



U.S. Catholic Sisters
Against Human Trafficking

Ending Slavery Is Everyone's Work

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ECPAT Awards Recognize Human Trafficking Heroes

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Brighton, MI – The ECPAT-USA Awards were held recently in New York City to celebrate individuals who work to combat child trafficking.

Theresa Flores, Program Director for the United States Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking, was recognized for her work in preventing sex trafficking and the exploitation of children.

“It’s an honor to be recognized by ECPAT USA for the mission that God put before me 15 years ago,” she said. “This journey has been heart-wrenching, mind-opening, brought me to my knees in tears, and also opened my heart to the huge amount of support and happiness I have received in turn. Receiving the **“Freedom Award”** is humbling because it wasn’t just *me* who did this work, but also motivating because we need a lot more people doing this work to end human trafficking.”

In addition to being the Program Director for U.S. Catholic Sisters Against Human Trafficking, Flores is the founder of the SOAP Project – Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution, a non-profit that mobilizes citizens to help locate missing youth who are being trafficked during major sporting events and assists survivors of trafficking on their healing journey.

She has been a licensed social worker for more than 30 years, was appointed to the Ohio Attorney General’s Human Trafficking Commission in 2009, and has testified before both the Ohio House of Representatives and Senate in support of Human Trafficking Legislation. Additionally, the “Theresa Flores Law”, which eliminates the statute of limitation for children who have been trafficked, was passed in Michigan in 2015.

Flores is a survivor of domestic child sex trafficking and was sold in an underground crime ring in an upper-middle-class suburb outside Detroit from the time she was 15-17 years old. She has researched the mental and physical health problems of more than 200 domestic trafficking survivors and has hosted more than 200 women at survivor retreats.

She has received many awards including the 2017 L'Oréal Women of Worth, the University of Dayton's Alumni Association, the 2013 Christian Service Award & the 2020 Polaris Star Award. In January 2012 at the Ohio State of the State Address, Flores received the Courage Award from the governor for her work in human trafficking.

Flores also has published five books including, "The Sacred Bath," "The Slave Across the Street" (in the UK and U.S.), and "Slavery in the Land of the Free – A Student's Guide to Modern-Day Slavery." You only list three books, so I added the including. The 10-year anniversary edition depicts the trauma of trafficking upon a person and the struggle it takes to heal. The audio version of her memoir—name-- was nominated for the 2011 Audie Award, being in the top five of all memoirs and biographies, and has been on the Wall Street Journal and USA Today Best Seller list for e-books several times. In addition, she also conducted the TED Talk, "Find a Voice with SOAP."

USCSAHT was founded in 2013 by a group of Catholic Sisters who were committed to ending human trafficking and supporting survivors and dreamed of creating a national network of resources and support made up of many different congregations and other mission-aligned partners. Today, this member-based organization has grown to include more than 110 congregations of women religious and another 70+ individuals and groups spread throughout the United States. USCSAHT is also the U.S. member of Talitha Kum, an international network of consecrated life working to end human trafficking.

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