

6th Annual Conference on Human Trafficking

March 17, 2015

Speaker Biographies

Sergeant Curtis Chastain is a 28 year veteran of the Fresno Police Department and currently supervises the Vice-Criminal Intelligence Unit which includes the department's grant funded Coalition Against Human Trafficking, one of nine state regional task forces. Sgt. Chastain was selected as a subject matter expert for the California Attorney General's human trafficking work group and assisted in the 2012 State of Human Trafficking in California report. Sgt. Chastain has worked a variety of investigative units, including sex crimes, homicide and vice. As a detective and supervisor, 15 years has been in undercover operations.

Phil Gazley is the Coordinator for the Kern Coalition Against Human Trafficking and the Cities Advocate for Youth with a Mission City Ministries International. Phil recently completed 3 years as a Contact Research Assistant at the Laboratory to Combat Human Trafficking. In addition to a background in the refugee resettlement, Phil was one of the founders of both the Colorado Network to End Human Trafficking and the Kern Coalition Against Human Trafficking. Phil formerly trained law enforcement with the Colorado Regional Community Policing Institute. He has trained law enforcement in Colorado, Idaho, Chicago and California in addition to conduction trainings in Albania. Phil Currently provides technical assistance to anti-trafficking programs in Europe, Central America and North America and last year worked in Brazil. He trains victim services providers, health care providers and child protection staff and does prevention work with teens in foster care and at risk families. He is an ordained minister, Church elder and therefore also engages with faith-based communities on anti-trafficking, refugee cultural mentoring and program development in immigrant communities.

Melissa Gomez has been an advocate for women and children for the past decade. She has worked as a domestic violence and sexual assault advocate in Stanislaus County, and served as a missionary with Youth with a mission in San Francisco, the Philippines, Mexico and most recently in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. As the director/founder of the Lighthouse, located in Amsterdam's red light district, she shared God's love through both spiritual support and practical resources with those trapped in a life of prostitution and sex trafficking.

Mario Gonzalez is the Victims Services Manager at Centro La Familia Advocacy Services. He is a graduate of Fresno Pacific University, where he received a Bachelor of Arts in Pre-Law and Criminal Justice. He is a first generation immigrant from Mexico. Mr. Gonzalez has been a resident of Fresno County since his arrival to this country in 1993.

Laurie Jackson is the President/CEO for National Safe Place Network, which also administers the Runaway and Homeless Youth Training and Technical Assistance Center (RHYTTAC) cooperative agreement. She joined the organization in June 2010 and has been

active with Safe Place for more than 15 years. She recently served as Associate Executive Director for Synergy Services, Inc. in Kansas City, Missouri. Laurie was with Synergy Services, Inc. for 16 years and prior to that worked for several years with Cedars Youth Services in Lincoln, Neb. She has been active with local, regional, state and national efforts in the areas of runaway and homeless youth, child welfare and domestic violence. Laurie holds an Executive Master's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Missouri Kansas City and a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from the University of Nebraska Kearney. She serves as a member of the Board of Directors for the National Network for Youth and is dedicated to bringing awareness to the issues of runaway and homeless youth.

Elana Lanpau is currently a Deputy District Attorney for Fresno County, assigned to the Sexual Assault and Child Abuse Unit. Prior to returning to the DA's Office just last month, Ms. Landau was an Assistant United States Attorney for the Eastern District of California, assigned to the Fresno Office. Ms. Landau spent six years in the Narcotics and Violent Crime Unit of the US Attorney's Office, where her duties included prosecuting human trafficking cases. In 2013, Ms. Landau successfully prosecuted the first human trafficking case out of the Fresno Division of the US Attorney's Office. Before becoming an AUSA, Ms. Landau spent 4 and a half years as a Deputy DA for Fresno County, prosecuting Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Child Abuse, Gang Cases and Homicide before leaving for the US Attorney's Office. Prior to that, she was a Deputy DA in Madera County. Ms. Landau has been a frequent speaker on human trafficking, participating in several lectures and symposiums throughout California in an attempt to educate the public about human trafficking from a prosecutor's perspective.

Robin Leppo became the Executive Director for Madera County Child Abuse Counsel Prevention Council in 2011. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminology along with a Victim Services Certificate from California State University, Fresno. She created and implemented the Multidisciplinary Interview Center in Fresno County and was the former Executive Director of the Fresno Council on Child Abuse Prevention. She is currently attending Loyola Law School where she is pursuing her Masters in Jurisprudence in Children's Law and Policy. She is also a board member for the United Way of Fresno County Women's Initiative focusing on combating human trafficking in the Central Valley.

Michael A. Neham is a staff attorney for Central California Legal Services (CCLS). He is a graduate of the Florida State University College of Law and an alumnus of UCLA. Mr. Neham has practiced law in Florida and California. He has been an attorney for CCLS since 2013. He is the Human Trafficking attorney for Merced County and conducts outreach and assistance to victims of human trafficking.

Jessica Pittman worked at Fresno First Baptist Church from 2002-2012 as Mission Director and Associate Pastor. She is passionate about missions and social justice issues, and about building a bridge from the church to the community. She is now directing the Central Valley Justice Coalition, as well as pursuing a Master's Degree in Civic and Social Entrepreneurship.

Margarita Rocha has been the Executive Director of Centro La Familia Advocacy Services (CLFA) for over 21 years. She has more than 35 years of social service experience and has achieved a distinguished career in federal and nonprofit service. Currently, she serves on the Fresno Housing Education Corp, Southwest Fresno Development Corporation, The Women's Resource Center at California State University Fresno, and TURN-The Utility Reform Network. She has also been identified by Fresno City College, The Business Journal, and Vida en el Valle as a top community grassroots leader and others.