

PART ONE: THE CRIME

# modern-day slavery

## Human trafficking in Durham

BY JOEL WITTNEBEL  
The Oshawa Express

**K**atie has a lot of stories about her rock bottom. For years, all she wanted was compassion. Another person to hold her hand, wrap their arms around her, caress her cheek and say I love you, say those three words and really mean them. Instead, she was met with men who abused her, raped her and sold her for sex. It indoctrinated her into a life of darkness and twisted her brain into believing that these men, the same men who forced her to have sex for money then took it all away, actually cared for her. The need to be loved eventually was washed out by the need to just end it all. However, even death proved as elusive as love for Katie, just another failure. “It’s really difficult to wake up and be like, ‘shoot, it didn’t work, again,’ and then feeling like a failure and trying again,” she says. “It’s almost like there were invisible bars. I wasn’t locked up, but I was trapped.” Tragically, Katie’s story of human trafficking, one which thankfully has a happy ending, is only one of the hundreds that take place across Canada every year, and the numbers are rising. Since 2010, cases of human trafficking have increased approximately 580 per cent in Canada, from less than 50, to nearly 350, according to figures from Statistics Canada. It’s a startling figure, made even more so by the fact that the crime is widely underreported. Closer to home, Durham is a hotbed for traffickers, a common stop along the Highway 401 corridor which serves as a main artery for pimps looking to cash in on vulnerable women. In 2017, Durham Regional Police dealt with 27 cases of human trafficking, and partnered with other police forces on several others. Throughout the month of September, The Oshawa Express will be taking an indepth look at all aspects of this crime, which along with being widely underreported to police, also flies critically under the radar of the general population. It’s out of sight, out of mind in the worst possible way. Over the next four weeks, these reports will share Katie’s story, whose full name has been withheld by The Express to protect her identity, while also looking at the crime, the causes, the police response, and all of those compassionate people in Durham who are doing everything they can to help women like Katie. The goal of this series is to display the full picture of human trafficking in Durham Region, and to show that not only is this happening across Ontario, but sometimes, right outside your front door.

**T**he real trouble began in Marathon, Ontario. Katie, along with her boyfriend and his friend were on there way out west, a trip that in Katie’s mind was almost meant to be a fresh start. She’d been working as a waitress, but a combination of her drug habit and a lack of showing up for work, led her to being fired. Soon after, her boyfriend offered to take her out west. “I thought finally, something good is happening for me, this is really exciting,” she says. She was 24, and the man who she thought was her boyfriend, she’d met in a trap house -- a house for drug users, dealers and their orbit of friends to hang out, use, and hide from society. This man had spotted her across the room, almost like a fairy tale beginning. Except those enticing eyes weren’t pulling her into a fairy tale, but pulling her into a nightmare. This moment was the beginning, the start of Katie’s path to being trafficked. It’s known in human trafficking circles as luring. “He came and he looked at me and he said, ‘What are you doing here? Come into my room, come with me,’” she recalls. “I was wearing next to nothing and he kept eye-contact. He wasn’t checking me out or looking at my body, he was asking me questions and talking to me like I was a human being, and I hadn’t experienced that in a very long time.” For several years, Katie had already been in and out of working in massage parlours in her hometown of Scarborough, the kind where a girl can make a little bit of extra money if she’s willing to do a little extra. She’d been doing it on and off since she was 14, fuelled by a bad drug habit. However, after her mother passed away when Katie was 20-years-old, the trauma was too large. Her family tried to help; her father, her three brothers, they all tried to help Katie get off the path she was following. “I couldn’t stop, it didn’t matter who you were, what you were trying to give me, what kind of help you were providing. I was so depressed and

she says. And while she may not have been able to do that for herself, that part of her brain that provides the good thoughts, the happy thoughts, the thoughts that would have told her she was strong, confident, and beautiful, all those parts were shut off. The boyfriend became those thoughts. “He took care of me, he bought me stuff, he took me for dinner, he introduced me to his friends, he didn’t ask for anything, he didn’t try to sleep with me, (he was) very affectionate,” Katie says. “All I wanted my whole life was to be loved.” For those working in the field of human trafficking and assisting the survivors, this is the second stage in the trajectory that eventually leads to a woman being trafficked; it’s called grooming. The trip out west was a pivotal point in Katie’s relationship, and her tragic introduction into the seedy world of human trafficking. In Marathon, their car was pulled over by police with weed smoke billowing out the windows, and all three were arrested. When the officers asked her to identify the men she was with, Katie complied. It was then that things took a left turn. “I said one of them was my boyfriend and the other one is his friend,” she says. What was the boyfriend’s name? “I told him the name he’d given me and it turned out that wasn’t his name,” she says. “I got a feeling in my stomach that was like, oh shit.” The officers questioned her story, telling her that the men had said she was just a stripper they’d picked up somewhere along the road. The sinking feeling returned again, two sides of her brain battling to try and comprehend how this man who purported to love her, could do such a thing. However, a bigger part of her brain wanted to trust him. “I knew something wasn’t right, but at the same time, this guy had taken such good care of me that I was almost like, who cares?” she says. “I smiled and went along with it.” Katie even admitted the drugs were hers, but in the end, the group was released, and the boyfriend’s friend ended up taking all the rap for the drug charges. The part of her brain that wanted to believe that everything was going to be okay grasped at this fact, lunging at it like a drowning person at a life preserver, these men really were her friends. Practically the second they left the station, the mood in the car turned sour, and Katie’s world moved from the honeymoon (grooming) stage, into the next realm of trafficking; coercion. Being arrested clearly hadn’t been part of the boyfriend’s plan, but it may have worked out better than he could have imagined, as Katie’s vulnerability was now paired with another, more powerful emotion, guilt. “Now they could manipulate me,” she recalls. “I felt save, I felt loved, I felt appreciated, and at this point he knew that and he took advantage of it. He said you’re going to have to work now, you’re going to have to pay for (his friend’s) lawyer, you’re going to have to pay for this and that. So I said okay.”

traumatized from my mom passing that I wasn’t ready,” she says. When she met the boyfriend, a drug dealer, the timing was right in all the wrong ways. Katie’s vulnerability was on full display. In other words, a perfect target for a trafficker. “He said all the right things. I had very low self-esteem, very low self-worth. I didn’t like myself. So pretty much anybody who would show me love or affection, I would just go with it because I didn’t know how to do that for myself,”

I was so  
depressed  
and tramatized

See KATIE Page 20



## KATIE From Page 19

Things moved very quickly after that. When they arrived at their final destination, Calgary, their first stop was to a lingerie store to buy Katie “work outfits”. The second stop, a hotel, where her picture was taken, her ad was posted, and her time in hell began.

“They made me work day and night, on my period, (they controlled) what I could eat, when I could eat, when I could sleep, (for) how long,” she recalls. “I remember waking up sometimes super

early in the morning to them yelling at me, saying we missed the morning rush, it’s all your fault, now you have to work all day and all night.”

