

THE MARICOPA COUNTY CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING COLLABORATIVE:

ANALYSIS OF THREE YEARS OF CASE DECEMBER 2020

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Mercy Care
- Mark Doty- Sargent Phoenix Police Department HEAT Unit

COLLABORATIVE OVERVIEW

- Innovative approach
- Unique to Maricopa County, Arizona
- Purpose
 - to streamline services
 - Provide targeted and specialized supports
- Utilizes a centralized coordinator
 - To provide ongoing case oversight
 - To help determine placement using input from the Collaborative Team

COLLABORATIVE OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)

- Unique supports
 - Transportation by law enforcement
 - Short term stabilization-utilizing contract for beds at a crisis psychiatric unit
 - Targeted placements- comprehensive training of staff, utilization of specialized treatments (STAR group).
 - A specialty Juvenile Court (STRENGTH) Calendar for sex trafficking victims who are either dependent or delinquent (or both).
 - Adult Survivor Mentor

COLLABORATIVE PATHWAY STEP I

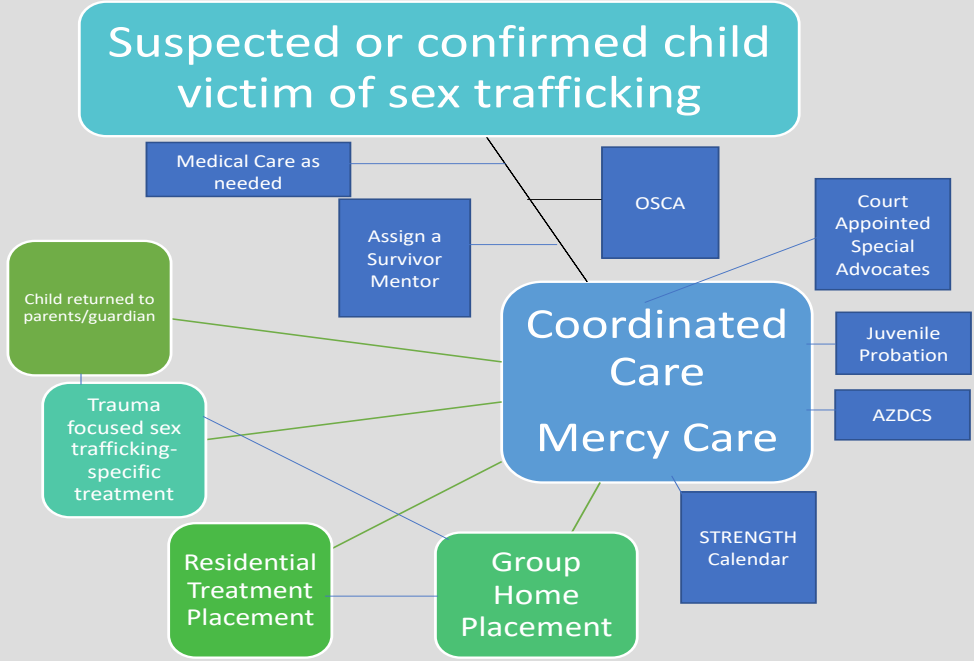
Child Identified as a potential sex trafficking victim

Referral received by Mercy Care Specialist
Explore client history (police reports, dependency, juvenile justice)

