

Drumright Rotary Club welcomed guest speaker Mark Elam, Coalition Director for Oklahomans Against Trafficking Humans at Friday's meeting.

According to Elam, there are 33 million slaves in the world. Slavery never ended, it just altered to work around laws that were created. Slavery is the loss of freedom to another's control by force, by fraud and/or by coercion. Typically, victims are threatened that their families will be hurt or killed unless they comply. "You see them everywhere, they look free, but they are not", says Elam.

Human trafficking is the fastest growing crime on the planet. It has passed arms dealing and is estimated to pass drug trafficking in three to five years.



Mark Elam and Jena Drake

Although not all victims are children, the majority of United States slaves are young boys and girls with an average age of eleven years old. Other victims include people brought over from foreign countries.

O.A.T.H. cooperates with the F.B.I. and two hundred other state and federal organizations to work towards ending human trafficking, especially here in Oklahoma. Oklahoma is one of the top ten states for highest activities regarding human trafficking. According to Elam, there are three main reasons for Oklahoma to end up on that list. The first is sharing a border with Texas. Texas is the fourth worst state in the United States for human trafficking. The second reason pertains to the major arterial interstates that criss-cross through Oklahoma. The third reason is due to Oklahoma's economy, education levels and prison rates.

One of the organizations O.A.T.H. works with is Truckers Against Trafficking, an initiative of Chapter 61 Ministries. Both organizations educate and equip truck drivers on how to spot victims of human trafficking national and locally. Truckers Against Trafficking has training videos and information available on their website, <http://truckersagainstrafficking.com>.

Another way O.A.T.H. is working towards the eradication of slavery, here in Oklahoma, is by creating programs and presentations in schools. O.A.T.H. works with local colleges to provide credit hours for students to help present the information. O.A.T.H. will do separate general assemblies for Jr. High and High School students, their parents and teachers. There is also a program to provide to elementary students. However, that is done class by class to ensure that the information provided is age appropriate.

If you or someone you know is a victim of human trafficking, please call the Oklahoma Trafficking Safeline at 800.522.SAFE (7233). If you witness acts of human trafficking, please call the National Trafficking Hotline at 888.3737.888. For more information on O.A.T.H. please go to their website <http://oathcoalition.org>.

Also, at Friday's meeting Drumright Rotary welcomed new member, Kay Murphy of Drumright.

Please join us at Friday's meeting hosted by Rotarian, Linda Crane, and her guest of honor, Raydene Walker with Sapulpa Alternative Education.

If you are interested in becoming involved in Drumright Rotary Club, or if your high school child(ren) would like to be involved in our Rotary Interact Club, please contact us on our FaceBook page, Drumright Rotary Club or go to our website [www.wix.com/drumrightrotary/drumrightrotary](http://www.wix.com/drumrightrotary/drumrightrotary).

Written by Jena Drake, Rotarian