

transitionsNews

ADOPT A FAMILY PROGRAM UPDATE

The Adopt-A-Family Program for 2024 has undergone changes to ensure a more focused and effective approach. Due to the overwhelming response in 2023 of 67 families, the program will now be exclusively available to clients staying in our Safe Houses during the holiday season. This adjustment aims to avoid duplicating services provided by community partners and to ensure a meaningful experience for all participants. Our goal is to ensure that everyone in our Safe Houses has a gift to open during the holidays. We appreciate those who have committed to the Adopt-A-Family Program for the 2024 Holiday Season. If you have any questions about the program, please contact Tracy Strosser, Outreach Coordinator, at tracy_s@transitionsofpa.org.



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Transitions of PA



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Visit us at- www.transitionsofpa.org

YOUR HELP IN NUMBERS

 **1,858 Individuals Served**



1,982 Crisis Calls

Emergency Safe House

145 Guests

4,412 Nights



149 Protection from Abuse Orders Filed

7,517 Hours of Counseling Provided



Numbers represent services provided between July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO: STANDING TOGETHER THROUGH CHALLENGING TIMES

As we approach the holiday season, a time typically filled with joy, togetherness, and celebration, it is crucial to acknowledge that this period can also be incredibly challenging for many within our community, especially those who are survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. As the CEO of Transitions of PA, an organization dedicated to supporting these survivors, I feel compelled to shed light on the unique challenges they face during this time and highlight how we can all come together to provide much-needed support.

While the holidays are often depicted as a time of joy and relaxation, they can amplify the pain and struggles of victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. The pressures of family gatherings, societal expectations, and the emphasis on togetherness can starkly contrast with the isolating and traumatic experiences these survivors endure. For many, returning to family homes or participating in social events can trigger traumatic memories, exacerbate feelings of isolation, and increase anxiety.

Moreover, the holiday season can often exacerbate financial stress, which is particularly burdensome for survivors who might already grapple with economic hardship due to their circumstances. This period can also limit access to supportive services, as many organizations experience reduced staffing and resources during the holidays. The combination of these factors can create a perfect storm of emotional and psychological challenges, making this time of year particularly daunting for survivors.

It is during these times that the role of friends and family becomes even more critical. Your support can make a significant difference in helping survivors navigate through these challenges. **Here are some ways you can provide meaningful support:**

1. Be A Safe Space: Let the survivor know you are there for them without judgment. Create an environment where they feel safe and comfortable expressing their feelings.

2. Offer Practical Help: Sometimes, small acts of kindness can have a big impact. Offering to help with errands, providing a safe place to stay, or simply being there to listen can be incredibly supportive.

3. Respect Their Boundaries: Understand that attending family gatherings or holiday events may not be feasible for all survivors. Respect their decision and offer alternative ways to celebrate or spend time together.

4. Stay Informed: Educate yourself about the dynamics of domestic violence and sexual assault. Being informed can help you better understand what the survivor is going through and how you can offer appropriate support.

5. Encourage Professional Help: Gently suggest reaching out to professional resources. Transitions offers safety planning, crisis counseling, legal advocacy, and many other services that are free, confidential, and voluntary for survivors. Our advocates are always available to provide support and resources.

At Transitions of PA, our mission is to provide comprehensive support to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, human trafficking, and other violent crimes, especially during these challenging times. However, we cannot do this alone. We rely on the generosity of our community to ensure that our services are available and accessible to those in need.

This holiday season, we ask for your support in any way possible. Whether through a financial contribution, volunteering your time, or spreading awareness about our services, every bit helps. Your support allows us to provide critical resources, such as emergency shelter, counseling, and legal advocacy, to those who need it most.

Together, we can make a difference. By standing with survivors, we send a powerful message of hope, resilience, and compassion. Let us come together as a community to ensure that no one must face their challenges alone.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to making a difference in the lives of survivors.

Warm regards,
Mae-Ling Kranz, CEO



Mae-Ling Kranz is the Chief Executive Officer of Transitions of PA and has been with the organization since 2016. Mae-Ling previously held the position of the Chief Operating Officer and has more than 20 years of non-profit experience.