Suspected or confirmed sex trafficking victim

Not a child sex trafficking victim

COLLABORATIVE PATHWAY STEP 2



CASE STUDY I

***Allison** (not her real name) was 16 years old when she was identified by staff at the Arizona Department of Child Safety Placement Unit. The Mesa Police HEAT Squad investigated this case and worked with the victim for a number of years. Allison refused to testify against her trafficker but did share details of her victimization including that she was forced to prostitute and forced to recruit and prostitute other girls. After she was identified and brought into the Collaborative services, she ran away from her assigned group home many times. On a couple of occasions, she took other girls in the group homes with her out to the Blade and introduced them to the 'life'. Sometimes she ran only for the day and would return to the group home in the night. She had a strong and consistent support team through the Collaborative including a behavioral health therapist, STRENGTH Court (Judge Svoboda), AZ Department of Child Safety worker, a behavior coach, juvenile probation officer, and a Survivor Mentor. Allison was admitted to OSCA for crisis stabilization a number of times. She was admitted to residential treatment center where she received sex trafficking specific therapeutic services and substance abuse treatment for a year. Once released she was successful at a group home with strong engagement with her Survivor Mentor until she turned 18 and she is currently living independently. Allison is stable and sober.*

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- To explore the child sex trafficking cases referred to the Collaborative.
- Look at trends and patterns
- Answer the following research questions:
 1. Explore the frequency of referred child sex trafficking victims during the three years.
 2. Explore changes in case information including victim characteristics of gender, race, guardian type, sexual abuse history, and running away.
 3. Explore the different types of referral sources for the cases over the 3 years.
 4. Identify what phone apps and online-driven transportation services were used in the trafficking of the child sex trafficking victims.
 5. Explore the impact COVID-19 has had on the number of cases and victim characteristics?

DATA COLLECTION SEPTEMBER 2017 TO OCTOBER 2020

- Date of first referral
- Age of child at first referral
- Gender of the children
- Sexual orientation of the male victims
- Ethnicity of children
- Guardianship information
- Runaway history
- Sexual abuse history
- Information about the number of children who utilized the psychiatric stabilization unit
- Number of children receiving survivor mentoring support
- Online applications use by traffickers to recruit, groom, find customers and transport the child sex trafficking victims

SUSPECTED/CONFIRMED CASES N = 291

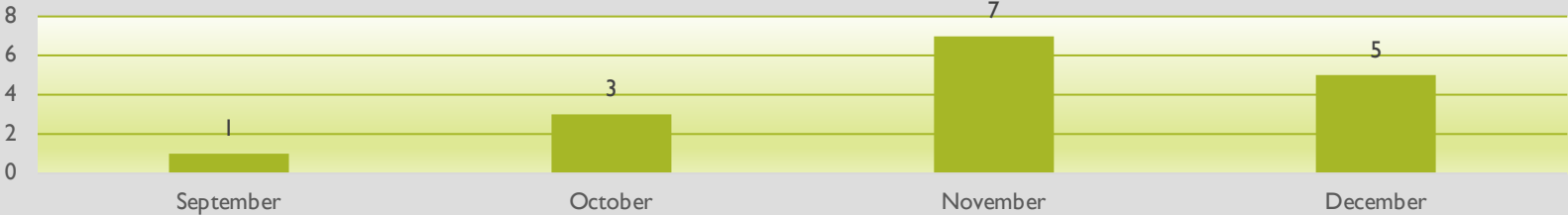
- Only four (1.4%) child sex trafficking victims were from out of state.

Table 1. Maricopa County Child Sex Trafficking Collaborative Cases by Year 2017-2020.

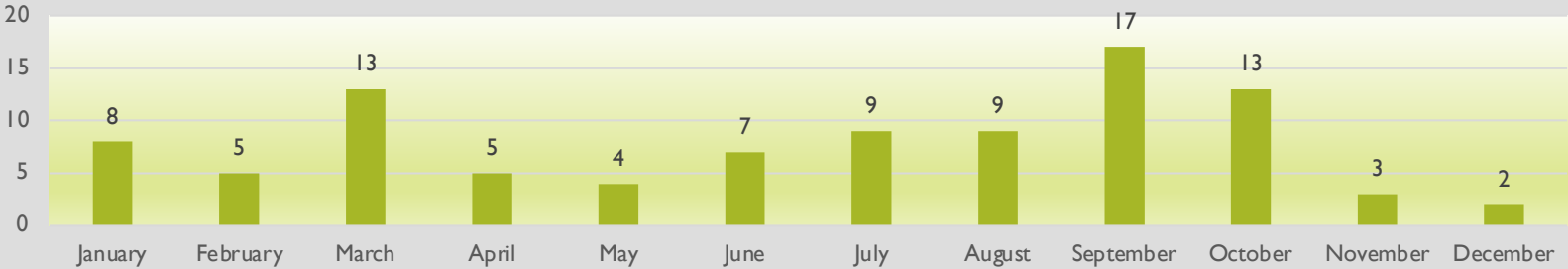
Year	# of Cases	% of Cases
2017 (September-December)	16	5.5%
2018 (all months)	95	32.6%
2019 (all months)	73	25.1%
2020 (January-October)	107	36.8%
Total	291	100%

