

MAY 2023

THE RED CORD

ISAIAH 61:1



WHEN STORM CLOUDS COLLIDE -- FOSTER CARE AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

MAY IS THE MONTH OUR THOUGHTS TURN TO HAPPY FAMILIES AND WARM DAYS. IT'S TIME FOR MOTHER'S DAY. TIME FOR FLOWERS THAT SPRING FROM APRIL SHOWERS. SOON SCHOOL WILL BE OUT AND CHILDREN ARE FREE FROM SCHOOL FOR A FEW SUMMER MONTHS.

WE LIKE TO THINK ALL IS WELL WITH THE WORLD ON BEAUTIFUL DAYS LIKE THESE. WE DON'T LIKE TO THINK OF CHILDREN AND TEENS LIVING VULNERABLE, DESPERATE LIVES THAT PUT THEM AT RISK FOR MANY ATROCITIES, INCLUDING HUMAN TRAFFICKING. WE DON'T LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT OUR FOSTER CARE SYSTEM IS EXISTING UNDER OMNIBUS CLOUDS OF DEEP NEED. IS THERE HOPE TO OFFER TO CHILDREN AT RISK ON THESE DARK DAYS?

(CONT.)



***“WE NEED TO EDUCATE
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VENERABLE TO
TRAFFICKERS’ TACTICS.
--ANSHA MORIN***



(CONT.)

Foster Care is the system for children who are removed from their parents/guardians, or surrendered to the state by their parents. These children are placed with non-relative foster families or relatives. These families receive financial help from the state.

The facts are:

- As many as 300,000-400,000 children are commercially sexually exploited in the United States each year.
- At least 800,000 runaway children will be lured into commercial sexual exploitation each year.

“...being in foster care was the perfect training for commercial sexual exploitation. I was used to being moved without warning, without any say, not knowing where I was going or whether I was allowed to pack my clothes. After years in foster care, I didn’t think anyone would want to take care of me unless they were paid. So, when my pimp expected me to make money to support ‘the family,’ it made sense to me.” Former foster care resident now a human trafficking victim

This life story reflects the experience of children all over the country, including Oklahoma. What do you think our state’s grade would be for taking care of our most vulnerable children? You may be shocked to know that one agency gave Oklahoma an “F”. **See this month’s blog for more information about that grade.**

We know that children who have been abused in their own homes are often placed in Foster Homes. Many will be placed in safe loving environments. But that’s not always the case. Many of these children will go on to relive their home life and, as adults, become abusers and in some case become traffickers. (cont.)

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“We were molested and sexually abused as children...We ran to get away ... We were thrown out, thrown away. We’ve been on the street since we were twelve, thirteen, fourteen.” (From An Unholy Alliance: The Connection Between Foster Care and Human Trafficking, The OLP Foundation and HumanTraffickingSearch.Net

These facts and quotes are hard to hear. Hard to believe. But if this is the truth, what do we do about it? How do we help these children be safe?

Ahsha Morin, The Red Cord President said, ***“We need to educate them about how they are vulnerable to traffickers’ tactics. Helping them understand how traffickers look for vulnerabilities and then use them against them to control them is key to prevention. The other key is helping to reduce the vulnerabilities of the kids. Low socioeconomic, homeless, LGBT, are high risk kids. But so are kids who have parents who are not involved in their life and social media connections. Getting education into schools, youth groups, foster care homes and parents is key to safety of children.***

There are also some practical ways we can impact this huge societal problem in three specific areas:

1. **EDUCATIONAL:** Host a human trafficking education and awareness class for foster care, DHS, and adoptive parents. Many times, child care providers are not aware of the signs of child who has been trafficked or experienced child sexual abuse. Fostering a child with a trafficking background can pose different behavior issues that providers may not understand. This can be classes, simulcast webinars, conferences, workshops or books.

2. **RELATIONAL:** Provide opportunities for families to be in the room with "their people." This is a crucial step. No one outside of the foster care and adoption world truly understands what it's like. This could include formal support groups and/or informal social hangouts where families feel comfortable, understood and encouraged. Sometimes the goal isn't to "accomplish" anything, it's just to be together. It's important for families to look around and be reminded that they're not alone. This is especially important for parents with children who have been trafficked.

3. **SPIRITUAL:** There are some specific things we can do to support the souls of families in the trenches. This could include specific studies, retreats, and support groups that continue to disciple families in the gospel and draw their hearts, motivations and strength back to Christ when dealing with the dark topic of human trafficking.



MAY 2023 Blog

Improving Our Grade

Ahsha Morin, The Red Cord President

How do you as a parent respond to an “F” on your child’s report card? Shock? Anger? Disappointment?

Shared Hope International provides a comprehensive analysis and assessment of all state statutes related to and impacting child and youth sex trafficking in all 50 states and D.C. They focus on the area where the largest gaps remain—victim protections. Sadly, Oklahoma received an overall grade “F” in this area in 2022. <https://reportcards.sharedhope.org/year2021/oklahoma/>


The Red Cord is never happy to see the State of Oklahoma have an “F” rating. However, it indicates that we still have a lot of work to do as a state regarding both sex and labor trafficking. The grade for “prevention, education, and awareness” was given an “F” as well. The Red Cord does not take this rating personally.

