

THE HEART INITIATIVE

Fighting Human Trafficking in Montana and Beyond
A Student Organization at MSU
Bozeman, MT



Director's Note

Four years ago, The HEART Initiative was just kicking off. Founding members formed a strong base in collaboration and an intersectional approach to address human trafficking, both in Bozeman and globally. Over the years, it has been exciting to hear voices of students and community members with diverse backgrounds discuss this violation of human rights. We are proud to collaborate around trauma-informed, survivor-centered activism. Together, the HEART team has hosted and led presentations, documentary screenings, discussion panels, recorded radio shows for the Community Action League on KGLT, worked with MSU Procurement Services on ethical procurement initiatives, and co-chaired the Prevention Committee of the Gallatin County Human Trafficking Task Force. This boots on the ground, grassroots action is so hopeful--together, we can build a more just world. This spirit of teamwork and compassion is embodied in our newsletters. We invite you to explore the perspectives and passion herein to learn more about exploitation and what you can do. Because after all, we can all act to make the world a little brighter.

Emma Folkerts

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Organization Spotlight:

By: Alena Haugo

Whether it be labor, sex, or organ trafficking, the nature of exploitation often leads human trafficking survivors to seek medical attention. One study found that up to 88% of trafficking survivors will interact with healthcare professionals while being exploited. While law enforcement has made efforts to combat the epidemic of human trafficking, it has been reported that 63% of health care professionals have not been trained on how to identify or intervene in human trafficking situations. This lack of education is creating a gap in the fight to eliminate human trafficking in the U.S. To help fill this gap, a partnership including University of Louisville, Harvard University and the University of South Florida have created a curriculum and simulation procedure for medical students. This curriculum aims to identify the red flags of human trafficking and how to interact with the trafficking survivor. The simulation gives students a stage to practice building trust with survivors in a space where mistakes can be corrected before practicing medicine in the real world. The program hopes that other educational institutions will be inspired to create similar interactive programs. Check it out using the link below:

<https://louisville.edu/medicine/departments/pediatrics/news/uof-l-harvard-and-usf-provide-model-for-medical-schools-to-teach-the-signs-of-human-trafficking>

Surviving Human Trafficking Discussion Panel

By: Mack Harris

On October 1st, the “Surviving Human Trafficking” discussion panel was held. The goal of this event was to learn more about the survivor’s side of human trafficking. We had the honor of hosting four panelists: an ER nurse and former United Nations anti-trafficking officer, a human trafficking advocate at HAVEN, a survivor of human trafficking, and a detective with Bozeman PD with experience investigating and prosecuting traffickers. Each speaker introduced themselves and their relation to human trafficking prevention, investigation, and survivor support. Emma Folkerts moderated a discussion focused on the importance of being survivor-centered when dealing with human trafficking. Some of the subjects touched on included: what trafficking looks like in Montana, what survivors experience after getting out of trafficking, and what law enforcement does to be trauma-informed.

Upcoming Events, Get Involved!

Weekly Meetings: Thursday 7-8pm
Norm Asbjornson Hall Room 331

Gallatin County Human Trafficking Task
Force Meeting

Wednesday, November 20 9-10:30am
Prevention Committee Meetings
3rd Tuesday of every month 4-5pm

Documentary screening
"Abducted In Plain Sight"

November 6th 6-8pm Procrastinator Theater

January is Human Trafficking Awareness
Month!

Lecturer Series, more details to come!

If you want to learn more about the HEART
Initiative, visit

<https://theheartinitiative.wordpress.com/>
or email us at

theheartinitiative406@gmail.com

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram

OUR MISSION is to foster conscientious awareness of human trafficking occurring in Montana & globally, aid those working towards eliminating trafficking, & promote a community of compassion & respect.



Why did you join HEART?

I do not think it is a stretch to say most of us tend to think about human trafficking as something that exists, but not in any sort of relation to our lives. Learning that, in fact, we all have purchased and own products likely touched by victims of human trafficking, and that human trafficking occurs right here in Bozeman, our home and safe space, is upsetting. I know it was for me. But that is why the HEART Initiative is so important; if we do not know that human trafficking is something that directly relates to our lives and our communities, we cannot be effective catalysts of change.

I joined the HEART Initiative because I want to become more educated on human trafficking so I can be a more ethical consumer, and so I can be more aware of the signs of human trafficking. I also want to give others the same opportunity to become more educated through the events the HEART Initiative plans and supports. As a member of a society where human trafficking is unfortunately still an issue that has direct connections to my life, it is my duty to be more educated about it.

- Katy Hilburn

Before I joined the HEART Initiative, I was largely unaware of the issue of human trafficking globally let alone locally. I was unaware that it happens in the hotels and massage parlors that I drive by every day. I was unaware that human trafficking takes on many forms apart from sex trafficking including labor trafficking and domestic servitude, organ harvesting, and forced marriage. When I heard about the HEART Initiative, I joined because I wanted to learn more about trafficking and how I can contribute proactively to raise awareness about the issue. This form of “modern day slavery” is largely a hidden crime, which is why education is one of the most powerful tools we can use to end this crime.

