

street

GRACE

GALVANIZING RESOURCES
AGAINST CHILD EXPLOITATION

A CHURCH MOBILIZATION GUIDE

Join the fight against the
Commercial Sexual
Exploitation of Children

www.streetgrace.org

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I. INTRODUCTION TO STREET GRACE

When eight churches in the metro-Atlanta region heard about the prevalence of child sex trafficking in their own back yards, they put aside their differences for the sake of addressing the disturbing and devastating reality of what was happening to these children. The collaboration of these eight churches resulted in the formation of Street GRACE in 2008.

Street GRACE (Galvanizing Resources Against Child Exploitation) is a non-denominational alliance of churches dedicated to supporting, enlarging, and allying with those individuals and organizations working toward eliminating the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC).

Street GRACE mobilizes the resources of churches, financial, human and material, toward those organizations and individuals who have demonstrated effectiveness in battling CSEC in the areas of advocacy, aftercare, and mentoring. Our ultimate goal is the elimination of this problem in the city of Atlanta and the duplication of these efforts in other cities across the United States.

This Mobilization Guide is a tool for churches to use and share with other churches in their sphere of influence. Within this guide you will learn about the significant and growing problem known as the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), and how to utilize the talents and resources in your church in the fight against CSEC in your community.

For information on Street GRACE's vision, mission, values and structure please see appendix.



Our Strategic Priorities

(You or your church may choose to engage in just one of these priorities or all five of them.)

- 1. Create an Advocacy “Outcry” Campaign** that will inform and educate broad audiences in Metro Atlanta on the existence and injustice of child sex slavery.
- 2. Develop a metro-wide Church Mobilization Campaign** that will equip churches to effectively engage the problem.
- 3. Build/establish a “mobilized” Prayer Network** that will intercede for the victims and abolitionists who are fighting the problem.
- 4. Sponsor Strategic Aftercare for Child Victims** to resource and equip facilities to better care for victims.
- 5. Support At-Risk Communities** through Youth Mentoring Programs/Networks to reduce the number of victims through education, prevention, and changing environmental conditions that foster and harbor child sex slavery.

II. BACKGROUND

Thank you for wanting to become involved in the fight against the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). This mobilization guide is a tool for you and your church to use and share with others in your sphere of influence. Within this guide you will find important statistics and information, as well as opportunities to partner with local organizations in order to utilize your gifts and talents in the fight against CSEC.

There are many justice issues that need to be addressed by Christ followers. So many, in fact, we're easily overwhelmed. But, as the Church—the body of Christ—we are “a light for the nation, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness” Isaiah 42:9. Many people in metro Atlanta are not even aware that human trafficking is a problem, much less a problem in our own communities. The fact that CSEC is impacting children who do not have a voice and cannot defend themselves elevates this injustice and demands our attention. While we do not have all the answers, we are learning and praying that God will use us to help children escape this evil practice.

Children hold a special place in Jesus' heart (Matthew 19:14). Jesus said of himself in Luke 4:18 that He came to set the burdened and battered free and to announce that this is God's year to act! We believe that tackling and solving the problem of CSEC will transform the city of Atlanta. Imagine a city without the problem of child sex slavery, a city where Christ followers from all denominations joined together to wipe out the abuse of children. What a statement to our communities that the Body of Christ is alive and well and ready to make an impact for God's Kingdom. Atlanta would become a city where hundreds of children are free from sexual slavery and the horrors they endured, and a city where they could heal physically and spiritually. Join with us to end the horrible injustice of CSEC.

III. FACTS ABOUT THE COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN (CSEC)

(Hidden In Plain View, Report by the Atlanta Women's Agenda, Office of the Mayor, 2005)

1. Until 2001, the pimping of a minor in Georgia was classified as a misdemeanor payable by a \$50 fine.
2. Average age of victims of CSEC is 14, but girls as young as 10 have been exploited.
3. 88% of children who are sexually abused never disclose their abuse while they are still children.
4. It is estimated that 82% of child sexual abuse cases in Georgia involved family and extended family members.
5. The majority of women engaged in prostitution were sexually abused as children.
6. 90% of runaways become victims of the sex trade industry.
7. Approximately 1.7 million runaway/throwaway episodes occur every year in the U.S.
8. 1 of every 3 teens will be lured toward prostitution within 48 hours of leaving home.
9. The younger a girl is on the streets, the more likely she is to be victimized.
10. Prostitution-related activities can be found near most Atlanta public schools.



