

Rotarians against Child Slavery

Newsletter of the RAG against Child Slavery – See website www.racsrag.org

(This Rotarian Action Group (RAG) is not an agency of, or controlled by, Rotary International)

26 Feb 2013

Issue No 37

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"Our struggle is easier than the one facing the 19th century abolitionists. We do not have to violate laws to help the victims as the early abolitionists did"

(John Miller – Director US State Department)

Editor: Mark Little – Rotary Club of Norwich St Edmund, England

"Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember you have within you the strength, the patience and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world" (Harriet Tubman – escaped slave who returned to help others to freedom)

Editorial

Thank you for the hundreds of messages of support which we have received in the last few weeks since I announced the news of the RI Board's approval of this Action Group as a RAG.

The Group was formed in 2009 with the belief that it would encourage Rotarians and their clubs to tread a path they had never trodden before. We knew this path would be full of obstacles and pitfalls but we also knew that we **had** to take it. Why? because we were convinced that many millions of children would benefit from the support which we knew we could give, to protect them from enslavement and its consequences, to create further obstacles for human traffickers, to defend the rule of law and to uphold the principles of justice for humankind as required by RI's Code of Policies (see Article 8.050.3 on page 5)

Ratification of the Group by the RI Board is a significant fillip for those Rotarians who have already started supporting the work of anti-slavery activists. It will also result in an escalation of projects (facilitated by the Action Group) which will benefit (through prevention, rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration) the millions of young victims and survivors

of human trafficking and forced labour as well as their families.

The Action Group has been given a great responsibility and must do everything in its power to ensure that it continues in the right direction and achieves its vision of a slave free world.

We know that we are at the start of a steep learning curve, not only in operating and managing the Group but also in ensuring that we do not sin against current RAG rules or indeed our own bylaws. To help us in this task we now have a Board of Directors who will strive to make the right decisions to achieve the objectives set down in our Action Plan and to keep us on the straight and narrow. The names of the Directors of this RAG and their contact details are included on the next page.

Since its formation nearly four years ago, Action Group has operated without any funds. All expenditure incurred to date has been personally borne by a few individuals. If we are to proceed in a professional manner, we see no alternative but to levy a subscription to cover all administrative costs such as printing and publicity costs.



The new Board has agreed the new rate of subscriptions and these are also included on the next page.

One of the benefits of being an RI supported RAG is that we are entitled to a booth to publicize our work. At three previous RI Conventions, we have had to submit a fairly detailed application for a booth and then had to await the outcome of a ballot for the privilege, either as a club or district project. In Birmingham we obtained a booth at a cost, but were lucky to obtain free booths at Montreal and Bangkok.

In agreeing to operate a booth, one of the rules is that the booth must be staffed at all times. So, I am now looking for volunteers to help staff the booth which will be entitled "Rotarian Action Group against Child Slavery". The booth will be situated in the House of Friendship which will occupy Pavilions 2 and 3 of the Feira Internacional de Lisboa (FIL).

For now let me know if you are interested in helping with the staffing of the RAG booth. Details of the opening times of the House of Friendship are included on page 5 of this Newsletter.

Mark Little



Directors of the RAG Board

Chairman: Mark Little, RC of Norwich St Edmund, D1080, England

Email address: mark@racsrag.org

Vice Chairman: PDG Bob Christie, RC of Dalkeith, D1020, Scotland

Email address: bob@racsrag.org

Secretary: Harry Payne, RC of Burnham-on-Crouch & Dengie Hundred, D1240, England

Email address: harry@racsrag.org

Treasurer & Webmaster: Stephen Sypula, RC of Stevenage Grange, D1260, England

Email address: Stephen@racsrag.org

Promotions & Communications: Carol Metzker, RC of West Chester Downtown, D7450, USA

Email address: carol@racsrag.org

Legal Advisor: Dorothy Pulsford-Harris, RC of Swaffham, D1080, England

Email address: dorothy@racsrag.org

Coordinator for the Americas: Dick Eisenach, RC of Phoenix 100, D5490, USA

Email address: dick@racsrag.org

Coordinator for Indian Sub-Continent: Girish Mittal, RC of Mumbai Borivali East, D3140, India

Email address: girish@racsrag.org



“So many of our dreams at first seem impossible, then they seem improbable, and then, when we summon the will, they soon become inevitable.”

