

Sara Cochran

Experience and interest in the fight against human trafficking:

- **April, 2011:** Co-founder, Ho Co AGAST (Advocacy Group Against Slavery & Trafficking)

Mission Statement: Ho Co AGAST is an all-volunteer citizen's advocacy group with goals to educate our community about Human Trafficking in the U.S., Maryland, and Howard County; to work for stronger laws to combat it; to prevent individuals from becoming trapped in sexual and labor exploitation; and to support victim service providers.

- **January, 2013 to present:** Lead Organizer for Ho Co AGAST. Among other activities, I
 - Plan and lead monthly public meetings that advance our mission statement goals (see attached January, 2020 agenda)
 - Publish a monthly newsletter to 850 subscribers (see attached January, 2020 newsletter)
 - December, 2017-December 2018: served on the Ho Co Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinating Council
 - December, 2018-November, 2019: served on the planning committee for the 2nd annual Howard County Human Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Conference
 - December, 2012-December, 2019: Organized the publicity, collection and delivery of hundreds of gift bags for AGAST's annual Holiday Gift Bag project. See attached January agenda for 2019 details
 - October, 2019: Submitted written testimony to the Ho Co Council in support of a permanent Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinating Council
 - December, 2015: Gave oral testimony to Howard County's Delegation to the Maryland General Assembly and in March, 2017 to the Ho Co Council in support of the Ho Co Massage Establishments Regulation which passed in April, 2017
 - December, 2013: Gave a Human Trafficking 101 presentation to the Ho Co Council which resulted in the establishment of Howard County's first Human Trafficking Task Force
 - March-December, 2014: Served on the Ho Co Human Trafficking Task Force
 - Attend state and national conferences to keep current on anti-trafficking news, such as the 1.27.20 Maryland Labor Trafficking Symposium, featuring Attorney General Brian Frosh as keynote speaker; the Maryland Child Trafficking Conferences (2018, 2019); the Maryland Victims' Rights Conferences (2017, 2016); and the Governor's Conferences on Combating Human Trafficking (May, 2012-2015)

Why I am interested in serving on the Howard County Human Trafficking Prevention Coordinating Council

Ten years ago, when I learned about the despicable actions of human traffickers, I was saddened and angry and compelled to join other abolitionists fighting this modern-day slavery. Driven by greed and profit, traffickers are enriching themselves by preying on the weak and the marginalized among us such as unsuspecting children and youth, women and men, the homeless, immigrants, and foreign nationals. Traffickers are controlling their victims through threats, deception, and violence, forcing them to perform sex acts or labor for little or no pay, thus robbing them of their human dignity and rights. These unfortunate persons are treated like objects that are bought and sold, used up, and then tossed aside when no longer profitable. Victims of human trafficking suffer such complex physical, psychological and emotional trauma that a lifetime may not be long enough to heal them. This exploitation is not acceptable. Justice demands that human trafficking be eliminated. I am committed to working for a world where every person is free and able to live their lives fully and joyfully.