

WALK

TO STOP CHILD TRAFFICKING NOW



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September 27, 2009 New York City



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OFFICIAL PROGRAM GUIDE



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THE FORCE BEHIND THE CAUSE

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Strategic Global Initiatives (SGI) is a non profit 501(c)3 entity registered in the State of New York. SGI serves many non-profit organizations via its mission to be "A Voice for the Vulnerable." Its formation by founders Ron and Lynette Lewis builds upon their combined 50 plus years of non-profit and corporate work. The SGI Board of Directors represents 100 combined years of full-time non-profit and fundraising efforts that have helped children and many vulnerable and persecuted victims around the world.

With the support of campaign and event sponsors & donors, SGI will quickly become the leading funder of special operative missions that will eventually shut down the demand side of the child sex slave industry. While a majority of funding will go to the demand side of the issue, consideration will be given to other qualified recipients focused on rehabilitation of victims. As more funds are raised, a broader spectrum of beneficiaries will be considered. SGI, through funding from STOP Child Trafficking Now related events, will focus on working with qualified private agencies in a manner that has the utmost integrity, accountability, and effectiveness. Preferences of top-tier sponsors will also be considered in fund allocation. Full accountability can be provided to interested parties and potential sponsors.



THE STORY OF ROSA

DR. LAURA LEDERER REVEALS HER WAKE-UP CALL TO THE PROBLEM OF SEX TRAFFICKING WITH THE STORY OF ROSA.

“Rosa was 13 when she was trafficked to the U.S. from Mexico,” Laura begins, then recounts the story of a poor, small-town waitress who jumped at a family acquaintance’s promise of more money for her parents and nine siblings if she took a better job across the U.S. border. One Friday evening, Rosa and girls from neighboring towns were driven overnight through the desert. Then they walked four days and nights into Brownsville, Texas, where they were driven to a series of trailers in Florida. There a big, burly man told them he’d purchased them for \$10,000 each, a debt they’d have to work off as prostitutes. “Rosa was a virgin,” Laura explains. “She cried and begged, ‘I want the restaurant job.’ ‘There’s no restaurant job,’ the man told her, ‘only this.’”

When Rosa refused to prostitute herself, a group of men gang-raped her and left her in a trailer for three days without food and water until she complied. So for the next six months, Rosa was forced to service 10 to 20 men a day on weekdays, 20 to 40 on weekends. She was twice impregnated (the men often didn’t use the condom that served as their \$20 “ticket” to buy some time with Rosa) and twice forced to abort. Men with guns guarded the girls 24 hours a day.

Rosa was rescued only after one of the girls escaped from a private party they’d been hired to work in town. That girl ran to the house of a neighbor, who contacted the police. Through a sting operation, the FBI and what was at that time the Immigration and Naturalization Service rescued 40 girls and arrested 14 traffickers. When the medical examiner checked Rosa, she had several STDs, pelvic inflammatory disease, and scar tissue from the forced abortions. Addicted to drugs and alcohol, Rosa also was suicidal. “In short,” Laura explains, “she was physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually broken.”

Laura J. Lederer received her B.A. magna cum laude in comparative religions from the University of Michigan. After 10 years in philanthropy as director of community and social concerns at a private foundation, she continued her education at the University of San Francisco Law School and DePaul College of Law and received her juris doctorate in June 1994. In 1997, she received the Gustavus Meyers Center for Study of Human Rights Annual Award for Outstanding Work on Human Rights for her work on harmful speech issues. She is the editor of *Take Back the Night*, published in 1980 by William and Morrow (hardcover) and Bantam Books (paperback), and *The Price We Pay: The Case Against Racist Speech, Hate Propaganda, and Pornography*, published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in 1995, and the author of numerous articles on trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of women and children.



