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## **NAGEL: Sports advocacy can help stop human trafficking on local, global level**

By Cody Nagel on April 24th, 2015 [sports](#)



Some of you may have noticed events across campus were held this week to help spread awareness on the severity of human trafficking.

The week started off with a "Shut Out Trafficking" keynote address on Monday night, highlighted by Richard Lapchick, Sarah Wilbanks and Sriyani Tidball. Saturday morning the "No Girl Should Be For Sale Walk," put on by, I've Got a Name, concluded the extraordinary week.

More than 100 participants started at The Railyard and made their way through downtown Lincoln. A few stragglers \*cough cough\* Dr. Williams...eventually caught up to the moving crowd.

For a Sports Communications class I am taking (JOMC 150), we were required to attend a human trafficking documentary called "Not My Life" last Wednesday. Before the showing, I had little knowledge about human trafficking. I knew it entailed using people illegally for labor and commercial sex, but I didn't know how serious of a threat it is to humans in every part of the world.

This documentary got me thinking about how serious this issue is and what I can do to do my part in helping the fight against human trafficking.

Some of you may be wondering why I'm talking about human trafficking and what it has to do with sports; I'm getting there. Take the time to continue reading, please.

There are several types of human trafficking, from forced labor, to commercial sex trade, to child soldiers. Together, they form a \$150 billion industry that needs to be stopped. There are nearly 27 million slaves in the world today, 13 million of them children, with each individual, on average, costing \$90. These statistics caught my attention.

This industry is happening all around us; 100,000 to 300,000 children are at risk for sex trafficking, just in the United States. One of the top three destinations for trafficking victims is the U.S.

I could go on and on listing alarming facts; the point of this column is to tell you how to help spread the awareness and to influence you to do your part in stopping human trafficking. This is where sports come into the picture. In my opinion, using sports will have a monumental impact on the process of prevention.

Sporting events of all levels attract an unimaginable amount of spectators each year. These events are the perfect opportunity to educate and spread awareness to stop human trafficking.

At the Friday baseball/softball double-header, those who attended may have noticed a blue blob in the middle of the third-base berm. Members of the Husker Distinction Council and several athletes, including members of the swimming and diving team, made up a group of more than a dozen people all wearing T-shirts with 'Shut Out Trafficking #SOT' printed in bold on the front.

Now, picture a section at a professional event, heck...think local. Imagine it at Memorial Stadium or Pinnacle Bank Arena. We all saw the impact the 'Yellow Zone' had when everyone wore their '#AveryStrong' shirts.

Athletes have been used for advertising and promotion of products and events countless numbers of times. Again, at the local level, Husker athletes promoted events during last week. Many pictures were posted on social media of athletes from a variety of sports holding blue signs with 'Huskies Against Trafficking' and 'Shut Out Trafficking' written on them.

Even Lil' Red, everyone's favorite air-filled mascot, got in on the action taking time to get his picture taken with a sign at the spring game.

Taking these same ideas of raising awareness to a larger scale would account for extensive results. When I say large scale, I mean Super Bowl, Olympics and World Cup, places where thousands of prostitutes are brought into cities that host such events.

If you promote the prevention of human trafficking at these events, the number of victims trafficked will at the least decrease.

The true point I want to get across in this column to you as a reader is to do your part in whatever capacity you can. Start small; start an awareness event in your community. Human trafficking is happening everywhere, even in Lincoln. Be proactive.

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