

# Advocating awareness

## Displays at libraries promote education of human trafficking

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OSCEOLA COUNTY — Each year, thousands of people worldwide are sold into slavery as part of human trafficking. January is set aside to call attention to their plight.

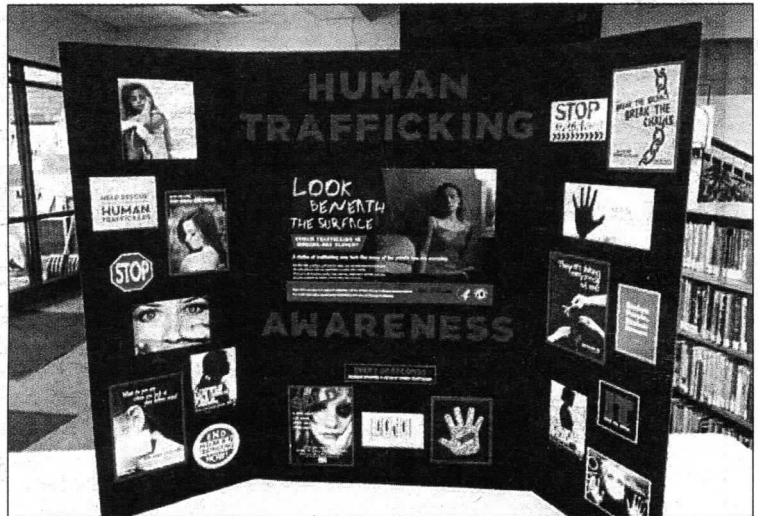
This month is Human Trafficking Awareness Month and those hoping to learn more about the world's second largest criminal enterprise can find plenty of resources at local libraries thanks to the Meceola Human Trafficking Task Force.

As part of efforts to raise awareness about human trafficking, which involves labor trafficking or sex trafficking, the task force created displays at five libraries within Mecosta and Osceola counties.

The group wanted to get information about human trafficking to the public in a simple way, said Dee Van Horn, task force member.

"We connected with some folks in Florida who work to educate people about human trafficking and they mentioned a program they do at the library," Van Horn said. "It just seems so logical. Libraries are places people are constantly coming and going and looking for information."

Displays featuring books,



**KNOWLEDGE:** A display at the Evert Public Library is filled with information about human trafficking. The display was set up by the Meceola Human Trafficking Task Force as part of Human Trafficking Awareness Month. (Courtesy photo)

pamphlets and other information about human trafficking are set up at the Evert Public Library, Reed City Area District Library, Big Rapids Community Library, Morton Township Library and the Wheatland Township Library.

The task force also supplied each librarian with a resource list with suggestions for books on human trafficking and organizations, Van Horn said.

The overall goal of the dis-

plays is to give people more knowledge about human trafficking, Van Horn said.

"It's a huge problem worldwide, nationally and especially in Michigan if you look at statistics," she said. "We hope this month people will strive to be aware and seek more information on the topic. There are many ways to people can engage with this, such as by having discussions with family members about human trafficking."