

REVOLUTION

TEXAS ASSOCIATION AGAINST SEXUAL ASSAULT

TAASA Newsletter | Winter 2016

rev•o•lu•tion (rev'loō sh n) n. a sweeping and momentous change

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PREVENTIONEERS...WE SHALL OVERCOME!

CRYSTAL GARCIA-WARD

Our agency recently completed a week-long leadership camp on gender roles for Break the Box week. The idea of a leadership camp was not new to me. I had it on my "idea" list for a while now, and I originally wanted to host the event in the summer, but every time I started putting together a project of this size I always found a way to hold back.

Thoughts like "I can't do this by myself, I am only one educator. All those middle school students will eat me alive." And "those kids aren't mature enough to handle something like this" swirled in my head. I questioned everything from how I would get youth to show up to what would happen if someone caught the building on fire? In the end, I would talk myself out of the project and would put it at the end of my to-do list.

Preventioners often approach working with youth as creating a program and filling it with students. Any student we can find will do, as long as we have enough bodies in the room to say we were able to have a group. This approach puts us, as preventioners, in our own box. It holds us back. It keeps us from connecting to our work in a meaningful way. We stress out, we burn out, and unfortunately, we lose faith in our program's ability to succeed and find ourselves feeling alone and stuck without a way to move forward with fresh ideas and programs.

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ANNETTE
BURRHUS-CLAY

The beginning of the year is often a time for self-reflection and rededication to what is truly important. For me, the last couple of months has been a period of incredible highs- Ahem, two more grandkids in a six-week span! There have also been lows, including the San Bernardino mass shooting, a place my husband and I and our four children lived for six years. Finally, there has been much too much energy sucking minutiae like constantly following up with some funders to find out why reimbursements aren't being processed in a timely manner for non-profits providing critical services.

In my youth, I fancied myself a revolutionary of sorts- a mover and shaker who would save the world or die trying. At some point, I evolved into more of a bridge-builder than a militant. For the most part, my tendency to be plain-spoken, reasonable, and moderate allowed me to be pretty effective in professional settings and interactions. Lately, I find myself questioning whether being the patient peacemaker who generally gives others the benefit of the doubt might have swung my pendulum too far in one direction.

I still feel a strong drive to make sweeping changes in this world. As cliché as it sounds, I do want to leave a better world for my grandchildren. I also feel a deep responsibility to my staff, TAASA members, and the many people who continue to selflessly dedicate their lives to making it a safer and better place to live. So in 2016 I resolve to continue this fight. Hopefully, that will include many

interactions that are pleasant, non-confrontational and mutually beneficial but I am committed to advancing the agenda of ending sexual violence regardless of whether feathers get ruffled or not. It's too important and I'm getting too old to worry about doing the right thing without hurting anyone's sensibilities. A friend and wonderful victim advocate once told me, "if at your funeral the only thing they can say is you were nice, you didn't do your job." So I pledge in 2016 to making changes and giving them something to talk about.

Happy New Year!



abClay

NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING · MEN · INCARCERATED

UNEMPLOYED · NATIVE AMERICANS

WIND THE GAP WHO'S MISSING FROM THE MOVEMENT?



2016
ANNUAL TAASA
CONFERENCE
OMNI CORPUS CHRISTI HOTEL
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX
MARCH 6TH - 10TH

FEATURING

SHANNON GALPIN, MOUNTAIN2MOUNTAIN
BRINGING THE POWER OF VOICE TO
WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN CONFLICT ZONES

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
WWW.TAASACONFERENCE.ORG

TAASA Welcomes...

four new additions to the organization. All bring new perspectives and expertise to their departments at TAASA and will be great resources for local training and technical assistance needs.



Denise Loya
Primary Prevention Specialist

Denise Loya, the newest addition to TAASA's Prevention Team, is proud to have been born and raised in El Paso (Chuco Town), Texas. She earned her B.A. in Liberal Arts from St. John's College in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 2001. In 2006, Denise received an M.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), focusing on Spanish and American Literature and History, with a certification in Women's Studies. Throughout her professional career, she has worked in the educational field as both a secondary and post-secondary educator. Shortly after receiving her M.A., she began working for the Institute of Oral History at UTEP, as an independent consultant for the Bracero Oral History Project. Her work there led her to the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, where she also worked as a consultant for the same project. Denise continued her work in the non-profit sector as a Volunteer Coordinator

and Primary Prevention Facilitator at the Center Against Sexual & Family Violence in El Paso through October 2015. Cool Fact: Denise is a fierce advocate for women's rights and related social justice issues.