For an entire month, they moved Katie from hotel room to hotel room, she saw client after client, with all the money going back to the boyfriend, who would usually be lingering somewhere nearby.

Her drug habit kept her dependent as the boyfriend also controlled her intake. Whether it was cocaine, meth, heroine, she took whatever she could get, and it just became another tool for her manipulation. A manipulation that would wrap her brain into a gordian knot, halting any ability to really grasp and think about her reality.

“He was trying to ween me off drugs, so he’d always praise himself when I’d go a day without using,” she says. “I’d relapse and he’d say you’re a no-good junkie whore, and then after I’d start crying he’d hold me and say I love you, I’m sorry, I just want you to get better.”

“He’d really mess with my brain,” she says. “My brain was rewired so whatever he said, that’s how it was.”

After a while, she began to get vocal. She complained, she begged, she wanted to go home. With the birthday of her deceased mother approaching, Katie used it as a crutch to stand on and miraculously was allowed to go home to Toronto, ending her nightmarish visit to Alberta.

Even after it all, after being forced to sleep with other men for his benefit, Katie felt compelled to protect him.

“When we finally came back to Toronto, I was watching the news and the guy who I thought was my boyfriend, his face and his name came up on CP24, wanted

for a whole slew of different things, kidnapping, forcible confinement, guns, drugs,” she says. “But my instinct was to protect him and care for him, because even though he treated me like shit, he still took better care of me than anyone ever has.”

Once again, that side of her brain won out, and she hid him in her apartment. That was, until he turned himself into the police.

However, Katie’s story doesn’t end there, as not long after, she would return to the sex trade voluntarily.

But we’ll get to that.

For Laura Burch, the shelter services manager at Bethesda House, a Durham Region women’s shelter that helps many survivors of human trafficking and women fleeing abuse, despite the trauma and the nightmarish circumstances of human trafficking, many women return to the sex trade voluntarily after getting out. Many times, it comes down to money.

“There’s usually a factor that brings them into this world, into the sex trade, whether it’s financial, (or) they have a kid to feed,” Burch says. “The question is, are they keeping their money?”

For women like Katie, they rarely see the money that comes from their client’s pockets, and the amounts they are actually making can be staggering, earning as much as \$5,000 a week for their traffickers.

“A lot of young girls, when they come out and they’re rescued out of it, they talk about the financial aspect and they have no concept of how much money they’re making because it comes and goes and it’s so quick, the exchange, and then it’s taken,” Burch says.

For Katie, she didn’t see a penny of the money exchanged for her.

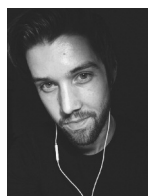
“They kept all the money,” she says. “After every client, they’d come in, take the money and go back out. It was awful.”

It’s a staggering demand, one that Burch says needs to be the focus if there is ever going to be an elimination of stories like Katie’s from ever happening again.

“If there was no need by men, then there would be no demand. I want to say it’s kind of simple, we need to start focusing on the Johns,” Burch says.

*In Part 2 of The Express’s series on human trafficking, we delve into the efforts of the Durham Police to combat this crime and go undercover with the DRPS Human Trafficking Unit on a sting operation targeting men trying to purchase sex with underage women.*

## Getting the story right



By Joel Witnebel  
The Oshawa Express

*I sipped my coffee on the patio of the Oshawa cafe, waiting for Katie to arrive.*

*My heart was restless, sliding in and out from beating incessantly to calm as I sipped from the paper cup of black caffeine.*

*I knew the interview was going to be heavy. I knew that the things I was asking Katie to relive had the risk of re-traumatizing a woman who had already been through so much.*

*Flipping through my notebook, I checked my watch, picked up my coffee cup and stepped inside. I looked around, and spotted a woman sitting in an armchair checking her cell phone. She was thin, well-dressed, with nice long hair hanging down her back. Katie.*

*She stood up with a wide smile on her face and shook my hand. Her grip was strong and her smile had a nice way of turning up the corners of her eyes, allowing the light in and shining back like tiny diamonds.*

*There was something else in those eyes as well, something that I couldn’t pinpoint at first.*

*We moved to the back of the coffee shop and sat at a large table. I took a deep breath, and we started talking.*

*The big question for me was, how do you even broach this topic? I knew what she’d been through, but I needed the details, the details that generally aren’t talked about.*

*I spent the first bit of the interview asking about her role now, where she works with other survivors of human trafficking, helping them to reconcile their own pasts and begin to love themselves.*

*As she talked, I tried to reconcile what I saw in the woman before me with what I knew.*

*It was then that I realized what it was that stood in her eyes. It was there every time she glanced at me to answer a question. Strength.*

*When we finally got into the gritty details of her story, there were several times where I had to take a deep breath. There were times when I was even close to tears.*

*As a reporter, you try and distance yourself from the*

*story. Your job is to get the information, collaborate the story, and write it in an engaging and informative way.*

*However, with a story like this, it can be extremely difficult. I’m only human.*

*Learning that there are people out in the world who would do such unforgivable things to a woman like Katie is sometimes hard to grasp. It turns your thoughts black and tarnishes your view of human beings with a black tar that is sometimes hard to wipe out of your mind.*

*Yet, her story also motivated me. I knew that I had to get it right. I knew that telling this story would have the potential to help others. At the very least, it would illustrate to the Durham community how awful this crime is, and perhaps motivate others to learn about how prevalent this is, and bring awareness to this crime.*

*Over the next three parts of this story, I will tell more of Katie’s story, which, honestly, gets worse before it gets better.*

*With this first column, I simply want to thank Katie for taking the time and the energy to share her story with me, and for trusting me to tell it the right way.*

## PART TWO: THE FIGHT

# modern-day slavery

## DRPS Sting operation

BY JOEL WITNEBEL  
The Oshawa Express

*This is the second in a four part series on human trafficking. In Part 1, The Oshawa Express introduced readers to Katie, a human trafficking survivor who agreed to share her story in order to help raise awareness about this growing crime.*

*For Part 2, The Express travels with the DRPS Human Trafficking Unit as they go undercover on a sting operation. We dive deep into the insidious nature of human trafficking and how police are evolving their tactics and their compassion to better protect and serve the trafficked survivors.*

**T**he street is alive with cars grinding through traffic, people waiting for the bus, or out for an afternoon walk. A seven-storey office tower stands tall across the street, filled with workers sitting at computers, filling out documents or attending meetings, perhaps even taking a break for a late lunch.

In the hotel next door, a man is looking to buy sex.

Across the road, parked on the edge of a parking lot, behind a stand of trees, sits Acting Det. Dave Davies with the Durham Regional Police Human Trafficking Unit.

He's leaned back in the driver's seat, a cell phone in his lap, a radio in one hand, the cord snaking down to the console installed between the seats. A recent flurry of chatter from his other officers has just gone silent.

