The Just Ask Prevention Project is a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit educational organization located in McLean, Virginia.
The Just Ask Prevention Project seeks to inoculate communities against the disease of human trafficking, an emerging public health crisis.
Just Ask was founded in 2013 in conjunction with a federally funded regional task force.

Initial focus was to provide awareness education to the community.

Adopted a multi-vector approach:
- Peer-to-peer education
- Bystander empowerment

Community-tested, industry specific best practices which have yielded measurable results.
Since its founding in 2013, the Just Ask Prevention Project has educated over 800 professional and community-based organizations in the identification, prevention, and response to human trafficking and other forms of exploitation.
Focused, driven, and compassionate in all we do

MISSION
The Just Ask Prevention Project seeks to inoculate communities against the threat of human trafficking, a public health crisis.

VISION
We envision a world where children are free to achieve their full potential without the threat of being trafficked or exploited.

VALUES
The Just Ask Prevention Project is focused and ensuring the progress of human rights and the protection of global citizens regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, age, gender, or socioeconomic status.
“Safeguarding communities through partnership”
A MOTHER’S STORY
DEFINITION

Human trafficking is compelling a person to engage in commercial sex or forced, unfair labor.

A sex trafficker is someone who profits from someone participating in sexual acts in exchange for anything of value (money, food, drugs, clothes, a place to sleep, etc.) or someone who gives something of value to receive a sex act.

Trafficking is the second largest criminal enterprise in the world.

Virginia ranks 10th for most reported cases of human trafficking in the country.
1) Prostitution is a victimless crime, and girls that are earning money through sex are just looking for an easy way to make quick money.

2) Manipulating someone into sex trafficking happens very quickly and the traffickers are always forceful and violent.

3) Victims of sex trafficking know they are victims and will ask for help as soon as they can.

4) Traffickers/Pimps take their victims to other states or countries, but never let them live in their own homes.

5) Sex trafficking only affects foreign nationals or immigrants.
Human Trafficking is not happening in my community.
Like victims, traffickers come from all parts of society – every race, gender, and socio-economic group.

**Boyfriend/Girlfriend:** A common type is an attractive polished man (or woman) in their early 20s, who pretends to be a girlfriend or boyfriend to the teen.

**Gangs:** Criminal gangs also play a significant role in trafficking, sometimes using associates with a less threatening appearance to make the initial approach.

**Employers:** Fake employers also lure victims in to both sex and labor trafficking with promises of modeling or other glamorous careers.

**Family:** Finally, some victims are trafficked by their own family members (or foster parents).
TRAFFICKER METHODS

SCOUT
Traffickers are searching for young people to target.

- Traffickers find teens:
  - On social media
  - In shopping malls
  - At bus stops
  - In school
  - Through friends

MANIPULATE
Traffickers relate to young people and often times seem “too good to be true.”

They:
- Pretend to be boyfriends or girlfriends
- Buy presents; treat their intended victims very well
- Listen and act interested in their lives
- Traffickers lie

TRAP
Traffickers trick or control young people into staying in the lifestyle.

These methods could be:
- False love or lies
- Drugs
- Violence or threats of violence
WHAT ALLURES VICTIMS?

- Fun and excitement
- Peer pressure
- Financial gain/drugs
- Social Status
- Protection
- Lack of understanding
- Seeking identity and a sense of belonging
Victims of human trafficking, and those that are targeted by traffickers, can be from any race, age, ethnicity, social or economic group, gender, sexual orientation or level of academic achievement.
WHO IS BEING TARGETED?

- Accessibility
- Suggestibility
- Vulnerability
TRAFFICKERS TARGET YOUNG PEOPLE WHO:

- Lack a sense of belonging to others
- Don’t feel well respected or valued by family or friends
- Base their self-worth on popularity or relationships
- Are willing to keep secrets, including their relationship
- Don’t have a good relationship with their parents
- Are looking for a boyfriend or girlfriend
- Are often bored with not much to do
- Spend a lot time away from family and friends
- Are willing to take directions and believe the lies and false promises of the trafficker
WHO IS VULNERABLE?

Victims of trafficking can come from dysfunctional families which make them vulnerable to traffickers.

Examples include:
- Children whose parents are addicted to drugs or alcohol
- Children who come from psychologically and/or physically and/or sexually abusive homes
- Children whose health and safety has been affected by poverty; violence, lack of access to education
VULNERABILITY

Other Factors:

- Children from single-parent households following divorce, separation or death of a parent
- Children from orphanages, group homes or foster care
- Children from refugee centers
- Runaway or “throwaway” children
- Children who are homeless
- Children or youth involved in the juvenile justice system
- Youth who identify as LGBTQ
Not all victims of trafficking have a history of maltreatment but every child will likely project low self-esteem and vulnerability at some point in their development.
Those with pre-existing physical, emotional and cognitive disabilities may be at greater risk of falling victim to human trafficking due to their vulnerable state.
Unaccompanied minors also known as “unaccompanied alien children” are vulnerable to human trafficking due to a lack of housing, resources and care givers to keep them safe from traffickers and other child predators.
RUNAWAY CHILDREN