Frequently Asked Questions

“What exactly is CSEC?”

The commercial sexual exploitation of children consists of criminal practices that demean, degrade, and threaten the physical and psychosocial integrity of children. There are three primary and interrelated forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children: prostitution, pornography, and trafficking for sexual purposes. Other forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children include child sex tourism, child marriages, and forced marriages. Simply put, CSEC is “rape for profit.”

“Trafficking was something I thought only happened in third world countries. How does it happen here?”

Sadly enough, it is an issue of simple economics. In a market where there is a demand, people will go out of their way to find or create a supply that meets that demand. The demand for sex and the availability of funds to pay for it are so great that forcing others against their will to meet the demand is a common practice. Trafficking happens here because there is money to pay for it. There are several factors that make Atlanta an ideal environment for the sex trade, the Hartsfield Jackson Airport being one of them. As one of the busiest airports in the world, it is incredibly easy for someone to “order” a child online, fly in, meet at a hotel near the airport, pay to rape the child, and then catch a flight home, all completely unnoticed. Atlanta also hosts a large number of conventions. This influx of visitors creates opportunity traffickers capitalize on.

The demand for illicit sexual activity is not limited to third world countries; the resources and opportunity to create a sex trafficking economy exist in major cities throughout the United States.





“Who is the typical victim of child CSEC?”

The range of age of entry into commercial exploitation is between 11 and 14 years old, but some are as young as ten years old. Although girls and young women are the primary targets of traffickers, there are an increasing number of boys who are being victimized.

“How do the traffickers get control over the victims?”

Traffickers use psychological manipulation, threats of violence, and addiction to keep their victims trapped in CSEC.

“Why can’t the victims just go to the police?”

Traffickers instill fear of authority in their victims’ minds. At a recent conference, cases were reported of Russian girls being “initiated” into trafficking through gang rape. Their perpetrators were wearing police uniforms and doctors’ clothing to cause distrust of authority. Sadly, this fear is sometimes realized because, until recently, victims of child sex trafficking were treated as criminals; authorities saw only the sex for money component of CSEC and not the forced nature of the act. Also, victims who are trafficked in the United States are often here illegally, thus they fear deportation.

“Are all child prostitutes trafficked or do some of them choose to do it?”

According to U.S. law and international agreements, a child can never consent to prostitution; it is always an act of exploitation. In fact, the phrase “child prostitute” is discouraged. The more appropriate phrase is commercially sexually exploited child.

Frequently Asked Questions (cont.)

“What is the typical story of a sex trafficked victim?”

Victims are lured into sex trafficking through one of two methods: deception or coercion.

In the case of deception, a victim is told he/she will be working in the United States as a seamstress, model, waitress, etc. Upon arrival in the States, the victim is forced into prostitution with the threat of family members being harmed, resulting in the victim's silence and unwilling cooperation.

In the case of coercion, a vulnerable runaway is approached by a “well-meaning” man who showers her with compliments and offers to take care of her. Eventually, the girl is coerced into a sexual relationship with this man. After she becomes dependent on him for support (victims are often introduced to drugs to create yet another dependence), he puts her to work on the streets. Physical and emotional abuse results if she should try to escape him.



“Why can’t we just go and buy the girls out of the brothels?”

The problem with this approach lies in the profit of trafficking. If we bring girls out of the brothels but don’t address trafficking itself, victims who are removed will just be replaced, thereby increasing the number of victims being put through the channels.

“As Believers, what is our role in this fight?”

Raising awareness about CSEC is vital. We have something powerful these children don’t have: our voice and the freedom to use it. They are kept silent; we must use our voices on their behalf.

In the sin-filled world we live in, WE, as BELIEVERS are called to point others to the goodness of God. Jesus said, “Let your light shine before men so that they will see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven.” That is our duty as believers. It’s a daunting task and the enemy would want nothing more than for us to be filled with fear - fear of the traffickers, fear of getting out of our comfort zone, and fear to admit that the problem is closer to home than we think. Put those fears aside, set your eyes on Jesus and walk forward. As Graham Cooke says, “I’m too busy being fascinated by Jesus to be intimidated by the enemy.”

“What do we do if we suspect a girl is trapped in a trafficking situation?”

If you suspect a child may be trapped in prostitution, call 1-888-373-7888. In Atlanta, call 770-837-LOVE (5683), the Redeemed Hotline.

Special thanks to Julie Riggs for insights into these questions .

