

# Miami Herald

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## Opinion

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### OPEN MIC

## Save a child; be aware of human trafficking

Human trafficking is an incredibly important issue that demands our attention. National Human Trafficking Prevention Month has come to a close, but we must continue to bring awareness to this issue and how we can each do our part to prevent it.

There are many misconceptions about human trafficking.

While many think these events mostly take place abroad, this is a grave domestic issue.

Florida, for example, ranks third in the nation in terms of the number of calls to the National Human Trafficking Hotline. Most of these calls involve the commercial sexual exploitation of minors.

The average age of a trafficked victim who is first used for commercial sex is between 12-14 years old. These children are vulnerable and often lured into terrifying situations from which they lack the resources to extricate themselves.

As a community, we can all play a role to raising awareness and prevention.

Whether it is paying closer attention to our surroundings or being observant of body language and behaviors (i.e., young girls checking into hotels with no luggage, wearing the same clothing day after day, having multiple visitors at the same room) or by simply downloading an app, like TraffickCam.

TraffickCam allows hotel guests to upload photos of their hotel rooms to a database. Investigators then use the photos to search for other images taken by traffickers in the same location.

These photos may have been used to advertise the victim for sex.

Raising awareness around human trafficking has the power to save thousands of children who have fallen victim to this horrific reality.

- Justin Grosz,  
board member,  
Florida's Children First,  
Fort Lauderdale