

FBICAAA Bowl-a-Thon Benefits Local Victims of Human Trafficking

By Jimmy Hoover

While the metropolitan Portland area has emerged in recent years as a main hub for sex trafficking, many organizations and individuals have stepped up to fight against this form of modern slavery and support the victims, most young girls between the ages of eight and 18.

The FBI Citizens Academy Alumni Association (FBICAAA) is one of those groups, whose annual Bowl-a-Thon assists survivors and educates citizens about trafficking's tragic effects on society. At this year's event, 196 bowlers competed for prizes and participated in a raffle to help raise roughly \$7,000.

In-part, the funds will go to Janus' Athena House, a confidential, co-ed group home for up to seven youth



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between the ages of 14 to 21 that provides emergency and long-term stabilization, trauma informed counseling, and case management for commercially sexually exploited youth.

Alexander Villarreal, Commercially Sexually Exploited Children (CSEC) / Victims Services Implementation Team (VSIT) Program Coordinator at Janus, spoke at the event about Athena House and the coordinated CSEC system of care in Multnomah County and shared how the donations will benefit so many.

“It was an honor to witness a community coming together responding to the needs of our survivors through a family fun event. We were truly grateful and deeply touched to see such a

turn out. The CSEC caseworkers are encouraged to know the community is in support of their work with the survivors,” said Villarreal.

Funds raised also benefited SARC (Sexual Assault Resource Center), a program that serves survivors of sexual exploitation and violence and Just Yell Fire, a locally developed safety awareness curriculum teaching girls and young women how to defend themselves against sexual assault and abuse.

“These three community-based organizations are at the forefront of the great work being done in our communities to address human trafficking problems and the violence being perpetrated against our youth,” the FBICAAA Board of Directors wrote in a thank you letter to participants.

The FBICAAA is comprised of graduates of the FBI’s Citizens Academy program. Members support community service, education and outreach on crime prevention, law enforcement and the justice system. They are a nonprofit organization separate and apart from the FBI. ■