DISTRIBUTION BY YEAR

2017 n = 16

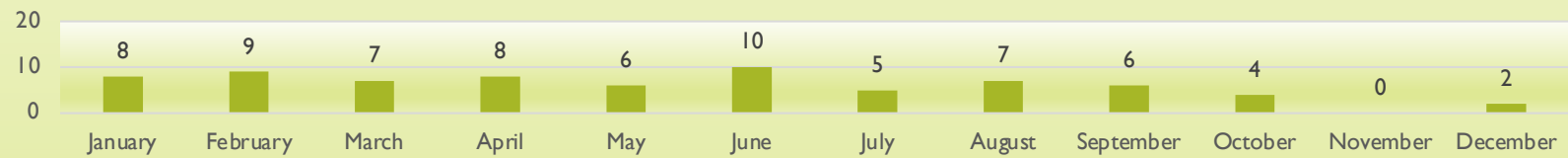


2018 n = 95

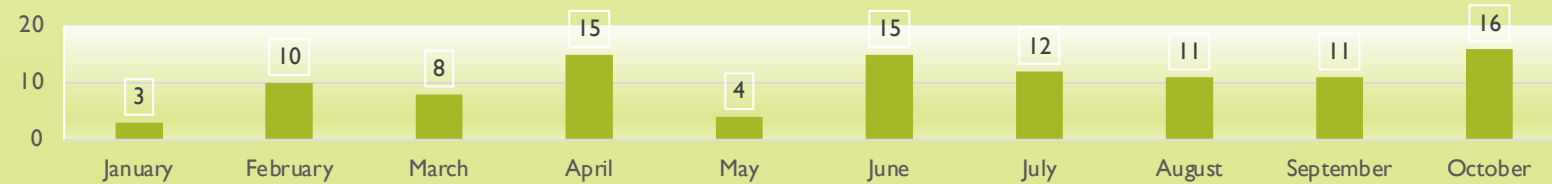


DISTRIBUTION BY YEAR

2019 n = 73



2020 n = 107



VICTIM CHARACTERISTICS

- Age range 5 to 17 (average 15.7)

