

## **A Weekend of Action to Raise Awareness of Human Trafficking Ahead of the FIFA 2026 World Cup Takes Place in North and South Jersey in May**

The FIFA 2026 World Cup (June 11-July 19) will impact New Jersey like no other city or region in North America. Along with the 8 matches, including the final, being held at MetLife Stadium, impacting northern NJ, 6 matches will be held in Philadelphia, impacting southern NJ. Large sporting events draw huge crowds which in turn cause there to be an increase in demand for sex and cheap labor, driving up incidents of human trafficking, where force, fraud or coercion are used upon people to compel them to work for little or no money. To help prevent this, organizations from throughout New Jersey, along with others from New York, Pennsylvania and nationally, will be coming together for World Cup ACT (Action Collaborative against Trafficking) a weekend of action being held over 2 days, about 2 weeks before the tournament begins.

Day 1 will be on Saturday, May 30 at Kean University in Union, with Day 2 being in Cherry Hill. Organized by Survivor Leaders and the New Jersey Coalition Against Human Trafficking (NJCAHT) the event offers everyone aged 13 and up a chance to become informed about the realities of human trafficking and take meaningful action to raise awareness and support survivors. Actions will range from crafts to social media projects as well as an opportunity to participate in an outreach to 150 hotels and motels in Union, Essex, Hudson and Bergen Counties, in partnership with the SOAP Project.

The Survivor Leader team has been led by Author, Speaker and Consultant, Gina Cavallo, who is also the Vice-President of the NJCAHT. Gina says this is a crucial time to act: "This moment is a powerful opportunity for communities to come together in prevention, awareness, and protection. Human trafficking thrives in silence and vulnerability, but when organizations, survivor leaders, law enforcement, and the public unite, we create safer spaces and stronger communities. World Cup ACT is about being proactive, informed, and ready to protect the vulnerable."

Participants will experience an Action Awareness Fair, where they can make bracelets with messages of empowerment; send out survivor-informed posts on social media; learn about wellness and self-care; and sign a giant soccer ball with a pledge to help end trafficking. They will then have a training on the basics of human trafficking and hear from a panel of survivor leaders. After lunch, which is included in the nominal ticket price, which also includes getting a World Cup ACT T-shirt, participants can then either go on the SOAP Hotel Outreach or learn about other aspects of human trafficking such as the trafficking of boys and men and labor trafficking.

"As New Jersey prepares to host the World Cup, we must remain vigilant and informed about the realities of human trafficking," said Kean University President Lamont O. Repollet, Ed.D. "Through education and community engagement, we can raise awareness and take meaningful steps to protect those most at risk. Kean is proud to serve as a host of World Cup ACT and

continue its long-standing partnership with the New Jersey Coalition Against Human Trafficking.”

Lived Experience Expert, Katrina Massey, who has been part of the team planning the event says: “As the world gathers to celebrate the beauty of the game, too often people like me are hidden in the shadows of that same spotlight, exploited, bought, and silenced. Events like the World Cup bring opportunity, but without intentional action, they also bring increased risk for trafficking. The NJCHAT World Cup Act brings awareness that lives are not collateral damage to a global celebration. It says prevention matters, protection matters, and we matter.”

On Saturday evening, participants can then attend the NJ Freedom Gala, which is an annual event celebrating survivors and honoring the work being done by remarkable individuals to end trafficking. This year the gala, which will be held at the Clubhouse at Galloping Hill Golf Club in Kenilworth, will be a T-shirt Gala, so that participants can enjoy a fun evening of music and games after a day of action, without having to change out of their World Cup ACT T-shirts.

On Sunday morning, a bus provided by Coach USA, a member of the anti-trafficking organization TAT (Truckers Against Trafficking) and a World Cup ACT national partner will drive survivor leaders from Union to Cherry Hill. The ride will be live streamed to help raise awareness. Upon arrival in Cherry Hill, the same actions from Day 1 will be available to participants of Day 2, to allow people in Camden County, other parts of southern New Jersey and the Philadelphia region to get involved, and a further 150 hotels and motels will be reached in the area.

More information and tickets at [www.worldcupact.org](http://www.worldcupact.org)

#### **About the New Jersey Coalition Against Human Trafficking**

The New Jersey Coalition Against Human Trafficking (NJCAHT) is a volunteer-based 501c3 nonprofit founded in 2011 with a mission to unite NJ communities to end human trafficking. It provides trauma-informed and survivor-informed awareness training in schools, healthcare, financial services, and all community groups wishing to learn how to end sex and labor trafficking in New Jersey. Comprising over 150 volunteers and more than 200 affiliates including nonprofits, faith-based organizations, academics, law enforcement, and direct service providers it works to empower communities with the knowledge of what human trafficking is, how to prevent it, and how to support those affected by it. More information at: [www.safernj.org](http://www.safernj.org)