



COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE • COMMUNICATIONS
PRESS RELEASE

333 W. SANTA ANA BLVD. • SANTA ANA, CA 92701 • WWW.OCGOV.COM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Elizabeth DenBleyker
Public Information Officer,
County of Orange Social Services Agency
(714) 541-7734

Orange County Launches Campaign to Raise Awareness of Child Sex Trafficking and Exploitation

Anaheim, CA (May 31, 2017) — The commercial sexual exploitation of children is a national and statewide epidemic that deserves our highest attention. Today, the County of Orange, in partnership with the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), Association of California Cities-Orange County (ACCOC), Orange County Juvenile Court, Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force (OCHTTF), The Raise Foundation, and Vanguard University's Global Center for Women & Justice launched a campaign to raise awareness of child sex trafficking and exploitation, highlighting the theme: **"Be the One to Help Out: Sex Trafficking. It's Not What You Think. Children are Victims, Too"**. Orange County elected officials and community leaders gathered to promote the campaign's goals of raising awareness of the risks and indicators of child sex trafficking and exploitation and ensuring that the community is aware of how to help potential victims.

OCTA initially launched the "Be the One" campaign in 2014, with a targeted campaign to raise awareness and encourage the community to help potential human trafficking victims. That same year, Senate Bill 855 established a state-funded county program to serve the needs of a specific subset of human trafficking victims: children. As a result, Orange County established the Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) Steering Committee and is implementing their CSEC County Plan, with a key deliverable of raising awareness in the community of the risks and indicators of child sex trafficking and exploitation.

"Orange County is committed to asserting leadership in addressing the needs of the CSEC population," said Third District Supervisor Todd Spitzer, Orange County Board of Supervisors and member of OCTA's Board of Directors. "As Co-Chair of the CSEC Steering Committee, I've witnessed firsthand our progress in identifying and serving the needs of our child victims. But we can't do this alone; we need our community to step up and help us identify victims and potential victims – and recognize when your child, or any child, may be at risk."

The new public awareness campaign will feature three (3) new bus tail designs, to be placed on ten (10) OCTA ACCESS buses that will be in service throughout Orange County. Additionally, the campaign features a new website, betheoneoc.com, which provides the community with information and resources to help identify and prevent the commercial exploitation of children.

"Since the implementation of SB 855, increasing numbers of sex trafficked and exploited youth are being identified in Orange County, including children who reside here and those who are

**BE THE ONE
BT1
TO HELP OUT**



transported here by traffickers from outside of the county or state,” said the Honorable Maria Hernandez, Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court. “Orange County has been identified as a ‘destination county,’ where child sex traffickers congregate to engage in the sexual exploitation of minors. There has never been a more crucial time for the community to become aware of this significant issue and learn how to get involved.”

Any vulnerable child can become a victim of sex trafficking and exploitation, which can occur in different ways and in different situations. Through the “Be The One to Help Out” campaign, community members are urged to learn about the potential indicators and how to seek help for exploited youth as well as the importance of talking to children about the realities of sexual exploitation and awareness of their personal safety.

“Child sex trafficking and exploitation is widespread in Orange County but often hidden,” said Orange County Sheriff Sandra Hutchens. “Oftentimes, it can only be uncovered by vigilant community members who report their concerns. This campaign is a fervent reminder that you truly can be the one to help out.”

###

