

03/26/2015

Incident: Ventura County Law Enforcement Anti-Human Trafficking Fund

Contact: Watch Commander, 805.339.4416

Location: Ventura Police Department

Date/Time Occurred: March 4, 2015

Officer(s) Involved: Ventura Police Detective Corporal Ruggiero

The Ventura Police Department will be partnering with Forever Found to assist in the training, recognition and investigation of Human Trafficking crimes in Ventura County. Forever Found is a local non-profit organization that has been fighting to protect victims of Human Trafficking both domestically and abroad since 2010.

The crime of Human Trafficking continues to be a concern in Ventura County. Law Enforcement officers may inadvertently encounter Human Trafficking victims during routine calls for service or may receive reports from other agencies of minors being exploited for commercial sex in Ventura County. Training and resources are vital to identifying potential victims, and conducting successful investigations. Funding for law enforcement to adequately respond to the problem continues to be a significant challenge. Forever Found has formed a partnership to accept public donations as financial support for the Ventura Police Department and other local law enforcement agencies to provide training and investigative resources in the fight against Human Trafficking crimes.

The Ventura Police Department's efforts supported by this funding will be coordinated under the expertise of Detective Corporal David Ruggiero. Detective Ruggiero is working alongside Forever Found to end Human Trafficking in Ventura County. He is an 11-year veteran of the Ventura Police Department and is currently assigned as a detective in Major Crimes, investigating sexual assaults. He has also received extensive training in Human Trafficking investigations and has worked on several cases in Ventura County along with allied agencies.

In June of 2013, he took a one-year leave of absence from his job at Ventura PD to serve with a non-profit organization overseas. Detective Ruggiero worked with International Justice Mission in South Asia to assist the local law enforcement agencies with the protection of Human Trafficking Victims. He has returned to Ventura PD, eager to continue the fight against the exploitation of young girls in our county.

Detective Ruggiero is also a member of the steering committee for the Ventura County Coalition Against Human Trafficking (VCCAHT). This steering committee is a work group comprised of key law enforcement, social service, and nonprofit groups (including Forever Found), which directly interact with victims. The mission of the VCCAHT is to combat Human Trafficking in Ventura County by partnering to prevent, prosecute, properly identify victims, and provide victim services.

More information on Forever Found's efforts can be found at:

<http://www.foreverfound.org> or by calling 805-306-8018.

Anyone with related inquiries may also contact Det. Ruggiero of the Ventura Police Department at 339-4304.