 8:00 pm

Demand Project: Statewide Training (The Red Cord will be a presenter at the event)
May 12th - May 13, 2022

Monthly Community Training- FREE to Community
Tuesday, May 17, 6:30 - 8:00 pm
Fort Sill Federal Credit Union
1614 NW 67th St, Lawton, OK



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Pregnancy resource center Human Trafficking 101 training

Oklahoma Dental Hygiene Association, Human Trafficking for Health/Dental Professionals

Supporting Foster Care Girls at Parker Point

- Art Supply Drive.
- Outdoor Game Supplies Needed

Accepting donations now at Buffalo Grove Coffee Co., 605 SW E Ave., Lawton

GALA - September. More info coming soon.

