

DOES **SLAVERY** EXIST IN NEW ORLEANS TODAY?

Are we wrong to believe slavery is simply a distant memory, an institution the United States left behind with the end of the Civil War? Could such injustice possibly still exist in today's post-Katrina New Orleans?

Sadly, with nearly 36 million people enslaved around the world today, the answer to these questions is **YES**. Modern slavery takes place deep in the city's shadows. It is often known in the 21st century as the crime of **"human trafficking" — the exploitation of a person's labor through force, fraud or coercion**. Human trafficking is a form of modern slavery. It is a heinous crime that forces children and adults to engage in commercial sexual activity or to labor without pay, against their will, under the threat of violence, and with little or no means of escape.

The fact is there are more slaves today than at any other time in human history. Modern slavery is a diverse and complex human rights issue, and it is happening right here in our back yard in Southeast Louisiana.

Slavery affects many of New Orleans' top industries, from tourism and entertainment to farming and seafood to construction and factory work. While citizens have begun to learn about this issue and legislators and activists have begun to respond, we are only at the beginning of a complicated struggle to yet again end slavery in our region. Locally, human trafficking still mostly flies under the radar with little public outcry and without a conscious citywide discussion on how to empower our citizens to abolish modern slavery.

"Right now, people who want to escape slavery in New Orleans confront serious barriers. They are not aware of their rights, police are untrained to identify them as trafficking victims, there is a lack of safe shelters and alternative jobs, and most workers are unaware of their vulnerability to these risks," said Dr. Laura Murphy, director of the Modern Slavery Research Project. "At the heart of all these problems is a need for better-informed approaches to the problem and for research that supports the work of the critical service providers who are the first to identify and respond to trafficking victims' needs."



Loyola University's Modern Slavery Research Project works to make escape possible for victims of human trafficking in Louisiana, the U.S., and internationally through data-driven, community based research that better serves survivors and supports advocates who are on the front lines of identifying and assisting those held captive in modern slavery.

DR. LAURA MURPHY, FOUNDER & DIRECTOR

New Orleans' own Dr. Laura Murphy is the founder and director of Loyola University's Modern Slavery Research Project, which was launched in 2013. Dr. Murphy holds a PhD in African and African American Studies and an MA in English and American Literatures from Harvard University. She also earned an MA at Syracuse University and a BA from Louisiana State University.

Through Dr. Murphy's extensive research, publishing, teaching and public speaking, she inspires and rallies local forces in Louisiana and around the world to help her support the needs of human trafficking victims eager to escape exploitation. Her firsthand research in New Orleans, across the United States, and in Africa and India, has led her to witness and write about evidence of modern slavery as an almost silent epidemic at home and abroad.

In addition to writing countless essays, reviews, reports and journal articles, and speaking for various lecture series and conferences at universities across the United States, Dr. Murphy is also the distinguished author of two influential books, one historical and one modern. Dr. Murphy's most recent book is ***Survivors of Slavery: Modern-Day Slave Narratives*** (Columbia University Press, 2014). *Survivors of Slavery* presents first-person accounts of modern slavery from the voices of not only those victims who are trafficked but also those of the traffickers themselves. *Booklist* reviewer Vanessa Bush said Murphy's "collection gives voice to the desire of the enslaved to express their humanity." Her first book, ***Metaphor and the Slave Trade in West African Literature*** (Ohio University Press, 2012, winner of the African Literature Association First Book Prize), traced the West African memories of the historic slave trade and set the stage for her work on modern slavery.

As founder of the Survivors of Slavery speakers network, Murphy works with survivors who are speaking out against trafficking, working as modern-day Frederick Douglasses. Dr. Murphy is also the founder and lead organizer of the New Orleans Human Trafficking Working Group, a coalition of state, civil society, and community organizers committed to preventing human trafficking in New Orleans.

Raised across the river in Luling, Louisiana, Dr. Murphy attended Hahnville High School and the Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts. "I know what it means to miss New Orleans, and I am thrilled to be able to return home to teach at Loyola and serve my community on this issue," said Dr. Murphy. She lives in the Faubourg Marigny and is an Assistant Professor of English at Loyola University New Orleans, where her institute, Modern Slavery Research Project, and its affiliated projects are based.



EMAIL ✉

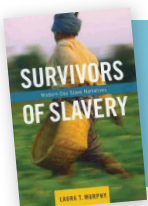
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"Murphy avoids sensationalism, making the stories seem almost ordinary; paradoxically [she] succeeds in underscoring the breadth and perniciousness of slavery's evils."

- *Publisher's Weekly* on *Survivors of Slavery: Modern-Day Slave Narratives*

**MODERN
SLAVERY**
RESEARCH PROJECT

HOW CAN WE REACH VICTIMS?

THE “MAKE ESCAPE POSSIBLE” CAMPAIGN

People who are trafficked do not get to quit their jobs – they must *escape* them. Once they finally find the nerve to escape, many obstacles stand in their way: fear of their traffickers, misperceptions of the police, lack of knowledge about their own rights, lack of housing and job opportunities—all of which can thwart their attempt to free themselves.