Something is about to happen.

This is Project Chestermere

in action and the man trying to buy sex in the hotel across the road has no idea he's about to come face to face with a undercover Durham police officer. The Oshawa Express joined the Human Trafficking unit for the sting operation to get a closer look at how the DRPS is battling the growing presence of traffickers in Durham. Chestermere marked a new milestone for DRPS, a new weapon in its arsenal against traffickers as it unleashed its first-ever John sweep. In particular, the focus is on the unsettling growth in appetite among Johns for younger and younger women.

It surprises even Davies, a 19-year veteran of the DRPS who has spent years working with the drug squad and organized crime team, and the truth of what's happening across Durham and Ontario is sometimes hard for officers to swallow.

"It hits home," he says while juggling discussions on

# “ At the end of the day, we’re trying to protect our young children in the region ”

Acting Det. **Dave Davies**  
Durham Regional Police Human Trafficking Unit

his cell and replying to radio chatter. “My guys have families and kids.”

But the work of the unit, the direct impact it can have on girls coerced into the sex trade, can sometimes shine a light that nearly dispels that dark shadow.

“It’s something tangible, it seems they are doing something to help the problem,” Davies says of their work.

It’s a problem that is growing too. Between 2009 and 2016, there were 865 victims of human trafficking, according to Statistics Canada police report data, 95 per cent of whom were female. A large proportion of those women, 72 per cent, were under the age of 25, and 26 per cent were under the age of 18.

Two thirds of human trafficking offences reported to police in Canada were in Ontario.

The incessant and greedy demand for this black market sex is seen immediately at the start of the operation. Before getting into the vehicle and heading off for the hotel, Davies sat us down in a room within the belly of the downtown DRPS detachment, and beneath bright fluorescent lights, he explained what was about to happen.

Project Chestermere is already several days in, he explains, with previous sting operations in Whitby, Pickering and Peterborough. Project Chestermere also has the specific aim of targeting men looking to purchase sex from underage girls. It marks the first time that the Durham Regional Police are running such an operation with the target aimed at the Johns.

The results were staggering. In three previous nights, 10 men had been arrested for trying to purchase sex with an

underage girl, resulting in 41 charges.

“At the end of the day we’re trying to protect our young children in the region,” he says. “The region is not going to tolerate this and it’s got to stop.”

The ad they will be posting for the night will appear on LeoList, a free classifieds website, the personals section of which has become the host for the virus that is human trafficking.

As Davies had said, the target for Chestermere is men looking to purchase sex with underage girls. For that reason, the DRPS needs to walk a fine line to ensure the arrests will stand up in court. In order to do that, the potential John that falls into their orbit is given several off-ramps to potentially save being arrested, charged and their name placed on the sex-offender registry if convicted.

Davies explains that the ad will be posted as an of-age woman, but when initial contact is made with an interested John, it will be explained that the girl is a little bit younger than listed in the ad. This is off-ramp number one.

“We want to give them the opportunity to say this is not okay,” Davies says.

If the opportunity is not taken, the “date” proceeds and the John is provided the address and hotel number for where the girl is said to be waiting for him. Officers tell the man to bring a drink, usually an Ice-Capp or something for the girl to drink. This time it’s a bottle of water. It’s simply a marker to make it easier for officers in the area to identify their target when he arrives at the hotel.

When the man eventually steps into the hotel room, he’s met with the undercover DRPS officer, who is posing as a madam (female pimp). This is off-ramp

number two. The madam explains once again that the girl is underage, and asks if he still wants to go through with it.

If the man agrees, as 10 men already had in the previous nights of Project Chestermere, the madam leaves to retrieve the girl. However, there is no girl, and it’s DRPS officers that return to the room.

It’s hard to say how busy the afternoon will be, but if the previous nights are any indication, it sadly won’t take long for the Johns to come out of the digital woodwork.

Davies says throughout Chestermere’s earlier nights, officers had exchanged messages with approximately 400 different Johns who responded to the ad. It takes merely seconds for the responses to start popping up after our ad is posted. The hotel is booked and it’s time to go.

When Davies pushes the car into park in the lot across the street, only the top of the hotel is visible over the trees. Radio chatter from his other officers explains that they believe a pimp is patrolling the hallways. It’s not uncommon for these men to approach undercover officers, even try and recruit them.

As messages with a John progress to the potential launch point, Davies and his men go through a final safety briefing, all of them again getting on the same page as things move forward.

Less than two hours after the fake ad was posted, a man is on his way. A 39-year-old mixed-race asian male. According to Stats Can data, 81 per cent of those accused in human trafficking cases in Canada are men.

The minutes tick by as the occasional radio chatter is punctuated by tense

moments of silence. A few cars come and go from the lot. Not long after, a man approaches the front doors.

“There’s nothing in his hands,” a voice on the radio states. No water bottle, it’s not their man.

The tense silence resumes. A few minutes later, a car pulls into the back of the lot. A man, appearing to be in his late 40s, is using a cellphone in the front seat. The man stays in the car for several minutes.

When he steps out, the officer on the radio describes a man wearing a blue sweater, black pants with mirrored sunglasses, he’s got a “quaff of weatherman hair.” He’s carrying a water bottle and something else in a white plastic bag.

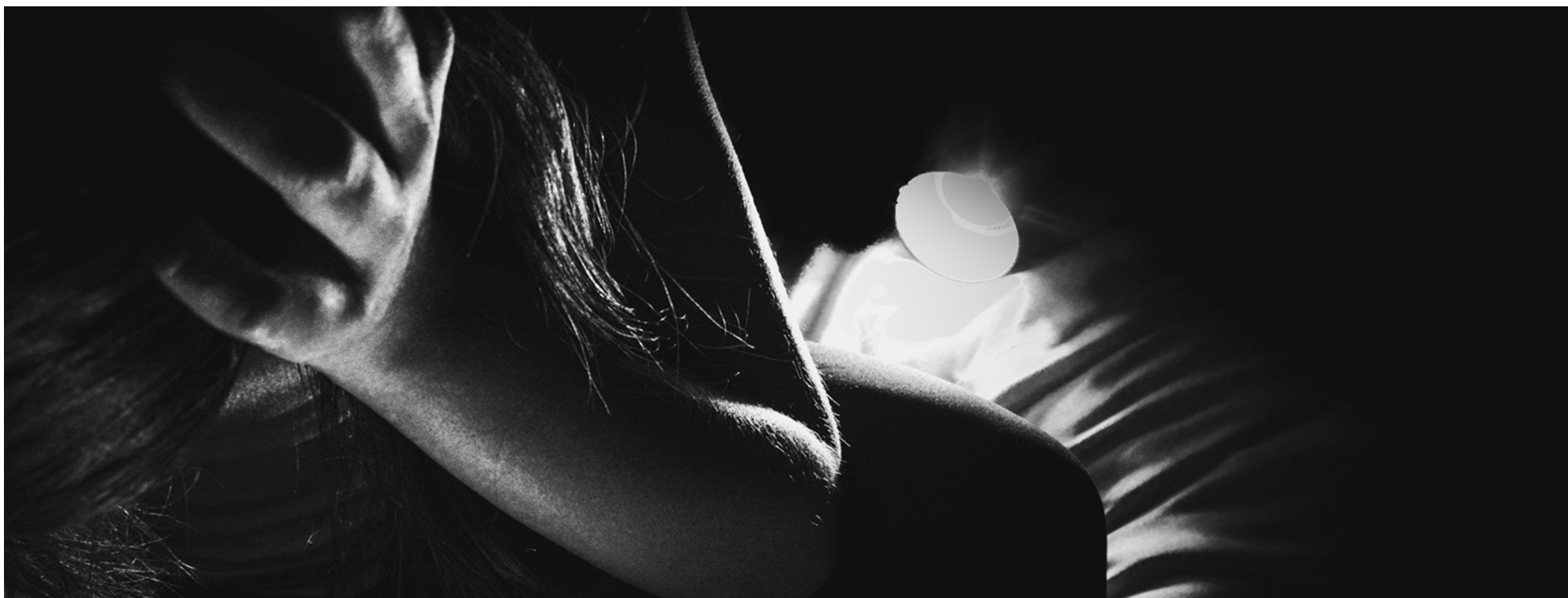
This is all relayed to Davies across the road, and when the man steps through the front doors of the hotel a few minutes later all radios go silent.

