

# PROJECT STAY GOLD



A STUDENT MOVEMENT TO ABOLISH MODERN DAY SLAVERY



# PROJECT STAY GOLD & INTRODUCTION

**Movements begin when people are pushed and motivated by a cause that is greater than themselves.** In the case of Project Stay Gold, young people, students, have identified a global issue, are committed to this cause, and are proposing real solutions to confront and abolish human-trafficking and modern-day slavery.

Students face the shocking statistics of our day: there are an estimated 27 million slaves around the world; the largest number in human history. They remain committed to the fight at hand, despite the billions of dollars of profit made through the exploitation of others their own age. Human Trafficking is the world's second largest illegal crime 100,000 people are trafficked through the United States each year. Project Stay Gold wants to start a conversation, lighting a candle that illuminates the dark underbelly of modern day slavery.

Using the power of education, Project Stay Gold hopes to raise awareness, advocate for abolition, and support rescue and prevention missions. Project stay gold seeks to awaken a modern-day abolitionist movement among the students inside our schools and our classrooms. Young people are highly sensitive to issues of injustice and are motivated by empathy to make a difference and to bring about positive change in our world. Project stay gold believes that our students have the capacity to be the history makers of today. We invite you and your school to join our crusade for abolition, and become the history makers of today!

# PROJECT STAY GOLD & HISTORY

**In 2011, Kate, then an eighth grade student, sparked the idea that would lead to Project Stay Gold at Jefferson Township Middle School, in Morris County, NJ.** After learning about slavery in social studies class, she was shocked to learn about its modern day equivalent, human trafficking. Kate was shocked that she had never been aware of it despite its overwhelming rates of occurrence throughout the world. She was disgusted with the mass, covert exploitation, and approached her social studies teacher in an attempt to do something about it. Interest grew from other students in the school; eager to join Kate, their friend, as well as Mr. Papa, the teacher that first planted the seed earlier in the year.

The group's initial vision was simple, spreading awareness about an unknown crime through education. Students worked together to create PowerPoint's and other teaching aids, and were granted the ability to go and teach in the Middle School's 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade history classes. There they enlisted the support of the younger members of the school, and before long, the branded merchandise that they had used to fundraise with had all sold out. Bracelets branded with the word "abolitionist" and t-shirts that carried the group's message suddenly adorned a considerable population of the school. From there, Project Stay Gold expanded.

After establishing the club in her middle school, graduating students brought the movement to Jefferson Township High School. They were buoyed by Mr. Papa's arrival at the school not long after. The group launched its website, commissioned the creation of professionally crafted videos, and refined their presentation skills to match their more mature environment.

# PROJECT STAY GOLD & HISTORY CONTINUED

**Project Stay Gold held awareness nights at local community centers, and were invited to the New Jersey State House to present in front of officials and the State Attorney General.** In turn, they gained recognition from local and state governments, as well as outside organizations fighting the same cause.

As the members of Project Stay Gold grew, they brought the group to new places. Matt, a student who participated in Project Stay Gold at Jefferson Township High school, spread the organization by starting a chapter at The College of New Jersey in 2013. Project Stay Gold found renewed purpose as the New York and New Jersey area geared up to host the SuperBowl in 2014. They warned against the prevalence of human trafficking and the nation's most prevalent sporting event, and through that initiated an affiliated program, called Not On Our Turf, which created PSA's, petitions, and met with New Jersey Senator Jeffrey Chiesa in Washington, D.C. Project Stay Gold hosted two student summits in the fall of 2013, comprised of dozens of schools and hundreds of students and educators. The focus of the summits was to provide guidance regarding the creation of mini- awareness campaigns in their own schools. Schools were paired with Project Stay Gold members to provide insight to the process, and by the time the SuperBowl came around, national attention had pivoted to the danger that human trafficking presented at large sporting events, an attention assisted by the work of Project Stay Gold advisors and members.

