

Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking and Slavery (NAHT)

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

July 9, 2019, 2:30-4:00

Conference Call

Present: Dr. George Belitsos, Jonathan Causey, Lauran Camp, Sister Shirley Fineran, John Hageman, Alyse Hardin, Dr. Taylor Houston, Dr. Joe Moravec, Shirlee Reding, Roxanne Riesberg, Bernadette Rixner, Jessica Rohrs, Dr. Alissa Stoehr, Maggie Tinsman, Mike Tupper, and Trish Young

Excused: Paul Fitzgerald, Jennifer Kerger, Katie Kyker, Dr. Alissa Stoehr, and Suzanne Wright

Guest: Rachael Wright (Senator Grassleys Office), Allison Tow (ISU intern), and Shana Kargbo (Executive Director of Chains Interrupted, and Theresa Davidson

Belitsos called the meeting to order and welcomed Dr. Joe Moravec and Jessica Rohrs as new members on the Board and asked each to share some of their background information. Young from Chains Interrupted introduced Shana Kargbo who would be filling her position on the Board. Kargbo, who was just recently appointed as Executive Director of Chains Interrupted, shared her background information and interest in human trafficking. Belitsos stated that he had received a resignation letter from Joy Fopma which leaves the Board with another open position. (The letter was attached to the board agenda.) He also introduced Allison Tow, who will be interning with NAHT.

Consent Agenda Executive Committee meeting report and approval of consent agenda: (George Belitsos)

- Motion to approve the June 11th meeting minutes of the NAHT Board of Directors.
- Motion to approve election of Jonathan Causey as board vice-chair until February 1st, 2020.
- Motion to accept the treasurer's report for June, 2019
- Motion to elect Shana Kargbo to fill the board seat formerly held by Tish Young.
- Motion to approve several changes to the bylaws as proposed by Maggie Tinsman.
- Motion to accept the resignation with regret as submitted by Joy Fopma.
- Motion to appoint Dr. Joe Moravec to the Research and Evaluation Committee

Belitsos asked if there were other changes to the consent agenda. Rixner made a motion to change Article IV, Section 8 of the bylaws to read “**Any major change of \$500 or more in the budget must be approved by the Board of Directors.**” Motion passed. Belitsos asked if there were any other changes to the consent agenda, with none the agenda was passed.

Report from Senator Grassley's office

Belitsos introduced Rachel Wright who works for Senator Grassley on his Judiciary Committee Staff and who talked about the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, the Public Private Partnership Council, and the concerns of the cuts in the Iowa's Victim of Criminal Acts (VOCA) funding. Wright had heard from Belitsos that there had been major cuts of VOCA grant money provided to a number of human trafficking organizations, which effectively ended some of their projects. The VOCA (federal grant money) is dispersed through the US Department of Justice – Office for Victim of Crimes. The state agencies designated to disperse VOCA formulated grant funds is done through the Iowa Office of Attorney General's Victim Services Support Program. In FY2019, Iowa received \$21.73 million in victim assistance from the Office for Victim of Crimes, which was higher than what Iowa received in FY2014 of \$4.74 million. Wright will be following up with Dept. of Justice Office for Victims of Crime and the Iowa Attorney General's Office: to see if there is any more information as to why the funds are being cut, to ask if there is anything more substantial that could be done, and to let them know the organizations being impacted are of real significant in combating human trafficking.

Tinsman mentioned that there is a dedicated fund to fight domestic violence and it would be helpful if there was a dedicated fund from VOCA for human trafficking. Wright suggested that we keep raising awareness to facilitate the argument for more funding. Taylor pointed out that one of the organizations affected by the cuts focused on training in schools to bring awareness to students, teachers, facilities, and administrators on anti-trafficking. By eliminating their funding from VOCA, this negatively impacts the purpose of TPVA for the state of Iowa. Teens Against Trafficking was one of the major sources for receiving disclosures from teen victims, as victims were not going to law enforcement or the medical professional, but would disclose what was happening at the training sessions. Fineran noted that for receiving funds from VOCA, the comprehensive application makes it difficult for new organizations to have in place the specific requirements to qualify for the funding. As an example, if an organization is applying for funding for a home for sex trafficked women, in the application they must also show that they are provide services for males and the transgender population. If anyone has any questions on funding, they should feel free to call Wright at 202-228-0927.

World Day Against Trafficking in Persons – Hageman cited that the Coalition Against Human Trafficking in Dubuque along with Set Free will be hosting an event at Convivium Urban Farmstead, 2811 Jackson St., Dubuque, on July 30th, 6:30 to 7:30 pm to bring people in and to educate the general public on human trafficking. Davidson stated that Chains Interrupted would be doing a coalition meeting on July 30th, and this will be one of the topics. Hardin mention that Braking Traffik would post something on their blog but lacked funding to do a special event for this. Next week, Belitsos will send out information about the July 30th “World Day Against Trafficking in Person” on the NAHT's blog.

Updates from Regional Coalitions:

Braking Traffik – Hardin shared that Braking Traffik had experienced a \$100,000 of funding cuts that led to the reduction of two staff members who were both working with survivors of human trafficking. She also stated that from April 1st to June 30th Braking Traffik has served 85 survivors of sex and labor trafficking (68 sex trafficking and 17 labor trafficking). They have facilitated 9 weekly groups so they are in residential facilities where they are housing at risk youth. They are doing groups in several high schools and middle schools in the region as young as six grade boys, which is one of their targeted populations. In the last three months, they have trained and presented anti-trafficking outreach programs to 727 people. Their most recent presentation on labor trafficking and immigration rights was made at Bell’s Farm in Conesville, Iowa, to 45 H2A labor workers. Braking Traffik’s total number of survivors served in the past fiscal year was 131 with 4 advocates up until the end of May when they lost VOCA funding, which now leaves them with 2 advocates.

