

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Office of the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia

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Lieutenant Governor and Shell Canada announce founding partners of Human Trafficking Prevention Network

VANCOUVER – Lieutenant Governor Janet Austin and Susannah Pierce, Shell Canada president and country chair, unveiled the founding partners of the Human Trafficking Prevention Network of British Columbia.

The inaugural event took place at Covenant House Vancouver and coincides with National Human Trafficking Awareness Day.

The signing ceremony included 20 corporate and community founding partners, bringing together a network from diverse industries and services. Speakers at the event included Deb Lester, CEO, Covenant House Vancouver; Alexandra Ford, anti-trafficking advocate; and Tamara Vrooman, CEO, Vancouver International Airport.

“Human trafficking is a serious and important issue that has been flying under the radar for far too long,” said Pierce, chair of the Human Trafficking Prevention Network. “Today, I would like to thank our corporate and community partners, who are coming together and agreeing to work collaboratively to raise awareness, share resources and co-ordinate action, so we can create safer and more resilient communities free from the harms of human trafficking.”

The founding partners will unite in their commitment to combat human trafficking, signing a statement of support and pledging to work collaboratively to share resources that spread awareness, and support organizations that are combating human trafficking or aiding survivors in their recovery and transition.

“Today, we are unified in our commitment to end human trafficking. Anchored by the actions outlined in the statement of support, we are resolved to raise awareness, disseminate crucial resources and offer unwavering support to survivors in their recovery,” said Austin, honorary patron of the Human Trafficking Prevention Network. “Through this collaborative endeavour, we are pledging to amplify our efforts and foster a more resilient and collaborative response to this pressing issue.”

The founding partners of the Human Trafficking Prevention Network are:

- Chair - Shell Canada Limited
- Honorary patron - Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia
- All Nations United
- BC Lions
- BC Native Women’s Association
- Business Council of British Columbia
- Covenant House Vancouver
- Greater Vancouver Board of Trade
- KPMG
- Ocean Spray Cranberries Inc

- Richberry Group of Companies
- Royal Bank of Canada
- Telus Health
- The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking
- The Port of Vancouver
- TransLink
- Truckers Against Trafficking
- Vancouver Police
- YVR Airport
- YWCA of Metro Vancouver

Several resources were featured at the launch event, including the Covenant House Toolkit, the National Centre to End Human Trafficking T.A.L.K campaign and the #NotInMyCity airport initiative.

“Covenant House Vancouver is committed to working in partnership with the community and in collaboration with survivors to end human trafficking,” said Lester, host of the launch event. “We know that supporting survivors requires us to be able to support all of their basic needs as they exit and heal. That is why building the capacity of the non-profit sector is crucial in order to address human trafficking in Canada in a meaningful and sustainable way. In addition, we must be willing to engage survivors in our work in a good way. Partnering to create a community where there is no wrong door to access support is key to combating trafficking. What we know for sure, the survivors are worth it.”

Organizations that would like to join the initiative may inquire at ghrsvp@gov.bc.ca.

Background:

- The vast majority of police-reported human trafficking victims are women and girls. Of the 3,103 detected victims of police-reported human trafficking in Canada from 2012 to 2022, approximately 94% were women and girls. Furthermore, approximately seven in 10 (69%) were under the age of 25.
- The Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline recognized 2,170 human trafficking victims/survivors between 2019 and 2022.
- Indigenous women and girls, and Two-Spirit people are disproportionately affected by human trafficking. The Native Women’s Association of Canada reports that Indigenous women make up 50% of trafficked persons in Canada, despite representing only 4% of the population.
- The majority of human trafficking cases in Canada are for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced labour and other forms of coercion. Research suggests that human trafficking intersects with other issues, such as homelessness, poverty, substance abuse and gender-based violence.
- These statistics underscore the urgent need for collaborative efforts to prevent human trafficking, support survivors and address the root causes of this crime. Through initiatives like the Human Trafficking Prevention Network of British Columbia, stakeholders are coming together to raise awareness, share resources and take decisive action against human trafficking in Canada.
- In 2022, the Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking received more than 4,900 calls to the Canadian Human Trafficking Hotline (1 833 900-1010), demonstrating the urgent

need for support and intervention for victims, survivors, as well as for family members and friends. If you or someone you know is a victim of human trafficking, please contact the hotline for assistance.

Learn More:

For more information about the Human Trafficking Prevention Network and to read the statement of support, visit: <https://ltgov.bc.ca/human-trafficking-prevention-network>

To learn more about the National Centre to End Human Trafficking’s T.A.L.K campaign and the hotline, visit: <https://www.canadianhumantraffickinghotline.ca/resources/its-time-to-t-a-l-k/>

Covenant House BC offers a comprehensive toolkit and resources for combatting human trafficking. To access these resources, visit: <https://www.covenanthousebc.org/human-trafficking-toolkit>

To learn more about Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking, visit: <https://www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca/>

To read about #NotInMyCity airport initiative, visit: <https://notinmycity.ca/airports-across-canada-collaborate-with-notinmycity-to-help-disrupt-and-end-sexual-exploitation-and-human-trafficking/>

In addition to being YVR’s Human Trafficking Awareness partner, #NotInMyCity will host police from coast to coast at the second annual front-line human-trafficking investigator summit in Kelowna in April 2024. The first front-line human trafficking operational summit in Canadian history, called The Maddison Sessions (TMS), was held in 2023 and has been instrumental in facilitating a new no-borders approach to addressing and suppressing human trafficking in Canada.

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