Brad Teaff
Training Specialist

Brad comes to TAASA with over 15 years of law enforcement experience. Brad's proficiency with college campuses and rural areas adds to the repertoire of trainings TAASA has to offer. Before accepting the position at TAASA, Brad was the Chief of Police and Director of Campus Safety at Cisco College where he was responsible for all law enforcement and administrative duties including Cleary Reporting. Brad hopes to make a difference with law enforcement's response to sexual assault cases.

Brad grew up in a small town outside of Abilene and currently resides in Cisco, TX with his wife and four children. Cool Fact: Brad also has a passion for dogs. He spent 7 years as a K-9 officer and spent 3 years overseas in Iraq and Afghanistan as an explosive detection dog handler embedded with the US Marines.



Alexander Perotti
Human Trafficking Specialist

Alex joins TAASA after nine years with the United States Army as an Airborne Ranger Captain. Alex worked with Special Operations Command South conducting Civil Affairs in Central America. While in Central America, Alex worked with multiple agencies and governments to assist in anti-human trafficking by incorporating a 360 degree approach that focused on trafficking victims as well as going after organized human trafficking networks. He also worked with the United States Embassy in Panama and Honduras to coordinate efforts between multiple United States agencies and host nation government. Alex grew up in Santa Rosa, California just north of San Francisco and attended the University of San Francisco. Currently, Alex resides in Austin and looks forward to working with local, state, and federal law enforcement to train, advise, and assist in counter human trafficking efforts. Cool Fact: Alex deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan and earned two bronze stars



Laramie Gorbett
Human Trafficking Specialist

Laramie has always fostered a passion for advocacy and activism. She received her BA in Anthropology from Texas Tech University in 2002, then her Masters from New Mexico State University in 2006. Laramie has many years of experience working with survivors in various capacities. She holds a Certificate in Nonprofit Leadership & Management from Center for Community-Based & Nonprofit Organizations & Texas Association of Nonprofit Organizations. She has developed trauma-informed curricula specifically for survivors of complex trauma and has facilitated hope and healing art workshops for survivors of human trafficking, refugees, and other marginalized populations domestically and internationally. Laramie is a leader in the global V-Day movement to end violence against women and girls. Cool Fact: Laramie once lived and worked on a monkey island in Puerto Rico!

SAVE THE DATE!

University Police Sexual Assault Training (UPSAT) Conference – June 2016

This year's conference, to be held at the historic Magnolia Hotel in Downtown Dallas, TX on

June 6th and 7th, will provide information on sexual assault response, investigations, and cultural change at Texas colleges and universities. Geared towards law enforcement, the purpose of the UPSAT Conference is to recognize and confront the prevalence of sexual assault, to ensure that crimes of sexual violence are reported, that victims are not blamed, and school policy and practice falls on the side of justice. Be on the lookout for more details on TAASA's website.

Prevention is Possible: 2016 Sexual Assault Awareness Month Campaign

Prevention is possible, and it is the theme of this April's, [Sexual Assault Awareness Month](#) from the National Sexual Violence Resource Center (NSVRC). It takes many voices and roles to prevent sexual violence. This April, we'll focus on the ways individuals, communities, and the private sector can take action to promote safety, respect, and equality.

Preventing such a far-reaching and prevalent social issue as sexual violence may seem overwhelming or even impossible. This mentality implies that there isn't a solution or if there is – we can't achieve it. But we can and we are. Reactionary measures are not enough; instead, we need a comprehensive solution. There are many practical steps that are currently being taken in our homes, neighborhoods, schools, faith communities, and workplaces. But there are many more things we can do to promote safety, respect, equality, and accountability.

The 2016 SAAM campaign will provide community advocates, business and campus leaders, and individuals with a toolkit to promote prevention. These tools will help encourage safe behaviors, thoughtful policies, and healthy relationships. This April's SAAM campaign will illuminate the way that prevention efforts are a part of a broader societal change. We invite you to join these efforts and use your voice to help spread the word that prevention is possible!

Materials are available online in English and Spanish at www.nsvrc.org/saam. You can follow NSVRC on social media, and keep checking the SAAM blog for campaign updates. You can also join the SAAM mailing list by contacting NSVRC at resources@nsvrc.org.

Deep in the heart of Texas, we always add our own little twist to Sexual Assault Awareness & Prevention Month and 2016 is no different. This time around, TAASA is asking Texans to use social media to #TurnTexasTeal. In addition to participating in the national campaign, we ask that rape crisis centers, colleges and universities, schools, faith-based communities, and engaged Texans join in TAASA's 2016 Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month initiative designed to raise awareness and promote a prevention-based actions across Texas. The #TurnTexasTeal initiative will use social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Twibbon, Vine, and Instagram to flood social media with everything from survivor stories to calls to action. The best part about #TurnTexasTeal is that the content will largely be generated and shared by people like you!

