DR. SUSAN ELROD: Good evening, how’s everyone doing tonight? That was really not very enthusiastic. How’s everyone doing tonight? There we go. That was much better. Thank you, well it’s my pleasure to be here. Thanks Kate for inviting me to spend just a couple of minutes introducing tonight’s wonderful speakers. I certainly appreciate the opportunity to be here and I want to add my thanks to all of you for being here, to the student leaders, who we are and had a big shout out for, the faculty, and staff who made that possible and of course all the sponsors that were just mentioned. Let’s give all of those folks another round of applause. This is the fourth annual human trafficking awareness week and as I understand it; it’s been growing in size, we got over 200, 230.... 250 people in the house tonight! So that’s fantastic, let’s give a round of applause for that. This whole week is an important one to help raise awareness about issues human trafficking and to help us all learn more about how to take action to stop it from happening globally, as well as locally, clearly there are things that we can all and we can all do and that we all should do. We read and hear about it in stories from around the world, but it is shocking to know that happens right here in our own community. College students are among those targeted and so I am very happy that we have this opportunity to learn more about how to protect our students and other members of our own local community. So it’s my job tonight to tell you little bit about our speakers. First, I’d like to tell you little bit about Ms. Shamere McKenzie, who I understand is back by popular demand.
Ms. McKenzie is CEO of the Sun Gate Foundation, an anti-trafficking organization that aims to provide educational opportunities for survivors of human trafficking. Among her other accomplishments, she has also worked for shared Hope international, an organization whose mission is to rescue and restore women and children in crisis. She's an expert consultant and mentor who works with other organizations to help survivors move their lives forward. Herself a victim in human slaves... sex slavery Shamir has much to share with us. While the story she tells maybe hard for some of us to hear, they are important for us to hear as we all learn more about trafficking and how to prevent it and how to help rescue victims from it. And in the end many of these stories have a positive ending and so there is hope and I know we'll hear some of that tonight as well. We’re also gonna hear tonight from Ms. Keisha Head who is an activist and advocate against human trafficking. She's a survivor of domestic child sex trafficking and now advocates for legislation that protects victims of human trafficking. She has received various awards such as the Paul Howard's Fulton County Dist. Atty. Voices for Victims Award and the Darkness to Light Voice of Courage Award. She has been featured in numerous print, news, and magazine articles and has even appeared on television shows to tell her story and advocate on behalf of victims. She too, is involved in the Sun Gate Foundation as the secretary of the board and has founded Project 360°, a nonprofit that offers mentoring programs that help empower women and children whose lives have been derailed by domestic sex trafficking and sexual abuse. She is also a writer working on her first novel, entitled “Motherless Child” and I’m sure you will hear equally inspiring stories from Ms. Head as well. Please join me tonight and welcome these two dynamics women to the stage.

AUDIENCE: Applause.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Good evening everyone. Wait, is this on? Testing?

KEISHA HEAD: Testing, testing?

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: There we go.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Good evening everyone. How are we doing?

AUDIENCE: Cheering.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Good, Good. I am Shamere McKenzie.

KEISHA HEAD: And I am Keisha Head.
SHAMERE MCKENZIE: But before we start I want to know one thing. Who was here last year? Last year? Awesome. Nice to see you. Who are the newcomers? Welcome. A round of applause.

AUDIENCE: Applause.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Last year I had a smaller bottle of lotion and I like to share my lotion. This year I bought a bigger bottle and I can pass it around if anyone needs lotion I’m very conscience about my dry hands.

KEISHA HEAD: I need some.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: You need some?

KEISHA HEAD: Yeah

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Okay.

KEISHA HEAD: Thank you.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: You need some. Anyone else need some lotion? Come get it, come and get it. Come on. So I’d like to share?

KEISHA HEAD: I heard there’s a lot of ashy people in Chico.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: So I bought a bigger bottle this year. Different fragrance, but it smells just as awesome as last year. So share with everyone else.

KEISHA HEAD: Victoria Secret for men.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: So guys, I’m really excited to be here tonight, I think it is a divine appointment for me to be here tonight. I also want to let you guys know in sharing, there is a specific way I like to share. The issue of human trafficking is uncomfortable. It’s not just something we can sit in our seats and listen, and just like okay. It’s a hard issue. As a survivor, I don’t even consider myself a survivor, but I am using language that you will understand, right? I consider myself a liberator, one who has breaken free from my chains of my past and is now helping others. So I am not a victim because I am no longer enslaved. I am not a survivor.
Thank you, I’m not a survivor because we all survive something and I’m passed that stage. I’m in this chair right now, the leader stage, the liberator stage. So the way we share tonight, we like to incorporate some laughter. It’s a hard issue, it helps me to process, right? You may think “She is doing well. She’s on the stage. She is smiling.” But on the inside it could be a struggle to share my experience, it’s very... and Keshia will give an example in the talk. So we share in a particular way. Some of the thing you may be “That’s not even funny Shamere. I just crack up about it to bring my emotions back to the center, right? I just want you guys to know that. I also have two rules or some rules. I am Jamaican so something I say may not come out right. Do not laugh at me.

KEISHA HEAD: [laughs] Sorry.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: It started already. We are wearing stilettoes, if we trip... we’re not gonna sue you Chico don’t worry about it. Where’s the Provost? Provost don’t worry, don’t worry. But don’t take pictures and put them on Facebook, Snapchat; I know that’s the new thing, or Instagram. I follow some of you on Instagram. Melissa, right? So those are just somethings about me. Keisha...

KEISHA HEAD: I also want to add, somethings that we talk about maybe very sensitive and triggering and if you have experience... we talk about somethings and it’s too heavy for you, feel free to walk out and please breathe and take in... Breathe in and out, and just re-center yourself. I wanted to add that. To be cautious.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: We have a power point, but it’s not coming over, but nonetheless, we’re here tonight to talk about human trafficking. For how many of us is this the first time hearing about human trafficking? First time? Some first timers, awesome. When you hear human trafficking, what comes to mind? What are some place that come to mind? Not America? Excellent. Iraq. Tonight we are going to talk about sex trafficking in the United States. But before we continue, let’s take a look at this picture.
**KEISHA HEAD:** This is values, each one of us has different values. Some people’s values are up, meaning they have high values and some people’s values are kind of shaky meaning they come from a lot of dysfunction and things. And then you have some people that hold on to their solid values and that’s the core of them. So what are three things that you value?

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Think about that. You may be this person, where you’re values sent you going off, probably chasing it right there, right? Or you’re this person where your values have you upside down, right? Or you maybe this person, holding on to it for your dear life. So think about three things that you find valuable. Anyone wants to share?

**KEISHA HEAD:** I kinda value my car cause it gets me back and forth.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Your car? That BMW I want to take a ride out of?

**KEISHA HEAD:** No, the Camry.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Oh okay. The car? Melissa... I’m a little loud, can you take some value off me. Melissa, what do you value? Your life. I shouldn’t have asked you that question
KEISHA HEAD: Wow.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Anyone else want to share what they value?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Family

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Family? Yes.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Peace

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Peace? Excellent.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Education.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Education, excellent. Anything else? Anyone want to.... Yes ma’am?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Laughter.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Laughter, I love to laugh. Yes! Laughter. Anyone else?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Loyalty.


KEISHA HEAD: Yeah, I’m very loyal. I’m here with you today.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Anyone else? What are somethings you value?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Honesty

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Honesty.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible]

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Can’t hear you, shout. Hunting?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Culture.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Culture, so sorry. Yes.
KEISHA HEAD: Culture, wow, awesome.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Free will? Awesome. Yes ma’am?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Jesus:

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Jesus, yes! That’s my BFF. Yeah. Jesus. So I did this little exercise and I said I shouldn’t have asked Melissa because when we think of values, right....
Many of us sometimes don’t value life or associate value with life. And that’s why I said I shouldn’t have asked Melissa. And I picked on Melissa cause I follow her on Instagram, right? So, life is valuable.

KEISHA HEAD: I could give an example. When you think about the way that we value, like human life, in our society, been an American, I think we put little value on each other’s life. There are people that take life easily. We have the death penalty, we have things that we just don’t value life a lot and when you think about animal; if you harm an animal, PETA will come after you viciously. There will be protests and I love dogs. I have a few dogs. I have friends that have dogs and I love dogs that are part of my family, but when you have a child molested and murdered, do you see anybody in the court house or protesting for children. We don’t value life in our culture and we’re gonna go more into that a little More.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Alright and when we’re talking about this issue of human trafficking, life is important because we are not talking about dogs, our cars, not our homes, but we’re talking about human beings. Does everyone understand that? We’re talking about human beings, valuable, life, valuable. So keep that in mind. When you look at me right now, forget that I am the CEO of Sun Gate, forget that I’m shame McKenzie, forget that I’m a survivor, just look at us as human beings. Just like you.
KEISHA HEAD: Sometimes society clouds, it clouds our judgement and we view each other as color, different colors, different races, different cultures, but if you look at each other, we all have 5 fingers, 10 fingers I hope. I saw 5.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: She got 5.

