

IN OUR BACKYARD

2020 MIAMI SUPERBOWL REPORT



www.inourbackyard.org



Executive Summary

In connection with our year-round anti-trafficking work, IN OUR BACKYARD (IOB) has worked for the last **11 consecutive years** to eradicate sex trafficking surrounding the Super Bowl through partnerships with top law enforcement, local nonprofits, and government agencies in host cities across America. IOB was honored to come alongside leaders already doing incredible work to stop human trafficking in Miami, including The Women's Fund, Miami Dolphins Football Unites Program, Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association, Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office, Salvation Army, St. Thomas University, Send Relief, and others. Highlights of our Linking Freedom In Our Backyard operation in Miami 2019 include:

- Engaged **more than 200 volunteers** in anti-trafficking education and advocacy.
- Throughout the Miami-Dade area, **360 convenience and corner stores were equipped** to recognize and report human trafficking.
- One minor from the missing children's booklet was recognized through social media by two volunteers before the outreach even began!
- Store managers and clerks provided **one very valuable tip on a missing child** from IOB's materials, which was immediately turned over to law enforcement and the National Human Trafficking Hotline for further investigation.
- **5,000 Missing Children's booklets were distributed** predominantly to convenience stores and official Super Bowl volunteers throughout the Miami-Dade area.
- IOB volunteers engaged in an outreach to distribute missing children's booklets.
- **15 of the 36 children in IOB's Missing Children's booklet were recovered** within one week of the Super Bowl.
- Through collaborative efforts, IOB **placed 2,500 Freedom Stickers** in restrooms stalls during its outreach event, creating a pathway of FREEDOM for those trapped in HT.
- IOB provided **33 qualified leads** for potential cases of trafficking to law enforcement.
- Law enforcement, in partnership with IOB and many other agencies, announced five arrests of alleged sex traffickers (three federal cases, two state). **There were four recoveries of minor victims** in their 10-day pre-Super Bowl operation.
- **Eight sex buyers and 34 accomplices** were also arrested on human trafficking charges.
- Local authorities were able to recover **20 suspected human trafficking victims**.

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IN OUR BACKYARD is a national leader with more than a decade of dedication to the fight against sex and labor trafficking. IOB links arms in the fight against human trafficking by empowering communities to prevent this atrocity and creating access to freedom for victims of human trafficking (HT). Exposed to the devastating realities of HT, IOB Founder Nita Belles was driven to take action to stop the exploitation of children, women, and men. Her book, *In Our Backyard: Human Trafficking in America and What You Can Do to Stop It*, has been acclaimed as the primer on human trafficking in America. IOB is known for placing Freedom Stickers in all 50 states and working to eradicate sex trafficking surrounding the Super Bowl for 11 consecutive years.

11 Years of Super Bowl



In connection with our year-round anti-trafficking work, IOB has worked for the last 11 years to eradicate sex trafficking surrounding the Super Bowl through partnerships with top law enforcement, non-profits, and government agencies in host cities across America. **Our involvement surrounding the Super Bowl is an opportunity to raise awareness of human trafficking and mobilize regular citizens to fight this atrocity year-round.** The operation began in 2010 and has continued in every Super Bowl host city since.

Statements have been made that the Super Bowl is the largest human trafficking event of the year. Some have also asserted that sex trafficking does not increase surrounding the Super Bowl. These are both myths. The truth is, **human trafficking happens 365 days a year everywhere in the United States** and does increase when there is increased demand due to conventions, as well as sporting and entertainment events that attract predominantly male populations with disposable income. **The Super Bowl is not the cause of sex trafficking, but it has become a catalyst to fight it in host cities across America over the last 11 years.**

A graphic featuring a person in a black hoodie and cap standing in front of a wall with a large letter "D". To the right of the person, there is a red box containing text. At the bottom, there is the IOB logo and the text "HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN OUR BACKYARD" and "www.InOurBackyard.org".

Myth: Super Bowl increases sex trafficking

Reality: Sex trafficking is happening every day. Sex buyers increase sex trafficking.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN OUR BACKYARD
www.InOurBackyard.org

Miami



The purpose of IOB's collaborative work surrounding the Super Bowl is to bring attention to this horrific crime and come alongside the host community as we take coordinated and effective action to stop human trafficking surrounding the Super Bowl and beyond. IOB recognizes geography, climate, politics, culture, socio-economic, gender, and racial factors have implications on how we collaboratively address human trafficking. We work with local partners to ensure the work is trauma informed and victim centered. This year our work reflects our core values of sustainability and collaboration that **always result in increased, ongoing anti-trafficking efforts after we have departed.**