Look for more details about #TurnTexasTeal in early February and make plans to participate in the SAAPM Laboratory workshop during the 2016 TAASA Conference in Corpus Christi.

#TurnTexasTeal Highlights

- Twibbon social media campaign
- Photo booth at 2016 TAASA Conference
- Sexual Violence in Texas prevalence graphics
- Suggested social media posts
- Prevention graphics
- "Why I #TurnTexasTeal..." video dedications
- And much more

If you have questions or need more information about #TurnTexasTeal or Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, please contact Ted Rutherford at trutherford@taasa.org.

'Tis the Season to Resolve

ROSE
LUNA

At the start of each year, resolutions invoke feelings of hope, faith, and prosperity. Courses of action are determined to accomplish both personal and professional goals. As personal resolutions guide individuals for the upcoming year, professional resolutions form the basis of TAASA's organizational policy. The resolve to adhere to the directives identified through resolutions influences the movement to end sexual violence in the state of Texas. Resolutions are significant and represent the core values defining TAASA's work.

How are resolutions written and introduced?

Any current TAASA member may propose a resolution. Guidelines to formally submit a resolution must be followed. Proposed resolutions are then voted on by TAASA membership at the TAASA Annual Conference. Resolutions submissions should be thoughtful and directly related to the purposes and principals of TAASA. All resolutions should be in keeping with the mission statement of TAASA.

What is TAASA's Mission Statement?

The Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA) is committed to ending sexual violence in Texas through education, prevention, and advocacy. In the meantime, we desire to support survivors on their paths to hope, healing, and justice. TAASA is the voice of the sexual assault movement in Texas. We are a unifying force bringing together parties involved in and affected by sexual assault as a catalyst for change.

What are the submission guidelines?

Step one: Complete resolution request form and resolution form found on the TAASA membership landing page.

Step two: Submit resolution request form and resolution to TAASA no later than October 21, 2015.

Step three: Proposed resolutions shall be posted on TAASA website no later than December 9, 2015 for membership to review.

Step four: Membership shall vote on proposed resolutions during the Annual Membership meeting at TAASA's Annual Conference.

Are there any proposed resolutions to be voted on at the 2016 TAASA Annual Conference Membership meeting?

Yes. Proposed resolutions, in their entirety, are posted on TAASA's website at <http://taasa.org/get-involved/resolutions/>. *

Is it too late to submit a resolution?

Yes, the resolution guidelines lay out the timeframe and deadline to submit. This process begins as early as summer and extends through October 21st.

To learn more about the resolution process contact Rose Luna at rluna@taasa.org or 512-474-7190 ext. 13.

**To be eligible to vote you must be a TAASA member for at least 30 days prior to the Annual Membership Meeting. The deadline to become a member with voting privileges at the 2016 TAASA Conference is Friday, February 5, 2016.*

2016 Proposed Resolutions

Presented here are summaries of the proposed resolutions to be voted on at the Annual Membership Meeting on March 7, 2016.

To view resolutions in their entirety, please visit:
<http://taasa.org/get-involved/resolutions/>

The Detention of Immigrant Men, Women, & Children

TAASA is committed to upholding the standards of care and rights of victims regardless of their status.

TAASA is committed to advocating on behalf of immigrant men, women, and children detained in immigration facilities who has experienced sexual violence or are escaping threats of sexual violence.

Engaging Youth to End Sexual Violence

TAASA is committed to preventing sexual violence by engaging youth.

TAASA is committed to supporting youth activists and their adult allies to end sexual violence by creating social change.

Including Transgender/Gender Non-Conforming Clients

TAASA is committed to seeking training resources for members to better expand their understanding and commitment to serving transgender and gender nonconforming clients.

TAASA will make culturally competent care for transgender clients central to the ethical standards of the organization.

Supporting Undocumented Victims

TAASA will commit itself to restoring the trust of undocumented residents, so that all Texas residents and visitors, including all immigrants, can have the confidence to contact and interact with victim service providers without fear of immigration consequences.

Addressing Sexual Violence in Institutions of Higher Learning

TAASA is committed to elevating the capacity of member agencies and institutions of higher learning to work with students affected by issues of "difference", oppression, and culture to address the root causes of sexual violence by incorporating anti-oppression principles.

Online Resources: Where to Look? What Will I Find?

JENNIFER
THOMPSON

I was recently asked if I could find a list of reputable websites that could serve as references for people as they did their daily work. There is no doubt there are great resources online but often they can be hidden away or are part of an odd sounding agency or department. Who knew that the Office of Post Secondary Education (OPE) has a Campus Safety and Security Data Analysis Cutting Tool <http://ope.ed.gov/security/> that allows you to create customized reports on campus crime data? Or that one of the most useful features of this website just might be the access to lead Title IX coordinator name and contact information for any institution in the U.S. and outlying territories?

