



BILL WOOLF, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Bill Woolf has dedicated his personal and professional life to combatting human trafficking – most recently being recognized by receiving the Presidential Medal for Extraordinary Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons. He started his professional career as a police officer where he was promoted to the position of detective and was assigned to work on the Gang Investigations Unit. While doing this work, he quickly became aware of an emerging problem in his region, human trafficking. Mr. Woolf learned that gangs were transitioning from other profitable crime, such as narcotics trafficking, to human trafficking as a source of income for their illicit activities.

Mr. Woolf, having no formal law enforcement training regarding human trafficking, sought out to better understand the problem. In doing so, he learned how prevalent the issue really was domestically in the United States, as well as internationally. From that point forward he became dedicated to combatting the issue serving as a federal task force officer investigating and prosecuting cases locally and federally.

He was instrumental in applying for, and ultimately receiving, funding to start a human trafficking task force in northern Virginia. Mr. Woolf was placed in charge of the task force and was assigned to coordinate enforcement and interdiction efforts with other regional, state and federal law enforcement. He was also tasked with forging partnerships with non-governmental agencies that could provide necessary services to those victimized by human trafficking. In the first two years, under Mr. Woolf's leadership, the task force was able to identify 217 victims of sex and labor trafficking and recover over 126 of them. The task force also identified and initiated investigations into more than 100 traffickers that had conducted illegal activities in the northern Virginia area.

Mr. Woolf saw, through his work, that many of the young victims were being tricked by the traffickers because they were not equipped nor educated to identify what was happening. Mr. Woolf founded the Just Ask Prevention Project to help in better protecting our communities. He led the effort to develop a systematic approach of education, prevention and intervention which brings effective strategies in addressing the threat of human trafficking to communities. The program has garnered national attention and is now being implemented in areas throughout the United States, Mexico, Netherlands, and Nigeria.

After over 15 years of law enforcement service, Mr. Woolf has taken on the prevention and intervention work full time as the Executive Director of the Just Ask Prevention Project and Director of the National Human Trafficking Intelligence Center. He leads a team that is focused on developing tangible tools and resources and leveraging new technologies assisting professionals in the field to better identify situations of human trafficking or exploitation and respond appropriately to those situations. That National Human Trafficking Intelligence Center supports law enforcement in both proactive and reactive investigations by providing actionable intelligence relative to human trafficking.

He also seeks to influence the next generation by serving as an adjunct professor at George Mason University in the Criminology department, partnering with other academics and educating students on effective policy development and strategies to combat human trafficking. He continues to partner with organizations such as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to enhance the fight against human trafficking and exploitation.