KEISHA HEAD: This one is artificial, sorry. We have 10 toes and a head. We’re all the same right.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: We all have these feelings. We all love, we all hurt. Some of us hate, Jesus I’m trying not to hate some people.

KEISHA HEAD: I hate sometimes. There are some people I hate.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: We get angry right? That’s all people, right? So we are a lot alike, more than we are different, right? But just keep that in mind as we go through this presentation. We are talking about human beings. As you look at us on his stage we are human beings. Remember, we are human beings. You got it? We are ready to roll.
SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Right, so when we talk about human beings, we understand that in our American culture, human beings are exploited, right? "But exploited is a big word, Shamere" I hear someone in the back ask said that. "It’s a big word" what comes to mind when you hear the term exploitation? Big word. What comes to mind? In the red shirt, what comes to mind? Exploitation, I have to make it sound big. Listen there is no wrong answer. We are learning together. What comes to mind? Something comes to mind. Is it your girlfriend? Does your girlfriend come to mind when you hear exploitation. No. sir?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible]

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Taking advantage of something, expose something. Yes sir?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible]

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Weaknesses. Great answer.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible]
**SHAMERE MCKENZIE**: Awesome, great example. Anyone else want to share exploitation? You hear pain, hurt. Prostitution may come to mind. Right? When we are talking about human trafficking we normally say "the girls work." Keisha and I may say that tonight in this presentation, but what really happens is this key word; it's not work, its exploitation. Being sold for someone else's profit.

**KEISHA HEAD**: And when I think about it, when I think about exploitation and this is how my mind process is when someone takes your vulnerabilities, they take your insecurities, and they use those against you to gain form them and a lot of times when I think about my trafficker, I look back at all the things that I gave him, all the power that I gave him like secrets. I told him things that I should have never told, I trusted him. So a lot... and he used those things to exploit me. So exploitation that is one way that I process it. What would be your definition of exploitation?
SHAMERE MCKENZIE: You summed it right up. See she is the smart one, right? You could tell, I am the dumb-dumb. She's the smart one, right? We got that clear right. I'm just here to assist her, okay. Okay, so what are some ways in which you may encounter sexual exploitation? There's an error in the grammar, I could already see it. Sorry. What are some ways you encounter sexual exploitation?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Massage Parlors

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Massage parlors. In our culture. In our American culture. What are some places, what are some ways?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Advertisement

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Advertisement, music.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Massage Parlors

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Massage parlors. In our culture. In our American culture. What are some places, what are some ways?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Advertisement
**SHAMERE MCKENZIE**: Advertisement, music.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER**: Pornography

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE**: Pornography. "Exploitation in pornography? But it helps in relationships." Anyone else?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER**: Instagram.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE**: I'm on Instagram. There is no exploitation on Instagram.

**KEISHA HEAD**: Yes, there is. I saw some Shamere.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE**: On Instagram? We are talking about Instagram.

**KEISHA HEAD**: On Instagram... no no no. I got a direct message from a trafficker. A girl, she said I was very beautiful. She said I was beautiful and i could make some extra cash and I said, "Do you know who I am? You need to google me before you come at me that way."

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE**: On Instagram?

**KEISHA HEAD**: Yeah. I know some federal agents that wouldn’t be so pleased with you, trying to contact me directly. Yeah, Instagram.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE**: How many of you got Instagram? Look out.

**KEISHA HEAD**: People saying you could make fast cash.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE**: Instagram?

**KEISHA HEAD**: Instagram

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE**: Thank god they are not on Facebook.

**KEISHA HEAD**: They’re on Facebook too Shamere. I see some pictures sometimes...

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE**: On Facebook too? Well they are not on Snap chat right?

**KEISHA HEAD**: I'm too old for snapchat. I’m 35.
**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Not on snapchat okay. So exploitation occurs on Facebook. That's something we use every day, right? Instagram and you're thinking social media, we're just posting pictures, but someone may see that picture and see something different from what you post. I want you guys to understand that cause young people know a days.... us young people, you old. You said it. You said you old. You’re too old for snapchat. I’mma create a snapchat Courtney, hook me up on snapchat on my phone. You got it right? Hook me up. Right? Us young people are into snapchat now a days and that's how we share and communicate, but we have to be careful, okay young people. When we are on snapchat, we have to be careful of what we're posting cause you may take it one way, but someone who wants to exploit you may use that to their advantage.
So some ways in which we encounter exploitation, some people already called some of these examples. Magazine, we see it in our magazines and I’m going to show you some examples in a few. Television. Anybody have a Tel‐lie‐vision. All of us have tel‐lie‐visions, right? My just keeps me company cause I live alone, right? I don’t even watch the thing. Fashion. I’m gonna show you like fashion. "Exploitation occurs in fashion?" I’m gonna show you an image in a few. In our culture, in different ways in our culture, right? We are going to talk about that soon. In our music. Vocabulary. So many words in the English dictionary.

KEISHA HEAD: You missed one Shamere

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: What?

KEISHA HEAD: I got encountered in the grocery store.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: The grocery store?!!

KEISHA HEAD: Yeah, my daughter is 18. One we was in the grocery store and she went in online before me to pay for her items. And I was like two people behind her because I had to catch up with her because I had to get some other things for myself. And she was in line and this guy behind her say, “Hey I’ll pay for that.” And paid the cashier. And I saw it. And I say, “Hey no you won’t pay for that. She’s got her own money.”
So, I mean, who knows that was a way that he could get her outside to say, “Hey here is my number” so traffickers are very savvy. Like so you need to be very careful. They will encounter you anywhere. They see you as she’s young. She may look very vulnerable and naïve and she’s an easy target. What makes her easy is she is young.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** I was at the nail salon once and get my nails done. And there were two young girls in there. One guy comes in just walking around the nail salon. And I’m wondering if his is going to get his nails done or what. All his is doing is walking around. He goes up to one of the girls but she’s absolutely gorgeous. Not that all people are not gorgeous but this girl was absolutely gorgeous. He walked up to her, he said, “Hello.” She said, “Hello.” He went back out the nail salon. She said to her friend, “Oh my gosh he’s cute.” Alright? He came back in with another guy, right? He walked to the back of the nail salon, the guy sat down beside the girl. “You getting’ your nails done? How much does that cost? Let me pay it for you.” She’s like, “Oh my gosh, he’s going to pay for my nails. Oh my gosh.” Right? And he took out a pile of money. Right? He like, “Man I’ve got all this money.”

**KEISHA HEAD:** A bankroll.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** “To pay for your nails and I can pay for your friends nails.” The girl says, “What do you do?” The guy says, “I’m in school.” The girl says, “You’re in school? What you studying?”

And I’m setting in the nail salon, and I’m like, he must not know that I am here. Right? I got out my little phone and I positioned myself and took a picture of him. And because I was on the DC task force at the time I just call the guy that I know and I said, “Can you all send a squad over here?” right? By that time he’s already getting his Mac on telling this girl how much money she can make if she comes with him. Right? I walk out the shop and two law enforcement officers greeted me coming in. I said, “Just walk with me and talk.” Right? And I’m walking with the officers and telling them that he’s in there talking to the girl. And I just left. The officers went in, I don’t know what became of that situation because the police can’t share certain information when it becomes an investigation. Right? (whispering) it’s just that simple. In the nail salon. Right? So those are some of the ways we many see. Someone said pornography, billboards. Right? These are just some of the ways in which we may encounter exploitation.
What about these images here? These are ads.

**KEISHA HEAD:** These are graphic but they are real.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** These are real ads. These are real ads that I pulled. What do you think this one is advertising?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** [inaudible] laughter

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Boob job?

**AUDIENCE:** laughter

**KEISHA HEAD:** I told you that Shamere. I said plastic surgery.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Plastic surgery. A boob job?

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Yeah.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** OK will get back to this one.

**KEISHA HEAD:** That is a camera by the way. They are advertising a camera.
SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Nikon. You see that? Cool Pics 2100. This is a Nikon ad. Right? And it’s basically telling you like when you take a picture you can have a different look. You see that’s why she has two different looks.

KEISHA HEAD: As if she wasn’t a beautiful before.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Right? This one the stomach is a little bit slimmer. Right? And this one with her head looking down and this won her head is up a little. These images. They’re selling a camera for god sakes. Right?

Let’s look at this one. What comes to mind when you see this picture? Provost I am sorry this may not be in line with the policies of Chico but this is what we’re seeing, right? What comes to mind when you see this picture? Let’s keep it real. An orgy. Right? I mean...

KEISHA HEAD: They are blue jeans.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Like, she’s on the floor. This is Calvin Klein ad for jeans. Right? This girl isn’t even wearing jeans.

AUDIENCE: laughter.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Right? But this is their ad. Right? She is topless in jeans. These are the images that we’re seein’. Right? Exploitation at its finest. Thank you Nikon and Calvin Klein.
What about these? What is being advertised here? American Apparel advertising socks. I don’t know if you guys can really see this but she is biting her lips in this picture. What does that have to do with socks?