We need state policy and laws to reach the goal to accomplish training related to child welfare. Gaps still remain in areas related to training for juvenile justice agencies, law enforcement, prosecutors, and school personnel as well as prevention education in schools. (cont.)

Ahsha Morin

***"THE RED CORD IS NEVER
HAPPY TO SEE THE STATE
OF OKLAHOMA HAVE AN
"F" RATING."***

MAY 2023 Blog (cont.)

Issue		Grade	Score
	1. Criminal Provisions	D	11 17.5
	2. Identification of and Response to Victims	D	16.5 27.5
	3. Continuum of Care	F	4.5 15
	4. Access to Justice for Trafficking Survivors	C	10.5 15
	5. Tools for a Victim-Centered Criminal Justice Response	F	3 10
	6. Prevention and Training	F	2.5 15
EXTRA CREDIT	 Youth		2
	 Child Labor Trafficking		4
OVERALL GRADE		F	54
TIER II			

THE RED CORD IS THE ONLY NON-PROFIT WITH THE SINGLE GOAL OF EDUCATION AND AWARENESS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING TO OKLAHOMA. THERE ARE OTHER NONPROFITS IN THE STATE THAT ALSO PROVIDE EDUCATION AND AWARENESS, BUT THEY GENERALLY PROVIDE RECOVERY AND RESTORATION. SO, IT WOULD MAKE SENSE THAT OKLAHOMA WOULD RATE "F" BECAUSE THE RED CORD IS THE ONLY NONPROFIT THAT OFFERS EDUCATION AND AWARENESS TO THE STATE FOR FREE. WE NEED MORE ORGANIZATIONS TO OFFER EDUCATION ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND THE KEY DEMOGRAPHIC TO REACH IS OUR SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN.

Currently, Oklahoma does not have a law or policy requiring school age children to receive this education. It is up to the individual school to make this happen. Unfortunately, many schools do not see Human Trafficking education as important, until there is an issue with a student. Then it is too late. The Red Cord is CLEET certified to offer free training for Law Enforcement.

To improve this grade in the coming year, there are some specific actions we can take as individuals, families, communities and churches

1. Assemble Care Packages

Children are often removed from their homes and placed in foster care with little to none of their own personal clothes or possessions. Find out from your local agencies what items kids being placed in Foster Homes need most and organize a volunteer team to assemble them.

2. Serve at a Local Child Welfare Office

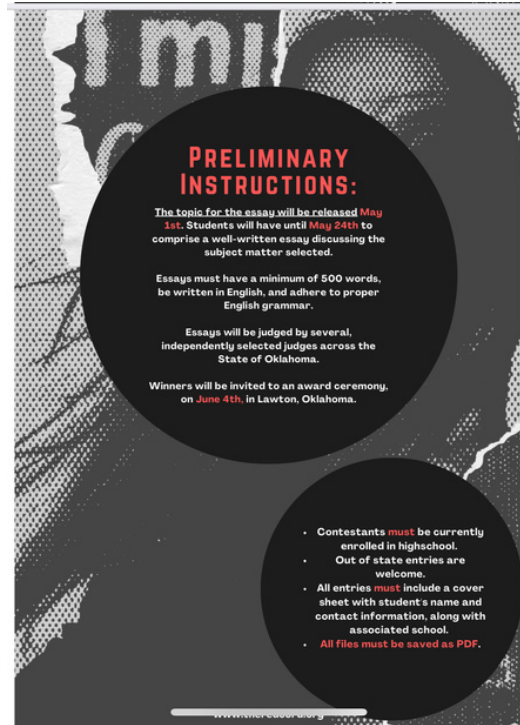
Child welfare agency offices often double as waiting rooms at all hours of the night for kids waiting to be placed. These offices also serve as parent/child visitation spaces. Ask if there are rooms that need makeovers and provide the materials and labor to create more welcoming and comfortable environments for the kids.

3. Organize Serve Teams

Ask local agencies if there are any specific needs they know of that families have. These needs may include general home maintenance, lawn care, car repair, etc. Mobilize teams to serve and take care of those needs around your community.

4. Pray

Pray for kids in foster care, the families they come from and the families that are caring for them now. There is a spiritual battle stirring over the lives of vulnerable children and families and everyone involved is in the path of the enemy's attacks.



MAY EVENTS

• **FREE community Human Trafficking Education and Awareness training.**
Tuesday, May 16 6:30 – 7:30pm. Fort Sill Federal Credit Union, 1614 NW 67th St., Lawton

Annual Red Cord Anti-Human Trafficking Essay Contest for High School Students.
 Deadline for entries May 24th. Winners announced June 4th. See the flier and The Red Cord website for all the details.