Project Stay Gold is determined to continue raising awareness regarding human trafficking, and to implement chapters "anchors" in schools. **Altogether, we will come closer to our goal of absolute abolition!**

# PROJECT STAY GOLD & BEHIND THE NAME

**The name of our organization, Project Stay Gold, carries significant meaning.** In eighth grade, students studied *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton at the same time that they were making their initial discoveries about human trafficking. While reading the novel, students were struck by the importance of one quote, “Stay gold, Ponyboy, stay gold.” This quote is the basis for the name of Project Stay Gold. In the novel, this quote reflects a need or desire to stay innocent and young for as long as one can. The theme of innocence relates to Project Stay Gold because in many cases, children are the targets of human trafficking. They are taken at a young and vulnerable age to be used and exploited, through the commercial sex trade, forced labor or other forms of bondage.

Project Stay Gold aims to stop human trafficking from happening by spreading awareness and advocating prevention methods. We endeavor to preserve the innocence of children, and fight so that in the future, the beauty of childhood is never stolen under the pretense of abuse and exploitation. By urging young people to “stay gold”, and by educating adults in the ways to maintain this purity for the children around them, we are able to make a difference. **To preserve the innocence of children, the exploited and the weak, we urge a robust response to raise awareness, fight abolition, and “stay gold”.**

# PROJECT STAY GOLD THE ISSUE

**Human trafficking is modern-day slavery. An estimated 27 million people remain in bondage or captivity, working tirelessly for no pay.**

Human trafficking is growing rapidly as it inches closer to the dangerous title of most lucrative illicit operation, worldwide. The reason behind this lies in the “product” at the center of human trafficking. Unlike drugs or arms, which need constant ammunition and replenishment, human beings are reusable, meaning that they can be recycled for a profit time and time again. They are used as commodities, as human traffickers not only charge a fee for their sale, but also for their continual use.

People of all ages are victims of human trafficking, forced into unending labor with respite. Forced labor manifests itself in many different areas: fieldwork, sweatshop labor, military engagements, domestic servitude, and forced prostitution. At this very moment, countless young people work under the oppression of a criminal.

Human trafficking encompasses a variety of crimes that involve the ownership and exploitation of a person for profit or personal gain, resulting in the degradation of their basic human rights. Sex slavery, forced labor, and child slavery are the three main classifications that different types of exploitation fall under. The ambiguous and clandestine nature of the crime sometimes makes it difficult to define and recognize the different forms. Clarity is key and understanding human trafficking as it exists is vital in order to plan meaningful efforts at reconciliation and abolition.

# PROJECT STAY GOLD & SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

**Sex slavery is human trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation.**

Brothels of the commercial sex industry are ran by modern day slave owners, known as “pimps”, and result in forced sexual acts, with young girls held under the guise of mental, physical and substance abuse.

People, especially young and naïve females, are sold or deceptively lured into the sex industry due to a number of factors.

- **Unstable economic conditions,**
- **Poverty**
- **History of Abuse**
- **Cycles of foster care or child protective services**
- **Desire to find a stable family unit**
- **Limited educational opportunity**

Any minor under the age of 18 induced into the commercial sex trade is a victim of sex trafficking, regardless of the tactics used by the perpetrator. Despite generalizations, however, there is no quintessential victim, as anyone from any background can fall prey to the horrors of the commercial sex trade. For this reason, it is necessary to provide education and prevention programs to all young people, so that they can recognize danger when it arises.

# PROJECT STAY GOLD & SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

**Sex slavery encompasses many different forms, including forced prostitution, pornography involving minors, and sex tourism.** Prostitution, though illegal in most countries, is a prime way for human traffickers to exploit victims. Perpetrators hold power over the young girls they control.

- Threats of violence to their families
- Deportation or the withholding of the government documents
- Psychological conditioning which makes the victim weak, compromising her ability to fight back.

**They lure their victims with the promise of a high paying job, a romantic relationship or guidance through the immigration and visa process.** However, pimps then turn to the implementation of various control tactics, and use the power of emotional manipulation, false security and promises, as well as threats of physical abuse to coerce victims into meeting and servicing “John’s”. These encounters are organized by the pimps for their own profit.