(Christopher Reeve)

The following are Coordinators (Non-Board Members)

Coordinator for Africa: Arnfinn Solli, RC of Livingstone, D9210, Zambia

Email address: arnfinn@microlink.zm

Coordinator for Oceania: David Black, RC of Dunedin Central, D9980, New Zealand

Email address: dblack@mainlandpoultry.co.nz

Treasurer's message on Subscriptions

These have been set by the Board as follows:

Lifetime membership £80

Annual membership £20 (£5 for 2012/13)

Rotoractors membership £10 but £3 for 2012/13

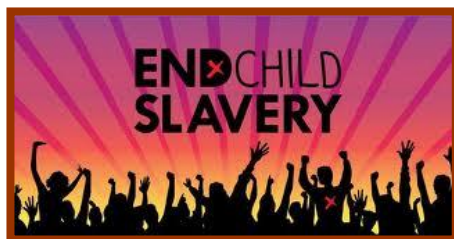
Subscribers to this Newsletter and those who have already signed up to RACS via our website www.racsrag.org will be advised by email of our Bank and PayPal Account details, once these are confirmed.

How Will Your Membership Make the Difference?

Your membership in the Rotarian Action Group Against Child Slavery will go far to spread the message: **END CHILD SLAVERY.**

- Your **subscription/dues** will fund printed materials, and other resources to help raise awareness of this problem and its solutions throughout the Rotary community and wider world.
- Your engaged **participation** as a member will lead to an effective and accountable organization, making sound decisions validated by you at our Annual Meetings.
- Your **support of nominated action group projects** will help change the lives of millions of children who are recovering survivors or still victims.

Sign up [here](#). **Your commitment may be the one that turns the tide.**



Snippets - Fighting trafficking in USA.

News from Pennsylvania by Carol Metzker, RC of West Chester Downtown, District 7450.

The Circle of Friends shared a triumphant moment on 3 Feb. 2013. The Circle—a small group of women Rotarian and Quaker volunteers and female survivors of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation in Pennsylvania, USA—raised their arms in victory on the Philadelphia Art Museum’s steps made famous by the movie “Rocky.” At the survivors’ request, the friends took a trip to the Philadelphia Art Museum and had their photographs taken on the museum steps. The 72 stone steps at the museum’s entrance are a pop culture icon and a symbol of triumph.

Every month for the past two years, the volunteers and residents of Dawn’s Place—a home where survivors can recover, regain dignity and build skills for a positive future in freedom—gather for an activity. While creating quilts, making bead bracelets, sharing international foods, or visiting cultural attractions, volunteers help international survivors practice English and learn American customs, and help all survivors learn to develop healthy relationships. In the past two years, Rotarians of District 7450 have also helped Dawn’s Place with books, furniture, and public transportation passes to get residents to medical appointments, shops, classes and new jobs.



The steps leading to the Philadelphia Art Museum. A photograph of the group of survivors is not shown in order to protect their identities.

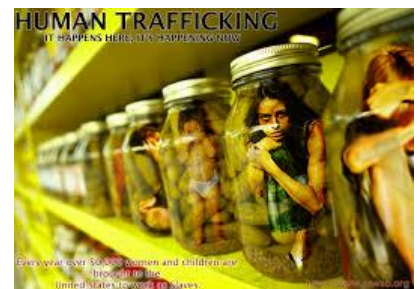
Wyoming poised to become the last State to criminalise human trafficking

Wyoming is on track to become the 50th state to pass legislation against human trafficking, making it illegal to traffic individuals for commercial sex or forced labour. On January 25th, Bill sponsors Representatives Cathy Connolly (D-Laramie) and Keith Gingery (R-Teton) urged their colleagues to support the measure, which increases punishment of traffickers and provides social services for underage victims of commercial sex exploitation.

Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA)

The TVPRA is the backbone of the US government’s approach to human trafficking and modern-day slavery. On 12 February 2013 the Act was introduced by Senator Leahy as an amendment to the Violence Against Women Act (S.47). By passing Senator Leahy’s amendment (93-5) and the Violence Against Women Act (78-22), the Senate demonstrated its commitment to providing resources to help survivors of trafficking begin their lives anew with freedom and dignity. Anti-slavery activists will be hoping that the House of Representatives follows suit.

Editors note: *The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA), initially enacted in 2000 and reauthorized three times with bipartisan support, has greatly increased America’s ability to protect victims, assist survivors, and prosecute traffickers over the last decade*



Quote by Bradley Myles, Polaris Project

“Of course, the fight against human trafficking isn’t only waged on Capitol Hill. It’s on our streets, our neighborhoods, our online communities. All over the United States, when people see the young girl being abused by her pimp and sold for commercial sex or the nanny down the street who is too afraid to leave the house because she’s been threatened by her employers – ordinary citizens are taking action. They are calling the National Human Trafficking Hotline (1-888-373-7888), operated around the clock by Polaris Project”

Editor’s note: *Polaris Project is a leading organization in the global fight against human trafficking and modern-day slavery. Named after the North Star “Polaris” that guided people escaping slavery along the Underground Railroad, Polaris Project is transforming the way that individuals and communities respond to human trafficking, in the U.S. and globally.*



World economics – Is there a connection with Child Slavery ?

(by Malcolm Goodson, President, RC of Norwich St Edmund, District 1080, England)

“What good is our economic and political power if we cannot use it to free slaves? If we cannot choose to stop slavery, how can we say that we are free” ?