AUDIENCE: murmurs

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Right? She doesn’t even look like she’s closed in this picture. Right? That’s not even talk about the pictures on these other two. Right? Socks! I’m proud like to see cute little toes and warmth. But this is what we’re seeing.

KEISHA HEAD: I don’t even think socks need to be advertised. I mean I’m sorry.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: But the fuzzy wassy ones. You haven’t seen the fuzzy wassy ones?

KEISHA HEAD: Oh yeah.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: The merry Christmas ones. No? OK. This picture (laughing), this picture I was going to a conference one time and the young lady who booked my ticket and after she booked my ticket she said, “You are not to believe what just came up after I pressed.” You know if you put in your credit card information and you hit confirm on Priceline, this is the image that came up.
KEISHA HEAD: A trafficker.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Right? What does this look like? When you see this picture what do you think this guy is?

AUDIENCE: Murmurs

KEISHA HEAD: P-I-M-P

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Right? I’m just like... His hair is down. The Priceline guy is in the back. And he’s all like HURUMP. Right?

KEISHA HEAD: What does it have to do with?

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: And what does it have to do with my ticket!

KEISHA HEAD: [laughs]

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Right? Priceline. She just took a screen shot and sent it to me. Oh my gosh. Right?
KEISHA HEAD: And it’s everywhere amongst us.
Right? We see it but we don’t see it. We look at things but we don’t look at the reality of things. And that’s how media has desensitized our brains. It’s like it shows us these images ‘cause our minds process these images and it influences us of who we become and who we are. So like the first ad, I don’t look right if I have a small chest.
So I have to buy this camera to have a bigger chest. That’s just Photoshopping. I don’t get it, like, how can a camera do that?

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: CoolPix! Hello!

KEISHA HEAD: Take a picture of me.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Take a picture of you?

KEISHA HEAD: Yes.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Anybody with a camera, please take a picture of her
KEISHA HEAD: But yeah, these images become who we are. And as a culture and as a society so it is very important.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: And you know these are tricky images. Because after we see them, you know it’s a camera and we’re flipping through our magazines and where just like it’s okay, it is normal, we just turnover, right? And we are not understand we are being programmed. Our minds are being programmed to accepting this.

KEISHA HEAD: And when we actually see a victim, we do not see victims because of these images
**SHAMERE MCKENZIE**: We are so programmed. Right? And, who is this Calvin Klein? I’m so tempted to call...

**KEISHA HEAD**: We can move on from this Calvin Klein.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE**: I want to call Calvin Klein. And ask him were you thinking? Like, your Marketing Department, let me speak to the Marketing Director, really? You want to call Calvin Klein. I know you do. They will probably give you some free jeans.

**KEISHA HEAD**: I don’t even want to wear Calvin Klein jeans.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE**: No? Me either. So let’s continue.
This all leads now to this big thing we’re talking about tonight. Human trafficking. Right? Human trafficking. That uncomfortable word. That uncomfortable topic. Some of us don’t want to talk about.

**KEISHA HEAD**: I want to talk about it. I want to talk about human trafficking. I was 16 sixteen, 16 years old. The time of my life when I should have been thinking about my high school sweetheart.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE**: Was he cute?

**KEISHA HEAD**: He was awesome, but... fathered one of my children. A time where I should have been thinking graduating high school, what I wanted to become in life. I met a guy, and I want to back all the way up... can I share my story Shamere? Really quick? Or pieces of it and we’ll go deep into it as we go through the slides. I was born to a schizophrenic mother. At a very young age that put me at a disadvantage. I was motherless and if you’re motherless you know you don’t have anyone to protect you cause your mother, she is supposed to protect you. So at a very young age that put me at a disadvantage. I was put into foster care. No... I was put into my aunt’s home. It started with foster care then my aunt stood up and said “I’ll take her.” Right because she didn’t want to look bad in front of everybody, the family. And she said “I’ll take her” as an afterthought. And in her home, she was very ridged, very strict.
She was a schoolteacher, not to say that any school teachers are just... but she was straight to the... I was... she, one of the things that I often talk about my aunt, I talk about their abuse, but I forget to talk about she gave me the love of books. I didn’t have I VT in my room, I had a case of books with encyclopedias and I started to read at a very young age.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE. Encyclopedias, we don’t have those no more.

KEISHA HEAD: Yes, well when I was little, I’m 35 so it was around there. So I used to read to escape because I experienced so mush trauma. There was sexual abuse by her two older sons. There was mental abuse, physical abuse. And I couldn’t take it, by the age of 12 I became angry. I would go to school and I would fight. My teacher would say “She is crazy. She’s disorderly.” No one took the time to ask me, “What’s wrong?” Why are you so angry?” and so I acted out. Fast forward, in and out the foster care system by the age of 16, I had been through 42 different placements, 42 different home. Group homes, foster care, juvenile hall, a lot of different places and my case worker said one day, I was pregnant at this point. I found out at 16 I was a teenage mom and I was soon to have a baby and she said, “You know the group home that you are in, you can stay here with the baby cause the program is not set up that... for children.” And she said, “I have this one place and if you run, we will have to put you in a mental institute.” I wasn’t crazy. I just need love. I needed nurturing and I needed someone to teach me how to heal. I didn’t get any of that and so.... You want to intervene?

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: So that was Keisha’s story before right? And how many of us can identify with that. You don’t have to raise your hand. Pieces of that story you can identify with and if you yourself cannot identify with that you probably know someone with a similar story. You probably know someone who was in foster care. You probably know someone who got pregnant at 16 and in our culture, taking it back to culture, how do we treat human beings that are in foster care, that end up pregnant at 16, that may have a mentally ill mom? Human beings right?
So we're still on this culture piece that was just a way of breaking this up. Like i told you, a lot of this material is heavy. We have to break it up for your sake and our sake, okay? You're like "and then what happened next? No, you can't stop the story there." It’s okay, for your sake and our sake we have to break it up, right? So in the human trafficking culture, it exists in our culture, right? Want to do a test, Ya'll know this song, "strip club and..." Sing with me, "strip clubs and..." ya'll don't know this song? "Strip club and dollar bills. Gotta get that money." “strip club and...“

AUDIENCE MEMBER: "...still got my money."

KEISHA HEAD: Oh still got my money. I'm old I’m sorry. I don't remember.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Oh still got my money. I thought he said got to make my money. See, you're old remember? So that is one song in our music, right? The restaurant Hooters, you like their chicken right? Awesome chicken! Right? Explain to me why, and if you're from Hooters sue me now, I don't have no money. The check Kate is going to give me is gone pay for school. Don't worry about that, ya'll can't get that. Why do you have to have big boobs and short shorts to work at Hooters? What are they selling?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Sex sells.
SHAMERE MCKENZIE: And who's buying it?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Men

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: And women, too. Women also go to Hooters. Don't try to blame the men. I maybe a feminist, but hello.... right? So we see it in Hooters. Bachelor parties. When I say bachelor parties, what comes to mind?

AUDIENCE: Strippers.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Keisha when I say bachelor parties, what comes to mind?

KEISHA HEAD: Well I planned my husband's bachelor party and I was there. So it comes to mind I was there for it.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: So, I mean... let me let me ask again. Maybe... hold on. When I say bachelor parties, what comes to mind?


SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Thank you! Wedding! Yes, that was a test question, but that should show us... that should show us something. Collectively, we said strippers. Collectively, now I may know some of you here right? But when I asked that question, people that I haven't even met, but hello, right, I'll meet you now... Said strippers. She said wedding. It's a bachelor party guys. The groom, Keisha said when we asked her, what she said, "well I planned my husband's bachelor party." Husband, right?

KEISHA HEAD: Well he had no friends, Shamere. I'm his best friend.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Right, that should tell us something as a people, how our minds are programmed to when we hear certain words, what we affiliate that word with, bachelor party and strippers. Never fail. I ask this question every time I come to Chico. I think some of you would have provably said something else by now, right, but that's what we hear. Halloween costumes. Pimps and Hoes, popular costume and I'm not gonna clean it up, because when you go to the costume store, that's what it says. Parents, you're probably like, "Shamere you are a little bit too explicit." But when you go to the store, that's what the costume says in writing. I have to say that because sometimes as parents we try to keep our kids in this bubble, but the world is exposing them to the things that we are trying to keep them from and we're not around our kids 24/7, right?
So we got to teach our kids how to process that in a healthy way. I'm not teaching you how to have parents, I have 0.000 kids, right? So in our Halloween costumes, we talked about the objectification of women. We saw some of the pictures before, right? The toys we purchase for our children. I forgot to show you that picture. I taught a course one time, it's not a course Shamere, I think I'm a professor cause I went to a couple classes today. If I was in your class, hello, hi again, right? How many people we're in some of the classes... the 2 classes we talked to today. Did you ask your professor for extra credit? She won't budge? I'll send her an e-mail. I got you, girl. I got you. The toys that our children.... I taught this course once, it's not a course Shamere, hello... A training called "Sex Sells and We Are the Buyer. Every Day Encounters with Exploitation." and I was looking at some of the toys... Barbie's who are pregnant. Ya'll never saw that one. It's a Barbie and she has a baby in the belly. Now it's good for sex ed, right? But you're playing with a Barbie you really want to teach your children about sex at that age too. Right? Some of the toys our children have, we need to look at those toys. What's the message in the toy? I'mma leave that at that. Technology, some of us kids... Keisha could tell you, her daughter know how to go on Instagram. Her Daughter knows how to post a video on Facebook.