Des Moines & Plymouth Human Trafficking – Reding reported that they have trained 70 hotels and have trained 509 people. They are asking all of their trainers to make contact with at least 3 hotels that they have been assigned. They are reaching out to the Cobblestone Hotels in Iowa to see if they would do either individual or regional training. They did this with all of the Best Westerns in Iowa, which turn out very well. The Coalition meets monthly at Plymouth Church.

Cedar Rapids Coalition/Chains Interrupted – Davidson reported that Chains Interrupted had hired Shana Kargbo as their Executive Director. In partnership with Mercy Medical Center, Chains Interrupted has received 51 referrals of survivors and victims of human trafficking in the past 11 months. Chains Interrupted is one of two organizations in the state to receive VOCA grant funding toward Survivor Advocacy. With the funding they receive they will be able to hire one staff. Their educational and awareness projects include:

- Presentations to Hotel/Motel staff,
- Forty-two presentations of Awareness in Action (Human Trafficking 101) to 1911 students, nurses, school counselors, teachers, parents, school administrative personnel and para professionals, and
- Multiple presentations to Linn County Juvenile Detention Center
- Creating a new school presentation based on video testimony from a local survivor
- 120 volunteers put together bracelets and literature to hand out in local summer parades
- Participating in several booths to raise awareness about human trafficking and resources available.

With the loss of funding for Teens Against Trafficking, Chains Interrupted has continued to serve Linn, Johnson, Iowa, Cedar, and Washington by trained over 700 students in the schools. Davidson stated that she would be doing an educational presentation on “Trauma Inform Care 201” for various organizations at their upcoming coalition meeting on July 30th from 11:30-1:00 at Mercy Medical Center (Hallagan Education Center). As lunch will be provided at no charge, you will need to RSVP to shana@chainsinterrupted.com by Friday, July 26th. Chains Interrupted sent a team of 14 to Guatemala where they talked to over 600 people at four conferences focusing on human trafficking, child pornography, child sexual abuse, and child smuggling.

Progress report from Johnson County Human Coalition – no report

Set Free Dubuque – Hageman reported that they meet monthly and that Suzy Wright had done some hotel training with Best Western and Hotel Julian. On June 20th, Set Free held a “World Refugee Day” event focusing on the link between forced migration and human trafficking. . The Telegraph Herald did a nice article about the event, which can be seen at http://www.telegraphherald.com/news/tri-state/article_78d7d877-e824-52bb-8044-11b869275b38.html.

Siouxland Coalition – Rixner reported that they are working with the police in the area and are facing a few challenges in moving things forward. They are also working with the Sane nurses from Unity Point in Sioux City, who took Davidson’s trauma training. They have a golf tournament coming up in September as a fundraiser. They have a large conference on pornography coming up in April, 2020. The Siouxland human trafficking Coalition meets almost every month.

Southwest Iowa Coalition – no report

Report from the Research, Evaluation & Best Practice Standards – Houston reported progress on the six recommendations in the State of Support Report. As to the delivery of services to survivors of sex and labor trafficking, Houston suggested putting together a best practice handbook to be used by all coalitions/service providers and focus on developing a self-care strategy for service providers to prevent burn out. He felt that more awareness should be placed on labor trafficking and on providing different type of services for labor victims. For example, If NAHT was to take on the “End Demand” campaign, Houston thought that we should not only be focusing on the buyers of sex trafficking but also the farmers, labor contractors, and processing plants taking advantage of labor trafficking.

Other than the coalitions going to “Pride Events,” there has not been a lot of focus on specialized services to address male and transgender victims and their needs. Working with the organization Transformative Healing, would be a good start to addressing this lack of focus. Houston believes the NAHT’s website provides a great resource/directory of organizations for services. One need that showed up in the evaluation study was that the coalition knew what resources were available in their city, but did not know what might be available in other nearby cities. Houston felt that if the regional coalitions could do a meeting (face to face or online) where they could share a list of resources available in their cities, this would be helpful.

He stated that NAHT was doing a better job of fostering relations between culturally specific and mainstream service providers (e.g. USCRI and Gretchen Brown-Waech’s work). Houston pointed out that sex trafficking is a uniting issue while labor trafficking tends to be more divisive issue due to anti-immigrant sentiment. The board needs to have a deeper discussion about how it will respond in the future to different legislation involving immigration, since it is will have an impact on human trafficking in the state.

Finally, there is a growing lack of funding for human trafficking service providers. There are two methods for crime victim assistance funding– State Appropriation and VOCA (State and Federal matching funding). Unfortunately, human trafficking does not have a designated pot of state money set aside so it competes against sexual assault and domestic violence in the Crime Victim Assistant

Division funding. Two things NAHT can do: ask Iowa Legislator to re-appropriate 1.5 million dollars back to CVAD and ask federal and state for the renewal of the \$2.4 million loss to VOCA funding (\$443,191.00 net loss to anti-trafficking programs specifically).

Report on the NAHT Rescue Stickers – Houston said that we have already distributed 7,500 stickers. If Board members have not already **received** or posted stickers in your community, please request stickers. All board members should help to distribute stickers. Belitsos recently ordered 2,500 new-stickers and sent them to the Mt. Mercy student group for distributions statewide. Belitsos also sent out a “Second call for volunteers to distribute stickers” in a blog post and on Facebook.

Report from the Fundraising Committee – No report

Report on Hotel/Motel Projects – This topic was covered in the Regional Coalition progress reports.

Next meeting August 13, 2:30-4:00 August agenda will include Hardin reporting on “End This Demand” to be rolled out on August 19th.

Meeting Adjourned.