I will provide an example that will walk you through the basics so you can see what is available – and help you get the lead Title IX coordinator information but like all of these sites, I'd encourage you to take some time and get to see all that they can offer. To get started choose "Get data for one institution/campus" in the upper right corner of the main page. Let's search for the information on a Texas A & M campus. In the name of institution field, enter "Texas A & M". By entering the main name for an educational system, you will most effectively capture the data for the entirety of that system. It will return every branch affiliated with that system. This data analysis cutting tool provides you not only crime statistics but also the locations of the institutions and their respective enrollments.

Continuing with our example, let's choose "Texas A & M International University Main Campus" locate in Laredo, TX with an enrollment of just over 7,400. When you select the main campus of Texas A & M International University you will then find information related to the provision of on-campus housing (if local police crime statistics are reported with the campus crime statistics) and the name and contact information for the Lead Title IX Coordinator. At Texas A & M International, we see that the lead Title IX Coordinator is Ms. Villanueva and we also find her contact information.

This is one very quick and efficient way of locating the lead Title IX Coordinator information for any post-secondary institution that reports a Title IX coordinator. You will also see the crime

statistics available for public review as reported by the respective institutions. This website may also be a helpful tool in quickly assessing enrollment numbers.

A second website I would like to make note of is one called MINCAVA electronic clearinghouse (<http://www.mincava.umn.edu>) out of the Minnesota Center Against Violence and Abuse. The mission of MINCAVA is to support education, research, and access to violence related resources. The topics are up to date, checked weekly and include areas like child abuse, stalking, domestic violence, and sexual violence. MINCAVA collaborates with Violence Against Women online resources (VAWnet), The Hague Domestic Violence Project, and Mobilizing Men for Violence Prevention among others.

There are a number of beneficial tools for training, prevention, policy work, and more which can all be found through the MINCAVA site. The website also provides a healthy FAQ section that covers issues like linking to the MINCAVA site, getting copyright permission (as long as the material is not sold for a profit and is properly cited you may use it!), and obtaining more information about resources appearing on MINCAVA's site (MINCAVA has a few people on staff).

And the last website I would like to highlight is one that has a thorough victim media advocacy section <http://www.medicrimevictimguide.com/index.html>. This guide was produced by Justice Solutions, an organization of crime victim professionals. The site provides information that can help facilitate sensitive and respectful treatment of a variety of survivors (e.g. homicide, sexual violence, vulnerable populations) by the media. This website provides information which you may find to be useful in educating those in the media on the impact of crime victimization has on survivors and how the media can cover these stories more compassionately and effectively.

I sincerely hope that these three websites will be of use to you and that you can add one or all of them to your list of bookmarked sites. I would love to hear back from you as to what are some of your favorite sites and where you go to find your information. Let's share more of these great resources with each other, I know that there are many more resources out there waiting to be discovered!



Parting is Such Sweet Sorrow

I don't know where the past sixteen years have gone. I have so many people to thank for allowing me to be the person I am today. I would be remiss if I didn't thank Carol Townsend for hiring me in 1999 and the agencies that supported me early in my career when they would get a call from an unknown man who wanted to come and to train for them. I am not going to name names because inevitably I would forget someone.

Truth be told I learned more from you advocates that I could ever learn in a book. You embraced me, supported me, and showed me much more love that I ever could have imagined. The growth in the field of sexual assault advocacy in the past sixteen years is simply amazing. You advocates are the soldiers in the war against sexual violence and you are a powerful force.

I have to thank Annette Burrhus-Clay for being my mentor, advisor, and friend. I don't think my career

would have been what it was without the support of Annette. You like to think the people you work with become a family and that is the case at TAASA. This year when I experienced personal tragedy I could have never hoped for the support I received from my TAASA family. The kindness and love that was given to me were far more than a person could imagine, much less receive. They will always be in my heart.

As I retire, and move into the next stage of my life, I want you folks who do the hard work of providing love and support to sexual assault survivors to know that I am taking you with me as well.

My love to you all,

Lyndel Williams



BREAK THE BOX

[CONTINUED FROM COVER]

I have labeled myself a do-er (according to my own criteria). I like to get things done quickly and move on to the next thing. It works for me. So, the thought of putting a significant amount of time and effort into planning a project that might fail or be poorly attended was a risk I was not ready or willing to take. That is until we started discussing how to conduct “Break the Box Week” in our community.

I knew from the beginning that a school-based approach would not work for my community. We began looking for an after school option that would work for us. I pulled up the idea list in my head and there it was staring me in the face, reminding me that the magic happens outside of my own comfort zone – youth camp. I found myself stuck in my own box of adultism and fear.