1 in 6 of the 18,500 runaways reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® in 2016 were likely sex trafficking victims.
Youth may exhibit one or any combination of the following indicators:

- Change in behavior or mood
- Change in dress or style
- Signs of physical abuse
- Physical changes
- Appears tired and sleepy
- Loss of skin color
- Noticeable change in weight
- Decrease in motivation to do anything
- Increase in secrecy
- Unexplained material possessions
- More sexually promiscuous
- Materialistic / Focus on money
WARNING SIGNS & RED FLAGS

- Sudden changes in peer group or affiliation
- May see indicators of gang involvement
- A sudden and unexplained increase in criminal behavior
- Trafficking victims will often describe their traffickers to others as a “boyfriend/girlfriend”
- An older, dominating/controlling boyfriend/girlfriend
- Frequent travel, local or long distance
- Tattoos that may have unexplained meanings, relate to earning money, or gang affiliation
THE EFFECTS

Trafficking victims experience life-altering and long-term physical, emotional, psychological effects.

According to the FBI, the average life expectancy of a person trapped in trafficking is only 7 years.

It is estimated that 1 trafficking survivor requires the resources of 10 domestic violence survivors and years of support to recover.
Physical Effects of Exploitation of a Teenager Over 18 months

* These physical changes are NOT a result of drug or alcohol abuse, simply the physiological effects of being exploited during childhood development.
BARRIERS TO GETTING HELP

- Isolation
- Debt
- Fear
- Guarded/monitored
- No one to turn to
- Confinement
- Threats to loved ones
- Shame/self blame
- Don’t self identify
- Debt bondage
- Resignation
- Hopelessness
- Misinformation
SAFEGUARDING YOUNG PEOPLE

- Help youth understand and define human trafficking
- Start the conversation and keep it going …
- Be engaged with what youth are doing
- Who they are hanging out with
- Who they might be communicating with through their mobile devices
- Be involved by building trust and having conversations, show interest
- Help build their self-esteem and confidence
- Talk with them about healthy relationships and what it means to be a good friend
- Be alert to warning signs as they may happen during the scouting phase (before exploitation/victimization)
REINFORCE ROUTINELY…

• Don’t rush into situations with new people
• Always have a friend with you whom you can trust
• Ask advice from parents, friends, and trusted adults
• Don’t respond to messages from people you don’t know
• Don’t except expensive gifts from friends
• If they sound too good to be, they probably are
• If people try to isolate you from your family or friends, there is a problem
• If you are ever in an uncomfortable situation do not hesitate to tell someone
Children should be encouraged to identify 3 trusted adults in their life.

**These could be:**
- Parents/guardians
- Adult family members
- Clergy
- Teachers
- School administrators
- Counselors
- Police officers
- School counselor
- Social worker
- Probation officer
- Club staff member

Children should let their 3 trusted adults know who they are and what their expectations are.
WHAT WE DO

Serving those most vulnerable in our communities... Our Youth

We bring HOPE ➞ STRENGTH ➞ COURAGE
to those that need it most.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT + PROTECTION

- Townhall Meetings / Community Conversations
- Safeguard Training Program
  - Parents
  - Teens
  - Houses of Worship
  - Field Technicians
  - Healthcare
  - Hospitality
  - Retail
  - Counselors / Social Workers
  - Youth Leaders / Coaches
  - First-Responders
SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND CAMPAIGNS

- Designed by professional curriculum developers
- Based on actual case examples
- Incorporate other subject areas
- Customized to fit the needs of the school district
- Education, Prevention, and Intervention
• Staff training
• Customized lessons
• Youth-empowerment
NO MORE VICTIMS

JUST ASK YOUTH CARES CONFERENCE ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING
February 2, 2019, Saturday

All High School students in Virginia, Maryland and Washington DC welcome.

February 2, 2019, Saturday
9:30AM-4:00PM

Registration
8:30-9:30 AM
Conference starts promptly at 9:30 AM

Hilton Springfield
6550 Lottsback Road
Springfield VA 22150

WHAT IS THE YOUTH CARES CONFERENCE?
The Just Ask Youth Cares conference is designed to inform and empower teens from across the DC Metro area to take action to fight against teen trafficking by protecting themselves and their peers. They will receive actionable ideas on where and how to begin.

FOR REGISTRATION ON EVENT BRITE
SEARCH: JUST ASK YOUTH CARES
PARTNERSHIP: What Can You Do To Help

• Attend the Youth Cares Conference with your Teen

• Have a conversation and spread knowledge

• Spear-head / Support an Awareness Campaign

• Follow us on social media – repost/share
  
• Learn more at www.justaskprevention.org

• Support our work
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Over 80 youth-led awareness campaigns

Educated more than 90,000 youth throughout northern Virginia

Brought awareness to over 800 church, civic, and youth organizations

Saved countless young people from a life of exploitation