

THE LIBERATOR

The Free Project Newsletter

Chapter Spotlight

Gardner-Webb Hosts the Rory Tyer Band to Raise Awareness

Challenging Heights is a non-profit that wants to “promote youth and family empowerment and children’s rights to education and freedom from forced labor in Ghana.” Lake Volta in Ghana hosts a large fishing industry that uses children for labor. *Challenging Heights* wants to put an end to child labor such as this. Gardner-Webb University’s trafficking club, *Release the Captives*, partnered to

fundraise with *Challenging Heights*. With help from *Historians Against Slavery*, the campus organized a benefit concert featuring the Rory Tyer band to help support *Challenging Heights*.

This article is summarized from The Free Project website. The following photo is also from the article. To read the article, visit <http://www.thefreeproject.org/2016/02/19/gardener-webb-hosts-the-rory-tyer-band-to-raise-awareness/>



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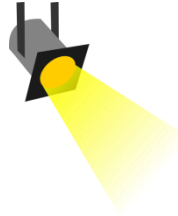
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What Can You Do?

- Read and share red flags for sex trafficking
- Listen to the End Human Trafficking podcast
- Report suspicious magazine sales crews

All these activities can be found at <http://www.endslaverynow.org/act/action-library>

Issue Spotlight



Sex Trafficking

Sex trafficking is a crime when women, men and/or children are forcefully involved in commercial sex acts. In the United States, any minor under the age of 18 engaged in commercial sex acts is automatically considered a victim of sex trafficking under the law. Worldwide, it's estimated that there are 4.5 million victims of sex trafficking.

Worldwide, false promises are ways in which traffickers bait and enslave their victims – both adults and minors. Indigenous populations and those who live in abject poverty are typically economically and politically marginalized; thus, most lack rights and access to basic services such as education which make them particularly vulnerable to sex trafficking. Many times, people from these communities are offered false employment opportunities in major cities. For example, men and boys are sent overseas to work in construction and agriculture but are also forced to perform commercial sex acts. Women and young girls may be offered jobs as models, nannies, waitresses or dancers. Some traffickers operate under the guise of agencies that offer cross-country dating services. However, upon arrival, these individuals are abused, threatened and sold in the sex industry.

Often, traffickers keep victims under their control by saying that they'll be free after they pay their debt. The "debt" is supposedly incurred from the victims' recruitment, transportation, upkeep or even their crude "sale." Thus, sex trafficking may occur within debt bondage/bonded labor. Victims of sex trafficking may eventually perform other functions, in addition to being forced sex workers. Some traffickers use sex trafficking victims to recruit or transport other victims. As a result, when sex trafficking victims are caught, they might be detained and prosecuted for criminal activity (e.g., prostitution). However, a legal charge is only one area of concern. Sex trafficking has devastating consequences for the trafficked individual. Victims may suffer from long-lasting physical and psychological trauma, disease (HIV/AIDS), drug addiction, malnutrition and social ostracism.

To read the complete article, go to <http://www.endslaverynow.org/learn/slavery-today/sex-trafficking>

Their story

Shamere McKenzie

McKenzie's story began in Manhattan, New York where she encountered her trafficker (and pimp). His politeness and ability to initiate stimulating conversations drew McKenzie's attention, and they met frequently. Soon thereafter, McKenzie became attracted to him and started to trust him with more personal information about herself and her financial struggles. At the time, McKenzie was on a student athlete scholarship at St. Johns University but due to an injury, had to find another way to pay off her remaining tuition balance.

The trafficker swiftly offered her a way: dance for clients and move into his apartment to save rent money. Seeing no other alternative and knowing that other girls danced to finance their education, McKenzie agreed. The trafficker bought a dress and shoes for McKenzie and took her to a New Jersey

strip club. At the club, the trafficker assured McKenzie that she only had to dance and would have no physical contact with the customers. Within a couple of hours dancing, McKenzie made \$300.

Excited that she'd be able to stop dancing as soon



Shamere McKenzie

as she made the \$3,000 she needed, McKenzie went with her trafficker to a house in Brooklyn, New York. At the house, McKenzie offered dances to the men but was taken aback when one of the men demanded oral sex. McKenzie began yelling at the man, and the trafficker

immediately pulled her aside and began choking her. McKenzie argued that she was prepared to dance, not engage in sex, and she tried to leave. The trafficker punched her in the face, kicked her and threatened to kill her family if she left.

This is the beginning of an article posted by [endslaverynow.org](http://www.endslaverynow.org). All content was found on the End Slavery Now website. To continue reading Shamere's story, go to <http://www.endslaverynow.org/blog/articles/shamere-mckenzie>

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.

The Liberator is edited by University of Texas at Dallas Free Project student-activist Ruth Varghese

For more information on The Free Project & Historians Against Slavery, please visit our websites:

<http://www.thefreeproject.org>

<http://www.historiansagainstsavery.org>