To support Transitions Annual Appeal, scan the QR code.

JANUARY IS HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH

By Heather Shnyder, Health Systems Training Specialist.

Understanding and Combating Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a grave issue affecting millions of people worldwide. It involves the illegal transport and exploitation of individuals through force, fraud, or coercion for purposes such as forced labor, sexual exploitation, or organ removal. This crime affects people of all ages and backgrounds, with an estimated 1,000,000 people trafficked globally each year.

Forms of Trafficking

There are primarily two recognized forms of human trafficking: forced labor and sex trafficking. Forced labor involves coercing individuals to work against their will, while sex trafficking involves exploiting individuals for commercial sex acts. The hidden nature of this crime makes it particularly challenging to combat, as victims are often isolated and controlled by traffickers.

Recognizing the Signs

Identifying potential victims of human trafficking can be difficult, but there are several key indicators:

- **Behavioral Signs:** Victims may appear fearful, anxious, depressed, submissive, or nervous. They might be controlled by others, unable to speak for themselves, or have someone else answer questions on their behalf. Their responses may seem scripted or rehearsed.
- **Physical and Environmental Signs:** Poor living conditions, signs of physical abuse, and lack of personal identification documents are common. Victims might live in cramped spaces with high security measures.
- **Work and Financial Signs:** Unusual work conditions, such as excessively long hours without breaks, little or no pay, and debt bondage, are red flags.
- **Social and Situational Signs:** Isolation from friends and family, not being allowed to socialize, and frequent runaways, especially among minors, can indicate trafficking.


The Scope and Impact

Human trafficking is one of the most underreported and misunderstood crimes. It is the fastest-growing criminal enterprise, generating over \$150 billion annually worldwide. Traffickers exploit vulnerable populations, including runaways, homeless individuals, and those who have experienced violence or trauma. Victims can be men or women, adults or children, and come from diverse ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds.

Sex trafficking is the most prevalent form, constituting an estimated 58% of all trafficking activities. It includes forced prostitution, pornography, child sex rings, and sex-related occupations such as nude dancing and modeling. Victims are often manipulated into believing they are being relocated for legitimate employment.

By understanding the signs and supporting robust legislation, we can all play a part in combating human trafficking and supporting victims in their journey to recovery. Let's have comfortable conversations about this uncomfortable topic and work together to address the issues surrounding commercial sexual exploitation in our area.

Statistics are from U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families.



**NATIONAL
HUMAN TRAFFICKING
AWARENESS MONTH**

**Human Trafficking Awareness Month
Hot Topic Community Conversation
Sunday, Jan. 5, 2025 9am - 10:30am
at St. Paul's UCC (400 N Market St.) in
Selinsgrove.**



Virtual Support Group-

Groups will be held virtually every Tuesday at 4PM for 8 weeks starting on January 7th, 2025. Please call our hotline at 1-800-850-7948 to register by December 31st, 2024. This group is for individuals who have experienced domestic violence or sexual assault.

The next 8-week session will start in the spring, April 2025.

STALKING ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES: A SILENT EPIDEMIC

Stalking is a pervasive issue on college campuses, often overshadowed by other forms of violence but equally damaging. Defined as a pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that causes fear or emotional distress, stalking can include unwanted phone calls, messages, gifts, and uninvited appearances.

Prevalence and Impact

College students, particularly those aged 18-24, experience higher rates of stalking compared to the general population. Studies indicate that between 6% and 39% of college students report being stalked since entering college. This behavior can severely impact victims' mental health, academic performance, and overall well-being. Victims often change their routines, friendships, and even leave school to escape their stalkers

Common Stalking Behaviors

Stalkers use various methods to intimidate and control their victims. These include repeated unwanted communications, following or spying on the victim, and showing up uninvited at places the victim frequents. The behavior might seem benign to outsiders but is terrifying in context. For instance, an unexpected flower delivery can be a threatening message if the victim has relocated to escape the stalker.