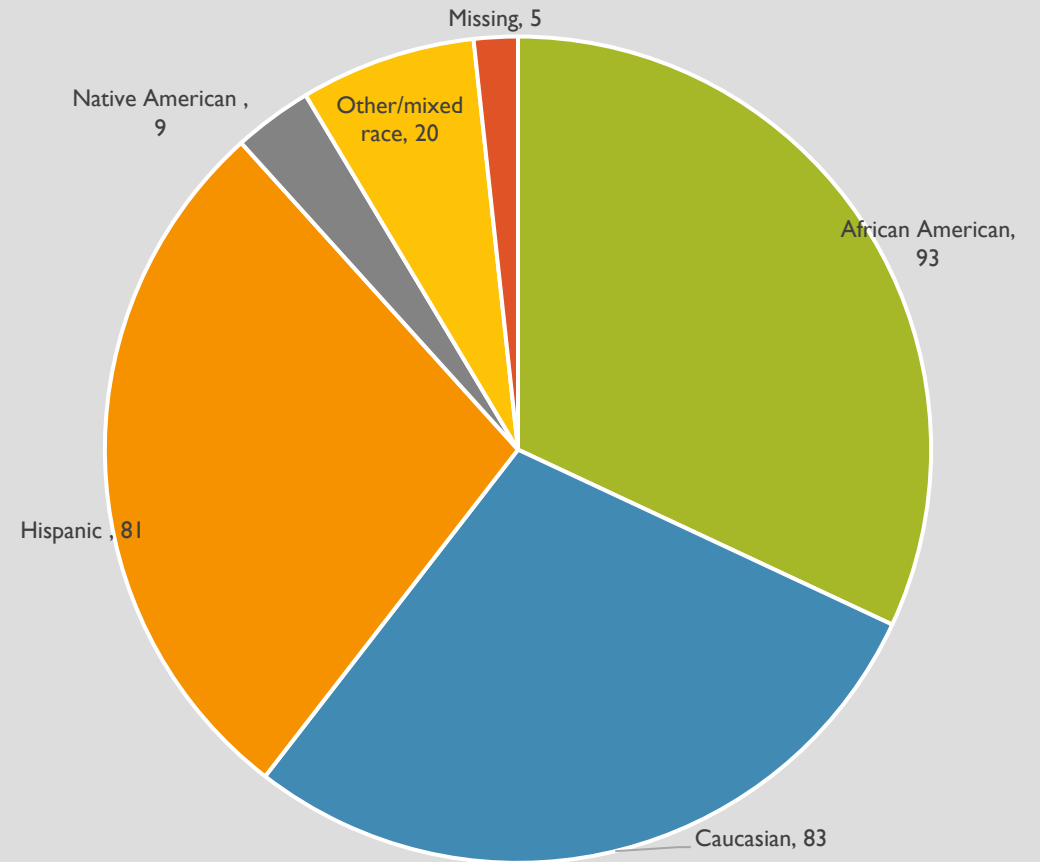
Age range and Medians of Maricopa County Child Sex Trafficking Collaborative Cases.

Year	Minimum Age	Maximum Age	Average
2017	16	17	16.6
2018	11	18	15.9
2019	12	17	15.7
2020	5	17	15.3

CHARACTERISTICS CONT.

- Gender
 - 281 (96.6% female)
 - 7 (2.4%) male
 - 3 (1%) transgender

Ethnicity of Child Sex Trafficking Victims N =291



VICTIM ETHNICITY

African American 93 (32%)
Caucasian 83 (38.5%)
Hispanic 81 (27.8%)
Mixed/other 20 (6.9%)
Native American 9 (3.1%)
Missing 5 (1.7%)

CHANGES OF VICTIM ETHNICITY

Changes in Ethnicity of Child Sex Trafficking Victims by Year.

	2017	2018	2019	2020
African American	10 (62.5%)	30 (31.6%)	19 (26.4%)	34 (31.8%)
Hispanic	4 (25%)	21 (22.1%)	24 (32.9%)	32 (29.9%)
Caucasian	2 (12.5%)	23 (24.2%)	25 (34.2%)	33 (30.8%)
Native American	0	5 (5.3%)	2 (2.8%)	2 (1.9%)
Other/Mixed	0	16 (16.8%)	2 (2.8%)	2 (1.9%)