KEISHA HEAD: She's 4.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Right, She records herself and posts it on Facebook and then Keisha comes out and apologies. "I'm sorry ya'll. That was my daughter." right? She's 4 years old, right?

KEISHA HEAD: I put a lock on my phone since then.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Technology. Cellphone apps. Smart phones, who does not have a smartphone? Hey, it's 2015. You’re gonna get one right? My grandma has a smartphone. She’s called me and asked me "how do I use this thing." I’m like "Grandma, you’re using it." Right? Everyone has a smartphone except for Kate... [Inaudible]

KEISHA HEAD: They're smart.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: They’re smart right? And if you ever go to your app store in your phone and put in the word "pimp" and you see the amount of apps that come up, relating to the word pimp is ridiculous. The last time I checked it was about 2 years ago and it was 300. I did a talk about 2 weeks ago and the student said, "Well, Ms. Shamere it's about 1500 now." That's a cute little student. I had to talk like that. She was so cute, right?
So you could do that exercise yourself. Go to your smartphone and put in "pimp" and you see the different apps that come up. We are glorifying this thing. Pimp My Ride, Pimp My Cellphone, National Geographic had Pimp my Fish Tank.


SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Maybe some stilettos. No? No? Okay. So these are some of the ways we see in in our culture, right? We see human trafficking in our culture and these are some of the ways. I'm sure if I asked you, you could tell me other ways. The word pimp is not cool guys.

KEISHA HEAD: That's another reason I feel we need to change the language because we have become desensitized by these words. Have you ever heard someone ever say, traffic my ride or... Trafficker, what does that look like? You think about a whole different type of person. So when we use these words, then we understand that we are somehow accepting the fact that this is cool because if I say pimp, then because of these images, these thousands and millions of images out there we have somehow said, "Okay, this is..." that's what people associate with it.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: And accept it right?

KEISHA HEAD: And if we say trafficker, then we understand that this is a person that tortures. This is a person that abuses, exploited and it changed the dialect and the way we look at it.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Everyone is with us so far? We’re not putting you to sleep yet right? Sometimes Keisha and I do a good job at that. She has 4 kids, she knows about putting people to sleep.

KEISHA HEAD: Right, kids don't sleep.
SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Tonight, we are particularly talking about sex trafficking. Before we get into sex trafficking and its manifestation, we want you to understand that human trafficking covers a lot. Keisha tell us what human trafficking covers.

KEISHA HEAD: Human trafficking covers "pimping," Pimping is when you have a man or female, when I was 16 I did not understand that pimp did not wear colorful... well some of them do, but if they are going to an event or something like that, I did not know on a everyday basis that a trafficker could be a woman. It could be a man and I did know that there was a culture; there rules and regulations.....

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: We'll get to that in a second. So Human trafficking, there is sex, there is labor. One student mentioned today hmm.... militants. Everybody remember "Kony 2012?" It was just 3 years ago guys, right? So what we're talking about sex trafficking tonight. We're talking about sex trafficking tonight because that's our experience. I can't tell you about labor trafficking cause I'm like hmm..... I understand it, but I can't speak to it at length as to how i can speak about sex trafficking. So sex trafficking manifest itself in our culture in 4 different ways; 4 different ways that's outlined in our Trafficking Victims Protection Act. TVPA, right? That's our federal law that was only put in place in 2000, the year 2000. So this old issue, the United States only recognized that this was a problem here in the year 2000 and sex trafficking manifests itself in 4 different ways in our culture, right, or i would say 4 primary ways. Pimpin', which Keisha explained a while ago, right?
And there are different types of pimps, it's not only men, right? Pimpin', traffickers- male, female. Any social economic background. Any race- black, white, yellow. I'm yellow sometimes, right? My friends will tell ya' I always have something bright. Where is Austin? Austin I had on a pink shirt today. She said, "Wear that one. That's you." I said, "But I like this one cause I'm gonna eat and I don't what everybody to see my fat belly, right, a little button-down shirt. She says, "That one is you though. It's colorful." So sometimes I'm yellow, right?

**KEISHA HEAD:** Then you have familial. That's when a family member... We had a case in Atlanta, Georgia. That's where I'm from, I catch the southern slang, the draw, not yet I try to hide it. Okay, familial that is when a family member... We had a case where the husband and wife they trafficked their daughter to their cars salesmen. Where they purchased their mini-van. And they traded their... I think she was under the age of 12 and they traded her for sex to pay their debt that they owned on their car. You could google that case if you don't.... it's real. We have you have families that actually traffic their children.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Sometimes for a flat screen TV. So I also want you guys to understand that it's just not the money part of it. Sometimes you are trading for drugs or anything of value, right? Survival. Some anti-trafficking organizations debate this one, survival, but according to our federal law, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, anyone under the age of 18 engaged in a commercial sex act... That's a big word Shamere. Commercial sex act just means buying and selling. That's all commercial means right there, right? I had to look this up guys, I'm not that smart. Right? So anyone under the age of 18 engaged in a commercial sex act is a trafficking victim. And survival sex sometimes when you are under the age of 18, right, someone will tell you, "oh I can put you up in my house." right? I don't have a place to stay because I may be in the system and you ran away and you met someone that says," oh come, I could put you in my house, but you have to do something for that." Sometimes that's sexual exchange. There's money there, but house, food, clothing, right? And then gangs, a new trend that we're seeing is a lot of gang trafficking. And when we talk about gangs, we talk about... and Keisha mentioned earlier that we equate words with certain things. A lot of people when we say gangs we equate that with violence and drugs, right? Gangs are now leaving drug trafficking, coming into the sex trafficking industry, why? It's profitable, it's lucrative. Low risk, high profit. If I'm in the car... come on Keisha we're in your BMW right now. We're driving.

**KEISHA HEAD:** You're in the.... I have the...

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Okay, we're in your BMW. I'm from Jamaica, we drive on the left side.
**KEISHA HEAD:** "Move on the way. What are you doing?"

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** [Imitates siren] Excuse ma'am stop. I'm the police now. I pulled her over. She is in the car with Shamere, right? I pull her over. Shamere is the victim, she may be the trafficker, i don't see anything wrong with this picture, right? They are just two people. Let's rewind the tape. This i the new drug on the market called "Aquafina," drive Keisha. [Imitates siren] Ma'am you drugs in the car, I'm taking you off to jail.

**KEISHA HEAD:** I don't want to go back...

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Oh we're not taking you to jail Keisha, not today. Right, but you see that example, right? If there is a human being, it's hard for law enforcement to realize that. That's a trafficking victim. If drugs are in the car.... If drugs is in the car, law enforcement could identify the drug and say you did something wrong, I'm taking you off.

**KEISHA HEAD:** We had a case in Atlanta Shamere, where because of the training, I trained over 3000 law enforcement officers and because of training he had received, he was a state trooper and because of the training he received, when he did a routine traffic stop, he was able to identify the victim because she had her head down and he was asking certain questions. So that lets him know that he needs to remove the trafficker from the victim. So he was able to remove the trafficker and the victim and then he began to ask questions and he had trafficked her all the way from another state. So he was able to save the victim because of that training and because of that intuition and knowing that was something wrong with that picture.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** So when you think about trafficking and you look at gangs, instead of you have one pimp who is doing the abuse, you have several. So just imagine that and we're not gonna get into details of that, right?
So in our culture we have sex trafficking, the subculture that exists in our own American Culture. And in every culture there are rules. Keisha, what were some of the rules your trafficker gave you.

**KEISHA HEAD:** Oh gosh I’m so old. What was the rules?

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Old people can't remember. Anybody have pimps?

**KEISHA HEAD:** There were a lot of rules and I wasn’t aware of how many rules there were. Some of the rules were you can't talk to other traffickers and you could not... One of the rules you had to give 100% of your money to him. There were several rules. There's just different types of traffickers. So they have different types of rules. My trafficker was 54 years old, so he was an older trafficker and had been trafficking over 30+ years.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** So some of the other rules include: Don't look a pimp in the eye. Don't look another pimp in the eye cause then you are gonna be out-of-pocket. We’re gonna get to that word in a few. Right? When pimps are on the sidewalk, girls have to walk on the street. Have you heard the term "Pimps up, hoes down." Hear that term right? That's where that term comes from, right? If a girl is on the sidewalk and a pimp comes on the side walk, she knows she has to get on the street or she'll be out of pocket. Right?
So those are just some of the rules that exist in the subculture. There is a code of conduct that ties in with the rules, right, and then there is a language and these are 3 elements of culture that exist in every single culture, right? So even though we may view rules, code of conduct, and language in this setting as something negative, it’s a positive thing in other cultures, except for the consequences for disobedience and I left off there. Our criminal justice system, right? So language, what’s a lot lizard?