IV. MOBILIZING YOUR CHURCH

There are nearly 5,000 churches in metro-Atlanta alone. Street GRACE is uniquely positioned to bring these churches together and align them directionally to the cause at hand. By providing a framework, structure, and strategy for the eradication of child sexual exploitation in Atlanta, and offering a valuable resource to the churches in our network, our efforts can initiate or accelerate high impact opportunities for change.

By providing a “common voice” and serving as a provocateur in the local community, we are uniquely able to resource, equip, enable, and champion others to the cause. Through local government lobbying efforts, community-wide campaigns, and strategic utilization of our network of informed and impassioned churches, our desire is to see hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children moved towards action.





1. Pray and Create an Advocacy Outcry Campaign within Your Church

Ask God to give you His heart for abolishing the injustice of CSEC.

Encourage your congregation to pray about this specific problem.

Identify leaders within your congregation, existing prayer ministries, or small groups to lead others in prayer about this problem.

“He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners... to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.”

ISAIAH 61:1-3

Areas to pray for:

- The breakdown of the sex industry
- Churches to work together with public and private sectors
- The rescue and restoration of victims
- The protection of potential victims
- The turning of hearts of pimps and traffickers
- The turning of hearts of customers
- Guidance of our President, the U.S. Congress, and the Georgia State Legislature as they work to abolish sexual slavery.



2. Explore Your Church's Heart for Justice

Is your church a safe place for victims of CSEC and other forms of injustice?

What are the skills in your congregation that will be useful as you explore the work of justice? Are there law enforcement professionals, social workers, lawyers or legislators in your membership?

What could be your church's unique contribution as a member of an alliance of churches working together to combat the problem of CSEC?

Is your church giving financially to the work of justice, or able to give in the future?

Victims of CSEC are found in every community. Do you have a realistic appraisal of this problem in yours?

3. Educate

Educate your church on the biblical mandate for justice and what this call may mean for your congregation.

Hold Information Gatherings in your church and small groups. Give talks about the problem of CSEC and ways to get involved in the fight to end it. Provide leadership in inviting and connecting churches interested in becoming involved with Street GRACE.

Share facts about the problem in Atlanta using Section III: Facts about the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

Form a Justice Learning Community. A Justice Learning Community is a multidisciplinary group, composed of church staff and volunteers, meeting for the purpose of learning about the Biblical call to seek justice in our world.

Preach and teach on the topic of biblical justice.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

JOHN 14:12-15

4. Engage

After you have learned about CSEC and the specific needs in your community, and heard God's call to justice, it is time to engage. The goal of Engagement is to develop or discover the unique contribution that your church can make to the work of justice. Consider these four categories of Engagement: **Street GRACE Task Forces, Prevention, Intervention, and Restoration.**

Join a Street GRACE Task Force:

The following task forces correspond to Street GRACE's strategic priorities. Your church may choose to be involved in just one task force or any combination of the task force teams.

Prayer Task Force: The prayer task force will provide leadership and oversight to the mobilization of prayer networks throughout the city of Atlanta. The prayer resources are already in place. This team will help other churches become aware of the prayer resources and provide guidance on how to get a prayer strategy started at a local church. A regularly updated prayer guide can be found by following the link on the Street GRACE website.

Advocacy Task Force: The advocacy task force will create an "outcry" campaign that will inform and educate broad audiences across metro Atlanta. If you have marketing or advertising experience, this team is for you.

Church Mobilization Task Force: The church mobilization task force is responsible for developing the Church Mobilization Guide as well as presentations for churches and other groups. Individuals on this team will share the vision and provide leadership in inviting and connecting churches in becoming involved with Street GRACE.

Youth Mentoring in At-Risk Communities Task Force: The youth mentoring task force encourages people to volunteer at and support local inner city churches, existing mentoring programs, or inner city schools who are effectively reaching youth in Atlanta's most vulnerable communities. There is also the opportunity to join a Community Asset Mapping Team to analyze at-risk communities and identify opportunities for implementing self-esteem building programs. The team also works with an investigating team to discover thriving community churches, influential school administrators, existing mentoring and self-esteem building programs, and emergency assistance providers.

Restoration and Aftercare Task Force: The aftercare task force is responsible for identifying ministries and organizations that are providing the best care for children after they have been rescued from bondage. This team will help ensure that Street GRACE is recommending legitimate aftercare programs. This team is also a resource for people interested in volunteering in an aftercare ministry.

