



On February 10, 2016 RAASE traveled with 18 people to Milwaukee, Wisconsin to study an innovative approach to human trafficking and forced prostitution. Our group included the RAASE Board as well as local law enforcement and court personnel, and our training trip was funded by a generous grant from Swedish American

Health Foundation. The diversion program we learned about is a collaboration between the Milwaukee Police Department's District 3 and the Milwaukee Benedict Center Sisters Diversion Program. The groups partner together to divert prostituted persons into treatment and restoration and away from traditional and ineffective methods of criminal prosecution. When the program began in 2009, there were 557 criminal charges of prostitution, and in 2016 the number of criminal charges has dropped to the single digits. We learned much during our visit, including what challenges police and courts may expect and the importance of creating a safe, free space for survivors to meet, drop into, comply with treatment plans and heal from trauma. We are very anxious to move forward with implementing some of the lessons we learned from Milwaukee here in Rockford, so please stay tuned for our progress updated over the next months.



In February we also began working with a new class of students from Rockford University to continue our partnership in the development of learning models and programs we can bring out into the community. We are in the process of choosing a focus study topic for the semester, and we look forward to updating you on our outcomes. We continue to bring the result of last semester's partnership with Rockford University students into our community in the form of training for medical providers. Health care providers are more likely than most of us to come into contact with a person being trafficked when injuries or illnesses affect the trafficker or pimp's ability to continue to exploit and sell the individual. As such, it's so very important for those at the front lines in the

medical field to know what signs to look for and what to do in the event they believe they are treating a victim. We have also expanded our network of resource providers for survivors we encounter who are in need of both long term stabilization and those in high risk, emergency situations with immediate needs, and we are confident this network will continue to grow across the United States this year.

On the End Demand side of our work, local law enforcement continues to shift their efforts to investigating johns and pimps, and the increase in the arrest of those individuals reflects law enforcement's new focus and hard work. RAASE is currently in discussions with the Winnebago County State's Attorney to develop new local legislation which will impose even stricter penalties for persons found guilty of participating in the purchase or sale of a trafficked person.

As you see there is much to do and we are very busy making sure everything gets done! We want to thank all of you who have taken the time to support RAASE, whether that is by visiting our website, talking about Human Trafficking, hosting a presentation, writing a letter to the editor, calling elected officials to let them know you support the End Demand philosophy or making a donation. Everything helps, and we are so grateful for your support. 