Adultism, a form of discrimination against young people, happens when we fail to recognize and engage youth as a part of our prevention work. Youth voices are silenced and neglected. Despite the fact that a significant portion of prevention work is done with youth, the intent is often to deliver a message to young people and have them respond in a way that the facilitator has designed for them.

The core work in social justice is building an atmosphere where people can feel safe enough and empowered to author their own story. My idea for summer camp was missing this key component. I was trying to just get something done because I thought it would work and would help youth in my community. Despite the fact that my intentions were positive, it was easy to give up on the idea when things got tough in the planning process.

When it came time to implement the “Break the Box” Week project, I had to take on a new approach. I needed to do more than invest my time and effort into a program that would work. I needed to invest into something that had depth and impact for the attendees and I needed youth to lead the project. I listened to my fellow preventioners around the state, sought out advice and feedback from trusted co-workers and colleagues doing prevention work in other sectors in our area. I asked questions and shared my ideas and things started to fall into place very quickly.

I learned that people in my community were not only willing to talk with me about my project, they were eager and excited to join me in getting everything together. I was going to our stakeholders asking for support from them in their professional role and what I got was “This is so cool! I would love for my own family member to be a part of this.”

My idea was no longer just an idea. Break the Box Week was going to be recognized in my community. I had a team of adult allies and they helped recruited a group of peer leaders. We made an agenda, divided up parts of the lesson plan we would each facilitate and threw in a good ice breaker for good measure. We were ready to meet for our first planning session. It was time to finally DO!

We showed up and waited, and waited, and waited for students to walk through the door. I kept checking my phone, wondering if students or people were lost. Finally, our first and only student walked in the door, accompanied by a supportive mom who stayed and worked with us to get through that first meeting.

I had the option to see this moment through two different lenses. Option one would have been to see this as my “I told you so” moment. I could have decided that all that work for two people proved that this would not work. I could have given myself permission to quit, or I could choose option two and keep going.

Option two required a little more courage. Bringing a new program into my prevention work was scary, but I knew that if I didn’t see this to the end, the youth would miss out. I could not expect someone to know something they have not been given an opportunity to learn. There was more work to do and I committed to doing it.



Once again, I backtracked so I could move forward. I checked in with the adults who were driving the young people to the meeting and we figured out our meeting time needed to be adjusted. This was an easy fix and during our second meeting, we had a room full of youth, parents, and advocates. Knowing what I know now, I can assure you that had we quit after that first week, I would have missed out on an important experience.

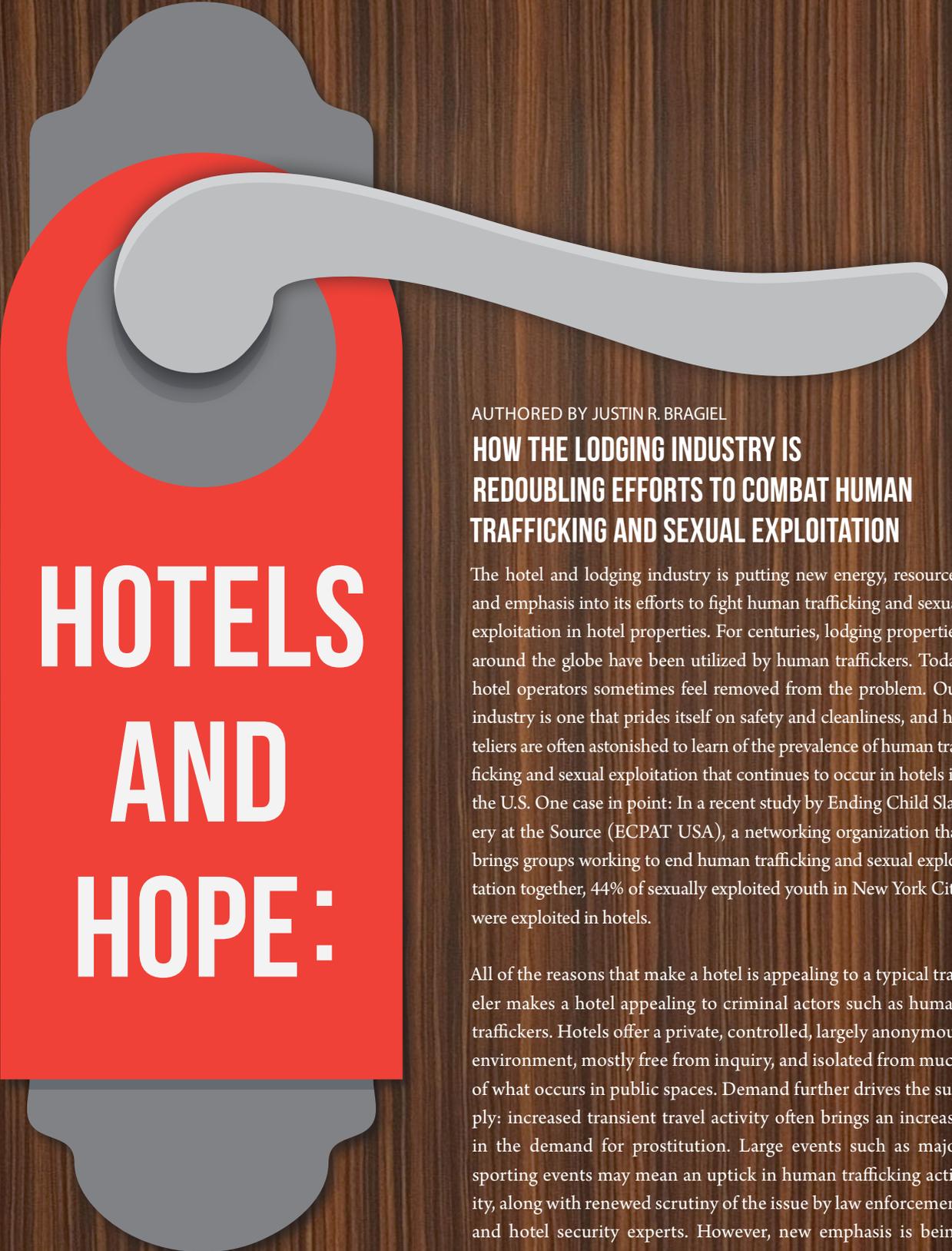
Each of our planning meetings included a discussion about our master chart for the camp and by the end, we had a page full of ideas for lessons and activities. Each week things floated to the top as priorities. After each meeting, we made phone calls on behalf of the youth to see how we could make those ideas work. The response we heard was “I am happy to help.” Over 20 community organizations and private businesses sponsored a piece of the camp. In the end, this project was successful because it wasn’t a “me” project it was a “we” project.