KEISHA HEAD: A what? A lot lizard?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible]

KEISHA HEAD: Oh... smart.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Excellent. He was here last year. He remembered.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible]

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Lot lizard. A word that we don't use in our culture. You don't go to the zoo and say, “let me see the lot lizard." right? But a girl that works the truck stop is called a lot lizard. And so tonight I'm wearing red shoes, I like my red shoes, they kind of offset the blue. Looks good right? Okay good. Thank you, I got your approval. I was worried about that for a second alright cause Keisha was like, “The red shoes? It's blue, wear black." right? She really didn't say that.

KEISHA HEAD: And I went on to put my diamond ones on.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: So, if you are in a truck stop, the truckers will go on their CB and they'll say, "Lot lizard blue and red." So other truckers know to look out for the girl in the blue and the red because she is working. She's being exploited. So that's a language. Bottom, do you know that one, bottom? Alright, tell use what's bottom.

KEISHA HEAD: Yeah, I know bottom. Lot lizard. I ain't never heard of lot lizard and I've never been around truck stops, so I don't know the word. The language, so and a lot of us like we've never been to this world so a lot of us don't know the language, but the traffickers know and they teach the girls the language. And that's why they call anyone who is not in that life style, they call them a square. Like you don't understand, you don't know because you don't speak the language, and you don't know the language. You are all Squares. I'm a square now. Thank god.
**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Me too.

**KEISHA HEAD:** I don’t want to be a triangle or circle anymore, but hmm yeah... the language is is... I lost it.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Bottom.

**KEISHA HEAD:** Bottom. The bottom girl is one of the most victimized girls out of all the trafficker's girls because she is the one that presumably is the most loyal to him because she's been there the longest and she's responsible for all the other girls. If any of the other girls, so that makes her more aggressive. I makes her more aggressive because if one of the other girls get out of line and she's responsible for her or say for instance, the other girl doesn't meet her quota or whatever the other trafficker feels the girl need to do, then the bottom girl gets the harshest punishment. So she is gonna make sure that the other girls have to do what they have to do so she won't get beat or tortured or possibly murdered.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** And I want you guys to understand the bottom girl concept because in our media currently you'll see, pimp arrested with his assistant or his help. Or pimp and 24 year old was pimin' out this minor, but we look at this 24 year old as his assistant, not understanding that she's the bottom, right? Who may at one time have been under the age of 18 if she was with him that long, right? And bottoms are prosecuted. It's happening all across the board. Law enforcement, will tell you "we have a bottom. She's not cooperating." Of course she is not going to cooperate. She's loyal to her pimp. I was a bottom, I understand the dynamic. And if you understand manipulation and how that psychological manipulation that goes into a bottom in training her to be a bottom. And even the word bottom, Keisha and I and Clarissa were talking in Hawaii about this word bottom. Right? And if you do a Hierarchy, I said it right, a hierarchy, right, of the subculture, you have the pimp at the top then the bottom and maybe his enforcers in there and then the girls fall under. Right? So she looks like she's in second in command to the pimp, but really she is the lowest in the stable.

**KEISHA HEAD:** Cause she has to make more than everybody, so she's... and another thing I want to go back to the language part of it, you know how we just said the word square, the trafficker makes make the victim believes that everybody who's normal. Is something wrong with them? Why should you give it away for free when you can sell it or he tricks your sight so you believe you’re normal and the world is abnormal? So it becomes normal behavior for you.
SHAMERE McKENZIE: Track. What's a track? I ran track in college and high school. Not that track.

KEISHA HEAD: I raced her on the beach of Hawaii. I almost caught her. That was tiring.

SHAMERE McKENZIE: She made me run. I have the video to prove, right? We're not gonna race in here Keisha. You're not gonna embarrass me today. The track is the place where the girls are prostituted. Track. Daddy, Pimp, trafficker, same word. Why do you think the girls call him daddy? What does daddy do? What does your dad do for you? Daddy protects, daddy provides and that's all part of the psychological part of it too. You're calling this man daddy. The man that's abusing you, raping you, beating you, you call him daddy. So you guys are getting the psychological perspective. Great, cause some people still don't get it. Judges. I'm sorry. Poly, not you, you are a great judge. Okay. She was putting people away before I was born, but I hear you were a great judge. Thanks Poly, Poly was a Judge, She's a retired Judge. She's one of the good ones. Right?
But now we are gonna talk about this reality. Right? Because, you know, a lot of times we see human trafficking in "Taken." Anybody seen the movie "Taken?"

**KEISHA HEAD:** So Hollywood.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Right, my friend Stacy Louis says when she talks about Taken, "Well Shamere, how many victims have a CIA father to say, go underneath the bed. Go on the cellphone... He’s gonna do. How many victims of trafficking do you think get that?" "You’re trafficker is gonna beat you lifelessly, when he beats you, I’m going to be on this end and then I’m gonna come in and then go underneath the bed. Be on the cellphone, don’t move.” How many victims you think have that? That CIA father to instruct them? Not many, if any... I don’t know any survivors that have a CIA father. So were gonna get down to the reality...

**KEISHA HEAD:** I used to dream about it. I was like, "Somebody was gonna come in here and the roof is gone fly open and they are gonna rescue me." I used to dream about it a lot.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** A lot of girls have that dream Keisha. In the life a lot of girls feel one day someone may rescue them.

**KEISHA HEAD:** Their community maybe. Maybe someone who knows them, who that this is not who they are.
SHAMERE MCKENZIE: But Keisha, I felt like that part was when I still had some kind hope in the life, but when I lost that hope, I didn't have that anymore. Did you have that?

KEISHA HEAD: Yeah, I realized no one was ever gonna come, no one was ever going to save me and everybody was always going to look at me as this prostitute. This label, and not Keisha, the girl who loved to read, who love to... animals, who liked to hang with her friends. No one was gonna come for that girl. I remember Shamere.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: You remember? I remember too.

KEISHA HEAD: That's the reality.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: That's the reality of human trafficking. Where victims, as we sit here, are being exploited; thinking no one cares. No one will come for them and rescue them.

KEISHA HEAD: Or remind them of who... One, one of the things I came to terms with was, human trafficking was not my genetic makeup.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: You mean the Y chromosome and X chromosome?

KEISHA HEAD: Yeah, this was what happened to me. Like this happened, somebody came and done this to me and this is why it happened and that was the reality for me.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: When you think about human trafficking, what are some of the realities for you?

AUDIENCE: [inaudible]

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Violence. Great.

AUDIENCE: [inaudible]

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Rape.

AUDIENCE: Suicide.
SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Suicide.

KEISHA HEAD: I had a lot of friends commit suicide.

AUDIENCE: [inaudible]

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Fear, great answer. Control. This is the reality of it. Now we’re gonna get a little deeper and I want to take the opportunity to say it again, so of the things you may hear moving forward may trigger you; its gonna make you feel uncomfortable. We do not feel disrespected if you get up and step outside of the room, right? We’re not in high school where the teacher monitors you or you need a hall pass, right?
So were gonna get into recruitment. We like to present this way because there is no cookie cutter story to explain human trafficking. Keisha and I are two separate individuals that were trafficked in two separate ways and we're gonna share how our stories are very different, yet its trafficking, right? She's gonna explain how she was recruited and then I'm gonna explain how I was recruited.

**KEISHA HEAD:** Okay, since I got everything out the way earlier, I had to get that out the way. So I'm 16 and call my friend and she takes me to the strip club and introduce me to this guy. I was introduced by a childhood friend I grew up with in church. Me and this girl, we grew up together and one of the things that linked me to her was because she was in foster care and she had been adopted into a home and I had been motherless. So we both had this instant connection, we were both motherless and we used to talk to each other in church and get in trouble and get pinched and my aunt used to say, "No, no talking in church." So we used to write notes and we became close and I thought she was friend and I still think she was a friend, but I did not know, she herself had been trafficked and she only knew recruitment because she was taught recruitment. And she introduced me to this guy, and that is how I met him. I met him through a childhood friend I grew up with in church. It wasn't... She knew who I was, she knew I wasn't promiscuous like that, she just felt like she could help me and she didn't have anywhere for me to go and she knew a man who had a house and money. And so she gave me his number and we met him like that.
SHAMERE MCKENZIE: I was simply walking down the street. On 96th street in Manhattan, New York and I saw a car that looks familiar, that look like a friend of mine car. And I looked at the car thinking it was my friend and this guy came out the car. He said, "Hello, young lady." Looked very charming, extending his hand, shook my hand and I'm like "Oh you're not my friend." right? He was like, "It's okay, we can exchange numbers." We exchange numbers and I want to back up who I was before that. I was a college student just like many of you here tonight. "But college students are smart!" Right, Professor Kate? Their supposed to be, that's what the judge said to me too. College I was a third year student, I was junior in college when I met this guy and he didn't approach me and say, "I'm big bad pimp-man. Come with me. Imma exploit you, give you a couple beatings, come with me." He didn't do that. Right? Recruitment looked something like this, "Girl you are beautiful."

KEISHA HEAD: Thank you.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: "Is this Brazilian yaki?"