“To make matters worse, because the U.S. had no trafficking laws in place at the time of the sting, Rosa and the other girls were arrested and held in detention centers. Not until several weeks later during interrogations did government officials realize, Wait, these young women aren’t criminals, they’re victims.” Because trafficking shelters didn’t exist, the girls stayed in domestic violence shelters during the two-year trial, never receiving the specific medical, legal, psychological, and spiritual help they needed.

“Now, take Rosa’s story and multiply it by hundreds of thousands, even millions, and you’ll get an idea of the magnitude of the problem of sex trafficking around the world,”

“THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT’S HEAD OF THE NEW HUMAN TRAFFICKING UNIT TOLD ME THEY HAVE A CASE OF TRAFFICKING IN EVERY STATE OF THE COUNTRY NOW.”

Laura explains.

Drawing strength from her faith, for the past six years, Laura, a wife and mom of three daughters, has served at the State Department. In her role as the Senior Advisor on Trafficking in Persons during the past five years, she shaped policy, worked with anti-traffickers worldwide, educated audiences about this growing global concern, and liaised with government agencies and faith-based groups, human-rights groups, and women’s organizations. She’s recently been promoted to Senior Director for Global Projects on Trafficking in Persons.

Prior to her government tenure, Laura worked ten years in philanthropy while earning degrees in comparative religions and law. In 1994 she founded the Protection Project at Harvard University, a human-rights research institute that moved to Johns Hopkins University in 2000. Today, Laura’s also an adjunct professor at Georgetown Law Center, where she teaches a course on International Trafficking of Persons.

We asked Dr. Laura some questions:

When you share Rosa’s story, are people surprised it took place in the U.S.?

Yes. People aware of sex trafficking often think it only happens “over there.” While some may hear about isolated cases in the States, they’re usually not aware of the full extent of the criminal activity. Or they’re unaware of the different types of trafficking, such as labor trafficking, domestic servitude, and various kinds of sex trafficking, including a recent case in Chicago where young women were forced to strip dance in a bar. Often when I speak to general audiences on this issue, people come up to me afterward and say, “I had no idea.”

Part of the problem is trafficking cases aren’t always covered in the media. A huge domestic trafficking case in Atlanta, where pimps trafficked 9- to 12-year-old African American girls, went through the entire criminal justice system without hitting the papers until the judge had trouble finding help for these young girls and sought out a friend who’s a newspaper reporter. While the public’s becoming more conscious of the problem, we still have more awareness raising to do.

How prevalent is trafficking in the States?

The State Department estimates between 14,500 and 17,500 people are trafficked into the U.S. annually. That number includes both sex and labor trafficking, and doesn’t include people trafficked within the U.S.

But the Department of Justice recently noted we don’t have all the data yet. For example, in Rosa’s case, officials rescued 40 young women. By the time of the trial, only 14 girls testified. A couple girls returned to Mexico; others simply disappeared. One of the young women who did testify told us this trafficking ring had

been operating for years and had victimized hundreds of women. Because we’ve only been tracking and prosecuting trafficking cases since 2000, and because convincing victims to testify is difficult, it’s a challenge to get a true sense of the numbers of people impacted. That said, we know trafficking is widespread; the Justice Department’s head of the new human trafficking unit told me they have a case of trafficking in every state of the country now.

But it doesn’t really matter to the U.S. government whether it’s a few thousand—or hundreds of thousands. We work to combat sex trafficking because we believe it’s a contemporary form of slavery—and we don’t want slavery in this country.

What happens to a victim once she’s rescued?

Though local law enforcement officials typically first encounter cases, representatives from the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security must become involved to determine whether there’s enough evidence to prosecute the case. At the same time, a case assessment allows us to attend to any of the victim’s emergency needs, including food, clothing, shelter, and medical issues. Within the first 24 to 48 hours, we obtain a translator to conduct interviews with potential victims, as many times the people who’ve been rescued don’t speak English. The Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, and Department of Health and Human Services all must work closely together on these cases. They place the victims in shelters run by nongovernment organizations (NGOs) or faith-based organizations (FBOs) that partner with the government. Together these organizations determine if the victim ultimately will receive what’s called a “T Visa,” a temporary residency status that allows her to stay in the U.S. for up to three years for rehabilitation and restoration purposes.