The Modern Slavery Research Project’s “**Make Escape Possible**” campaign, launched in the spring of 2014, is a collaborative effort involving state legislators, state and local police, regional hospitals, city schools, and human trafficking victim service providers. Together we aim to improve New Orleans’ anti-trafficking efforts through our multi-faceted approach:

- **LEGISLATION** – Create research-based, survivor-centered legislative priorities to assist legislators in determining next steps for keeping Louisiana the #1 state in legal response to human trafficking.
- **LAW ENFORCEMENT** – Focus on the arrest of traffickers instead of sex workers. Require human trafficking training at all police academies and for veteran officers. Create data management systems for trafficking offenses.
- **HEALTHCARE** – Increase training for healthcare professionals on how to identify victims of trafficking. Create an intake questionnaire for ER and social workers in cases of sexual- or labor-related abuse. Increase harm-reduction efforts aimed at trafficking victims and at-risk youth and adults.
- **VICTIM SERVICE PROVIDERS** – Create and distribute a working protocol for identified victims. Enhance outreach to trafficking victims. Implement data collection for confirmed and suspected human trafficking cases. Expand access to self-esteem, harm-reduction and anti-trafficking opportunities.
- **EDUCATION & AWARENESS** – Partner with Frederick Douglass Family Initiatives on city school HT curriculum. Create “Escape” public service announcements and distribute posters and pamphlets with a free telephone helpline for at-risk youth.
- **CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP** – Inform and train area business leaders on their corporate social responsibility and what their role is regarding human trafficking. Ensure the supply chain of their products and services is slavery-free. Raise awareness among employees who might encounter trafficking victims. Hire workers who are survivors of trafficking.
- **RESEARCH** – Study the prevalence of trafficking in Louisiana. Evaluate effectiveness of training programs, awareness campaigns, school curriculum and our overall outreach.



WHERE IS THE HOPE?

CONNECTING RESEARCH TO ACTION

Though the Modern Slavery Research Project just launched in the fall of 2013, many strides have been made toward addressing trafficking in New Orleans as well as in the United States. Here are some of the initiatives already underway:

- ***The Louisiana Human Trafficking Report*** is a 40-page research report on the current state of knowledge regarding the forms, prevalence and sources of trafficking in the New Orleans metro area. The report synthesizes data on trafficking-related legislation, arrests, cases and response.
- ***Trafficking 101 seminars*** are conducted around New Orleans for high school and college students, community groups, medical professionals, faith-based groups and any group wanting to raise awareness in their community.
- ***Our “Make Escape Possible” campaign*** explores what New Orleans is doing to address trafficking and suggests ways community members, business leaders and stakeholders can make a difference.
- ***“Know Your Rights” brochures*** are being developed for New Orleans regional hospitals, police stations, social services sites and churches to distribute.
- ***Training workshops*** are held across the city for law enforcement, health professionals, social workers and school teachers to learn how to identify victims.
- ***The Survivors of Slavery speakers network*** is introducing the community to the first-person accounts of survivors of modern slavery.
- ***Our Covenant House New Orleans Trafficking study*** features interviews with youth residents to determine their likelihood of having been the victims of trafficking.
- ***Strategy-sharing sessions with international diplomats*** draw on lessons learned from addressing trafficking in New Orleans to spark international discussions on anti-HT efforts that have been successful around the globe.

The **Modern Slavery Research Project** continues to host ongoing events throughout the year to raise awareness in our community about human trafficking in New Orleans and around the world.

Email modernslavery@loyno.edu to request a speaker for your community or group.

For more information, please visit:
modernslaveryresearch.org



HOW CAN I HELP?

Without your help, human trafficking will continue, and the thought of slavery taking place today in our beloved city is disturbing. Most know little about modern slavery in New Orleans, while others prefer not to think about it at all. Present-day slavery can often feel like a problem that is so big and so overwhelming that it cannot be tackled. The Modern Slavery Research Project strives to make change possible and accessible.

Community awareness and a robust response are needed to enforce human trafficking laws and make more victim services available. The Modern Slavery Research Project is not just a call to action to state and local civil services; it is also an important reminder for local corporations and private citizens alike to understand the moral urgency of this issue and do their part to help expose and address these inhumane labor and sex crimes.

A cultural shift in our citizens' perceptions and assumptions about sex workers, immigration and laborers is required if we are to respond compassionately and justly toward people who are vulnerable to exploitation. Through research and training, the Modern Slavery Research Project is trying to understand the reach of this crime in our community and to collaborate with citizens to ensure that we have a slavery-free city.

To date, the Modern Slavery Research Project has been funded through grants and donations. No donation is too small, and every amount helps. All donations are tax-deductible, and you will receive a letter acknowledging your donation from Loyola University New Orleans.

Donate now!

GIVE ONLINE:

- Please visit <http://www.modernslaveryresearch.org/#!donate/c1ghi>
- Click on **DONATE** button to link to Loyola's secure donation form.
- On the form, under "**Donation Info**," kindly select "**Other**."
- On the form, under "**Designation**," kindly select "Other."
- Under "**Comments**," type in "**For Modern Slavery Research Project**."

GIVE BY MAIL:

- To mail your donation, include your check, credit card payment or money order made payable to **Loyola University New Orleans**.
- Indicate your gift is for the **Modern Slavery Research Project fund**.

Please mail to:

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Feel free to contact Dr. Murphy at modernslavery@loyno.edu or at (504) 865-2479 for more information or to discuss your donation.

Thank you in advance for your contribution!

