



United States

# Dayton Unites Against Human Trafficking: SOAP Project Seeks Volunteers

In Dayton, Ohio, the SOAP Project leads a community-driven effort against human trafficking by distributing soaps labeled with the National Hotline in hotels.



Nimrah Khatoon

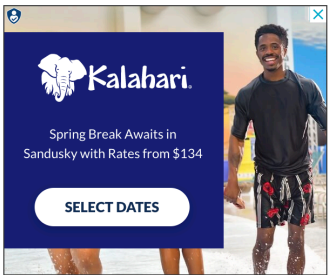
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In Dayton, Ohio, a collective effort spearheaded by human trafficking survivor Theresa Flores and supported by local groups, including the Sisters of the Precious Blood, is taking a stand against human trafficking with the SOAP Project. The initiative aims to distribute soaps and makeup remover wipes labeled with the National Human Trafficking Hotline in nearly 90 hotels around Dayton on Saturday, March 9, as part of a broader outreach campaign.

Theresa Flores, the visionary behind the SOAP (Saving Our Adolescence from Prostitution) Project, found solace in the solitude of bathrooms during her harrowing time as a trafficking victim. This insight led her to devise a plan to reach out to others trapped in similar situations in a discreet yet effective manner. The project involves labeling soap and makeup remover wipes with the National Human Trafficking Hotline number, offering a lifeline to those in need. The Sisters of the Precious Blood’s Peace, Justice, and Ecology Coordinator, Jen Morin-Williamson, emphasized the reality of trafficking in Dayton and the importance of community involvement in the fight against it.

## Volunteer Engagement and Outreach Strategies

Volunteers, crucial to the success of the SOAP Project, are being rallied to distribute the labeled products and missing children’s posters to hotels, with an emphasis on safety and teamwork. Zola Howard, a Student Success Coach at Career Prep High School, underscored the importance of the endeavor, especially for the youth. With a background in working with vulnerable children, Howard brings a personal commitment to protecting young individuals and aiding in their rescue from exploitation.

## Strategic Timing and Awareness

The timing of “SOAP Up Dayton” is strategically planned to coincide with the First Four basketball games, a period identified by Tony Talbott, Director of Abolition Ohio and Advocacy at the University of Dayton Human Rights Center, as having increased activity in commercial sex trafficking. Through this initiative, the community not only learns about human trafficking but actively participates in an outreach that could potentially save lives by increasing awareness and providing direct assistance to those in need.

## Looking Ahead: Protection, Prosecution, and Prevention

Moving forward, Talbott emphasizes the necessity of a three-pronged approach focusing on the protection of victims, prosecution of offenders, and prevention of trafficking. Despite improvements in the collective response, he advocates for enhanced support and resources to make existing programs more effective. The call for more volunteers for the upcoming “SOAP Up Dayton” event reflects the ongoing need for community engagement in tackling human trafficking head-on.

As Dayton rallies together to combat human trafficking through the SOAP Project, the initiative serves as a reminder of the power of community action in addressing complex societal issues. By offering a discreet yet powerful means of support to those in need, the project underscores the importance of vigilance, compassion, and proactive intervention in the fight against human trafficking.