GUARDIANSHIP OF CHILD VICTIMS

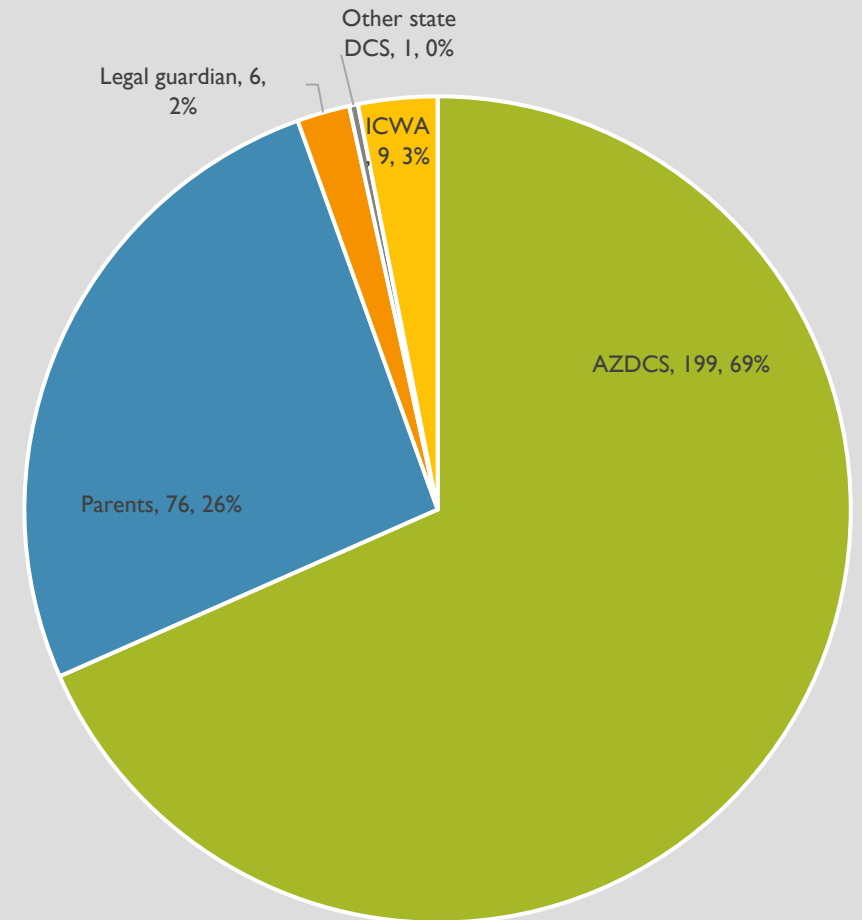
71.4% (n =208) of the child victims were in AZCDCS guardianship (including the 9 children in the ICWA Unit),.

26.1% (n =76) in parent guardianship,

2.1% (n =6) had a legal guardian (non-parent)

1 child was in the guardianship of another state's child welfare agency

Guardian of Child Sex Trafficking Victims (N =291)



CHANGES IN GUARDIANSHIP TYPE

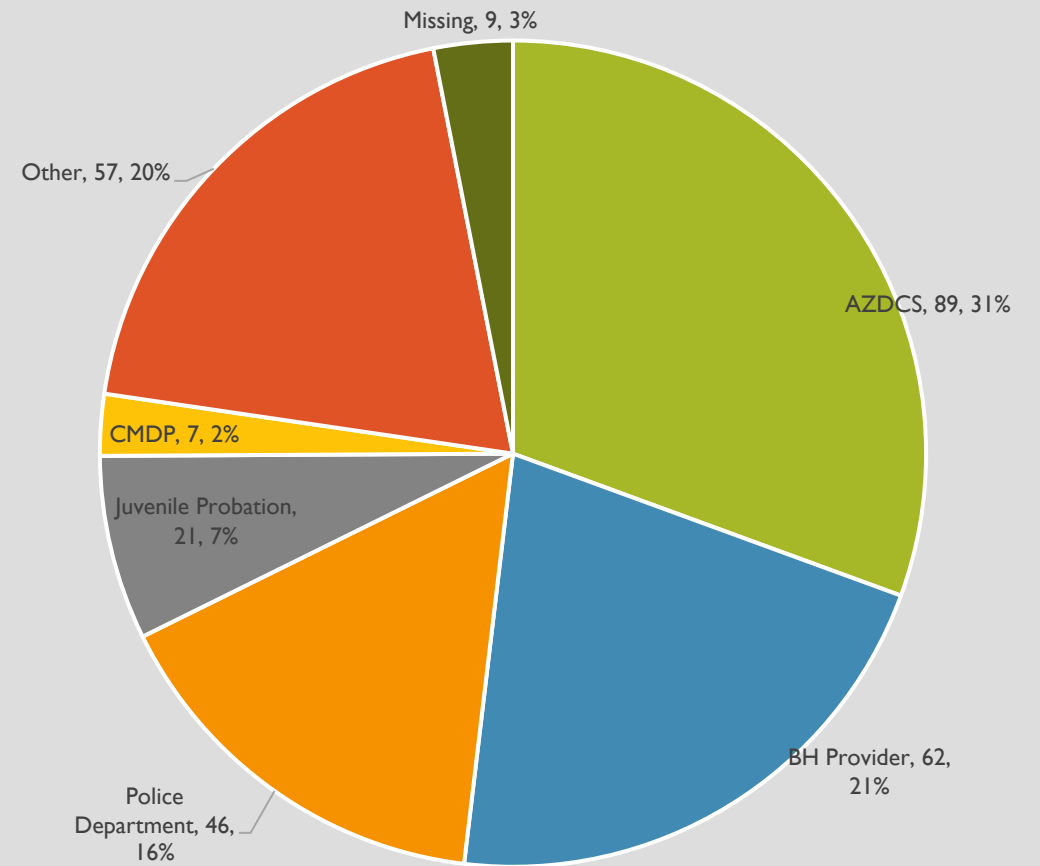
Changes in Guardianship Type of Child Sex Trafficking Victims by Year.