KEISHA HEAD: No, this is Malaysian baby.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: "Malaysian. That smile. Oh you see her smile. Smile for them again kei.... what's your name again?" right? So pimps have this very smooth approach when they recruit right? And they know where to recruit. Where are some places you think pimps recruit? Malls, nightclubs, Facebook, Twitter, schools.

KEISHA HEAD: They hang around in places where we allow our kids to go. That's where they hang.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: That's what how the recruitment looks like they pray up on your weakness. Right? There was a pimp that was interviewed that said that in 2 minutes he could tell if a girl would come with him. If he looks at her and says, "You are so beautiful." You realized how Keisha said thank you. How many young people that we know that may have that insecurity and when they talk to boys be like, "Girl, I got his number." That's okay, it's all a part of growing up, right? If everyone one was honest, we were all at that point. At that stage at one point right? But when a pimp looks at a girl and says, "You are so beautiful." This pimp said, "if she don't look me in the eye and say thank you, I know I got her." If she looks down and wiggles and says thank you, he knows he got her. Something that simple.
We don't come out of our wombs, our mother's wombs and say, "Hey, we got it together. Life I'm coming at you, let's go." We don't do that. It's a part of growing up. There's brain development that happens, right? And Keisha and I were in the same training where this psychologist was going through brain development and how that looks like...

**KEISHA HEAD:** Found out I had PST.

**SHAMERE McKENZIE:** It's PTSD. Wait, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. PTSD.

**KEISHA HEAD:** I got that too. I got it all baby.

**SHAMERE McKENZIE:** How you gone have something and not even know what it is?

**KEISHA HEAD:** I'm crazy.

**SHAMERE McKENZIE:** I'm crazy too, they just don't know it yet, right? So you talk about brain development, there's... You ever look at a baby? Where's the little baby that was outside crawling? Where's the little baby? Mom? Grandma? Hi grandma with a baby. I looked at the baby and the little baby was 10 months old climbing the stairs outside. You ever look at the process the baby takes, the baby comes out and all they want to do is sleep sleep sleep sleep sleep and I want play play play; I've been waiting 9 months for you to get here and all you want to do is sleep sleep sleep and eat and poop, right? Sleep, eat, and poop. Then after they get a little older, then they begin to talk, and some of them just don't shut up. "blah blah blah duh duh duh." Quiet, it's night time. Right? Then they get a little older, they try to creep or crawl, we say creep in Jamaica, they crawl, right? Then they get a little older and the learn how to walk, right? Then their height comes into play. Different stages right? That's how our brains operate too. There are different stages and the brain doesn't fully develop until we are like 24, 25 years old. Do you know that? So some of the things that you do and you're like, "Oh my gosh, that's so goofy." It's natural, it's okay. Embrace it, it's a part of being a human bean.

**KEISHA HEAD:** A human bean? I like that.

**SHAMERE McKENZIE:** It's a part of being a human being, right? And insurance companies got this a long time ago. You ever wonder why the insurance rates for 25 and under are so high. Cause they know. 25 and under is not gonna make a rational decision when they get behind that wheel. Keisha, talk to your 18 year old daughter.
KEISHA HEAD: She drives safer than me.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: well that may not happen all the time. Sometimes the phone may ring and she may reach or she may text. Well I don’t do that too, so let me not blame that on the children. Right? So the insurance companies know that, human, our brains don’t fully develop, until we are about 24-25 so we don’t always make a rational decision. So they increase it, they capitalize on that and increase insurance rates, right? If only our system and people could understand that, right? So, that’s recruitment, that’s what recruitment looks like.
Now we are going to get into what happened after we were recruited. Thank you so much, you see the white stuff in my mouth.

KEISHA HEAD: I saw it on mine.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Some people call this the life or the game, but if you came to Clarissa's training last night, she's trying to change that and she talked to us about using that word. The life or the game, but that's probably how you know it. The life or the game and that's the exploitation process. Did I spell that right? ex-plo...College students, that's right, right? Taken me 10 years to get my bachelor's; now ya'll see why.

KEISHA HEAD: Can I take a second on that route with my trafficker, when I first met him? When I got in the car with the trafficker after my friend took me down to where he was, for the first time in my life, by him being, like I said he was 54, and he just seemed like he was a grandfather type and for the first time, I felt like I could talk to someone. And he told me things like, "Hey you're too beautiful to be out here and not having nowhere to go. I know how you could make money" and I told him everything about me, I told him about my daughter. I was giving him my power, I told him about my daughter. I told him about me being in the foster care system; He's taking all of this, processing it in, "I'm gone use her this way. I'm gone user that way." And I told him places, "My aunt stay over there, and you know, as we taking routes around our city.
I stay in a small community, and he took me to get my daughter. I hadn't seen my baby for 6 months because I had run away and if I went back to see her, I could get arrested. So I stayed away a little while and he knew that. And exploitation, he knew everything about me in that little short car ride. We was together about 6 or 7 hours. He took me to get something to eat. Took me a little shopping, get some cloths cause I had nothing. So they know that and he exploited me through my vulnerabilities.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** For my trafficker, like I said when we start talking on the phone, we exchanged numbers. When we started talking on the phone we didn't talk anything about pimpin', right? We started talking about single parents in the communities, things that I like talking about. Right? The high number of African-American males incarcerated. Homelessness, all these topics that I like to talk about. And by the way, he said that he graduated from a very prestigious school in the United States. "Oh he graduated from Moore House?" Who wouldn't like to talk to a guy that graduated from Moore House.

**KEISHA HEAD:** Me.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** That's how you represent Atlanta?

**KEISHA HEAD:** I love Moore House. I love Moore House.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Okay, right? So these are the type of conversations we had, right? He didn't say he was a pimp, right? He drove a Mercedes-Benz, he had flashy jewelry. When I asked him what he did for work, he said, "I want you to like me for who I am, not for what I do." Now females, we could identify with that right? "I don't want him to think I'm after him for his money." Right? So I thought, that should have been a red flag for me, but in my undeveloped brain, I thought that was normal, 21 years old, thinking this is normal, this is okay. I don't want him to think I am a gold digger. That's how they called it in my culture, gold digger. Anybody familiar with gold digger, right? Okay good, right? So, but then this guy who I thought was prince charming at the time, he opened my doors, he called me young lady. This was my prince charming on a white horse, right? Graduated from Moore House, we have great conversation, he got some type of job, he has some type of good job because he drives a Mercedes-Benz, he has this flashy jewelry, so he is my package pulled together right? But then he said, I was on a full athletic track scholarship, injured my Hamstring, he said, "I'll help you go back to school, all you have to do is dance.

**KEISHA HEAD:** He told you that too? Wow. That's what my trafficker told me. "All you have to do is dance." Sounded real innocent like giving candy to a child.
**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** For how many of us here in college, how many of us hear about college students who are strippers or dancers? Not a lot. I guess it’s not popular anymore, okay, times have changed.

**KEISHA HEAD:** That was a lot. Do that again? Okay. New phenomenon, how many of us have heard of sugar daddies? Okay, going somewhere with that, right? He said all I have to do is dance. I needed $3,000 dollars to go back to school. That night, he put me in a club in New Jersey, started out in New York, He put me in the club and in 2 hours I made $300 dollars and I’m thinking, "2 hours, 300 dollars..." You got a smart phone? Get a calculator, right? I didn't need a calculator, I just knew. 2 hours, 4 hours...

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** I don't have a smart phone.

**KEISHA HEAD:** You with Kate? You don't have a smart phone either? Right? So I did the math, right and I said in no time I'll have $3000. He took me out of that facility, strip club, right? He brought me to a house. And I thought it was okay because in the strip club they didn't touch you, you didn't have to be nude. It was what they call a "titty bar." Where you just walk around and collect dollars from the guys, right? Then he put me to this house and he said, "$10 for a wall dance" guy stands up on the wall and the girl grinds on him, right? "And $20 for a lap dance." So I'm going around "Do you wanna dance? Do you wanna dance? Do you wanna dance?" nobody wants to dance, I'm like ya'll must not be dancers up in here, right? Then this one guy approached me and he said, I'm ma use his exact words, "How much is it for a blow job?" I did not know Jesus at that time, so I will dare not repeat the words that came out of my mouth that night, tonight. I started to curse that guy out using all the language the devil likes people to use, right? I walked away. The trafficker came and got me and said, "You're going to do whatever that guy said do." I started cussing him out. "Did you just hear what he asked me?" He said, "Yes, and it's 50 dollars." "You trippin' dude. You really trippin' right? I'm not gonna do that." "You are going to do whatever I want you to do." And I said, "Alright, then you do it because I am gonna leave." And when I took a step, he put his hand around my throat and he began choking me and brought me back into my position and he said, "You could never leave, I will kill you. Do you really think you could make it out of here alive?" And I remembered those big bodybuilder-looking men at the door and I was like... I have on weight now guys, I have on weight and I have a booty, right? I am proud of it cause I was talking to Celeste today and I was like "I want your butt." Still have some insecurities right? All of us do, right? For me it’s my butt, right? And so I was very tiny at the time and I thought, “I could never pass those big bodybuilder-looking guys. They're Big!” Right?
And I went back to the guy like "Oh my Gosh, this man will probably kill me. I'll probably not make it out of here alive" and I went back to the guy, who didn't even want to hear anything I have to say, I just finished cursing him out and I said, "Let's do some dances. My life is on the line." That's when this guy started to listen. When I said my life is on the line, and the guy did some dances and I got the money and when I went home I felt empowered now. Anybody does history? History, right? You know they said the bad slaves were dropped off in Jamaica, it's true. Jamaicans we like to fight and we are very aggressive. It's true, it's in our DNA, I believe it. So I believe I am a fighter. See these guns? I had guns at the time. These guns. This one, right? Not this one, this one, right? So I believed when I got home like I'm a fighter, I could fight this guy. The bodybuilders guys won't be there, right? So I went to him and I was like, "Look, we talked about dancing, you didn't talk about this prostitution thing. I don't want to do 'dis no more. So thank you very much." And when I mean thank you very much, he had moved me off my off-campus apartment, into his basement. "Don't worry about rent. I'll help you with that." All my stuff is in his basement. "I have a basement you could live in." "I said thank you very much, but I don't need your help no more. So I'm just going to leave alright?" Leave, you think that's how it went? Leave, You think that's how it went? I'mma get back to that. Keisha, how about you?

