

The Liberator

Monthly Newsletter of The Free Project



The Lucky Ones Project

Helping young people discuss the difficult issue of sex trafficking

Starting a conversation: this is often the most harrowing part of the anti-trafficking movement for students. How do you get your fellow students talking about difficult topics like sex trafficking? One way is through art. Graphic designer Sabrena Deal teamed up with an illustrator and writer to create *The Lucky Ones*, a series of graphic novels meant to facilitate conversations about the risks and realities of sex trafficking for young women. You can find out more and download a digital copy of the novels at theluckyonesproject.org.

What to Do?

Need ideas for what to do on campus? Check out this segment for a monthly event or project idea.

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Issue Spotlight

Focusing on one issue in trafficking and human rights, this segment provides information and inspiration.

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Past & Present

Linking the past to present is essential for a successful movement. See how you can learn from history.

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Don't forget:
January is
Human
Trafficking
Awareness
Month

Starting in 2011, President Barack Obama declared January National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. Start planning your events and projects now!

What to Do?

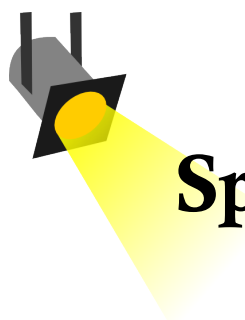
Advocate for Anti-Trafficking Policies in Your State!

You have power in your voice- use it! Each state controls its own legislation and enforcement of anti-trafficking policies, and you can make a serious difference by advocating for better policies. Your Free Project chapter can urge local and state representatives to pass and support bills that seek to protect victims, require transparent supply chains, and fund critical anti-trafficking programs, for example.

Find your local and state representatives through government websites. Ask a Government or Public Policy Professor for help if necessary.

Some ideas for action: create petitions and get your fellow students to sign on; draft letters to your representatives and have students send as many as possible; ask to meet with representatives to discuss what you and they can do to institute better procedures and policies.

Need help finding out which policies need support in your state? Check out Polaris Project (<http://www.polarisproject.org/policy-legislation>) and Shared Hope International (<http://sharedhope.org/what-we-do/bring-justice/reportcards/>).



Issue Spotlight:



“Bonded labor, also known as debt bondage and peonage, happens when people give themselves into slavery as security against a loan or when they inherit a debt from a relative. It can be made to look like an employment agreement but one where the worker starts with a debt to repay – usually in brutal conditions – only to find that repayment of the loan is impossible. Then, their enslavement becomes permanent.

Bonded labor is designed to exploit workers. The cyclical process begins with a debt, whether acquired or inherited, that cannot be paid immediately. Then, while the worker labors to repay the debt, the employer continues to add on additional expenses. For instance, a laborer may begin with an initial debt of \$200. While working and unable to leave, this worker needs a shelter, food and water. The employer tacks on \$25 per day to the debt to cover those expenses. Consequently, the employee only grows his debt while continuing to labor for his debtor, and repayment is impossible...

U.S. law prohibits the use of a debt or similar threat of financial harm as a form of coercion for forced labor. The earliest U.S. legislation outlawed bonded labor under its Spanish name, peonage, which surged following the legal emancipation of U.S. slaves in 1865. Following the Civil War, former slaveholders and white Americans needed labor for their workforce, so they found new ways to force African Americans to work. Whites arrested and charged African Americans and then fined them for their various crimes. Former slaves had little money to afford such fines, so white businessmen forced the emancipated slaves to take on debts in exchange for paying them. These former slaves then had a bond over them, and employers exploited the situation so that the debt could never be repaid.”

This article comes from End Slavery Now. For more on this form of modern-day slavery, check out <http://endslaverynow.org/learn/slavery-today/bonded-labor>

How to Make Freedom Ring

“...Generations of Americans of all races and ethnicities have been taught to honor, mythologize and hold sacred slave owners like Washington, Jefferson and Jackson. They are on our currency, but they are perceived, in the popular imagination, as being apart from America’s peculiar institution: The institution is found guilty, but not the perps. Slavery is forced upon a begrudging Washington. All of this to indoctrinate our youth and bathe them in American values free of the inconsistency and hypocrisy of a slave owner demanding his own freedom and liberty...It allows us, by design, to ignore the inconsistencies of the past, and thus only seem natural and right that we would ignore them today.



I think modern thinking about today’s slaveries suffers from similar myopic views and casual denials. We deny our own complicity at the same time as indicting the institution, but the practice exists because we perpetuate it through what we buy and our silence. We deny that today’s perps are the corporations we admire, own stock in or products from, and work for, while holding the low-level slavers as vile and yet not seeing them or the enslaved or the roles enslavement plays in our economic, social and political lives. The slavers have become analogous to the institution of slavery. We, living in and espousing freedom, have become or placed ourselves apart from fault and responsibility for modern day human trafficking. We have compartmentalized our participation in the enslavement and exploitation of others just as we have done for Washington, Jefferson, Jackson, and others.

The inconsistencies past and present must be that with which our youth are indoctrinated: how freedom and liberty are debased, deformed and devalued in a land of enslavement, exploitation and denial of others that can not or will not seen by the public. That is how we make freedom ring. Otherwise we are hypocrites and our ideals become farce. That is our legacy if we do not set the record straight for our youth.”

Find the full blog post, written by HAS Board Member Jason Allen, at <http://www.historiansagainstsavery.org/main/2015/03/how-to-make-freedom-ring/>.

The Free Project is a part of Historians Against Slavery, a group of scholars who bring historical context and scholarship to the modern-day antislavery movement.

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For more information on the Free Project & Historians Against Slavery,
please visit our websites:
<http://www.thefreeproject.org>
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