Hundreds of conversations and multiple trips over the course of a year culminated in a 10-day operation surrounding the Super Bowl in Miami in 2020. IOB was honored to come alongside leaders already doing incredible work to stop human trafficking in Miami, including The Women's Fund, Miami Dolphins Football Unites Program, Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association, Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office, Salvation Army, St. Thomas University, Send Relief, and others. IOB collaborated with the above agencies, as well as our partners, Securus Technologies Inc., Thorn, the National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS), National Center on Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), and the Florida Petroleum Marketers Association to stop sex trafficking surrounding the Super Bowl and beyond. IOB engaged more than 200 volunteers in anti-trafficking education and advocacy, **including 15 who dedicated more than a week of their time at their own expense to ensure the success of the operation.**

IOB's eleventh operation surrounding the Super Bowl represented **the best of the collaborative work required to eradicate human trafficking.** Words are not adequate to express our appreciation of the amazing partnerships and the life-saving work being done across Florida. Strong partnerships with like-minded advocates were essential to the success of our work.

IOB would like to thank:

Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office: We appreciate State Attorney Katherine Fernandez-Rundle's leadership and vision in overseeing the professional and effective operation. Also, a special thank you to Assistant State Attorney and Director of the Human Trafficking Unit, Alicia G. Priovolos for her key role in collaboration with IOB.

Miami-Dade Police Department: We would like to recognize the fine work of Lieutenant Louis Poveda and the FBI Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Task Force. Their leadership and professionalism was chief in stopping this criminal activity surrounding the Super Bowl and beyond!

Kathy Anderson, Women's Fund Miami-Dade: Our thank you is not enough to convey our gratitude to Executive Director Kathy Anderson for her tireless work and communication in overseeing Miami's Anti-trafficking work surrounding the Super Bowl. Kathy truly showed the value of linking arms with all groups involved in the Linking Freedom event. She was the glue that made collaboration in Miami possible!

St. Thomas University School of Law: IOB would like to extend our sincerest thanks to Dr. Rosa Pati, Liza Smoker, Esq., Executive Assistant Carla Garcia and the entire St. Thomas staff. They worked hard to make our *One Team Against Human Trafficking* event so successful. Your dedication to the fight against human trafficking is commendable.

Salvation Army: It is with great appreciation that we recognize The Salvation Army in Miami. Each and every person in this organization is deeply committed to serving and helping to stop human trafficking. Special recognition goes to Major Enrique Azuaje, Major Nancy Azuaje, and Lucille Rinker who coordinated the events. Also a tremendous thank you to Dotti Groover-Skipper for her immeasurable contribution to these efforts.

Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association: A great thanks goes to the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association Miami-Dade chapter. It's President, Steve Keup, and the South Florida Regional Director Lynne Hernandez provided connections to local restaurants and hotels which enabled the IOB core team to enjoy delicious meals and safe and comfortable lodging during our stay.

National Association of Convenience Stores (NACS): We extended our warmest appreciation to Jeff Lenard, VP of Strategic Initiatives for NACS who came to Miami to participate for a second time in our *Linking Freedom In Our Backyard* event. The partnership with NACS has opened many doors for convenience stores across the nation to receive training to help fight human trafficking.

Send Relief: We value and appreciate our partnership for the second year in a row with Send Relief. We are proud to link arms with this exceptional group of people. A big thank you for the awesome t-shirts, monetary donation, and those who volunteered for our event. The t-shirts were a huge hit!

Miami Dolphins Football Unites Program: We want to recognize the generosity of the Miami Dolphins Football Unites program for their donation through the Salvation Army which helped feed our army of volunteers lunch at the *Linking Freedom* event. We appreciate their heart to stop this atrocity in our backyard!

Sponsors

IOB's anti-trafficking work surrounding the Super Bowl and beyond was made possible by the sponsors below for both monetary and in-kind donations from organizations and companies across Miami and the U.S!

Thank you for the support of our generous sponsors who have made the printing and distribution of this book possible:



Linking Freedom In Our Backyard Event

On Saturday, January 25th, 2020, more than **100 volunteers** showed up at an event – *Linking Freedom In Our Backyard* (LFIOB) – at St. Thomas University to learn more about human trafficking and distribute awareness materials—including Freedom Stickers and Missing Children's booklets—to convenience stores. This sixth annual event is an extension of IOB's national, year-round **Convenience Stores Against Trafficking** program, which grew out of IOB's Super Bowl efforts. **300** convenience and corner stores throughout the Miami metro were equipped to recognize and report human trafficking.



Shameire McKenzie shares how missing children at risk can be recovered through collaboration



Jeff Leonard speaks about trafficking and convenience stores



Quotes From Participants

Volunteers were excited about the program and their appreciation for being able to play a vital role in the fight against human trafficking:

"One clerk was almost moved to tears and **thanked us for looking for missing children**. She said her brother had gone missing and she wished others had looked for him this way."

