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ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES ANNOUNCES INCREASED EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND TRAINING TO PREVENT SEX TRAFFICKING

NYC first jurisdiction to purchase new educational tool to help at-risk middle-school-aged children recognize the signs and dangers of trafficking

New York, NY – NYC Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell today announced increased education and training to prevent sex trafficking, during National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month.

ACS will begin using a new animated video to teach children ages 11-14, how to spot recruitment tactics used by sex traffickers. The video, "I am Little Red," which was written by 10 survivors of child sex trafficking along with the writer of the film "Toy Story" and is narrated by actress Jessica Chastain, will be shared with youth directly via Facebook and Snapchat ads and also through 300 city agencies and nonprofit service providers.

ACS is also launching a pilot training for 25 foster care and juvenile detention professionals who work with at-risk youth. *Not a Number*, a five-hour prevention training provided by the anti-trafficking organization, Love146, is designed to train staff to engage youth on child sex trafficking prevention – specifically, to teach youth how to protect themselves from human trafficking and exploitation through information, critical thinking, and skill development.

Already, ACS provides substantial training and support to help intervene in child trafficking cases and prevent them from happening in the first place:

- In 2017, ACS conducted nearly 2,000 training sessions to help youth, parents, teachers, nonprofit service providers, and city agency staff address and prevent child sex trafficking.
- In 2016 (the most recent year for which data is available) ACS, the NYC Department of Youth & Community Development (DYCD), and ACS provider agencies identified that 2,480 children and young adults in New York City were sexually exploited or at-risk of exploitation. Of these, 1,293 were under the age of 19.

“Human trafficking has devastating effects on our communities, especially young children,” **said Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Dr. Herminia Palacio**. “This administration is committed not only to stopping the predators that victimize these children, but also assuring that survivors get the supportive services that they need to rebuild their lives. I commend ACS for continuing to raise awareness and increase resources to prevent sex trafficking.”

“Every year, we connect hundreds of at-risk youth and their families to educational and supportive services to help prevent trafficking,” **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell**. “Young children, particularly those in our child welfare and juvenile justice systems, are especially at-risk. We’re committed to increasing awareness and supportive programs designed to help at-risk youth protect themselves and help survivors find a permanent way out. With innovative new tools, such as “I Am Little Red” and increased training for staff, we hope to help even more young people and families across New York City.”

Young people in the foster care and juvenile justice systems, as well as homeless and runaway, immigrant, LGBT and other marginalized youth are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. Nationally, middle-school-aged children are most vulnerable to sex trafficking.

New York City is the first jurisdiction in the country to purchase “[I am Little Red](#),” a primary prevention tool aimed at children ages 11-14. It was produced by 50 Eggs and Mary Mazzio, narrated by Academy Award nominee Jessica Chastain, animated by Academy Award winners Gabriel Osorio and Pato Escala from PunkRobot, and written by 10 survivors of sex trafficking (aged 14-21), along with Alec Sokolow (Academy Award nominated writer of Toy Story). The film is a contemporary adaptation of the classic fairy tale, Little Red Riding Hood, and depicts the tactics typically used by “wolves” (traffickers) to lure young victims. The film helps young people learn strategies for responding to recruitment. My Life, My Choice, an anti-trafficking organization, designed the curriculum materials that go along with this resource and gives at-risk children the skills and tools they need to identify and prevent trafficking.

“We are thrilled to partner with ACS to help prevent sex trafficking of children in New York City,” **said “I Am Little Red” Producer Mary Mazzio**. “These can be difficult conversations to have with children as young as 11 years old, and our film communicates in a way that makes sense to them, so that they can identify methods used by traffickers and protect themselves. We hope that Little Red equips children with some of the warning signs.”

Human trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, selling or buying of people for various forms of exploitation, including labor and sexual exploitation. The ACS Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy (OCTPP) works with provider agencies to provide guidance in assessing trafficking indicators, suggests resources towards development of appropriate service plans, and liaises between key stakeholders.

ACS has been steadily building its capacity to identify and prevent sex trafficking through a range of supports and services. ACS contracts anti-trafficking organizations, like Safe Horizon and GEMS, and ACS provides on-site assessments and mentoring services at its Nicholas Scoppetta Children’s Center, a temporary placement setting serving children who have been

abused and neglected and removed from their parents for safety reasons. Currently, two Commercially Sex Exploited Children (CSEC) counselors from Safe Horizon, funded by ACS, are available at the Children's Center to provide assessments and counseling services for at-risk youth.

Last year, ACS announced a new tool to help raise awareness among young at-risk youth. Through the distribution of the comic book "[Where is Dylan?](#)" a comic book to help educate youth about human trafficking and empower them to protect themselves. ACS distributed the comic book, along with guidelines for its use, throughout its network of foster care provider agencies.

Additionally, Division of Child Protection Child Protective Specialists also receive training on how to identify and intervene in cases where there is suspected trafficking. Caseworkers are then able to keep track of at-risk and trafficked youth and provide supportive services through ACS contracted agencies.

Through the Safe Harbour program, the City of New York has served 2,000 exploited or at risk for exploitation youth in 2017 providing therapy, crisis beds, and transitional living, among other preventive services. The Safe Harbour programs provided services to engage and educate exploited youth and assist with risk reduction through the use of internships, counseling groups, and outreach efforts.

ACS' Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy is holding [events and trainings](#) throughout the month to increase awareness around the issue and promote the supportive programming available for at-risk youth.

About the New York City Administration for Children's Services:

About the New York City Administration for Children's Services: The Administration for Children's Services (ACS) protects and promotes safety and well-being of New York City's children and families by providing child welfare, juvenile justice, and early care and education services. For more information about NYC ACS, please visit www.nyc.gov/acs.