(Kevin Bales)

Following on from Hilary King’s article in the last edition, may I pose the question of competitiveness in the global market.

As Europe attempts to find a solution to its ailing gross domestic product and its failing position within the global market, one is prompted to consider whether Europe can operate on a level playing field whilst it maintains working directives and environmental constraints that do not apply within the developing world.

The wholesale movement of production and services to the Far East and India especially, brings with it opportunity for the few and exploitation of the many, for in countries that have few workplace ethics neither provinces nor governments are willing to embrace ‘equality’ in the workplace nor ensure ‘safe’ environments.

One such example of exploitation is the use of foreign labour brought from a poor Asian country to a more developed region to work in IT component production. The country of origin is feudal and the ‘opportunity’ for work is the only hope for many. Their qualification is not to be too literate, must not understand the language of their hosts and must relinquish their passport to their employer for the 3 years whilst they are ‘lawfully employed’. Lawfully, because they hold a passport that shows they are at least 18 years of age. Forged

passports are part of the package and many of the workers are in their early teens.

Their promise of good wages is tempered by their enforced payment for hostel accommodation, transport to and from work, food and agency fees. In effect 50% of their earnings are taken before tax. The alternative is of course, no work in their native country. These ‘children’ will work 12 hours per day with no rest days, they cannot venture away from the hostel without their passport and girls especially would be at risk if found wandering. They are indoctrinated with fear of the ‘outside’ and for most, they have no idea where they are.

Of course governments know of this practice but so long as the paperwork is in order and a consideration is offered to local officials then nobody minds. If the authorities were to intervene, then the factory will move elsewhere thus affecting the local economy.

Controlling the workforce through ignorance, fear and retention of passports may lie at the shallow end of slavery but such practice is a form of slavery because there is no escape until the contract period ends. When one girl was asked what she would do with her wages at the end of 2 years contracted labour, she replied that she wanted to buy a floor for her mother’s home which was a mud floor shack. After returning to her native Cambodia, she was soon back because her mother, a widow, could not

afford to feed her and her siblings. Such are the economics of survival.

The point of this story is to highlight the fact that many of these corporations are owned by western investors, investors concerned with profits not human rights.

Brazil polices its supply chain of imports and currently enjoys significant economic growth. Is it beyond the European Union to do likewise and thereby ensure the quality of life for workers ? After all, reputable employers will be forced to increase costs or reduce profit. Either way this would allow Europe to become more competitive and operate in a more equitable climate. Perhaps this is a political minefield for western politicians who are not beyond the influence of large corporations but without economic intervention from the West, we too will see a continuous decline in our conditions of employment. We see it now with immigrant workers living and sleeping in shifts in shared beds.



Volunteers required to “man” RAG Booth

House of Friendship, RI Convention, Lisbon – 22-26 June 2013

The RI Convention provides an opportunity for Rotarian Action Groups to showcase their work and generate interest among fellow Rotarians. On Friday 21 June we will be setting up the RAG booth in the House of Friendship in readiness for the official opening at 10 am on Saturday 22 June. It is one of the RAG rules that booths must be staffed at all times during the official opening hours.

The opening hours for the Lisbon Convention are as follows:

| Date | Exhibit Hours |
|-------------|-------------------|
| Sat 22 June | 10.00 – 18.00 hrs |
| Sun 23 June | 9.00 - 17.00 hrs |
| Mon 24 June | 9.00 - 18.00 hrs |
| Tue 25 June | 9.00 - 18.00 hrs |
| Wed 26 June | 9.00 - 16.00 hrs |

Initially we would be grateful if you would indicate an interest in helping to staff the Action Group’s booth. Later we will allocate a suggested time slot once we have further details of the programme and speakers.

At the moment the RAG has no funds. One way of helping us in the fight against child slavery is to sponsor printing costs. Does any member know of any Rotarian or firm who would be prepared to print out say 2,000 or so leaflets or cards, as handouts at the Convention ?

RI’s Code of Policies – Article 8.050.3

Rotarians should

- Defend the rule of law and order to preserve the liberty of the individual so that all may enjoy freedom of thought, speech and assembly, freedom from persecution and aggression and freedom from want and fear.
- Uphold the principles of justice for humankind, realizing that these are fundamental and must be worldwide

PLEASE PASS ON THIS NEWSLETTER AND ALSO ENCOURAGE FELLOW ROTARIANS TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND SIGN ON AS A MEMBER. THE WEBSITE IS www.racsrag.org.

If you click [here](#) you will also be able to find out what you can do to help end child slavery

The webmaster is Stephen Sypula, RC of Stevenage Grange, D1260, England

Mark Little, RC of Norwich St Edmund
District 1080, England
26 February 2013



“The mass movement against slavery will only work if every single supporter performs simple acts of preventative abolition”

(Benjamin Skinner)

