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## New Outreach Campaign Raises Awareness About the Sex Trafficking of Boys

### *Studies Show Exploitation of Boys is Under Reported*

San Diego County District Attorney Summer Stephan and Health and Human Services Director Nick Macchione today announced a new outreach campaign aimed to raising awareness about boys who become victims of human trafficking. The month-long campaign's goal is to broaden the public perception of who is vulnerable to being sexually trafficked. Officials hope that bringing attention to this issue will improve screening, identification, and services for boys who are victims of sex trafficking. The campaign will appear on billboards, bus transit posters, on social media and in public service announcements on radio.

“To truly address the needs of all sex trafficking survivors, we must recognize the reality that the trafficking of boys is more common than the public may realize,” said DA Stephan. “We have a responsibility to protect all children who are being trafficked. This latest outreach is an extension of our work to increase awareness, improve identification and reporting, and develop specialty services for survivors who are boys.”



While state and local data doesn't provide good statistics about the trafficking of boys, national studies demonstrate the seriousness of the problem. A study by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice estimated that as many as [50%](#) of the commercially sexually exploited children in the United States are boys. In 2013, a [study](#) found that the commercial sexual exploitation of boys is vastly under reported.

“The commercial sexual exploitation of children in our region is a hidden crisis and one we are proud to raise up and combat in partnership with the District Attorney's office,” said Nick Macchione, Director of the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency. “Girls are well-known targets, but so are an astonishing number of boys and LGBTQ+ youth. All human trafficking is despicable, and we look forward to this creative campaign saving young boys from tragedy.”

The campaign is being organized by the District Attorney's Office, Health and Human Services Agency (HHS), and Child Welfare Services. The artwork for the campaign was produced by anti-trafficking activist Genice Jacobs with artist Myriam Obin. A new web page, [www.ProtectSanDiegoKids.org](http://www.ProtectSanDiegoKids.org) provides information and resources.

The outreach coincides with a [collaborative human trafficking summit](#) being held on March 4 in partnership with Point Loma Nazarene University, Rotary District 5340, the District Attorney's Office and the San Diego County Office of Education. The event's keynote speaker is Nathan Earl, an anti-trafficking pioneer who leverages more than 20 years of lived and professional experience to help organizations and communities prevent violence against boys and male-identifying individuals.

Visit [www.ProtectSanDiegoKids.org](http://www.ProtectSanDiegoKids.org) for more information. For help for you or someone you love, call 800-344-6000 to reach caring, trained staff who can help.

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**About the San Diego County District Attorney's Office**

*The San Diego County DA's Office prosecutes all felony crimes in the county and misdemeanor crimes committed outside the City of San Diego. The office files about 40,000 criminal cases a year and balances prosecution with numerous crime prevention programs. District Attorney Summer Stephan leads the office of more than 1,000 dedicated employees who pursue fair and equal justice, and support victims daily across San Diego County.*