With a new state plan in place, 2016 is bringing preventioners a few opportunities to break our own boxes and to reinvest in fresh programs and ideas for the youth in our community. Yes, for us do-ers, this means it could be scary. There will probably be moments that we might consider giving up.

In those moments, I hope you will take the opportunity to break your own boxes to keep moving forward in your work. Prevention WORKS! Change is happening and our work is needed and valuable to the youth in our community.

Prevention works because it starts with us. Together we can break boxes.





HOTELS AND HOPE:

AUTHORED BY JUSTIN R. BRAGIEL

HOW THE LODGING INDUSTRY IS REDOUBLING EFFORTS TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The hotel and lodging industry is putting new energy, resources, and emphasis into its efforts to fight human trafficking and sexual exploitation in hotel properties. For centuries, lodging properties around the globe have been utilized by human traffickers. Today, hotel operators sometimes feel removed from the problem. Our industry is one that prides itself on safety and cleanliness, and hoteliers are often astonished to learn of the prevalence of human trafficking and sexual exploitation that continues to occur in hotels in the U.S. One case in point: In a recent study by Ending Child Slavery at the Source (ECPAT USA), a networking organization that brings groups working to end human trafficking and sexual exploitation together, 44% of sexually exploited youth in New York City were exploited in hotels.

All of the reasons that make a hotel appealing to a typical traveler makes a hotel appealing to criminal actors such as human traffickers. Hotels offer a private, controlled, largely anonymous environment, mostly free from inquiry, and isolated from much of what occurs in public spaces. Demand further drives the supply: increased transient travel activity often brings an increase in the demand for prostitution. Large events such as major sporting events may mean an uptick in human trafficking activity, along with renewed scrutiny of the issue by law enforcement and hotel security experts. However, new emphasis is being placed on the recognition that human trafficking occurs year-round, and across all segments of the lodging industry.

Human trafficking and sexual exploitation prevention education have traditionally presented a unique set of challenges for us in the lodging industry. We pride ourselves on being the best part of the travel experience: warm and welcoming, and a drastic contrast to the harshness of air, bus, or train transportation. Our employees are trained to respect guest privacy, and our industry is sensitive to practices that may make our guests feel like we are intruding into their private lives. This sentiment is ingrained into an hotelier's mindset, and this is a factor we are taking into consideration as we find new ways to address the issue of human trafficking and sexual exploitation and educate our industry on preventing it from occurring in our lodging properties.

