Anti-Human Trafficking Summit:
Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Solutions
March 16, 2023 | 10:00AM – 12:00PM CT
Speaker Bios

[Caroline Roberts](#) – Senior Staff Attorney, CHILDREN AT RISK

Caroline Roberts serves as the Senior Staff Attorney at Children at Risk, advocating for policies that positively impact the lives of children. Caroline also serves as vice-chair on the Houston American Constitution Society board. Caroline attended New York University School of Law, where she served as symposium editor for the Environmental Law Journal. Before law school, Caroline graduated with a B.A. in psychology from Duke University. After graduation, she moved to Beijing to teach English to children and then to Shanghai where she taught writing and Western culture at Jiaotong University.

Innovative Tech Solutions within State Agencies

[Joseph Scaramucci](#) – Detective, Human Trafficking, McLennan County Sherriff's Office

Detective Scaramucci began his career in law enforcement in 2004 and was promoted to Detective in 2008 with the McLennan County Sheriff's Office, investigating Crimes Against Persons. Since creating a Human Trafficking Unit in 2014, Detective Scaramucci has conducted sting operations resulting in the arrest of more than 600 sex buyers, and 159 individuals for human trafficking and related offenses, which has led to the identification of 280 trafficking victims. Detective Scaramucci has worked both state and federal investigations as a Task Force Officer with H.S.I., leading to investigations and arrests throughout the U.S. He further advises and participates in sting operations throughout Texas, the U.S. and abroad. Detective Scaramucci is certified in Courts of Law as a Subject Matter Expert in Human Trafficking. He has further advised and testified in the State House and Senate, assisting with the creation and passage of laws leading to harsher penalties for human trafficking, as well as working against laws that would have added further burdens on victims. He is further employed as a consultant, contracted to provide training and technical assistance for numerous Department of Justice-funded Enhanced Collaborative Model task forces, as well as other national and international anti-trafficking organizations. He has trained 594 agencies throughout 44 states, 28 federal and DOD agencies, as well as law enforcement agencies in 12 countries, and provides technical support for their human trafficking operations and Investigations.

[Rochelle Keyhan](#) – Chief Executive Officer, Collective Liberty

Rochelle Keyhan is the Chief Executive Officer of Collective Liberty and the 2018 Thomson Reuters Foundation Stop Slavery Hero. Rochelle's focus on shifting systems to address root causes has led to the arrest of over 3,000 human traffickers and sex buyer, training of over 10,000 investigators, and shift in approach toward human trafficking in over 450 agencies and institutions. This work is informed by her decade of experience in government and nonprofit organizations as an advocate for vulnerable populations. She has a proven record as a prosecutor handling over 20,000 misdemeanor and felony gender-based violence cases in Philadelphia. Before creating Collective Liberty, she worked at Polaris where she authored the national playbook for ending massage parlor trafficking.

[Autumn Kessler](#) – SAFVIC Systems Instructor, SAFVIC Systems

Autumn Kessler brings over half a decade of law enforcement experience as a police officer, field training officer, TCOLE instructor, and crisis negotiator assistant team lead for Central Texas Regional SWAT. Throughout her experience, she has investigated many assault family violence and sexual assault crimes, including cases of physical and sexual abuse of children. Prior to becoming a police officer, Autumn dedicated her time to being a victim services advocate for the people in her community through the police department. As an officer, she joined her department's peer support team to continue an advocacy role in helping fellow first responders receive necessary support through times of personal and professional crisis. Autumn joined the Sexual Assault Family Violence Instructor's Course (SAFVIC) and SAFVIC Systems programs in pursuit of her goal to teach and promote increased knowledge and awareness among law enforcement officers and advocates statewide.

[Jason Lundquist](#) – SAFVIC Systems Instructor, SAFVIC Systems

Jason Lundquist is a SAFVIC Systems instructor. He assists in the development, implementation, and training for the Sexual Assault Family Violence Investigators Course (SAFVIC) and SAFVIC Systems programs. Prior to working for TMPA, Jason worked for the Waco Police Department. He retired after over 21 years. As a police officer Jason spent over 15 years as a patrol officer, field training officer, and patrol supervisor. In 2014 he transferred to the Waco Police Department Crimes Against Children Unit. During his tenure as supervisor of the CACU Jason oversaw over 5200 cases of physical and sexual abuse of children or child related crimes. He supervised the first investigation in McLennan County for Continuous Trafficking of Persons which resulted in a life sentence without parole, and the investigation which resulted in the longest sentence ever imposed in McLennan County (12 consecutive life sentences-Trafficking of Persons). As a supervisor he maintained his own caseload, personally investigating hundreds of cases of abuse. Jason wrote or consulted on policies regarding runaway/missing children, child abuse, and sexual assault investigation.