It’s a tense few moments. The energy in the car is practically electric with anticipation.

**F**or those working in the field of human trafficking, working to stop men like those who just walked into the hotel, and work to repair the damage that has been done to women by them, what the DRPS are doing with Project Chestermere is exactly the right path.

“I think if they continually went after the men who are going after the young girls, then you would see some change,” says Laura Burch, the shelter services manager with Bethesda House, a women’s shelter in Durham Region that helps house and treat survivors of human

See **TRAFFICKING** Page 20





## TRAFFICKING From Page 19

trafficking. Burch says when it comes to these men, few concessions should be given.

"When you have somebody who is trying to purchase sex from somebody that they know is underage then I think the entrapment piece doesn't really matter, because they are making a choice then with the information," she says. "People's wives need to know what their husbands are doing because it's everyone. It's doctors, it's lawyers, it's judges."

The radio chatters back to life, the man has reappeared, stepping out the front door.

He puts the plastic bag in his trunk and gets back in his car.

"He had a change of heart when he got in there," Davies says.

Others did not. In two weeks of Project Chestermere, 11 men were arrested, all within Durham Region. All of them face a combined 45 charges, including sexual exploitation, obtaining sexual services for consideration and luring a child.

For police, it's a small dent in a problem that proves slippery and consistent across Durham. Since 2014, the DRPS Human Trafficking Unit has been putting dedicated work into disrupting the sale and movement of women for sex. Over the last four years, the need for work like Project Chestermere has only increased.

"Our focus is definitely on the person who is controlling the victim, that's where all our energy and time goes into," says Det./Sgt. Ryan Connolly, the head of the DRPS unit.

However, one of the things the DRPS also needs to be cognizant of is the other side of the equation. Once these pimps and Johns are off the street, what happens with the women who are left scarred and sometimes broken by their experiences in trade?

For that reason, the DRPS works in close contact with the Victims Services of Durham Region, sometimes even bringing them out on

operations in order to interact with women in the sex trade. The Human Trafficking Unit is also part of a large contingent of approximately 30 different agencies from across Durham that form the Human Trafficking Coalition of Durham Region. It's a partnership that has proved invaluable for the DRPS.

"We have to push the envelope a bit, especially in this area," Connolly says.

Connolly has also ensured to draw expertise in his team from across different aspects of the DRPS arsenal, with officer backgrounds that include drug investigations, fraud, guns and gang investigations. It's a laundry list of skills that can help nab traffickers for any number of the offences they may be involved in.

"We just want to make sure that as investigators we look at the big picture and we can have a diverse team with a lot of experience that is very well-versed in investigating all those different offences," Connolly says.

The DRPS unit is also heavily involved in the education side of things, a priority identified when the unit was first created. And over the last three years, that education mandate has continued to grow. In 2017, DRPS officers conducted 55 public presentations and spoke with more than 2,600 Grade 9 girls across the region about the dangers and the warning signs of human trafficking.

For those in the field, this early education aspect is a key component to fighting human trafficking. At a young age, children need to be taught self-worth, empowerment, and the different levels of consent.

"There's not enough people educating the public," Burch says. "It needs to be talked about in schools, there needs to be a class on it or something."

However, until these classes and lessons become commonplace, more and more people will continue to be shocked when they learn

the frightening truth that human trafficking is happening right outside their doors, where they drive to work, where they shop.

For Oshawa MPP Jennifer French, the reality is staggering, and after spending an entire night with the DRPS human trafficking unit, her perspective has been changed forever. Since that time, French has advocated at Queen's Park to raise awareness about the nature of human trafficking.

"It was a real gut check to realize that just our normal hotels, not the seedy underbelly hotels, just the normal hotels, that this is going on all-day, everyday," she says. "I will carry the experience with me forever, and I am definitely motivated to continue, especially because this is our community."

Durham, Ontario, regardless of the chosen area, human trafficking continues to happen here more than it does anywhere else in the province. In fact, in 2016, the rate of human trafficking offences in Ontario was one and a half times the national average.

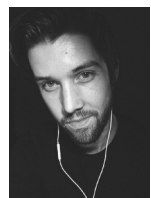
According to Set Free Durham, an organization that looks to raise awareness about human trafficking, 41 girls have been lured into human trafficking in the last six months.

However, the DRPS is battling back. So far in 2018, the police have helped 51 victims of human trafficking, 21 of whom were under the age of 18.

But as it turns out, getting them out is only half the battle.

*In Part 3 of this series on human trafficking, The Oshawa Express returns to Katie's story, a nightmare that continued even after the terrible events of her trip out west that were detailed in Part 1. Part 3 also examines the trauma and lingering impacts of being coerced into the sex trade, and how sometimes, the hardest battles for survivors can come long after they've escaped their traffickers grasp.*

## The fight - making sure word spreads on this crime



By Joel Wittebel  
The Oshawa Express

"My soul doesn't know how to file all of it, it is a lot."

Oshawa's MPP Jennifer French said this to me when I sat down to talk with her about her experience with the DRPS Human Trafficking Unit.

My behind the scenes look at the unit's work was still a few weeks away, and while slightly different than what French experienced, it was still an eye-opening look into what Durham officers deal with on a regular basis while trying to battle this insidious crime.

For me, it was the dichotomy that hit home the hardest.