**KEISHA HEAD**: Okay, so, later that night my trafficker takes me to his house, it's a beautiful house. I'm homeless at this point cause before I met my friend, I had been staying in an abandoned apartment in a side of town cause when we ran away from our group homes, someone knew of a place to go, but this particular time, one of the girls led us to these abandoned apartments and I was homeless and I said, "Oh-oh. This is a horrible situation." And that's what led me to contact my friend. And so we get back to his house and I see these girls like me, young, excited, they were laughing. I didn't see any danger. Any abuse, everyone was busying themselves and later that night, he takes me back to the strip club. Did I say I met him at the strip club? Okay, he takes me back to that strip club, we go in and we see lights, action, men, women, I see money. That's what I saw the most because that's what I need the most. And I was like, "Okay, I could do this", the shy girl from the other side of town, no one knows me. Maybe, I could do this and get away with this and nobody see me and nobody, you know, tell people who I am." And so I do it and it wasn't hard because I had already been sexually abused. My boundaries had already been erased way back when I was 4 years old. So I said, "Okay, I could do this and I danced and I made a few hundred dollars and when we got in the car, he was like, "Well just give me your money. I'll make sure you get your cloths, your food, and everything you need. I'll just keep all the money." I was like "okay." I never had money anyway, I never even had a job before, so and I was very compliant because as children you are told to do what your parents and adults tell you to do. So I said, "Okay, here's the money." It wasn't a big deal to me long as he provided which he did and I didn't feel anything because it happened so fast.
I often compare my story to Alice in Wonderland. You know, you... just like Alice I was running away from something and fell down this hole. And all of a sudden I wake up and I'm in this different world and I look around and I'm trying to understand exactly what world I'm in. And so the third night, it lasted 3 nights. I went to the strip club three nights. He came and told me when we we're getting dressed, he said, "Hey you can't go to the strip club anymore" and I wondered why the girls who I had... were in the house, they weren't in the strip club with me. It was just me who went to the strip club. But he told me, "You can't go there because you are too young and I could get in trouble and I was like okay. I can't go to the strip club anymore, I didn't know what was next; this was new to me. And so, we got in the car and he rode us to a side of town that I knew was the track, but I really didn't know what a track was. I just hear people say, "That's where women sell themselves" but I thought it was older women on drugs; I didn't think it was us children on the track. And so we go there and he let me out, well he didn't let me out, we go there and we're talking. He let everyone else out and I stayed. He told me to stay in and he gave me all of these rules. He said, "Don’t look a pimp in the eye. Charge this much for this act. “And I’m like what? Charge what, what?” and so he... while he’s telling me, it happened so fast my mind can't process. I'm like, “I’m not doing that and before I know it, he said, he looked me in my eye, and he said, “Oh you'll do it. You remember that little girl you showed me, I'll make sure something happens to her." and I'm still trying to process this and I was like, "Did this guy just threaten my daughter?" and then I became very scared for the first time. I was like, "Oh crap." I've heard something similar like this, but I didn't know that this is how you get involved in it. And so I got out of the car and I walked to where the other girls were.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: So now we’re in the house...Some of you are like, "It's a movie" switch scenes right? So now were in the house and I’m telling him "We talked about dancing. You didn't say anything about prostitution. So I don't want to do this anymore. Thank you very much, I'm going to leave.” You think it was that easy? You think he allowed me to leave? No, cause when I took one step to the door, he put his hands around my throat and at this time, you know bad slaves are dropped in Jamaica, we made that clear already right? I was ready to fight, had my guns up and I punched him. Rule number 1, never hit a pimp, right? And when I hit him he began to hit me, and it was winter, he had on his Timberland boots. This is a big guy right? He began punching me and kicking me with his Timberland boots and choked me to the point of unconsciousness, where I lost function of my bodily fluids.
To this day, I still have the mark in my right eye when he popped a blood vessel from choking me around my neck in my eye. Prince Charming that I met, turned into a monster and I was... When I woke up, I didn't even know, when you become unconscious sometimes when you come back to consciousness you don't even know where you even are. You're wondering like, “Where am I? What just happened?” and I realized I was laying in a pool of urine and he ran over to me. The monster that had just beat me to the point of unconsciousness, ran over to me and said, "I'm so sorry. I don't know what happened to me. I'd never do this again." And guess what, guess what guys.... I believe him. I believed that he would never beat me to this point of unconsciousness again. Right?
But it continued, 18 months of severe torture and when I say torture, torture in every sense of the word torture. Severely beaten, physically, psychologically, abused, raped a numerous amount of times, right? Witnessed others in your stable. Stable is all the girls under the same trafficker. Stable. Right? Witnessed others going through even worse conditions, sodomized, right; this continued 18 months. 18 months here I went from being a hopeful girl to losing hope in life. 18 months of working these long hours in strip clubs, right? To coming out the strip clubs and going out the track, right? 18 months where my quota went from $500 to $1500 sometimes, $3000, right? 18 months of torture. 18 months of being exploited. 18 months of feeling like I am not a human being cause he reminds you and tells you, "You are nothing, but a prostitute. You can't leave me. You a hoe." The words that he called me like young lady were replaced with other words, you know them, the v's and the H's and all those words, right? Those words were replaced. And when this man tell me, "If you leave me, I will kill you and your family." I believed him and I’mma tell you why in the next slide.
So that's the exploitation, right? So now you maybe wondering.... Did you want to go in anything else while you were being exploited?
KEISHA HEAD: Only like, a lot of people ask me when he let me out the car, I went over it and share it again because a lot of people weren't here, but when I got the car, a few hours later, cause I looked so awkward, the police... I did, I looked real awkward. Did you laugh at me? I couldn't help, but... trying to walk to the car. Shamere it was awful and so the officer is like, "Hey you, you stumbling", that's what I think he was saying. "What are you doing out here?" and I was like I wanted to say I need help, but this guy had already told me he would do something to my child if I tell on him. He could speed down the street and go into that house with his gun. He was an awful person. I had a law enforcement tell me... you want to go into escape first?
SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Hold on, no, continue.

KEISHA HEAD: Okay, I had a law enforcement tell me at one of my trainings when I was training law enforcement, “I remember Sir Charles”, and he said, “We had a call on metropolitan’” which was the track. “We had a call from a man, who had been shot”. He said he got there and Sir Charles was standing there and the male was there on the ground and he asked, “Who shot you?” And the man was too fearful to say that Sir Charles had shot him. “He didn't even leave the scene. I remember because he was so arrogant.” He said, "We tried to arrest him several times, but he'll be out in ten minutes." He had the judicial system under his control. He had lawyers that would come to the jail and instantly bond him out because trafficking was a misdemeanor in our state. So how much more was I fearful of this guy? So when law enforcement asked me what was doing out there. I said, "I'm waiting on someone." A few days later, I’mma tell you what the law enforcement said, he said, “You don't belong here; you belong on P street where the pretty girls are.” So he told me another side of town because we had 2 different tracks. We had one track for African-American girls; the track, the prices were $40 and this is how they broke it down. And we had a track in Buckhead, which was the Caucasian, like white, I don't like to say word white. How do you say the word Caucasian? I view everybody as humans so I just don't look at people like that.
So he said that the white girls track was on the other side of town and those girls charged $100 per hour. Basically, he said don’t be out here, you are making the spot hot. You look awkward. You need to go on that side of town. And so that is how he looked at me, when he should have said “Hey come get in my car, I need to take you for a ride and separate you from the scene” and do his job. And so.....

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: And that's the reality for many girls, right? I remember people asking me, “Well why didn't you just run to the police?”