Guardianship Type	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Parent	1 (6.3%)	16 (16.8%)	18 (24.7%)	41 (38.3%)	76
AZDCS	15 (93.8%)	76 (80%)	51 (69.8%)	65 (60.8%)	207
Legal Guardian	0	3	3	0	6
Other state DCS	0	0	0	1	1
Missing	0	0	1	0	1
Total					291

REFERRAL SOURCES

The most common referral source was the AZDCS (n = 89, 30.6%) behavioral health providers (n = 62, 21.3%) other (including parents, judges from Maricopa County Juvenile Court) (n =57, 19.6%), Police Departments (n =46, 15.8%), Maricopa County Juvenile Probation (n =21, 7.2%) Comprehensive Medical and Dental Plan (CMDP) (n =7, 2.4%)

Referral Source of the Child Sex Trafficking Victims



CHANGES IN REFERRAL SOURCE

Referral Source	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
AZDCS	12	34	14	29	89
Law Enforcement	2	19	7	18	46
Juvenile Probation	1	12	3	5	21
Behavioral Health Providers	0	17	22	23	62
Other sources (parents/judges)	0	11	22	24	57
CMDP	1	2	1	3	7
Missing	0	0	4	5	9
Total	16	95	73	107	291

UTILIZATION OF CRISIS STABILIZATION BEDS

- OSCA was used by 104 (35.7%) of the child sex trafficking victims.

Use of OSCA for Crisis Stabilization by Year.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
OSCA Use	10	42	11	41	104

SURVIVOR MENTOR INVOLVEMENT

- Increase in Mentors over the three years
- Provide assistance with navigating the system
- Provide lived experience and case input
- Assist the Collaborative Team to develop insight and make recommendations for care
- 24.3% (n =70) received mentoring support from a Survivor Mentor

HISTORY OF RUNNING AWAY

- 90.3% (n =263)

Reported History of Running Away by Year.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
History of running away	16 (100%)	77 (81.1%)	66 (90.4%)	104 (97.2%)	263 (90.3%)

HISTORY OF CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE

- 27.5% (n =80) reported a history of childhood sexual abuse.