I attempted to portray this part of the story right in the introduction. All around the hotel there were people going about their daily lives, cars driving home from work or running errands, people walking down

the street, many on their cell phones, perhaps texting friends about their plans for their night or some such thing. Then right next door, an office building filled with workers going about their days. All of this going on while right behind a bit of brick and glass, a man is trying to buy sex with an underage girl.

It's a gut punch to think about how this has been going on almost right beneath everyone's noses, and people just don't know, or choose not to think about it. However, with the expansion of the Internet, the proliferation of the crime has just increased right along with it.

"I think this has always been in our backyard, but it's just easier now," says Acting Det. Dave Davies.

While the DRPS unit does work on raising awareness about human trafficking, during the hours that I spent with them, their focus was completely on the job.

The coordination, the back and forth, and the effort of all these officers was a flurry of movement.

Along with Davies, I crossed paths, either in per-

son or listening via radio, with a couple of other members of the unit, all of whom seemed to share the same ideals as Davies, that the priority was getting these men off the streets, and driving a stake into the growing desire for underage girls.

And the desire is there. While getting briefed at the DRPS station before heading out, the officers posted the ad for the "girl" and received responses within seconds. Seconds!

There are many words one can use to describe the men on the other end of those messages, but criminals is probably the best way.

The experience with the unit was extremely valuable in telling this second part of the series, and only illustrated for me further that there is a serious need to get the word out in a big way about this crime in Durham.

## PART THREE: THE SURVIVORS

# modern-day slavery

## Surviving the heinous crimes

BY JOEL WITTNEBEL  
The Oshawa Express

*This is the third in a four-part series on human trafficking. Through the first two parts, The Oshawa Express has shared the story of Katie, a survivor of human trafficking who agreed to share her story in order to help illustrate the insidious nature of this crime and also to help raise awareness about the growing issue. In Part 2, The Express went undercover with the DRPS human trafficking unit on a sting operation targeting Johns seeking sex with underage girls. It offered a behind the scenes look at what the police are doing to battle this crime on the street. The Express also detailed the educational and message-spread-*

*ing arms of the DRPS Human Trafficking Unit to show how they are trying to educate Durham and get the word out about this heinous crime.*

*In Part 3, we take an in-depth look at what it takes to get out of the sex trade, the nightmarish court process that survivors must go through if they want to seek justice against their traffickers, and we speak with those who know best about the levels of trauma that come with being sold for sex for any period of time.*

**T**here were too many drugs in her system, she knew it. Her body was raked with seizures and Katie turned to the man she was with, a familiar client and asked for help. She needed to go to the hospital, she said.

He had another solution.

"He just said, if I have sex with you that will take your mind off of it, and then he raped me," she recalls. "That was kind of a constant thing."

It was 2014, and her nightmarish trip to Calgary with her former "boyfriend" was long behind her. However, a brutal relapse had forced Katie back into the sex trade. The man she was with was one she had seen before, but things had started to go from bad to bottom of the basement terrible. Bad drugs, bad tempers and coercion mixed and once again, Katie was trapped in a situation she saw no way out of.

"The first couple times that I saw him it went okay," she says. "But then I got very sick and I didn't understand because he told me it was cocaine, even though I knew it wasn't."

"I saw his temper, I saw that kind of dark side to him, but I was too afraid," she says. "When he would go to work and I was left in the condo, could I have left? Absolutely, but I felt trapped, I felt scared, I felt like if I leave here, he knows

where I live, he's going to come and kill me, and that fear is real."

However, in the summer of 2014, something started to change in Katie's mind. The overdoses, the three-day long hallucinations, the rape, it was all too much.

"Bottom line, doing what I was doing, washing my body in bleach, I had enough, I was ashamed of the person I was, I hated the person I was, I didn't want to live that way anymore."

So, she booked herself a bed in a treatment centre, and despite having to wait a few months to get in, she eventually made it in September of 2014.

"I graduated from the treatment centre feeling amazing," she recalls. "Never felt better, and literally my first stop after going home, I think I went within a week, was to the police station."

Her newfound sense of strength and confidence felt as thick and tough as a brick wall as she marched into the station.

"I remember feeling empowered and feeling like I'm doing the right thing, and (the police) reassured me," she says. "I went in there, I am woman, here me roar."

However, that brick wall almost immediately started to crumble as she shared the details of what she'd been through, the names of her traffickers and all the gory details. She quickly learned it was too soon.

"I was not ready. As soon as I walked out of that police station I wanted to die, all of them knew where I lived, I was in a relationship and I was worried for him," she says.

It was also clear that the traffickers still had a hold on her. It was not just reliving the complicated trauma that had snuffed out her newfound confidence, but the entire act felt like betrayal.

"I betrayed them, I betrayed this guy who was my boyfriend and I actually felt guilty," she says.

It was exactly 86 days after treatment when Katie relapsed and she tried to kill herself.

She woke up in hospital in a five-point restraint with two police officers standing guard outside her door. Once again she was left with one thought, "it didn't work."

It was January 2015.

Her sobriety was touch and go after that. For three months, Katie consistently relapsed.

"Their trauma is more complicated, because these women generally often think that their pimp is their boyfriend, because that's usually how it starts. So you could look at it from a domestic perspective," says Laura Burch, the shelter services manager at Bethesda House, a women's shelter in Durham Region that



supports survivors of human trafficking.

And in Katie's case, nobody would know it better than Burch, who was her support worker when Burch was with the Vicim Services of Durham Region when Katie got sober once again in April of 2015.

While Katie never stayed at Bethesda House where Burch works now, the home is funded for 18 beds, but will generally use the space they have to squeeze more women in if they need to.

While victims of human trafficking are a small portion of the clientele who come through the doors, Burch says they generally stay longer, and will receive the full range of services offered to help with their trauma and recovery.

However, to start, it's all about basic needs, and the first thing many of them want to do when they arrive; sleep.

"We'll try to give them their own room, just because they've been through so much, we don't want to overwhelm them with other people and what they have going on and they spend a lot of time just sleeping," Burch says.

For Katie, it was just too hard to do anything else.

"After all this happened I physically couldn't get out of bed. I was depressed, anxiety, (before) I could not leave my house unless I was high. Now, I'm sober and dealing with all this crap," Katie says.

Having someone there for her was critical. Whether it was something small, like talking through getting out of bed for a glass of water, or something much bigger, Katie says Burch was there all the time, just a phone call away.

"She got me to break my meth pipe because I

didn't want to smoke anymore but I couldn't do it alone. She stuck by me on the phone, at midnight, to help me," she says. "She believed in me."

At Bethesda House, Burch says that help comes in the form of empowerment. A small helping hand that can start the long and painful process of rewiring a brain that has been knotted with trauma, making the smallest of decisions almost impossible.

"You'll ask them what they want to eat and they just can't make a decision, they just don't know," Burch says.