Prevention

Mentor At-Risk Children and Youth

Children and youth, whether due to poverty, poor education, or family situations, are at risk for exploitation. We're all called to protect the weak and defenseless. Your influence and investment in the life of a child or teenager can change their lives forever. If you are interested in mentoring, contact Street GRACE.

Volunteer in the Public Schools

The public schools are the hubs of our communities, and they are where some of the most at-risk students spend their days. In order to reach these children before they are victims, we need to come alongside children who are in elementary school and middle school. Nearly all public schools seek volunteers to spend less than an hour per week helping a struggling student. Get involved in the public schools.

Give

Make a donation to the organizations helping to protect all children's right to grow up free from abuse and exploitation. Go to www.streetgrace.org to learn more about opportunities to give.

Create Awareness

Tell the Governor, Mayor, county officials, and others with the power to make a difference about CSEC. Raise awareness in the media of the problem of CSEC in your area. It exists in the shadows; the only way to end CSEC is to acknowledge its scope and impact. Acknowledging CSEC is the first step toward ending it.

Write Letters

Tell your Governor, Mayor, Police Officers and others involved in making a difference about your civic concerns. Write letters to U.S. hotel companies asking them to sign the Code of Conduct. Send a letter to your Congressperson (www.georgia.gov) asking him or her to write to the CEOs of U.S. hotel companies about the Code of Conduct. For sample letters go to www.ecpatusa.org or www.afuturenotapast.org.

Intervention

Push for reform of lenient laws so that traffickers, pimps, and customers are more severely punished.

Lobby state and local government to allocate resources to provide rescue and shelter for victims of CSEC.

Participate in outreach, literally working with law enforcement to identify youth and communities at risk. Help children leave the streets and escape CSEC, and communities to become intolerant of CSEC.

Encourage our police officers who are on the front lines with the girls and boys on the streets. You can send notes of thanks, or host a lunch to express appreciation for them.

Please visit the Street GRACE website for a list of organizations you can partner with in the area of intervention.

Restoration

Identify and support, financially or with volunteers, safe houses - the nurturing environments where victims of CSEC can receive treatment for their physical and psychological wounds, enabling them to resume normal lives as children and teens.

In communities where none exist, either through development from the ground up or in partnership with local human services organizations, establish safe houses for victims of CSEC. Such safe houses may take the form of day treatment programs, residential treatment programs, or temporary emergency housing.

Identify gaps in services in your community. Encourage leaders of private and public human services organizations to develop programs to serve victims of CSEC.

Work within communities to reduce or eliminate the environmental conditions that foster and harbor CSEC.

Please visit the Street GRACE website for a list of organizations you can partner with in the area of restoration.





Appendix A

Street GRACE Information

OUR VISION

The Metro Atlanta faith-based community envisions a day when children are safe and free from the injustice of child sex slavery and exploitation.

OUR MISSION

Create an aligned, powerful, highly-resourced movement of churches united with public, private, and social sectors to bring about the abolition of child sex slavery and exploitation in Atlanta.

OUR STRUCTURE

The Alliance will operate with three levels of engagement:

1. Strategic Member Church – Contributes \$5000 per year or more.
2. Supporting Member Church – Contributes \$250 per year or more.
3. Individual Member – Contributes \$150 per year or more.

OUR VALUES

- 1. Dependent on God** – Our purpose and our power comes solely from God who has equipped us for every good work.
- 2. Make a Difference** – Our efforts must result in a difference that is statistically undeniable, anecdotally inspiring, independently applauded, and life transformational as evidenced by a renewed mind through a Christ-centered existence.
- 3. Inclusive and Integrated** – We will build a guiding coalition that reflects the breadth of the people groups victimized by this injustice.
- 4. Progress over Process** – We will champion results and moving forward versus an approach that measures activity. We recognize our vision requires a sense of urgency and resilience with a commitment to the long-term.
- 5. Celebrate Creativity** – We will be respectful of one another's ideas and we will encourage going to the "edge" in pursuit of our vision. We will willingly challenge the status quo with outrage over the injustice.
- 6. Champion Unity** – We will be one in spirit and mind; aligned and focused; relentless in addressing and attacking the injustice "enablers".
- 7. Mutual Voluntary Submission** – We will be accountable to one another; we are shared stewards of a unique opportunity. We will lead with love and service, and not be dictatorial or authoritarian.