ONLINE APPLICATIONS

- OnlyFans
- Discord
- Plenty of Fish
- Moco Space
- Meet Me
- Whatsapp
- Grindr
- Tiktok
- Snapchat
- Calculator%
- Kik
- Whisper

IMPACT OF COVID-19

- Comparison-increase by 29%
- Cases
 - March to October 2019 = 67
 - March to October 2020 = 93
- Runaway Comparisons
 - March to October 2019 = 61 (93.8% of total 65)
 - March to October 2020 = 90 (97% of total 93)

POSSIBLE REASONS FOR INCREASE IN VICTIMS DURING COVID-19

- Children are online more due to virtual school. This can increase vulnerability and new access routes for sex traffickers to identify, groom, and sexually exploit the victims. Some of the applications that sex traffickers have used during this time to gain access to the victims include dating apps, social media (Snapchat, Facebook dating, Facebook, Instagram), and cash apps.
- Some children are being supervised less. In some cases, this has been due to parents needing to work inside or outside the home.
- Children are more accessible online due to increased use of gaming applications during COVID-19 including games and gaming systems like Fortnite, Call of Duty, and Discord.
- Due to limited social interactions, some children are craving social activity and have been convinced by sex traffickers that they really want to be their boyfriends and they feel wanted and needed.

CASE STUDY 2

- Gia (not her real name) was referred by Phoenix Police HEAT Unit to the Human Trafficking Project Coordinator. Gia had been contacted by HEAT Unit detectives on 27th Avenue who identified as a 15-year-old runaway. She was from a home that permitted her to do what she wanted and had few rules except to share the money that she was making while prostituting. Gia had not been reported missing although she hadn't been home for a while when she was found and was being trafficked by a male trafficker. Her trafficker was a friend of her family and she had known him for years before he convinced her to go out make money for him. Once identified on the street, Gia was transported by a HEAT unit detective to OCSA for crisis stabilization. She was there for 23 hours and was returned home and although engaged in some services, Gia was still being trafficked by her trafficker. Three months later she witnessed a violent crime on the streets and was again contacted by the Phoenix Police Department HEAT unit who brought her to OSCA. She was transferred to the St. Luke's adolescent psychiatric unit for longer term stabilization. Once stable, Gia was sent to Mingus Mountain Academy for almost a year and then stepped down to Desert Lily Academy group home. At Desert Lily, along with trained staff supported services, Gia was provided with outside sex trafficking specific clinical services from Southwest Network. Gia was assigned a Survivor Mentor and participated in STRENGTH Court with Judge Gass. She testified against her sex trafficker and he was convicted and she received encouragement from Bikers Against Child Abuse (BACA) who provided her with support before and during her actual testimony. She aged out of the Collaborative and moved out of state.*

DISCUSSION

- Most (98%) of the child sex trafficking victims referred to the Collaborative were from Arizona.
- Steadily decreasing in average age of child sex trafficking victims- From 16.6 to 15.3 years old over the three years.
- Significant changes in guardianship of victims moving from AZDCS to more parents.
- Diversification of referral sources over the three years.
- Important link to runaway history.
- Technology used- grooming, recruitment, exploitation (finding dates), and transportation.

LIMITATIONS

- Victim information was limited to those referred to the Collaborative.
- Although 12,000+ community members have been trained on sex trafficking 101 and the Collaborative, there may still be cases in Maricopa County not being referred.
- Data is limited to what is collected by the referral agency and historical records which are often missing key elements of information regarding sex trafficking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Target prevention at lower ages. Begin in 7th grade (ages 12-13 years old).
- Continue training for high turnover Collaborative partners to decrease knowledge loss. Create monthly training opportunities.
- Hire more Survivor Mentors.
- Create a county-wide standardized child sex trafficking screening used by all Collaborative partners.
- As more child sex trafficking victims have their parent as guardian, there is a need to develop and provide services to the parent/family of child sex trafficking victims.
 - Services should include-
 - Support group/education group (combined).
 - Systems navigation guides for parents.

RECENT COLLABORATIVE ACTIONS

- Increased involvement of Phoenix Children's Hospital Emergency Department and social work staff for crisis medical and substance abuse evaluations.
- New AZDCS positions- STRENGTH Court Specialists
 - Six total in Maricopa County

THANK YOU!!!

- Contact information
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