[John Nehme](#) – President & Chief Executive Officer, Allies Against Slavery

John Nehme is the founding President & CEO of Allies Against Slavery, where he's worked for twelve years to restore freedom and dignity to survivors of human trafficking using data, technology, and partnerships. Under his leadership, Allies has supported hundreds of trafficking survivors, successfully passed a slave-free city resolution in Austin and grown the Central Texas Coalition Against Human Trafficking. In 2018, Allies launched Lighthouse, an innovative software platform to identify victims and visualize data. Lighthouse is used by over 180 organizations and more than 1700 field professionals across Texas and Louisiana, with support from Governor's Offices in both states. John also served on a research team with the University of Texas to publish the first statewide prevalence study of human trafficking, and he serves as an expert witness in sex trafficking cases. His belief in the fundamental dignity of every person motivates him to build solutions that protect the most vulnerable and promote flourishing.

[Veronica Lowenberg](#) – West Texas Regional Advisor, Child Sex Trafficking Team, Texas Governor's Office

Veronica Lowenberg joined the Governor's Child Sex Trafficking Team as the West Texas Regional Advisor in 2019 after working with the El Paso Center for Children's Specialized foster Care Program which helps young survivors of sex trafficking find well-trained, specialized foster care homes. She has 25+ years of experience working with child protective services, juvenile probation department and TDFPS licensed operations. Veronica has her Child Placing Agency and Child Care Administrators license. Veronica graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso with a BA in Psychology and a minor in Religious Studies. Her passion for children and families stems from growing up with 5 brothers and sisters, both her parents, raising 4 bonus children and birthing 2. Governor Abbott's Child Sex Trafficking Team (CSTT) was created by the 84th Legislature to coordinate a holistic response to child sex trafficking in Texas. CSTT is a division within the Public Safety Office and its mission is to build sustainable capacity, enhance expertise, promote policies, and create new and leverage existing collaborations to prevent child sexual exploitation, to help survivors heal and thrive, and to bring exploiters to justice.

Using Technology to Connect Survivors to Resources

[Laura Gedeon](#) – Outreach Coordinator, The Landing

Laura Gedeon has served as the Outreach Coordinator at the Landing for just over five years. Prior to her time at The Landing, she worked in the anti-trafficking sector for several years having worked day shifts at an Assessment Center created for those just exiting "the life", conducting outreach in illicit massage businesses, and mentoring survivors. Prior to exposure to the realities of human trafficking, Laura's career started in the corporate arena upon graduation from Texas A&M. She also stayed busy as a mom of two now grown and married boys. Upon being exposed to the realities of human trafficking and with continued education, encouragement from her husband and a prompting from God she jumped into anti-trafficking work with an intention to build relationships with survivors met on the street, in the courtroom and online with the hope of building trust in order to provide a connection between where they are now and where they may want to go.

[Kari Meredith](#) – Co-founder and Managing Partner, Ignite Synergy and collaborative partner, Global Bridge Tech Initiative (GTBI)

Kari Meredith is Co-founder and Managing Partner of Ignite Synergy, a software development company that uses innovative technology to design and develop apps for businesses and organizations primarily on the Google Platform. Kari strives to bring the knowledge of innovative Google technology to help businesses and nonprofits manage and scale their organizations as well as help people become proficient navigating Google Workspace to increase their knowledge and skills in this office ecosystem. Ignite Synergy is also a collaborative partner with the Global Tech Bridge Initiative which works to bring technology and career development skills to underserved communities. From 2004 through 2014, Kari served in administrative roles for the Arizona and New Mexico Attorney General's offices. While at the New Mexico Attorney General's Office, she worked on a Department of Health and Human Services Federal Grant in collaboration with the New Mexico Public Education Department. Under her direction, a statewide program was created to address issues in teen dating violence. This program provided education, training and coordination of services to victims of dating violence, sexual assault and human trafficking. Early program success helped her to create an additional curriculum specifically for New Mexico which emphasized evidence-based learning and train-the-trainer components. Spending over a decade working in the social justice field, she wanted to create a bridge that connects victims of trauma and the technology sector to open doors of opportunity for those who may not otherwise have the chance. Ignite Synergy is committed to supporting organizations that help bring restoration to the lives of those affected by human trafficking through charitable giving and providing support with technology. Kari has a B.A. in Political Science/Criminology and a Masters in Psychology with an emphasis on Human Factors.

[Toni McKinley, LPC](#) – Executive Director, Magdalene House of Austin

Toni McKinley is the Executive Director at Magdalene House of Austin, which empowers sex-trafficked women toward independence and freedom. She is an advisor on multiple human trafficking councils, the Texas Human Trafficking Task Force, the Travis County CSEY Human Trafficking Advisory Board, and the co-chair of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Advisory Committee. She has trained numerous government organizations and non-profits around the nation on the neuropsychology of trafficking trauma. Internationally, Toni has trained caretakers of trafficked girls in Sonagachi, Kolkata, India. Toni is a Licensed Professional Counselor, TBRI practitioner, and TEDx Speaker, and is a recipient of the Hero Award and the Texas Governors Human Trafficking Prevention Award. She is the author of the book, What Happened to Me: Healing for Sex Trafficking Survivors, which is being used all over the country to aid in the healing of trafficked teens and adults. Toni holds a BA in Education from Arizona State University and an MA in Professional Counseling from Liberty University. She has counseled numerous women and children who have been trafficked, plus first responders and combat veterans who suffered from complex PTSD. Her lived experience as a survivor of child trafficking and the professional experience she has worked hard for have for have enabled her to help heal those who suffer from trauma all over the world.

