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Human trafficking is the exploitation by force, fraud or coercion of vulnerable people - often immigrants - for forced labor, domestic servitude, or commercial sex operations. Human trafficking has become a multi-billion dollar global crime impacting nations - and neighborhoods - around the world. Florida is one of the highest destination states for women and children trafficked into the United States. In the past 5 years, law enforcement and social service providers have identified multiple cases of human trafficking in the Tampa Bay, Florida area.

{youtube}49IRyOTkVqU|480|295|1{/youtube}

In October 2006, the Clearwater Florida Police Department was awarded a Department of Justice grant to fund the creation of the Clearwater Area Task Force on Human Trafficking (CATFHT). The mission of the task force is to identify and rescue victims, create a coordinated law enforcement system to investigate and prosecute these crimes, and to deliver social, legal and immigration services to human trafficking victims in the Tampa Bay area.

The Task Force will serve as a mechanism for communication and strategic collaboration between law enforcement agencies and service providers; coordinate community resources; promote community awareness of the human trafficking; and train intermediary communities on human trafficking indicators and responses.

For additional information on the Task Force and its operations, to report a suspected case of human trafficking, to obtain additional information about the crime or to arrange for a presentation to your group or agency, contact the Clearwater Police Department at humantrafficking@myclearwater.com, or call Task Force Detective James McBride at (727) 562-4916, or fax (727) 562-4488.

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