To help with that, Burch says Bethesda House has front line councillors in the house, and a mental health worker with Durham Mental Health Services who visits once a week.

"It's always going to be about offering options, empowerment, and once they become comfortable and can trust you, they can start making decisions and feel better about themselves," Burch says.

"Healthy people loved me until I started to love myself," Katie says. "Until I at least started to like myself, or at least until I started to see a little glimmer of light and help because to me everything was dark."

The court process didn't help either.

"Going through court, which took almost two years, was almost worse in some ways than the actual experience," Katie says.

After getting sober in April 2015, Katie went through various court dates, preliminary trials and trial for the cases involving the boyfriend and his friend who trafficked her out west, and the client who abused her, and kept her confined

in his apartment.

"It's not a fun experience for anyone to go through, let alone a victim of human trafficking because they have to relive everything that happened," says Det./Sgt. Ryan Connolly, the head of the Durham Regional Police Human Trafficking Unit. "They have to discuss it on the stand in an open courtroom, and they have to be cross-examined by a defence lawyer who is extremely well-trained in cross examination and that's their job, to discredit the victim."

Going in, Katie knew it was going to be rough, she knew it was going to be revealing and humiliating, and she knew she would have to face her trafficker once again. Of course, there was a screen between the two of them, but knowing that he was in the same room was enough to be a trigger. However, even knowing all of this, she felt she still wasn't prepared for how brutal the court process was going to be.

"There was a lot of sugar coating, and I think it was to protect me," she says. "Sitting up on that stand in the trial, being called a liar, being told you made all this up, you

See TRIAL Page 20

“

Sitting up on that stand, being called a liar, being told you made this up, you enjoyed it... it was too much and my brain shut down...

”

## TRIAL From Page 19

enjoyed it, you're a whore, all these things happening that it was too much and my brain shut down and I disassociated," she says.

For that reason, the crown attorneys pulled her rights to continue and saved her from further trauma.

In the end, in the case of her boyfriend, he's actually still wanted by police, and no longer believed to be in Canada. The case against his friend never made it to trial. The client who kept her confined was given a six month peace bond and acquitted.

In human trafficking cases, this result is more common than many people think.

According to information from the Integrated Criminal Court Survey, in completed human trafficking cases where human trafficking was the most serious offence, 60 per cent of cases resulted in a decision of stayed or withdrawn. Recent studies have made the connection between the challenges of prosecuting human trafficking cases, leading prosecutors to often proceed with other complementary, or less serious charges. With that said, those who are eventually charged, about two-thirds of them will face jail time.

To make the court process easier on the victims, there are organizations springing up to provide much needed mental, and even physical support for survivors of human trafficking when they enter the courthouse.

Ryan Shanks is an assistant director with Men Ending Trafficking, a group dedicated toward raising awareness and getting men involved in the solution of ending human trafficking.

One of the organizations

main focus is court support, where a group of volunteers will attend court along with the survivor, offering any support that's needed, especially if the survivor is forced to come face to face with her trafficker.

"We train the men on being a physical barrier against intimidation or threats of any kind because a lot of the time, these traffickers, they have a lot of control over these girls for a long time. Even if they've been apart for a year or two, it doesn't take much for him to get into her head again," he says. "There's a regression that takes place, and so, when there's four or five guys standing between her and him, he's not able to do that," he says. "A big part of what we're doing, showing them that men can care for them, love them, and help them in the right way, does a lot to heal that damage and it opens them up to taking the chance with others."

Shanks has been with the organization for about a year, and he says he's seen the power and the catharsis that can come from survivors standing up to their traffickers and completing the court process, as hard as it can be.

"It's a really difficult thing for them to go through, but it's an absolutely necessary part of their recovery. It's a part of stepping out of that life and into a new life," he says. "You can actually see it, physically on their faces, from before the trial to after, you can tell that they've changed inside."

It's a change that everyone working in the social services field would like to see. A change that creates hope, not just in the social workers who help victims of human trafficking, but hope in the sur-

vivor.

Hope that one day they can see a future where they are strong, a future where they are living for themselves, and one where they've come to terms with their trauma and can make a better life for themselves.

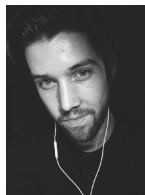
For Katie, she knows all about that part of life as well.

### Ryan Shanks

Assistant director with Men Ending Trafficking

*In the fourth and final instalment of this series on human trafficking, The Express looks to the future. What can be done to stop human trafficking at the source? Is it about changing attitudes towards women? Raising more awareness? Education? Are all of these initiatives receiving the funding and support they need from all levels of government? Part 4 will also give readers the final piece of Katie's story, and where she is now.*

# The fight - making sure word spreads on this crime



By Joel Wittnebel  
The Oshawa Express

At the end of the day, everyone wants the Hollywood ending.

In Katie's case, the perfect ending would be to see these men cuffed and led away to spend years behind bars for what they did to her.

However, as officers have told me, getting that result can be extremely difficult, and generally the traffickers will go down on different charges, whether its for drugs or guns, or some other thing. Either way, for the police, it gets the guy off the street and away from the women whose lives he's been ruining.

For Katie, she didn't get that result, but she told me she still sees the process as a victory.

"It's a win because I don't live that way anymore, and even though I didn't get the results, the guilty, I know what really happened to me," she tells me.

I admit, I wanted for her to be able to tell me that these guys ended up in jail. After sitting with her and hearing her entire story, I wanted that Hollywood ending, Katie deserves that ending.

Yet, life is not like the movies, and we need to push forward, and leave the past behind.

For this third portion, I knew I wanted to focus a lot on the court process, as I'd been told from several sources, and then confirmed when I sat down with Katie, that it can be worse sometimes than the crime itself.

For me, I'm not sure what the solution would be. Measures are being taken to further separate survivors from their abusers during testimony, but if a survivor takes the stand, they still have to face a defence lawyer, whose job it will be to try and poke holes in her traumatic story. There's no getting around that.

While there may not be much to change, I still felt that this part of the story needed to be highlighted, not just for information purposes, but to once again high-

light the different branches of this awful crime. If there was no human trafficking, there would be no traumatized survivors taking the stand to be torn apart emotionally by lawyers.

It's great what Ryan Shanks and Men Ending Trafficking are doing to support survivors through the court process, but I'm sure even Shanks would gladly step back if there was zero need for such a service.

This portion of the series is arguably one of the most important. As knowing how to support these survivors once they're out of the trade needs to be a priority for social agencies and governments across Canada.

Because while we may not immediately be able to stop the incessant nature of human trafficking, we can at least save these women and with the proper help, allow them to take their lives back once they've escaped.



