

Discovering Trapped Women

Since publishing our educational packet “Modern Slavery: The Secret World of Trafficking of Women,” we have been gathering stories about its use. The idea is that these stories can be useful to others thinking about opening conversations about sex trafficking and considering action. Here’s one of the stories:

A social service agency in the East Harlem section of New York City used the packet in a reflection group which meets monthly. The group is composed of 8-10 staff members, some from a religious order, some with secular backgrounds. The discussion of sex slavery led them into sharing experiences they are having with people they work with in the community. They came to the conclusion that certain situations they were seeing definitely include women who are or have been trafficked for sex purposes.

In addition they discussed a young mother in a family who seems caught as the object of overt sexual behavior by males within the family structure. It raised questions such as, “Where do you go when you see this problem?” “Where can we send the ones that wish to escape?” It seemed that the dialogue in the session raised new concerns about what may be happening in the community.

One question that arose is: How can we open conversations with women in the community who seem trapped but who are guarded in many ways?

These staff members are seeking help for themselves and their clients. They will surely be continuing this conversation among themselves, too.

--Kathleen Kanet