

# Protect yourself from sex trafficking

BY SUMMER BARRAZA  
MULTIMEDIA EDITOR

The Portland Metro area is infamous for human trafficking, most notably because of the Shanghai Tunnels, in Chinatown. To add, there are approximately 27,000 documented homeless youth in the area that could potentially be exposed to sex trafficking and abuse.

On Jan. 25, Clackamas Community College teamed up with other organizations to set up a booth in the Bill Brod Community Center to raise awareness, share experiences and offer resources and advice. The booth was covered in pamphlets, flyers and candy, which was inviting to students. Tall cardboard silhouettes of a male and a female with life-saving and life-threatening facts and statistics surrounded the booth.

Amanda Keeler, mother of five and student at CCC, expressed her concern about her 9-year-old daughter who goes to school in the Beaverton school district. A man had recently driven by the girl's school in a white van, attempting to lure children and had done so previously at other schools. No other schools in the district were warned, said Keeler, who majors in human services.

"It was devastating 'cause they're starting to hear about it at their age and they need to be more educated, because some of us aren't very educated as much

as we should be," said Keeler.

After visiting the booth, she said she feels very grateful and more comfortable with the information she has acquired. It will also be put into a personal resource book that human services students make for personal use when they graduate to help others.

Village for One is a non-profit organization that serves both Clackamas and Marion counties, and they participated at the booth.

Ashlee Zell, an intern for the organization, discussed how a lot of homeless youth are the victims of sex trafficking and how they're manipulated into doing such work.

How is that done? Homeless youth, usually from ages 12 to 14, are easy to take advantage of because of their living and financial situations, making them prime targets for pimps and traffickers. They are offered companionship, food, water, shelter and clothes and from being given all of these human necessities, victims feel indebted to these people.

This is also very common for one third of young runaways, as after 48 hours of being away from home, they will be pursued by a pimp. Because of this, Village for One is open to meeting with boys and girls in public places such as McDonald's to discuss their situation

and the best way to get out of it.

Mary Vest, the advocate in charge on campus who works through Clackamas Women's Services and in Barlow Hall 202A, is on campus to make sure that all survivors of assault or abuse receive care and are able to discuss their situations in peace and privacy.

"I'll share with them different protections and rights they have on campus through Title IX, which is a federal law that prohibits discrimination based on sex or gender and encompasses sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking," said Vest.

On her door, she lists her office hours and her cell phone number, which she says she always answers.

*For more information go to:*  
[avillageforone.org](http://avillageforone.org)

*Scan the QR code to watch our video online.*



photo by Jonathan Sanchez



Amanda Keeler acquired information about sex trafficking on Jan. 25 in the Bill Brod Community Center.

**ON THE COVER:** Cover and graphic design by Alexis Wagar. **CORRECTION:** On page 7 of issue 9 we misidentified Alia Parsons as Nicole Hermosillo-Wright.

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