Sex trafficking could possibly exist in the United States under the façade of massage businesses, online escort services, and residential brothels, but also in hotels and restaurants, strip-clubs, city streets and truck stops. In order to take the first step in reducing the 3,609 cases of sexual slavery that the Polaris Project reports occur in the United States each year, understanding the issue and working towards prevention is vital.

# PROJECT STAY GOLD & FORCED LABOR

The term slavery often conjures images of Antebellum America, men working on plantations, picking cotton in unbearable heat. This visualization, though accurate in the historical context, is much more transparent than the obscure, covert means through which forced labor occurs today. **In today's world, forced labor occurs in factories, in restaurants or in homes. Labor traffickers could include employers, contractors and other middle men, who use varied forms of coercion to force victims into working for little or no pay.** Some are forced into debt bondage until they pay off excessive amounts of debt that they never owed in the first place.

Migrant workers who travel to find work take the risk of being exploited in a land where they do not know the language, have a network of support, and oftentimes, the means of returning home if necessary. U.S. citizens, foreign nationals, men, women and children of all ages can be subjected to this time of exploitation. In the United States, this type of human trafficking manifests itself in domestic servitude, factory work or bonded labor on farms and in agriculture.

**Globally, the International Labor Organization estimates that there are 14.2 million people trapped in the chains of forced labor.** Victims of modern day slavery work in manufacturing, agriculture, and construction, as well as in the domestic sector. In 2013, the National Trafficking Resource Center received 929 reports regarding forced labor in the United States.

Large companies, including the likes of Nike and Apple, for example the Foxconn plant in China, utilize forced labor in their manufacturing process. Manufacturers use sweatshops in Asia, where employees work in horrible conditions. For example, carpet factories in India, where children are used to manufacture textiles. Unlike the highly visible labor that abolitionists of the past fought against, the forced labor of today is invisible to the naked eye. It is a goal for organizations like Project Stay Gold to rid the world of the mistreatment that forced labor subjects its victims to.

# PROJECT STAY GOLD & CHILD TRAFFICKING

**Children are often the victims of human trafficking because of their innocence and naïvete. Around the world children are recruited, transported, harbored or moved for the purposes of exploitation and profit.** Although the problem is more prevalent in nations in South America and Southeast Asia, the United States is not immune to the evils of child slavery. The United States is a source and transit country for would-be trafficking victims, and the international hubs and airports that exist across the country provide the venue to carry out the logistics of trafficking operations. The International Labour Organization estimated in 2005 that between 980,000 and 1,225,000 children were in human trafficking situations that could be classified as forced labor.

**Children are trafficked because there exists a need for cheap labor.** The need for this labor closely overlaps with employers who underpay and allow young children to work in conditions that grossly violate their basic human rights. The workplace can be hazardous or dangerous, and the forms of child labor range from household servitude, to drug couriership, newspaper selling, forced begging and bonded labor. According to the Polaris Project, The U.S. Department of Labor has recognized at least 122 goods whose production has been linked to forced or child labor.

Child slavery is among the most heart wrenching of all the different types of human trafficking, as its victims are helpless and ruthlessly used, being denied the innocence and growth that the formative childhood years normally provide. Project Stay Gold, as a group founded by students the same age as the young children sometimes being exploited, is in a unique position to corral other students to champion the rights of their enslaved brothers and sisters, not just in foreign factories and fields, but on the streets of our nation as well. Potential solutions include prevention, law enforcement, and victim assistance.

**It is through prevention that the greatest work can be done.** By recognizing warning signs, and educating parents, caregivers and educators to the risk factors that could compromise the safety of a child, the entire process could be subverted and the purity, the ability of all those young faces to “stay gold”, will be maintained.

