

# TEEN COURT NEWSLETTER

July 2025

## Shining a Light on Human Trafficking: Awareness and Action

Each year, on July 30, the United Nations recognizes **World Day Against Trafficking in Persons**, a global call to raise awareness about one of the fastest-growing crimes impacting communities across the world, including right here in Maryland. Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery that exploits people for sex or labor through force, fraud, or coercion. According to the latest statistics from the National Human Trafficking Hotline, Maryland reported **368 human trafficking cases in 2023**, and many of these victims were children and teenagers.

Although it can seem like a hidden crisis, it is happening in every state and every type of community. The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children estimates that **1 in 6 endangered runaways** reported in 2023 were likely victims of sex trafficking, and the average age of a child first targeted is **just 12–14 years old**. Traffickers often target vulnerable individuals — especially young people — online, in neighborhoods, and even in schools. The good news is that with increased awareness and education, we can recognize the warning signs and help prevent exploitation.

### What can you do?

- **Learn the signs.** Be alert for sudden changes in behavior, signs of fear, unexplained injuries, or restricted freedom of movement.  
~ *Check out [sharedhope.org/resources](https://sharedhope.org/resources) ~*
- **Trust your instincts.** If something doesn't seem right, speak up.
- **Report suspicions.** If the person is not in immediate danger, call the **National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888**. If the person is in imminent danger, call **911** right away.
- **Share the knowledge.** Talk openly with friends, family, and peers about this issue. Education is a powerful tool for prevention.



As an Ambassador for Shared Hope International, I deeply appreciate the partnership with the Charles County Sheriff's Office Teen Court Program — because we believe every young person has the right to live safely and with dignity. Together, by spreading awareness and taking action, we can help build a community where exploitation has no place.



~ Written by Cerise Woodard  
Ambassador for Shared Hope International & Human Trafficking Prevention Advocate

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Looking for opportunities to expand your knowledge base & skills?

## UPCOMING CLASSES

### **Human Trafficking Awareness -La Plata**

Shared Hope aims to help Adults identify warning signs & how to keep kids safe.

Next Class: Monday, July 07, 2025

Location: CCSO Headquarters Building

### **Human Trafficking Awareness -La Plata**

Shared Hope will help teach Teens & Families how to stay safe from online predators.

Next Class: Tuesday, July 08, 2025

Location: CCSO Headquarters Building

### **Relaxation Management - La Plata**

Prepare for a successful and low stress school year by learning relaxation techniques & exercises.

Next Class: Tuesday, August 12, 2025

Location: CCSO Headquarters Building

Registration is Required  
but Teen Court Classes  
are FREE!

## DID YOU KNOW?

Teen Court is an excellent way for students to earn Community Service Hours for their Senior Portfolios, Student Service Learning Projects, or groups like National Honors Society, even during the summer months. Youth ages 12 to 17 that are interested in volunteering can find the Teen Court calendar and more information on our website.



If you would like to subscribe to the Teen Court Newsletter, use the subject 'Teen Court Newsletter' to one of the contacts below:

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For more information on  
Upcoming Classes & Events,  
check out our website:



Teen Court Website