

P R E S S R E L E A S E



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY GENERAL GLENN FUNK

METROPOLITAN NASHVILLE DAVIDSON COUNTY

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Human Trafficking Intervention Court Announced

(Nashville, TN)—Nashville is set to launch the first of its kind court in Tennessee aimed at addressing the issue of human trafficking. Mayor Megan Barry joined Judge Casey Moreland, District Attorney Glenn Funk and others in announcing the launch of a Human Trafficking Intervention Court in Davidson County.

“Nashville is a compassionate city with a long history of assisting some of our most vulnerable citizens in turning their lives around,” Mayor Barry said. “Human trafficking and prostitution can have a devastating effect on those forced into illegal conduct. This collaborative effort will aid the court system in solving a vast and critical problem.”

The effort will be the first of its kind in the State of Tennessee and the Southeast. Similar courts are already operating in New York and Chicago.

“As we have done so often in the past with drug courts and mental health courts, this new initiative will assist the Davidson County court system with identifying victims and connecting them with services,” Judge Moreland said. “Human trafficking is a crime that inflicts terrible harm on the most vulnerable members of society including children, runaways, immigrants and the poor. When these victims arrive in our courts, even as defendants in criminal cases, it gives us an opportunity to work together to stop this criminal enterprise.”

“Through the combined efforts of the judiciary, prosecutors, defense attorneys, law enforcement, treatment providers, and others, this court will work to restore those

impacted by trafficking and prostitution to safe, law-abiding lives,” District Attorney Funk said. “The aim is make Nashville a safer place for everyone.”

While it is difficult to measure precisely a practice that exists largely in the shadows, we do know that there are approximately 27 million victims of human trafficking in the United States, according to a recent State Department estimate. The TBI estimates there were well over 100 reported cases of minors being trafficked for sex in Nashville in 2014 and a much greater number of adult victims being trafficked that same year.

According to Assistant DA Tammy Meade, who heads the DA’s Grace Empowered prostitution intervention program, “Many more victims continue to go uncounted because they are often driven to the margins of our community.”

Upon completion of the court’s three-phase program, which includes drug treatment and counseling, participants will have their cases dismissed and expunged. Several nonprofit organizations including End Slavery Tennessee, the Sexual Assault Center, The Next Door, Inc. and Thistle Farms will assist the court in providing aftercare.

“The human trafficking court indicates a vital shift, treating victims as victims rather than criminals,” according to Derri Smith, Executive Director of End Slavery Tennessee.

The Davidson County Human Trafficking Intervention Court will begin on February 9, 2016.

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