# PROJECT STAY GOLD & WHAT YOU CAN DO

**The main objective of Project Stay Gold chapters is to spread a message of education and prevention to other schools.** These chapters will be comprised of students and educators motivated to make a change, and provide them with the resources and support network necessary to enact that dream. To start a Project Stay Gold chapter in your school, there are a few things to consider.

## & EDUCATE YOURSELF &

**It is vital to understand modern day slavery, to be armed with facts and statistics, to supplement your argument.** Research the issue more thoroughly, utilizing the resources provided not only in this manual, but literature, non-profit webpages and other resources that is easily available online and in print. Another resource could be listening to the story of a human trafficking survivor. Incorporate the emotional power of their tale to help craft the message and the unique spin you want to bring to the issue in your school.

## & FIND AN ADVISOR &

**An advisor is an essential member of your club.** Your advisor will act as a supervisor and enabler, overseeing chapter plans and activities, while coordinating efforts with your school administration and the appropriate officials, depending on your individual school system. The mutual learning and respect that can take place when educators and students come together to make a difference is critical. Human Trafficking is an issue for all ages, and the right teacher will provide you with the springboard to launch your success.

# PROJECT STAY GOLD & WHAT YOU CAN DO

## & ENCOURAGE MEMBERSHIP &

**After initiating the club in your school, invite peers to join your initiative.** By recruiting members, you plant the seeds of a movement in your school or community. A few methods of recruiting could be posters, morning announcements, and activity fairs. Be sure to invite people from all backgrounds and interests, and cater to each member's skills and preferences. By harnessing the full range of talents from your student body, you will begin to diversify. It is important to remain organized and have members report back to the advisors or peer leaders. Students who enjoy writing could help craft speeches or documents, while the tech-savvy could create a website or social media. Consider incorporating an artistic or musical component to your group. By making the group fun and exciting, membership will grow.

## & ORGANIZE YOUR EFFORTS &

Project Stay Gold will offer resources to ease your chapter through the initiation process. However, it is important for each chapter to serve its own objectives, so students and educators are afforded the license to be creative in their means of spreading awareness and raising funds. Every school has a different process for getting a club started, and each environment will also bring its own preferences. **Adapt the activities of your individual chapter to best serve the needs of your local community, and begin planning your initial efforts to raise awareness and make a difference!**

# PROJECT STAY GOLD FINAL STEPS

**After the hard work of initiation and recruitments finally settles into a stable group of excited individuals, it is time to begin planning your chapter's opening activities.** First, build that all-important base of knowledge, personnel and resources. Work with advisors and administrators to cultivate a diverse talent pool, and utilize the talents of each individual member to contribute to the vision of the group as a whole.

**After you are assured in your membership and support, it is time to begin spreading your message.** A sure-fire way to launch a campaign like Project Stay Gold is by hosting an Awareness Night. Schedule an awareness night at a visible, inviting environment, like a school, public library or other community center. Invite speakers who are experts on human trafficking, like law enforcement agents and activists to educate guests regarding the issue. Invite group members to speak among those professional guests, showing the audience how human trafficking awareness and prevention looks like in your individual school system. When planning your Awareness Night, pick a date when people are free, and try not to overlap with local events.

**As an awareness group, spreading knowledge is a principle task of each chapter.** With that in mind, the creation of tools to help raise awareness is key. Create a presentation that can be delivered to multiple audiences. Consider a PowerPoint or Prezi, and look towards the resources given to you as examples to build off of. Consider variations when giving presentations to students, as opposed to adults. In general, consider the age and appropriateness of topics depending on your audience. Work to make connections with local community leaders to find venues to give presentations.

**Chapter initiatives can also include fundraising.** Consider the creation of branded merchandise, including t-shirts, sweatshirts, bracelets or locker magnets. At presentations and other outings, bring merchandise and any other resources to show the diverse talents of your group. Funds raised can be donated to established aid organizations, like the Polaris Project or Love146, but could also help cover administrative fees, transportation or other expenses related to the individual chapter. Be sure to follow your school's fundraising policy, and explain to donors what money will be used for.

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