Human Trafficking Webinar Series – Preventing and Intervening in the Labor Trafficking of Students

Wednesday, August 17, 2022 | 3:00 – 4:15 PM ET

SPEAKER BIOS

Ruth Ryder
Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Policy and Programs, U.S. Department of Education

Ms. Ruth Ryder is the Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Policy and Programs – Formula Grants in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) at the U.S. Department of Education. In this role, Ms. Ryder oversees a broad range of management, policy, and program functions related to formula and discretionary grant programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA). Ms. Ryder was previously the deputy director of the Office of Special Education Programs in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, which she joined in 1988. Prior to joining the Department, Ms. Ryder was a program administrator in a Washington state school district. There she had responsibility for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title I and Title II programs, state-remediation, gifted education, outcome-based education, and state- and district-wide testing programs. Ms. Ryder has a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology and Elementary Education and a Master’s degree in Special Education.
Katherine Kaufka Walts
Director, Center for Human Rights of Children, Loyola University, Chicago, IL

Ms. Katherine Kaufka Walts, JD is the Director of the Center for the Human Rights of Children at Loyola University Chicago. The Center represents, coordinates, and stimulates efforts of the Loyola University community to understand and protect the human rights of children utilizing an interdisciplinary approach. Prior to joining Loyola, Ms. Kaufka Walts served as the Executive Director of the International Organization for Adolescents (IOFA). At IOFA she developed several projects in the US and abroad advancing the rights of children and youth, including a program to develop the capacity of child welfare system to better respond to child trafficking and exploitation cases. Prior to IOFA, Ms. Kaufka Walts managed the Counter-Human Trafficking project at the National Immigrant Justice Center, where she worked with several local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies on single and multiple-victim sex and labor trafficking cases. She successfully represented dozens of victims of human trafficking in the United States within immigration and criminal justice proceedings under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

Ms. Kaufka Walts has provided expert testimony to local, national, and international governmental bodies. Ms. Kaufka Walts continues to provide technical assistance, training, and consultation to law enforcement, service providers, task forces and coalitions, government agencies, federal and local law enforcement, and media in the US and internationally on the subject of human trafficking. Her international work includes project development, training, and consultation in the Dominican Republic, Latvia, Ethiopia, and Kosovo.

Sheri Lochridge Combs
Senior Program Manager, Human Trafficking Special Populations, Covenant House New Orleans, LA

Ms. Sheri Combs is the Human Trafficking-Special Populations Sr. Program Manager at Covenant House of New Orleans, with a decade of serving victims of Human Trafficking. Her work includes direct care of over 400 survivors of human trafficking. Ms. Combs’ powerful presentations on her experiences as both a survivor and a survivor’s advocate have captured the attention of key stakeholders across the country.

Ms. Combs has worked within support of local, state, and federal law enforcement to identify cases of Human Trafficking. She is trained in child forensic interviews through The American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children (APSAC). Ms. Combs participated in a yearlong undercover investigation, written by The Times Picayune, “The Track”. Ms. Combs has attended the Supporting LGBTQ Youth Certificate
Program at Georgetown University and was admitted to the CJJR Fellows Network.

Ms. Combs has won multiple awards locally and nationally for her anti-trafficking work, including recognition by the City of New Orleans and Ohio Senator Fedor. Ms. Combs continues to share her knowledge of Human Trafficking throughout the state of Louisiana and nationally, presenting to health and human service professionals, law enforcement, political platforms, and community organizations. Most recently, a United Nations Panel Event - Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 66), Mitigating the Risks of Disaster for Gender Violence Survivors.

**Yuri Guerrero**  
Lived Experience Expert and Advocate, TX  

Ms. Yuri Guerrero is a REALTOR, Bilingual Survivor Advocate Speaker & Consultant, and CHW promotora in Texas. She has a passion to help others to thrive and to become the best that they can be, educating and empowering the community for an overall wellbeing. Ms. Guerrero, her sisters, brother, and family survived the ordeal of slavery/Labor Trafficking for more than 20 years. It has been a long and difficult journey, but now as she continues healing, she is using her life experiences and professional trainings to prevent, educate, increase awareness among the community, and to empower and bring hope to survivors.

Ms. Guerrero is an active REALTOR in Texas, a Human Trafficking Advocate, Speaker and Consultant; she worked as a child/Youth Advocate & Substitute Teacher, she also got her CHW Community Health Worker/Promotora Certification, graduate from HTLA class 6 (Human Trafficking Leadership Academy), and received CORO Training. She was invited from Mosaic Family Services to be a speaker in April 2018 & May 2022 Freedom Network USA conference, she also has being collaborating with in several outreach anti-human trafficking conferences and meetings; she was the guess/speaker in a video with Mosaic outreach team to be play in DFW Hispanic Consulates September 2020; She also participate in Story Corps Human Trafficking awareness recording Interview, participate in Red Dress-Vestido Rojo ADA- Human Trafficking panelist survivor, and in the International Visitors Anti-human Trafficking program meeting. Ms. Guerrero continues to collaborate in the community with organizations, and Universities, and groups to invite her to make awareness in the community preventing and fighting Human Trafficking. Most of all, Ms. Guerrero’s purpose and passion in life is helping the community to prevent & fight Human Trafficking, and keep healing and thriving with other survivors. She is very grateful for surviving, and wants to squeeze every second of her life to live enjoying freedom with her husband, family, friends and pets... She also enjoys cooking, gardening and do crafts, and loves to sing! Si hablo y canto en Espanol.