## PART THREE: THE FUTURE

# modern-day slavery

## Helping to save future victims

BY JOEL WITTNEBEL  
The Oshawa Express

*This is the fourth and final instalment in a series by The Oshawa Express on human trafficking. Throughout the month of September, this series has shared the story of Katie, a survivor of human trafficking who agreed to share her story in order to shed light on the terrible crime of human trafficking and potentially give hope to others who may be struggling. In this final part in the series, we delve into the potential solutions for eradicating human trafficking for good, whether that's through more resources, education or a complete changing of societal attitudes towards women.*

**K**atie looks down at her hands as she speaks. She sees the ghosts of all her stories blowing behind her eyes like white lace on a window.

"I still am baffled that all this stuff has happened," she says, her head shaking slightly from side to side. "I never thought in my wildest dreams that I'd be, for one, sober, and for two, alive. I'm supposed to be dead, with the amount of things that I've done and have happened to me."

She's shared it all -- the terrible trip to Calgary where she was forced to have sex with men for money, controlled by a man who she thought loved her and was her boyfriend. There were the relapses, the suicide attempts, and then finally the man who held her captive in his apartment, sick on bad drugs, hallucinating and being raped when she should have been taken to the hospital.

Then after it all, there was the torturous court process that saw her take her story to the judicial system, which resulted as a non-starter in one case, an acquittal for another, and one man still at large.

Despite the end result of the court case, the horror, the trauma and the struggle, Katie knows that she won in the end.

"I was able to stay sober and continue on with my life," she says. "My outlook today is that if my story can help at least

one person, then it wasn't for nothing. I know that what I went through wasn't for nothing, it was to help someone else and give them hope."

Moving forward, many advocates, social workers and police officers working in the field of human trafficking know that one of the key pillars to change the tide against women being pulled into the sex trade is simple awareness. However, at times this can prove difficult.

Human traffickers are like rats, present, but unseen, moving from place to place and taking what's not theirs to take.


"The clandestine nature of these traffickers and their victims means that people don't hear about it," says Ryan Shanks, an assistant director with Men Ending Trafficking, a group focused on spreading the word about human trafficking. He admits, for a long time, even he didn't know that it was an issue in Ontario.

"There's been a bit of a boom. More people have begun talking about it, a lot of groups have been formed to fight it, it's sort of a hot topic now. However, I'm still amazed to see a lot of people just don't know at all."

It's true for many in Ontario to this day, despite the fact that Ontario has the highest rate of human trafficking violations in the country.

"It's a big problem in Ontario and Durham is seen as a hub, particularly along the Highway 401 corridor," says Carly Kalish, the executive director of Victim Services of Durham Region. "Poverty is a major contributor and a major risk factor for being trafficked," she adds.

This could put Oshawa right in the crosshairs for pimps looking to recruit vulnerable young women. According to the Durham Health Neighbourhoods mapping system, a regional initiative that rates Durham's local areas on social and economic factors. As part of the program, 50 neighbourhoods were identified as a priority for being deficient in health or economic indicators. Of the seven lowest-income neighbourhoods in Durham, five



are in Oshawa.

A number of factors also increase a young woman's vulnerability, including low self-esteem, abuse, bad family relationships, or a lack of social support. Any number of these things can reprogram a young brain to seek out things they shouldn't.

"They seek out chaos," Calise explains. "It's all their brains know."

So what can be done? For some, it comes down to educating our kids before they reach their teenage years.

Calise explains that these lessons don't need to be graphic or "fear-based", but instead can come at the level of empowering children, building their self-esteem and teaching them about healthy relationships, boundaries, and the different aspects of consent.

In the age of #MeToo, consent has become quite nuanced as it's been made clear from many instances, human trafficking being one of them, that yes does not always mean yes, especially when drugs, alcohol or coercion are involved.

"If we equip people to know about these things, then less of this would happen," Calise says.

Katie now knows this first hand, and she's taking her experiences and is working as a peer support worker. The Express is withholding the name of the agency she is working with in order to further protect her identity.

She says when survivors are attempting to heal after their time in the sex trade, having them accept that none of it is their fault is a big step.

"There's more that comes along with consent. You can say yes, but actually mean no, and I think a lot of times they come out and they're like, 'it's my fault cause I said yes,' and I'm like, 'no, it's not,' and helping them understand the four components that take part in consent."

Those four elements are that the sexual activity must be clearly defined, the woman must be coherent to make a decision, she must be doing it under her own free will, and those first three elements must be ongoing throughout the course of a sexual relationship. Yes does not always mean yes.

A lot of this education can start at home, with parents being involved in their children's lives.

For Laura Burch, the shelter services manager at Bethesda House, a shelter that helps survivors of human trafficking and women fleeing abuse, it almost becomes a risk not to get involved in what your children are doing.

"The traffickers are so smart in their field that it's a safety concern to give your child privacy," she says, adding that this is especially prudent when it comes to what they get into and who they talk to online.

Taking a step back, before the lectures, the classroom and the lessons, the educational direction that has the potential to stop human trafficking can start with simple values, in particular, how society treats women.

"As long as men are using their wealth to leverage access to things they have no right to, the problem is not going away,"

Shanks says. "We need a real shift in our culture, in our society, before this is going to disappear."

That shift may be upon society already.

On a large scale, Hollywood is seeing a renaissance when it comes to women speaking out against sexual violence and manipulation. In Canada, due to

reporting completed by The Globe and Mail, police services across the country, including Durham, are reviewing and changing the way they deal with sexual assault complaints. As a result, more women are coming forward to speak out against their abusers. Throughout the first portion of 2018, violent crime stats in Durham Region increased by 13 per cent, driven in large part by an increase in historic reports of sexual assault.

However, within the field of human trafficking, there still remains an unwillingness or a fear of some women in the trade to cooperate with police. The fear can largely be driven by pimps who warn against potential consequences of speaking with officers. However, the DRPS Human Trafficking Unit are finding other ways around that.

During investigations, the unit will bring along social service workers and sometimes, even other survivors of human trafficking to speak with girls in the hotel rooms. These operations work almost in the opposite vein of the John sting detailed in Part 2 of this series. Instead of setting up a fake ad, the Durham police respond to real ads as interested customers and try and make a connection with the girl in the room, and convince her to leave.

It's not as easy as it would seem.

"A lot of the times, it's not successful and if they are of a certain age, they'll say, 'I'm not going anywhere, I'm working by myself', which is not usually the case," says Det./Sgt. Ryan Connolly, the head of the DRPS Human Trafficking Unit, adding that if the girl is over 18, there's nothing they can do if she's unwilling to cooperate, and due to updated prostitution laws, she cannot be taken in for other reasons either.

Katie explains that at times, it's simply impossible to ask for help. The fear instilled by a pimp can be overwhelming.

"A lot of people will say, why didn't you leave? I think it's really important to understand that I could have left, they weren't there 24/7, they weren't hiding in a closet while I had a client in the room," she says. "You can't just leave. They frighten you, they scare you and they

See PARTNERSHIPS Page 20



## PARTNERSHIPS From Page 19

work really hard in doing so.”

