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Contact: Christine Commerce, USCSAHT Communications Director, Christine@SistersAgainstTrafficking.org, 321-750-4996 OR Kathy Dempsey, NAC Communications & Advocacy Consultant, kathydempsey8@gmail.com, 202-359-4379

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World Day Against Trafficking in Persons “Leaves No One Behind” – July 30

United States, July 17 – Cristian Eduardo was 24 years old when he was trafficked after a false promise of a job and a better life.

He escaped his trafficking situation in Canada and fled to the United States, where he was exploited once more. Eduardo is originally from Mexico, where despite his best efforts to go to school and work, he was not able to make a sustainable living. He then was recruited and lured to Canada. And trafficked. Eduardo was among three webinar panelists who recently shared stories on human trafficking and migration.

The webinar is part of an 18-month journey for the U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking (USCSAHT) and the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd (NAC) to raise awareness of human trafficking and forced migration, particularly on the nexus between them. The U.S. State Department estimates that more than 70 percent of the persons trafficked in the United States each year are immigrants.

On [World Day Against Trafficking in Persons](#) July 30, human trafficking organizations will raise awareness of trends and help combat trafficking by calling on governments, law enforcement, and society to strengthen efforts to prevent, provide and protect victims of human trafficking.

“This year’s theme, ‘Reach every victim of trafficking, leave no one behind,’ is an important reminder that anyone can be targeted by traffickers, but we must not forget the most vulnerable,” said USCSAHT Executive Director Katie Boller-Gosewisch. “Migrants are especially vulnerable to trafficking since they don’t know the language, often fear the police, don’t know their rights, and fear deportation as well as receive threats to their safety and their loved ones.”

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Eduardo said he feared for his life throughout his trafficking situation, where he was exploited for both labor and sex. His goal is to prevent people from being trafficked, but more policies and better legislation are needed to prevent the paths that traffickers use to exploit immigrants who are looking for a better life.

“We need to remind ourselves on who is being trafficked. We are talking about human beings. We are talking about children. We are talking about people just like us,” Eduardo said. “People like me are pending on decisions of all of you. We can do better. We are the United States.”

Immigrants who come to the United States often escape poverty, violence, and a lack of resources. Many are seeking asylum because their lives or those of family members have been threatened. USCSAHT and NAC are hoping to address the root causes of human trafficking and migration through awareness and policy changes that are identified during interviews, the recent webinar and research.

"In the midst of upheaval throughout the world, we must not let the purveyors of evil succeed in trafficking people and using them to prop up their power or fill their coffers," said Fran Eskin-Royer, executive director of the National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. "How do we stop them? A theme found in the stories of many survivors is that they were in vulnerable situations prior to being trafficked. Our response is how do we reduce these vulnerabilities?"

Sr. Mary Jean Doyle, DC, works at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington, where she accompanies people who have been trafficked, helping them build trust and rebuild their lives. Sr. Doyle helped a woman who left Africa, where not just employment and electricity were scarce, but so was water. This woman then found herself trafficked, through the ruse of a cousin, into domestic servitude in the home of a diplomat in the United States. She escaped. Yet, she had to wait years for a special visa for trafficked persons so that she could work and safely remain in the country.

“People do care, but they don’t always know and once they do, we can make a humongous difference in helping the person next to us,” Sr. Doyle said.

For more information on the nexus between human trafficking and forced migration, visit bit.ly/3CcdUYn to find resources and to view the recent webinar.

USCSAHT also is offering an opportunity for individuals, groups, or organizations to learn more about spreading awareness through its Human Trafficking & Art webinar on July 25 at 1 p.m. EDT. Founder Molly Gochman of Red Sand Project will share how sidewalk interventions and earthwork installations create opportunities for people to question, connect and take action against vulnerabilities that can lead to human trafficking. Click here: bit.ly/3JWsl7b to register and learn about this unique way to bring light to the crime of human trafficking.

USCSAHT was founded in 2013 by a group of Catholic Sisters committed to ending human trafficking and supporting survivors. They created a national network of resources and support that includes many different congregations of women religious and mission-aligned partners. Today, this member-based organization has grown to include more than 115 congregations and another 100+ individuals and organizations spread throughout the United States. USCSAHT is also the U.S. member of Talitha Kum, the international network of consecrated life working to end human trafficking.

[The National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd](#) educates and advocates on social justice issues for the transformation of society to the benefit of all people reflecting the spirituality, history and mission of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd. NAC advocates at the Federal level for people living in poverty, immigrants, survivors of human trafficking, survivors of domestic abuse, and other vulnerable populations. NAC reflects the spirituality, history and mission of the Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd (better known as the Sisters of the Good Shepherd). The sisters and their agencies work in solidarity with the disenfranchised – particularly families, women and children – who often are forgotten, left-behind or dismissed.

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