

Sex Trafficking Addressed in Porn Harms Campaign

Now in its third week, Morality in Media's month-long "Be Aware: PORN HARMS" National Awareness Campaign is focusing on the links between pornography and sex trafficking.

"Pornography is not only used to train those being trafficked, but it also breaks down the conscience of its viewer," says Patrick Trueman, president of Morality in Media. "Men are encouraged to act on what they see, and often times those actions are taken out on victims of trafficking."

Dawn Hawkins, Morality in Media's executive director and director of the Be Aware: PORN HARMS campaign, says this week's events will shock viewers who think sex trafficking only takes place in foreign countries.

"People will be surprised to know how much sex trafficking goes on right here in the U.S.," said Hawkins. "A recent trend involves pornographers offering their viewers the ability to create custom live porn, where victims are forced to engage in heinous sexual acts on a web cam."

Although sex trafficking statistics are difficult to pinpoint due to the clandestine nature of the crime, a University of Pennsylvania study estimated nearly 300,000 youth in the United States are at risk of being sexually exploited for commercial uses—most of them runaways or throw-aways. As of 2005, the Department of Justice reported there have been an estimated 100,000 to 150,000 sex slaves in the U.S. since 2001.