Connolly says the police partnerships with social agencies and survivors can sometimes break through that barrier.

“Having the (survivors) on scene can give us that credibility for her to go in there and say to someone who is being trafficked, ‘listen, the police are here to help you. They helped me, and that’s how I got out.’ That is helpful in building the relationship with the police and the victim,” Connolly says.

Earlier this year, Oshawa MPP Jennifer French joined the DRPS unit for a ride-along during one such investigation, and was able to witness this impact firsthand.

“The girl was not expecting an intervention, was not expecting the police when they were there, but they were all receptive to the kindness, the compassion, the offer of services, and also to talk to the police,” French says, who attended, along with a social worker and another survivor. Along with building a connection with the police, the social services also work to attend to any of the women’s basic needs while they have her in the room.

“Every girl was receptive to having those kinds of conversations because you have to imagine too, they’re isolated, they only have their controller and this constant stream of assault and abuse,” French says. “So to have someone give you some toiletries and compassion and let you know that there is help and that not everyone wants to hurt you, there’s power in that message.”

To take that partnership to another level, within the last year, more than 30 organizations from across Durham, including the DRPS, have joined together to form the Durham Region Human Trafficking Coalition, bringing together individuals with backgrounds across the social services spectrum to discuss issues, brainstorm solutions, and even find practical solutions to problems agencies are facing with clients at the present moment. It’s a go-to place for finding a solution for any survivor of human trafficking, whether they need housing, mental health supports, health care, financial aid. Whatever it is, someone around the table is bound to put their hand up and say they can help.

For the DRPS, the group has proved instrumental, in not only helping presently, but also freeing up time so that resources can be put where they need to be in order to combat human trafficking in the future.



**Jennifer French**  
MPP for Oshawa

“We’re not social workers, we can’t do a lot of the things these other groups can. So everyone in the group, in the coalition, brings something to the table,” Connolly says, adding that it allows the DRPS to put their focus where it needs to be.

“It’s more important that we put our time and resources into going after pimps and the Johns and just set up the meeting and bring the victim to the support services,” he says.

For Shanks, whose father Larry Shanks with Safe Hope Home, another shelter geared towards helping survivors of human trafficking, was instrumental in setting up the coalition. It’s significant for the fight to end trafficking to see so many organizations working together.

“I was absolutely amazed by what I saw there,” he says. “The group of people who have joined the coalition are such an amazing group who are not talkers, they’re all doers.”

French has also been involved with the coalition, and is currently seeking a forward path to assist in any way she can at the provincial level. In 2016, the Ontario government launched its strategy to end human trafficking, which led to the creation of the provincial Anti-Human Trafficking

Coordination Office, triggered a cross-sector review of training related to human trafficking in an effort to identify any gaps, and also included the passage of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act, which increased protection for survivors.

Most recently, the DRPS received approximately \$10,000 in order to create a video campaign aimed at raising awareness around human trafficking. Funding from the Attorney General’s office also helps fund the Victim Quick Response Program run by Victim Services, which can provide money to survivors for any number of things from basic needs like food or shelter to more complicated things like glasses or counselling. There’s even the chance to receive up to \$10,000 for recovery at a treatment facility.

“I’m glad that there is some money coming for

this awareness campaign, that’s great, but I would like to figure out what it actually looks like at the ministry level and I’d like to be involved as much as possible in that,” French says, noting that she continues to work with the DRPS to figure out what a potential solution could look like.

“It’s not so much a piece of legislation that needs to happen to facilitate that, but I’m trying to tease that out because we work within the confines of the system that we know. We don’t necessarily know how we can improve unless we’re asked,” she says.

Small steps. Small steps that can eventually lead to a solution. A solution that could eventually lead to the end of stories like Katie’s. A story that saw her raped, and abused when all she was seeking was love. Love that she wasn’t able to find anywhere else.

Until now.

“Still today, sometimes I look in the mirror when I get up and I don’t really like what I see, but I make a phone call. I have people that can remind me. I don’t need them to tell me how pretty I am. I need them to tell me to look at what you’ve accomplished, that this is just a little hiccup,” Katie says. “I don’t need that validation, I can give that to myself.”

## HOTLINES:

**DRPS: 1-888-579-1520 x-4888**

**VICTIM SERVICES: 905-579-1530 x-3400**

*If you, or anyone you know is involved or you think is involved in human trafficking, the DRPS urges you to reach out. In Durham Region, the police have set up a human trafficking hotline at 1-888-579-1520 ext. 4888. The public is also encouraged to call this line with any information related to human trafficking. Also, survivors of abuse are reminded that you do not to be involved with the police in order to get help from Victim Services. Victim Services can be reached at 905-579-1530 ext. 3400.*

## BEHIND THE WRITING



**By Joel Wittnebel**  
The Oshawa Express

This four-part series is the end result of nearly six months of reporting, countless interviews and hours of research in order to dig up the statistics on this growing crime.

I also had the opportunity to join the Durham Human Trafficking Coalition for two meetings in order to see firsthand the impact they can have. It’s inspiring and absolutely heart-warming to see so many people in one room who care about finding a solution to ending human trafficking and also support those who are struggling.

Throughout the course of my interviewing for this series, which included police, social agencies, and of course, Katie, I began to notice a common trend among the people working in the field.

For many, they were unaware of the scope of the problem, and were shocked, surprised or frightened

when they finally got a glimpse of the true face of human trafficking. A face that is morphing and changing by the day.

I now count myself among them.

This series was launched by one interview with Det./Sgt. Ryan Connolly, the head of Durham’s Human Trafficking Unit. The Oshawa Express ran a story on the unit in March of this year, which was mainly supported by a sit down I did with Connolly. At that time, I had no idea the scope of the issue.

When I began to dig, the story just went deeper and deeper and I soon realized that there was no way it could be contained in a single story. It is for that reason that this series has taken up so many pages and inches of ink over this past month.

I want you, reader, to take a moment and think about that. If you haven’t read the previous parts of this series, I encourage you to do so, because the only way we are going to ever get to the end of this nightmare created by human trafficking, is if everyone educates themselves.

Many people don’t even know what human traffick-

ing is, sometimes not even those who are in it.

“I was trafficked and I had no idea. I thought I had a shitty boyfriend,” Katie told me.

If there is one message to leave these pages with, it is to take what you have learned and share it with others. If you’re a parent, talk with your kids about the dangers of the Internet, talk to them about their self-esteem, and if they are young men, teach them the value of women. If you’re not a parent, take this story and share it with your family, share it on social media, just keep the message out there.

I also want to address that it is also isn’t strictly young women. While Durham has not seen a market for young boys in the sex trade, there are young men who get pulled into this dark world as well.

So, the sooner that children learn their worth and learn to treat others with respect, love and compassion, the sooner we can keep them from falling into dangerous hands.

It’s up to us, and it’s clear that now is the time to change.