There are a number of FBOs and NGOs providing shelter and services in the U.S. They have a huge task. Following the emergency stage, in which the victims’ physical and psychological needs are met, NGOs offer educational and employment opportunities to victims to provide them

with skills needed in order to move back into mainstream society. Many of these women have never had their own money, they’ve rarely gone grocery shopping, they don’t know how to hold a job, and they don’t have any marketable skills. They’ve been systematically broken, so it takes a lot of time and work to restore them.

How has being involved in such a tough issue affected you?

After confronting the palpable evil of human trafficking every day for years, I felt as though I was looking into a black hole. Around that time, a Christian friend who worked in the Justice Department said to me, “You need the Lord guiding you. You need the reassurance he’s right there beside you. You can’t do this work by yourself.” I began to go to church with him, and attended weekend retreats. I also began reading the Bible again, this time to hear what God had to say. I’d read the Bible many times, but mostly in an academic way, as a part of an I was raised in a close family, but it was a mixed religious household—my father was Jewish and my mother was Christian. When they married, they left their faiths and attended a Unitarian-Universalist church. I was without faith or any clear relationship with God when I began this work. Working to stop the buying and selling of human beings is what led me to God. This battle was a David-and-Goliath one—the trans-national traffickers in the sex industry were Goliath—and suddenly the Lord seemed to speak directly to me. I love the passage in Ephesians 6:12-18: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” That passage goes on to instruct us what to do: “Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith.” It’s God’s battle plan for living in the world.

So I came to the Lord as a result of my work. After I became a Christian, I realized God had been right there by my side all along, even in the darkest of days, and after that I didn’t

experience the same fear or pessimism; I know I’m not facing this evil alone.

How has your work impacted you as a mom?

Frankly, I haven’t talked much with my daughters about what I do. Trafficking is a frightening issue for children. I wanted my girls to have time to be innocent, to experience the wonders of the world, to learn how to live without being afraid or upset. I tried to shelter them as much as I could when they were little.

At the same time, it’s important to figure out how to talk about the larger world. When I travel, I’ve begun bringing home gifts for my daughters from the shelters I visit. I tell them how these necklaces or purses were made by kids rescued from slavery. As my daughters are getting old enough to talk about trafficking, this has been a great starting point for discussion.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT ESTIMATES BETWEEN 14,500 AND 17,500 PEOPLE ARE TRAFFICKED INTO THE U.S. ANNUALLY.

What advice would you give other moms for educating and protecting their children?

We don’t want to scare our children, but they need to be aware. I’d start by raising awareness through some of the many good books, articles, and materials that are at least somewhat child friendly. We need to teach kids what’s happening in the world—that slavery still exists, that kids are being hurt and exploited, and that we need to work together as a global community to solve this problem. I recommend Zach Hunter’s new book [HYPERLINK “http://www.christianbook.com/Christian/Books/product/?item_no=277566&p=1006339”](http://www.christianbook.com/Christian/Books/product/?item_no=277566&p=1006339) Be the Change for teenagers. Our State Department Trafficking in Persons report also has some helpful information for teaching children the basics. [undergraduate](#)

degree in Studies in Religion at the University of Michigan many years ago.

Unfortunately, children today are confronted 24/7 with the sex-industry culture, so this is a more difficult battle. As parents, my husband and I have the same issues every parent has with the Internet, TV programs, certain hip-hop songs, and some of the fashion industry. It’s a constant cultural war, but if we do our jobs properly over the years, our children will see the cheap, exploitive ploys for what they are and will make choices for faith, hope, and love.

What can readers do to help combat sex trafficking?

