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Save Lives

Sex Trafficking by Gangs Hits Orange County

A recent article on the front page of the OC Register talked about street gangs expanding sex trafficking in the county. They are drawn by the promise of easy money without the risks that come with dealing drugs or weapons, according to law enforcement officials.



Covenant House, a national organization in multiple cities that houses homeless youth, recently did a study showing that almost a quarter of the homeless youth surveyed had been commercially sexually exploited, either by being trafficked or by having to trade sex for something of value, usually a safe place to stay.

California has the second highest rate in the country of homeless youth who were unsheltered at 79%. This means that of all the homeless youth in California, only 21% have a place to sleep. Orange County has one of the highest percentages in the state of homeless students in our schools. When they turn 18, they are still homeless and most have never been in the foster system. Sherilyn Adams, Board Chair of the California Coalition for Youth (CCY), says, "Homeless teenagers often have similar histories of abuse and neglect as their peers in the foster care system, but often fall through the cracks when referred to the child protection system for services." The number of homeless youth is increasing and services and programs for these youth are decreasing.

Homeless kids are the most likely target of sex traffickers and gangs. These vulnerable kids are forced to endure unimaginable horrors, just to survive. Build Futures takes these kids off the street right away to keep them safe and help them become self-sufficient.

Build Futures meets the needs of the most under served homeless population and addresses the gap in services in Orange County for youth ages 18 to 24. We are their safety net. Build Futures strives to be a source for raising awareness of the prevalence of homeless youth throughout Orange County and the lack of support and services available to them. We hope that you will take some time to learn about the solutions and role you can play in preventing and ending youth homelessness in our community.

We are asking our caring and philanthropic community members for their continued donations. Your generous support will directly impact and save lives. To date, Build Futures has never turned away a youth seeking help in Orange County who wanted to turn their life around and with your

continued support we never will. We have helped over 400 homeless youth in the last three years.

Please give generously today so together we can continue to transform the lives of these kids and give them hope, safety and a future free from homelessness.

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Elizabeth, 18 and homeless

On President's Day last month, Elizabeth called Build Futures from a friend's phone; she had been referred by 211. She was homeless and afraid. Within four hours we had met her, provided safe housing, a phone, seven day bus pass, food cards, hygiene products and basic necessities. With the rise in sex trafficking by gangs in Orange County and the many dangers on the street for a young girl, we believe it is urgent to take these kids off the street immediately.



She had no CA ID so we provided a form and check to go the next day to get her ID. While waiting for her ID, she attended job readiness and computer classes and received interview clothes. She had no high school diploma so we helped her obtain her school transcripts and she enrolled in an adult education course to get her high school diploma in the next four to six months.

Once her ID came she was able to enroll in a workforce program targeted to 18 to 21 year olds which provides short term, paid, on the job training and works to get her a permanent full time or part time job.

Build Futures continues to pay for Elizabeth's housing, bus passes, phone and supportive resources and services while she starts her job, goes to school and begins getting paid. At that point she will be able to pay her own rent and become self-sufficient. After three weeks, Elizabeth said she could not imagine that in three weeks her life could change so completely. She is very excited for her future. Elizabeth has been in and out of shelters, her parent's home or homeless since she was 15.

Build Futures bridges the gap between life on the streets and a life as an independent, contributing member of our community. Without our help and yours, these youth would not have the support, guidance, or financial resources to make the leap from a life of hopelessness to a life filled with hope. We could not do what we do without your ongoing help and continued financial support.

We thank you in advance for your generous, life-saving contributions that enable us, and you, to change lives everyday.

DONATE

Just visit our website: www.BuildFutures.org

Or send a check to:

Build Futures
19036 Stonehurst Lane
Huntington Beach, CA 92648

96% of All Donations Go Directly for those we serve.

DONATE NOW

Build Futures is a non-profit 501c3 organization (90-0629740) whose mission is to take homeless youth ages 18 to 24 off the street and give them housing and support to achieve self-sufficiency. Visit us at www.BuildFutures.org

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