- Ellie Jackson

Legislation

By Emma Sundeen

As of September 1st, new resources were made available in Texas in order to encourage survivors of trafficking to come forward and report their victimization.

According to the Department of State, Texas is one of the top three states in the nation for human trafficking, and as such, actions are being taken to combat these high rates. These new resources will allow survivors to conceal their criminal history so that when they come forward with reports of trafficking, they will not be subsequently punished for past committed crimes. It was acknowledged that this new legal resource is still in the beginning stages, and at this time it may have limited availability given the expense of hiring an attorney. However, in conjunction with talks of this new state law for trafficking survivors, the same legislative session also advanced House Bill 8, which provides more timely resources for sexual assault victims, which can then also be considered a resource for trafficking victims. Due to a backlog in rape kit testing in Texas, the new bill has three primary goals – establishing timelines for appropriately testing evidence, auditing jurisdictions who have untested rape kits, and moving the statute of limitations to the time the evidence was collected. These objectives have been put in place to encourage reporting among victims, as well as provide timely justice in criminal cases.

Despite Texas having one of the highest rates for trafficking victimization, it is clear that through new legislation, efforts are being made to improve judicial response to survivor experiences, and hopefully provide greater resources to those who have been victimized.

To find out how Montana defines trafficking and handles court proceedings visit:

https://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/title_0450/chapter_0050/part_0070/sections_index.html



FOUNDING PERSPECTIVE

By: Elly Sawyer

Elly Sawyer is a 2018 MSU graduate who has dual-degrees in political science and sociology. She is currently preparing to teach in South Korea. Along with her many other accomplishments in her time at MSU, she helped found the HEART Initiative.

Fighting human trafficking sounds overwhelming when you're a twenty-year-old college student who can barely manage to eat and sleep regularly. Juggling school, work, any number of extracurriculars and trying to figure out how college translates into a successful career seems like plenty of work for one person, and it can be hard to find free time to end systematic oppression and exploitation. However, when I was this twenty-year-old scholastic juggler, I met several students who decided that this was exactly how they wanted to spend their free time. Michael Hollinger and I were walking back to our quad on a sunny afternoon when he brought up a conversation he'd had recently with Dr. Lee, Honors Dean and cello performance extraordinaire. He had spoken with a family member during a break about their work in law enforcement, which had resulted in contact with a trafficking situation. Michael was troubled by this and brought it up to Dr. Lee, who responded with "why don't you do something about it?". Michael's "something" turned into The HEART Initiative, which we call HEART. On that sunny afternoon during our walk, Michael asked me if I would be interested in helping him and a few other students that he had already approached. I was so uninformed on the issue that this might have been my first time hearing about it, but ignoring injustice seemed like the wrong option so I signed on.

The group that met first was composed of environmental science majors, political science majors, psychology, premed students, kinesiology majors, and a few students in business. We were quite different but united in our aims, and we bonded over school struggles and the drive we felt to deal with human trafficking. Our first meetings flew by as we considered and debated the issue, our purpose, the structure of our budding organization, and how we should go about accomplishing our goals. Only a few of us had experience founding a student organization and none of us had ever done exactly this kind of work. The more we dug into the issue the more daunting it seemed; modern slavery is a part of our technology, our food, our clothing, our makeup, and deeply interconnected with other social issues like climate change, violence, unrest, and poverty. We networked whenever possible. At first, this looked like us telling anyone who would listen- or not- about HEART. We told our friends, hoping we'd recruit a few and they'd bring their considerable talents. Eventually we came across people who had a hand in efforts already in play, so we connected with non-profits, business and political leaders, and the FBI. HEART was a little ragtag crew but had all the guts and elbow grease required, so even though we jumped in with only a vague idea of how to get things off the ground, our hard work paid off. With an issue like trafficking, we focused on bringing people information they could use like brands and items that are fair trade so you can avoid supporting labor trafficking, or signs to look for that could indicate sex trafficking. Even years down the road, the most important thing HEART does is remind people that they have the power to stop modern slavery, and all it takes is information and a willingness to act.

**New to the anti-trafficking movement?
Or just want to brush up on your knowledge?**

Here are some resources from the Department of Health and Human Services, HAVEN, and the Office of Trafficking in Persons that provide definitions of different types of trafficking, red flags for identifying victims of trafficking, and resources.

HAVEN Human Trafficking Advocate Resource

<file:///C:/Users/CSCguest/Downloads/Human%20Trafficking%20Tools%20for%20Action-AmySadosky.pdf>

Labor Trafficking Fact Sheet

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/orr/fact_sheet_labor_trafficking_english.pdf

Sex Trafficking Fact Sheet

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/archive/otip/resource/fact-sheet-sex-trafficking-english>

Social Justice Coalition

October 8th was the inaugural meeting of the Social Justice Coalition, a union of campus organizations dedicated to advancing human rights in various forms. Leadership from eight different student organizations came together to discuss ways in which we can support one another's organizations and missions. If you missed the first meeting, don't worry, there is still plenty of time for leaders and members of student organizations to get involved! Contact us at sjc.msu@gmail.com for more information.