First, educate yourself about both the domestic and global situation. Then bring that information to your PTA group, church committee, or community organization. If you feel moved to get involved, you can find many good faith-based organizations and community groups working to stop human trafficking; call, write, or e-mail to find out how you can help in your community. I’ve been traveling throughout the U.S., often at the invitation of an FBO or community group, hosting one-night seminars.

When you start with yourself and then move out in concentric circles, helping to facilitate various education and awareness activities, you can make a big difference in your community. Soon the eyes and ears of the people in your geographic area are opened to notice when things are amiss. We uncover most trafficking cases through tips from local residents.

Should readers be watching for any particular red flags?

Most people instinctively know when something’s not right in their neighborhood. For example, a colleague of mine ran a small business in a three-story building in a suburb outside D.C. Three months after an acupuncture clinic moved onto the top floor, my colleague commented he’d never seen such a weird clinic. All the customers arrived at night, and the acupuncturists were heavily made-up women in low-cut outfits. So he phoned the police, who raided the clinic. It turned out to be a prostitution ring. It’s important to be aware of what’s going on in your community and to call local

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law enforcement when you think something isn't right.

What punishment do traffickers usually receive?

Before the establishment of trafficking laws, we tried to prosecute traffickers using related laws, such as visa fraud, weapons charges, or, at times, rape and kidnapping laws. But those charges often didn't cover all the suspected activities, and the penalties didn't fit the crime. For example, in Rosa's case, some traffickers were only sentenced to three months in prison.

UNLIKE DRUG OR ARMS TRAFFICKING, SEX TRAFFICKING INVOLVES A HUMAN BEING WHO NEEDS TO BE RESCUED AND RESTORED.

As these cases came to our attention, and we realized trafficking is a growing problem worldwide, eight years ago representatives from government agencies, faith-based groups, women's-rights groups, labor groups, human-rights groups, and children's groups formed a coalition. In 2000, we helped draft and pass into federal law the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), the first comprehensive trafficking act in the world.

The TVPA allowed us to prosecute the whole pipeline of people involved in trafficking—recruiters, harborers, buyers, brothel guards, anyone involved in the process. It also increased penalties so traffickers now can get 20 years to life in prison. And the law set up a needed victim-centered approach.

Why is a victim-centered approach important? Unlike drug or arms trafficking, sex trafficking involves a human being who needs to be rescued and restored.

The church has played a key role in caring for survivors and setting up shelters worldwide. And without faith-based organizations' strong stance, we wouldn't have been able to withstand the intense

ideological onslaught from human-rights groups in this country who wanted to legalize prostitution as we developed trafficking laws. While mainstream human-rights groups neglected human trafficking for years, the church really carried the water on this important issue.

I'm convinced faith-based communities all around the world are the only ones qualified to provide long-term care for trafficking survivors. It's the area of biggest need concerning sex trafficking, and I think it's a perfect area for the church to take leadership.

What's the outlook for the fight against sex trafficking?

I've been doing this work for a long time, and lately I've been more optimistic than ever before. I'm hopeful because so many good people are beginning to work on this issue. We're building a critical mass; it's a new human-rights movement. And it's filled with Christians and others who understand we have to be shoulder-to-shoulder to fight an epic battle with these new contemporary forms of slavery. ■

MORE BACKGROUND ON DR. LAURA

Dr. Laura Lederer founded and directed The Protection Project at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government in 1997. In 2000, she moved The Protection Project to Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). She is adjunct professor of law at Georgetown Law Center, where she has taught for six years, including the first full course on international trafficking in persons offered at a law school. For five years she served as Senior Advisor on Trafficking in Persons to Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs, Paula J. Dobriansky.

She was recently the Senior Director of Global Projects on Trafficking in Persons in the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons at the U.S. Department of State and served as the Executive Director of the Senior Policy Operating Group on Trafficking in Persons, a high level interagency policy group that staffs the President's cabinet-level Inter-agency Task Force on Trafficking in Persons. Dr. Laura has recently joined SCTNow as a senior advisor and works with Global Centurions in the elimination of the Child Trafficking Demand.

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