To this end, the lodging industry is taking a fresh approach to addressing this age-old problem. We are placing a renewed focus on preventing human trafficking and sexual exploitation, and we are pivoting on updated training curriculum that is better tailored to the lodging industry. In the past, educational efforts have largely focused on posters and signs, or the most obvious issues such as preventing active solicitation in the hotel bar. Now, our message is focused on recognizing the signs of human trafficking that might go unnoticed by the untrained eye. For example, we are training employees to look for warning signs, such as guests paying with cash on a day-to-day basis, an increased volume of visitors to registered guests coming and going, guests declining housekeeping service, guests having little or inappropriate luggage, the presence of A/V equipment in guestrooms, and even the terminology and language used by traffickers and victims.

This training is aimed at two audiences. Line-level hotel employees such as front desk clerks, housekeepers, housekeeping supervisors, and room service attendants are trained to recognize the signs of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, and these employees are encouraged to immediately report these signs to their supervisor. Managers are taught to create a workplace atmosphere that encourages line-level employees to talk to their supervisors about what they see and hear. Managers are trained in how to respond to the situation and are instructed to report suspicious activity to the appropriate law enforcement officer.

Hotel employees at all levels are learning to balance guest privacy against preventing criminal activity from occurring at the property. Our message to hoteliers is that if a manager has a reasonable suspicion that criminal activity is occurring, reporting that suspicion to law enforcement is not a violation of our guest's privacy. We in the lodging industry recognize that we have a duty to protect all of our guests, including those who did not voluntarily chose to visit our lodging properties.

Our national hotel association, the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA) has partnered with ECPAT and other advocacy organizations in creating new training tools, with an emphasis on understanding and working within the hotel employee's perspective. Our own organization, the Texas Hotel & Lodging Association, has joined forces with AH&LA in this training. We have been meeting with hotel brands and hotel safety and security experts, we have made human trafficking and sexual exploitation a topic at our educational events and our board meetings, and we have incorporated human trafficking prevention training into hotelier educational conferences, such as our annual Short Course. Additionally, we lobbied to have a statutorily allocated seat on the Attorney General's Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force, and we are regularly working with state governmental leaders in finding effective solutions.

Leaders in our industry are working hard to make human trafficking and sexual exploitation prevention efforts a mainstay of hotel guest safety and security programs. The Texas lodging industry is honored to have the opportunity to partner with TAASA and advocates who are committed to stopping human trafficking and sexual exploitation, and we appreciate the opportunity to share our efforts with you. Texas Hotel & Lodging Association is coordinating with experts on the topics of preventing human trafficking and sexual exploitation around Texas. If you are interested in addressing a group of hotel industry decision-makers in your community, we encourage you to get in touch with us.

Justin R. Bragiel has been practicing hotel law and advocating for the Texas lodging industry for over seven years. He can be reached at jbragiel@texaslodging.com or 512-474-2996.

RESOLVE AND STRENGTH: Addressing the Rape Kit Backlog

In 1984, Carol Bart was kidnapped outside of her Dallas apartment and raped at knifepoint. She submitted to an invasive rape kit to collect evidence, yet the evidence collected dust in a storeroom for 24 years. When the kit was finally tested, the DNA was a match to a known criminal, but the statute of limitations to prosecute the rapist had already passed.

Tragically, Carol Bart's story is not unique.

Since the introduction of DNA testing in the 1980s, law enforcement agencies have used it to solve violent crimes like rape and sexual assault. The key to these cases is rape kits – 10-inch-long boxes containing swabs, evidence envelopes, and information sheets.

However, the collection of rape kits and enhanced DNA testing capabilities alone do not ensure that justice will be done in every case. For many rape victims around our country, justice is put on hold as evidence sits untested in police storage facilities. Criminals are left on the streets to commit more devastating crimes and victims are denied the justice they deserve. Though Texas has taken the lead in addressing the rape kit backlog, there are still more than a hundred thousand of these kits sitting untested across the country.

The cause of this crisis is complex – many governments do not understand the nature of the problem, and some have simply not made it a priority. But through increased awareness and more efficient funding, we are making great progress towards eliminating the rape kit backlog.

To continue the fight at the federal level, in 2012, I introduced the Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence Reporting (SAFER) Act with my colleague Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) to enhance grant funding so that DNA evidence collected could be swiftly processed, and victims can finally find the justice they deserve.

Yet while this legislation was signed into law in 2013, it has still not been fully implemented by the Justice Department. Tens of millions of dollars that should be used to pursue justice and help victims heal has instead been withheld from state and local law enforcement.

A half-hearted solution is no solution at all. In June 2015, Sen. Bennet and I wrote to Attorney General Loretta Lynch, urging the Department of Justice to finally fully implement the SAFER Act to ensure that money is set aside to conduct audits of the rape kit backlog, and designating that no less than 75 percent of Debbie Smith Act funds be used directly on processing DNA backlogs.

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Congress cannot and should not accept the Administration's refusal to follow the laws that protect them. We must do everything we can to help local law enforcement reduce backlogs of rape kits and take criminals off the streets and fulfill our promises to victims.