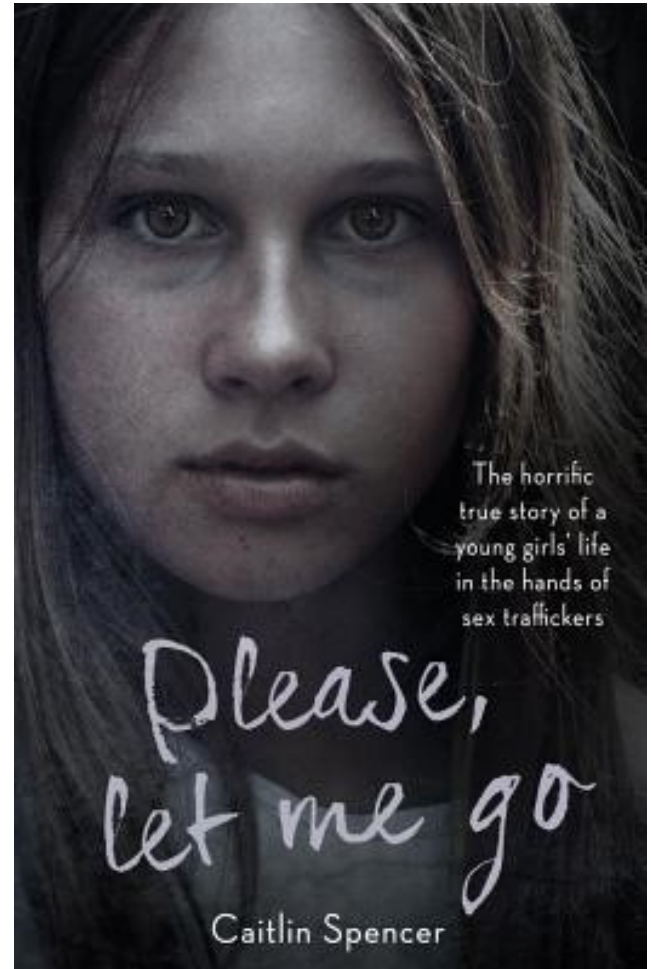
Legal and Institutional Responses

Stalking is recognized as a crime under federal laws like the Violence Against Women Act and Title IX, which mandate campuses to address and prevent stalking. Institutions are required to have policies and support systems in place to help victims. This includes safety planning, counseling services, and disciplinary actions against perpetrators.

Prevention and Support

Raising awareness about stalking is crucial. Campuses can help by educating students and staff about the signs of stalking and how to respond. Providing resources and support for victims, such as hotlines and counseling, is essential. Encouraging a culture of respect and vigilance can also help prevent stalking and support those affected. Stalking on college campuses is a serious issue that requires comprehensive strategies to ensure the safety and well-being of all students.

Statistics are from U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs.



January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month.

**Please join our Book Club!
Reading: Please, let me go By
Caitlin Spencer. Check it out on
Facebook, Instagram, and X**

**Wrap up discussion will be held
Thursday, January 30, 6:00 PM at
The Union County Public Library.**

YOUR HELP IN NUMBERS



**92 Households
Permanently Housed
92 Adults & 88 children**

**460 Programs to
10,171 students**



**139 received Civil Legal
Representation**



Numbers represent services provided between July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

UPCOMING EVENTS

- *January – Human Trafficking and Stalking Awareness Month*
- *January - Book Club: Please, let me go By Caitlin Spencer (Follow on Social Media)*
- *January - Human Trafficking and Stalking Awareness display at The Union County Public Library*
- **January 5 (Sunday)** - Hot Topic Community Conversation on Human Trafficking: 9am - 10:30am at St. Paul's UCC (400 N Market St.) in Selinsgrove.
- **January 11 (Friday)** – Blue Day for Human Trafficking Awareness
- **January 18 (Saturday)** – Sparkle day against Stalking (wear Sparkles)
- **January 30 (Thursday)** - Book Club - Wrap Up Meeting: 6pm -8pm at The Union County Public Library



THANK YOU!

Thank you for your support during October's Domestic Violence Awareness Month. **Our Quilt Raffle raised \$2,450.**