Human Trafficking in South Florida

The United States Department of Justice and the Florida Coalition against Human Trafficking identify Florida as one of the three states where human trafficking is most prevalent. Human trafficking, defined as the criminal exploitation of a child or adult for any type of gain and characterized as modern day slavery, is violence and exploitation at its worst.

Broward County has the highest rate of sexual trafficking in the South Florida tricounty area. The Broward County Public Schools Office of Diversity, Cultural Outreach, and Prevention Programs cautions that domestic minors as young as 13 years old are trafficked for sex. This symposium will provide an overview of current research in the field, sexual and labor trafficking in South Florida, and cultural similarities to domestic violence. The dialogue will highlight efforts to prevent human trafficking through research, education, and a collaborative initiative to provide services to survivors of trafficking.

Speakers

Sandrine Gaillard-Kenney, Ed.D., assistant dean and associate professor, College of Health Care Sciences, is a founding member of projectHEAT/CREATE (Health Educators Against Trafficking/Coalition for Research and Education Against Trafficking and Exploitation). Gaillard-Kenney was the principal investigator on the 2013–2014 NSU Quality of Life grant awarded to projectHEAT funded by the Broward County Sheriffs Office. Her research on instructional technologies supported the implementation of the projectHEAT faculty training modules.

Brianna Black Kent, Ph.D., associate chair of the Department of Health Science and director of the Ph.D. in Health Science program, College of Health Care Sciences, is a founding member of projectHEAT/CREATE. Kent is a nurse, psychotherapist, and trained mediator. Her research explores the healing process among survivors of sexual abuse. Her professional experience includes working with issues of trauma among child, adolescent, and adult populations.

Sandrine Gaillard-Kenney and Brianna Black Kent have each participated on two Congressional roundtables on human trafficking and presented at local, national, and international conferences. At the invitation of the U. S. State Department, they participated in a discussion on human trafficking prevention with governmental and nongovernmental representatives from Azerbaijan.