OUR PURPOSE

- 1. Unifier** – We are a safe place to come together, to unify others.
- 2. Resourcer/Mobilizer** – We will serve as a resource mobilizer through campaigning, directing, and acquisition of resources. We are uniquely able to resource, equip, enable, and champion others to the cause; but NOT operate or "do it" ourselves. We will focus our efforts to initiate or accelerate high impact opportunities for change.
- 3. Strategic** – We will provide an organizing framework and aligned direction that creates a structure and a strategy to which others will be drawn.
- 4. Advocate** – We will provide a "common voice" and serve as a provocateur. We are not afraid to go to the edge.
- 5. Gatekeeper** – We recognize the need for a "clearinghouse" of information of available services and best practice agencies. We will strive to serve this need by thoughtfully monitoring activities, identifying standards, evaluating performance, and sharing "best practices" among identified agencies and service providers.
- 6. Distributor** – As a church body, we have nearly 5,000 Atlanta churches (distribution points) for focused, high impact action.
- 7. Convener** – We are able to bring others together and align them to the cause.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Create an Advocacy “Outcry” Campaign that will inform and educate broad audiences in Metro Atlanta on the existence and injustice of child sex slavery.
2. Develop a metro-wide Church Mobilization Campaign that will equip churches to effectively engage in the problem.
3. Build/establish a “mobilized” Prayer Network that will intercede for the victims and abolitionists who are fighting the problem.
4. Sponsor Strategic Aftercare for Child Victims to resource and equip facilities to better care for victims.
5. Support At-Risk Communities through Youth Mentoring Programs/Networks to reduce the number of victims through education, prevention, and changing environmental conditions that foster and harbor child sex slavery.



Appendix B

God's Heart for Justice: Justice can be defined as "truth in action."

We should treat others in a just manner. This includes both friend and foe. As individual Christians we should speak out for the cause of the oppressed. As the Church we should reflect God's passion for the weak, the poor, and the downtrodden.

Justice is putting God's truth into practice in the world around us. God has called us, as followers of Christ, to look after those who can't look after themselves. James 1:27 tells us, "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."

God requires justice of us because He is just Himself.

Deuteronomy 32:4 *"He is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He."*

Isaiah 61:8 *"For I, the LORD, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity."*

Psalm 97:2 *"Clouds and darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne."*

In order to "Do Justly," we must first seek after and know truth. Once we know truth, we must put the truth into action. This is for both Justice and Mercy. Remember how Micah spoke to the Nation of Israel – trying to get their attention about what was important to God? The great prophet Isaiah did the same thing. God was disturbed by the heart of the people of Israel—their religious works were an abomination to Him—even when they were fasting and theoretically, seeking Him out.

Isaiah 58:2-10 *"Yet they act so pious! They come to the Temple every day and seem delighted to hear my laws. You would almost think this was a righteous nation that would never abandon its God. They love to make a show of coming to me and asking me to take action on their behalf. 3 'We have fasted before you!' they say. 'Why aren't you impressed? We have done much penance, and you don't even notice it!'"*



God's Heart for Justice (cont.)

"I will tell you why! It's because you are living for yourselves even while you are fasting. You keep right on oppressing your workers. 4 What good is fasting when you keep on fighting and quarreling? This kind of fasting will never get you anywhere with me. 5 You humble yourselves by going through the motions of penance, bowing your heads like a blade of grass in the wind. You dress in sackcloth and cover yourselves with ashes. Is this what you call fasting? Do you really think this will please the LORD?"

6 "No, the kind of fasting I want calls you to free those who are wrongly imprisoned and to stop oppressing those who work for you. Treat them fairly and give them what they earn. 7 I want you to share your food with the hungry and to welcome poor wanderers into your homes. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help.

8 "If you do these things, your salvation will come like the dawn. Yes, your healing will come quickly. Your godliness will lead you forward, and the glory of the LORD will protect you from behind. 9 Then when you call, the LORD will answer. 'Yes, I am here,' he will quickly reply.

"Stop oppressing the helpless and stop making false accusations and spreading vicious rumors! 10 Feed the hungry and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as day"

If you want to be my people—then obey—do what I require—demonstrate justice.

Justice is at the heart of who God is! He hates injustice, and as His body we cannot ignore or shy away from injustice because of fear.

It is time for the Body of Christ to engage and help bring child sex slavery and exploitation to an end in Atlanta!

"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

Edmund Burke



Contact Us

Please feel free to contact us for more information about Street GRACE and our strategy to eradicate the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Atlanta.

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