"I was afraid that stores wouldn't be receptive but **every store we entered wanted the materials** and looked through the missing children's booklets."

"It was an honor to be a part of IN OUR BACKYARD's convenience store outreach leading up to the Super Bowl. Dedicating time and volunteers to canvas communities with missing children flyers not only impacts the chances of identifying and bringing these children home, but also **makes our community more vigilant in keeping an eye out for some of our most vulnerable kids**. Equipping local business owners with awareness of who is missing, and providing them with the tools to know how to report, empowers the local bystander to become an active reporter that may help bring a child home."

"It was great to feel like I could to really make a difference in anti-human trafficking. **I've always wanted to make a difference like this. I hope to continue in this work.**"

Volunteers were extremely passionate and asked for additional materials to distribute in their neighborhoods after the outreach.

Resource Fair

IOB's inclusive outreach event facilitates collaboration among individuals and groups who share the common goal of stopping human trafficking through its resource fair. Each year volunteers are able to connect with local anti-trafficking organizations and collaboration continues after Super Bowl, resulting in **greater anti-human trafficking resources and efforts going forward**. Resource fair groups included:



- The Salvation Army Miami <https://salvationarmyflorida.org/miami-ac/>
- The Manuvo Project www.TheMavunoProject.com
- International Rescue Committee www.rescue.org
- St. Thomas University www.stu.edu
- Miami-Dade State Attorney's Office <http://www.miamisao.com/>
- Survivor's Pathway survivorspathway.org
- Junior League of Ft. Lauderdale www.juniorleagueftl.org/
- Guardian ad Litem for Children <https://guardianadlitem.org/>
- Glory House of Miami www.gloryhouseofmiami.org
- Citrus Family Care Network Citrusfcn.com
- South Florida Human Trafficking Taskforce <https://www.sfhumantraffickingtaskforce.org/>
- Familias Unidas International, Inc www.familiasunidasintl.org
- Women's Fund Miami womensfundmiami.org
- A Voice in the Wilderness www.avitwf.com
- Barry University <https://www.barry.edu/center-for-human-rights-social-justice/>
- There is Hope for Me www.TherelsHopeForMe.org
- Send Relief sendrelief.org *A special thank you to Send Relief for the amazing t-shirts they donated for all our outreach volunteers!*
- Sharing One Love sharingonelove.org
- Elite Foundation <https://elitelfundsfreedom.org/>
- Human Trafficking Coalition of the Palm Beaches <https://www.htcpb.org/>

Missing Children Outreach

IOB created and distributed booklets containing pictures and information on 36 children from Miami and surrounding areas retrieved from the National Center on Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) registry. 5,000 booklets were distributed through the One Team event, IOB's outreach efforts and collaboration with other local nonprofits. **15 of the 36 children in IOB's Missing Children's booklet were recovered** within one week of the Super Bowl.



Freedom Stickers

Through collaborative efforts, IOB placed 2,500 Freedom Stickers in restrooms stalls around Miami to **create a pathway of FREEDOM for those trapped in human trafficking**. Freedom Stickers were created in collaboration with trafficking survivors, who directly contributed to their design and objective. Since their creation, more than 420,000 have been placed nationwide and have successfully led to multiple victim recoveries. Freedom Stickers are placed in public restroom stalls in high-traffic areas such as convenience stores, restaurants, hospitals, schools, bars, airports and government buildings. Public restrooms are the safest place for a victim to call or text for help.



Law Enforcement Support

IOB spent six days of our time in Miami conducting our online surveillance operation in an undisclosed location. Our operation funneled and analyzed large volumes of data, analyzing connections to domestic sex trafficking that could aid in law enforcement efforts to stop this criminal enterprise. This collaborative involved law enforcement personnel from across the nation who work with IOB's Super Bowl operation yearly, IOB volunteers and others from nonprofit organizations with domestic sex trafficking expertise. **The operation laid a critical foundation for best practices in this field.** IOB board member and Human Trafficking Sergeant, Molly McDade of Multnomah County Sheriff's Office led the operation, along with Nita Belles. **IOB provided 33 qualified leads to law enforcement as a result of this collaboration.** *Due to the sensitive nature of this operation, we are unable to provide information on ongoing investigations.*

Fighting HT the other 364 days a year

In addition to our Super Bowl work, IOB works year round across the nation, with six other programs, Teens Against Trafficking, Training and Mobilization, Survivor Advocacy, Freedom Stickers, Convenience Stores Against Trafficking and legislative advising.

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We are grateful for everyone who was involved and trust they were encouraged to continue working toward a culture where all people are empowered to live in freedom because even one victim of human trafficking is too many.