[Hana Hassan](#) – CEO and Founder, Black Maple and Collaborative Partner, Global Bridge Tech Initiative

Hana (Dope'rah) Hassan is an accomplished entrepreneur, serving as the Founder & CEO of BlackMaple.io and a Collaborative Partner with the Global Bridge Tech Initiative (GTBI). Her talent platform operates as a two-sided marketplace, connecting companies with a diverse pool of job seekers and equipping them with resources to create an inclusive workforce. By supporting tech companies in diversifying their talent pipeline, the platform empowers individuals to access equitable employment opportunities and fosters a sense of community. Beyond addressing the challenges of diversity in tech, BlackMaple.io's talent marketplace provides industry-leading training and workforce development, opening new pathways to employment in the tech industry. Hana's commitment to supporting people in finding meaningful careers extends beyond her role as CEO. She is an active volunteer and mentor, leveraging her expertise and experience to help others succeed. With over a decade of dedication to this cause, Hana is a recognized leader in the tech industry and a driving force for positive change.

[Rhonda Kuykendall,](#) Anti-Child Trafficking (ACT)Consultant, Texas CASA

Rhonda Kuykendall serves Texas on the Human Trafficking Survivor Leader Council. She works as the Anti-Child Trafficking Consultant for Texas CASA.   She also chairs the Fort Bend County DA's Human Trafficking Community Awareness Team and serves on the Board of Directors of Child Advocates of Fort Bend where she chairs their Legislative Advocacy Team. Rhonda is a member of the Survivor Leader Advisory Board of Street Grace. In 2015 Rhonda received the U.S. Congressional Medal for her work in Austin enacting legislation to protect children from sexual assault. In 2019 she received Child Advocates of Fort Bend's Legislative Advocate of the Year and Child Advocate of the Year. In 2022 Rhonda received the UHD College of Public Service Social Justice and Change Agent award. Demand Disruption awarded Rhonda the Community Leader of the Year (2023). Rhonda is finishing her bachelor's in social work at University of Houston – Downtown and will be attending UH Graduate School of Social Work in the fall to obtain a master's in social work with emphasis in Political Social Work.

Keynote

Stephanie Yanta – Senior Account Manager, NEC National Security Systems (NSS)

Stephanie Yanta joined NEC NSS in September 2022 as the lead for Intelligence. Stephanie is responsible for the overall relationship between NEC NSS and it's customers, across the Intelligence community (IC) and other government entities, managing all facets of the business relationship and marshalling the Company resources necessary to achieve a high degree of customer satisfaction. She is responsible for constantly seeking new customers and expanding the business relationship with existing customers and for uncovering, qualifying, defining, proposing and closing new sales orders in line with the Company's business objectives and within profitability guidelines established by the Company. Stephanie is often required to provide mentorship to colleagues and other staff members as well as assists management in devising sales strategies related to government business, to include in classified environments. Further, she provides key strategic input for growth of Company including decisions on entries to new markets, mergers and acquisitions. In succession planning. Stephanie is assigned as next in command.

<u>Dr. Lucia Summers</u> – Associate Director, Center for Geospatial Intelligence and Investigation (GII), Texas State University

Lucia Summers is an Associate Professor in the School of Criminal Justice and Criminology and Associate Director of the Center for Geospatial Intelligence and Investigation (GII). Originally from Spain, she completed most of her training in England, where she resided for 16 years. She has a bachelor's degree in experimental psychology from the University of Sussex, master's degrees in forensic psychology and in research methods from the University of Leicester and University College London (UCL), respectively, and a Ph.D. in Criminology from UCL. In 2012, Lucia moved to Austin and joined Texas State University, where she has continued her line of research into crime analysis, situational crime prevention, problem-oriented policing, and offender decision making when choosing where, when, and how to commit crime. Some of this research has examined the dynamics of sex trafficking and prostitution, and how problem-solving and situational crime prevention techniques may be applied to reduce sexual exploitation. Lucia has published extensively and spoken at various national and international conferences, both in English and her native Spanish.

<u>Alyssa Shallenberger</u> – Doctoral Research Assistant, Texas State University

Alyssa Shallenberger is currently a PhD student at Texas State in the School of Criminal Justice and Criminology. She is a graduate of South Texas College of Law Houston, with her Juris Doctorate and Texas State University, with her Master of Science in Criminal Justice. Previously, Alyssa has worked at Children at Risk in the Center to End the Trafficking and Exploitation of Children as the Senior Law Fellow and Program Coordinator providing data analysis and policy support on numerous initiatives, including CEASE (Cities Empowered Against Sexual Exploitation) Texas. She has also worked as a student attorney in South Texas College of Law Houston's Asylum and Human Trafficking Clinic where she has worked with survivors/clients in their journey to apply for T-Visas or U-Visas. Her research interests include gender-based violence (sexual assault, domestic violence, and sex trafficking), and gender and crime theory.

<u>Thank you to the Edward N. and Margaret G. Marsh Foundation!</u>

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