In September, the Obama Administration increased grant funding to address the serious backlog of rape kits around the country. In Texas, the City of Austin Police Department, Jefferson County Regional Crime Laboratory, and the Travis County Sheriff's Office will receive well over \$2 million in grant funding to process untested rape kits.

Despite years of waiting for answers in the most trying of circumstances, Carol Bart has become an example of resolve and strength – not only for fellow victims but for legislators too. And while we can never fully restore the lives of victims, we can fight on their behalf. Legislation like the SAFER Act is one powerful way we were able to do that – and I won't rest until this law is fully implemented.

ADDRESSING TITLE IX AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

In a previous article, I wrote about the importance of colleges & universities and local sexual assault programs working together to build strong, meaningful, and lasting partnerships to ensure that no survivor is left without options, a quick response, and resources after they reported their rape.

Knowing that these types of collaboration are essential to providing comprehensive services, I had the opportunity to visit a local program recently that was already heading in that direction. Last fall, I was contacted by the Center Against Sexual & Family Violence (CASFV) in El Paso. They were interested in reaching out to their local colleges and universities in the hopes of elevating their presence and raising awareness about the services that they provide. What a perfect opportunity for campuses to learn about the work that sexual assault programs do, and for programs to learn about what sexual assault issues campuses are facing regarding Title IX reporting and compliance. My first thought was...I'M IN!

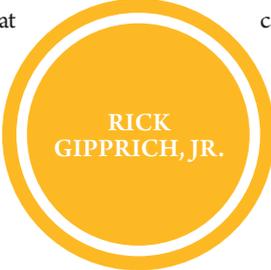
CASFV did most of the legwork and used their resources to compile a list of Title IX Coordinators in their area. The list was comprehensive and included four-year schools, community colleges, trade schools, vocational schools, and barber and cosmetology schools. We were invited to participate and formal invitations were sent out to each campus inviting them to CASFV to learn about the work they do in the community, and to learn about TAASA's efforts at the state level to address campus sexual assault response and prevention efforts. As folks began confirming their attendance, we decided that it might be a good idea to send out a survey asking campuses to gauge how confident their students felt reporting a sexual assault to the campus Title IX office. In addition, we asked them about their sexual misconduct policy and its comprehensiveness, and about what types of training they feel they could benefit from. Their responses would help determine our approach to the meeting and helped guide a discussion on where the campuses ranged on a spectrum of need.

The meeting took place at CASFV and was well attended based on the list of key players the center has compiled. Representatives from CASFV and I were both happy to see that vocational, trade, and

cosmetology schools were at the table with the larger four-year schools and junior colleges. CASFV began with a very comprehensive and detailed presentation about their history and the work that they do in the community. That conversation led to a discussion of TAASA's efforts to address Title IX issues through training and technical assistance across the state. We also discussed the results of the survey in which they were asked to participate, and were not surprised to find that the two major areas where colleges and universities are asking for help are in the realm of Title IX investigations, and prevention efforts. This was a perfect transition into a discussion and presentation from Emiliano Diaz de Leon, TAASA's Men's Engagement Specialist, about what it means to provide effective prevention programs on their campuses, specifically ones that engage men. We wanted to make sure that they knew we saw their concern as a need, and that as a statewide agency, we were here to help guide them.

Overall, the meeting was a success. With the level of participation in the room, it told me that colleges and universities have an interest in the work local programs are doing and that they understand that this type of collaboration and this level of partnership not only benefits them but also survivors. It increases access and resources. It helps them with compliance issues. It shifts the approach from just "checking the boxes" to creating effective and much-needed, systemic and institutional responses, as well as awareness-raising and prevention strategies. This meeting was also proof to me that local programs the size of CASFV have the capacity to do the work needed to build these collaborations with their local campuses and TAASA can help bolster those efforts.

The meetings that we had in El Paso were the first of their kind for both TAASA and CASFV. I have no doubt that these conversations in their community will continue and flourish and serve as a model for work that could potentially be done in every community where a local sexual assault program and a college, university, or trade school exists together. If you would like to do what CASFV did, or need help in strengthening an already existing relationship with your local campus, let's talk about it. Call me at 512-474-7190 x39 or email me at rgipprich@taasa.org.



RICK
GIPPRICH, JR.



6200 La Calma, Suite 110
 Austin, Texas 78752
 www.taasa.org (512) 474-7190

Mission Statement: The Texas Association Against Sexual Assault is committed to ending sexual violence in Texas through education, prevention and advocacy. In the meantime, we desire to support survivors on their paths to hope, healing and justice. TAASA is the voice of the sexual assault movement in Texas. We are a unifying force bringing together parties involved in and affected by sexual assault as a catalyst for change.

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