KEISHA HEAD: I was a runaway, I already knew where I was going.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: That was Keisha’s encounter with the police, a police with a police officer. I remember being on the track one time and a police officer told me to take off my shoes and run. And he is in his car and he’s like, "Run hoe, run." Right? And I took off my shoe and he said, "If I catch you, I’m going to lock you up." And I took off my shoes, and remember I used to run track, and I started running down the street and these officers drove and caught up to me and they laughed. They said, "Run faster, run faster." And I am running cause they said they are going to lock me up. I’m running from these officers who every time they caught me, they told me to laugh and run faster. Is that the law enforcement that I’m supposed to run to, right? Imagine how many victims are bought by law enforcement and they are not hiding it, right? "Do this or I’m going to lock you up. Give me some of this or I’m gonna lock you up." Right? It’s not a secret and sometimes when I talk about this in law enforcement, they’re like "We’re so high and powerful, we don’t do that. We are here to serve and protect."

KEISHA HEAD: I’ve actually been in trainings where I saw officers that purchased me and the look on their face of fear. I just continued to train because they needed to be educated.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: This is the reality of exploitation, right, and we’re just sharing some of our stories, right, of what it looks like and when we share we want you to understand that were not here sharing to ask for sympathy. We’re sharing for you to understand that this is real. This is the reality of it. Right? And while we are sharing, we also want you to understand that this may be difficult to here, but in the name of Jesus there is hope and we’re gunna get to that in a second, right? It’s not all this gloomy, right? I have just have to put that out there, cause I’m looking at some of ya'll faces and so of you are like... right? Now making me nervous, right? But we went through all of that process of you know, just think about those conditions, right?
**KEISHA HEAD**: And we left a lot out.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE**: We learned from that process. And now you may be asking, how on god's green earth did you escape, right? Good question to ask. Wanna talk about how you escaped?
KEISHA HEAD: I escaped a year later or two later I went back and forth, back and forth because somehow like when you’re with a trafficker, you get this bond with your abuser and it’s called the Stockholm Syndrome, where you begin to identify with your abuser.

KEISHA HEAD: Not only identify, but you defend your abuser. You defend him because you feel "it’s my fault." It’s similar to like domestic violence victims, it’s my fault, if he wouldn’t have done this if I would have done this. Maybe I do this or I make more money, he’ll be extra nice. And he was. If you met the money and met the quota, he was nice, but what got me... I knew that my trafficker was an abuser, I knew he was a monster. I knew my aunt was a monster to me too. I knew my molesters were monsters, but what I did not know was the men that purchased me were monsters. I had been through several rapes, several beatings on the hands of buyers. Men who purchase sex from women. You would get in the car with them, they would give you the money and all of a sudden they turn violent and sometimes they would rape you, pull out guns. I’ve had guns put to my head and one guy actually pulled the trigger and the gun jammed. He was a serial killer because I know that one girl that got in the car with him we never saw again and I know he murdered that girl, but these are the things that you go through on a nightly basis. So you are going through trauma after trauma and somebody asked me, "What does it feel liked to be trafficked? Imagine someone starting to spin, turning you around and you turn around and you turn around.
That's what the trafficker is doing to you. You’re too tired to even think about the pain. You are too tired to even think about anything and when you stop the world is like this... and you just want to lay down and go to sleep, but one day I said, "My trafficker says he's gonna murder me, but if I stay in this life style, if I stay in this life, these buyers are going to murder me." And it made sense to me to just leave and escape and I got up the courage, it was so hard for me to get out the courage because I so shy and so used to being compliant to everyone and so I got up the courage and... One time I tried to escape, I had told one of the girls who I was with and she told the trafficker and he took me in the car and act like, and I didn't know she had told him, and he said, "You thinking about leaving right?" and he did somethings to me that I choose not say to victimize myself. But those are the mind games that they play. But this particular night I didn't tell anybody. I went to the track, like I was supposed to do and it was a buyer and I got in the car with him and I said, "I can't do this anymore. Can you please help me? And he said, what's wrong? I think that my pimp is going to kill me and I just need help, can you help me?" And he took me to a hotel and he paid for a weekly for me. And that gave me the time to unprocess and he didn't, he said, "I'm not going... we're not going to do anything tonight. I'm just gonna pay for you this room cause I see that's something wrong with you." and he was a nice guy that night? And so he paid for the room and I didn't go back. I didn't go back to that trafficker, but I could not leave this lifestyle and go ahead.... that's how I escaped my trafficker.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Escape. Death is how many girls escape. Those are the girls who are not alive to share their stories because their lives were taken from them while they were being exploited. Those are the unheard stories. Those are the missing children reports we continue to see over and over, "Have you seen this child." Who may have been exploited and end up dead? And for some, some people don't even care that they are dead. No one is looking for that person. Escape for some is being beaten or killed in that lifestyle, right? For me, I tried to escape several times. My first time when I ran away being sodomized was my punishment and remember that vividly to this day, right? So after that experience, running away was not an option for a very long time. I thought about poisoning his food, get some rat poisoning, put some other stuff in there, poison his food, he will die, but light bulb, what happens if he doesn't die. Then he is gonna know that I poisoned his food, can't do that. We traveled, we left from New York to New Jersey, to Connecticut, to Texas, now we are in Florida. In a nice gated community, right? Met these gangsters, these Jamaican Gangsters and they have been running Jamaica since the 70s. I know the father was running Jamaica, now the son is running Jamaica. Real bad gangsters and I met up with them. I became friends with them, telling them to come see me at the club. Guy never came to the club, but I had his cellphone number and when I ran away this time, I called him and I said, "I need you to help me."
I told him I had a pimp. He’s like, "How much money the pimp got?” "A lot of money. He keeps it all in the house." “Okay, we are going to rob him and kill him.” That’s the plan, right? I just got this hitman from Jamaica, I’mma send him over. Rob him and kill him. Don’t worry about it. Excited right? Guy comes to my hotel room, gives me a 9mm gun. Show me how to load the clip, right? He says, "All you have to do it cover me." Who’s the boss now? Right? I feel empowered. I have this guy with me, “Let me see you hit this guy. How you hit me,” right? All these things are going through my head. Every beating, every assault just going through my head, like, can't do that no more cause I got the gun now, right? And he said he gonna beat you up. We'll gone kill you. All I got to do is cover him. Easy right? I was ready. "If I killed you, you can't hurt me no more. Can’t beat me no more. Can’t abuse anybody else either." Ready. I got on the car, drive up to the gate. He said, "Punch in the number." Now I can say the Holy Spirit took control because I could not put in the number to get into this gated community. And I said to this guy, “I can't do this no more. I can't do it.” He took his gun and he put it to my head and he said, "You playing with me." I said, "I can't do it. I can't kill nobody." And of course he started to curse me out. As a result of that, I was raped at gunpoint by this guy. Right?

But I thought if I stopped making him money he wouldn't want me anymore. Great plan, right? Cause the money keeps this thing going, right? Ya'll don’t believe me, right? Ya'll believe it's all about money? What’s the number one sneaker company, athletic company?

**Audience:** [inaudible]

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Who drinks Starbucks? Sometimes I can't afford it, right? Too expensive. That Mocha Choca-latte.

**KEISHA HEAD:** Life of a college student.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Life of a college student man, right? Number one coffee company, right? How many people googled me before you came in here? Nobody googled us? Keep it that way. Don't google us, right? Google, number one search engine right? What do those 3 companies have in common? Make a lot of money right? Guess who is with them? Traffickers. Right up there with Google, Starbucks and Nike. Making Multi-million dollars. You don't believe me? The average quota for one girl... common average quota going around is $500. This is one girl, he makes off of one girl. If you multiply 500 by 365, you don't get holidays, days off. That’s why we can’t call it work. You don't get workman’s compensation if you get injured. You work 365 days a year. You have a smart phone pull out a calculator. Multiply 500 by 365. I'm smart, I already did this. 182,500. Off one girl a year. Imagine if he has 6 girls or she makes more money. That's a lot of money.
You don’t pay taxes on that either. We should be upset. This is the point where you get upset. You should already be upset though, right? So I thought if I stopped making him money, he wouldn’t want me anymore, right? And I'm working in the club where my quota fluctuates sometimes 15, sometimes 3000, right? And I stopped making money from 15 to 2 to none.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: And he’s like, “It’s impossible for you to be working in this”, some people say it’s the largest strip club on the East Coast, I don’t know. It was once a Costco. You know how Costco is big. Right? It’s a huge club. And the clientele that come in are very high end clientele. And this club still exists, right, at that time the guys that came there paid $65,000 to rent what they call a Skybox. They pay $65,000 a year to be in this Skybox. That when they come to the strip club they could only be in there for 2 hours. Now are they stupid or am I stupid? Right? $65,000 that is a down payment on a house. I could buy my Bentley. A Bentley is not $65,000 Shamere. All right, but that is money that they are just putting into just exploiting someone. Right? I say that to show you the type of money that was in that establishment. Not to glamorize the issue. Right? But to show you the money that’s in that establishment. So it was impossible for me not to make any money. Guys would look at me and give me $100 has a smile that them. Right? I stopped making money in there. He took me out of the club and put me on the streets in Miami. Right? He put me on South Beach, it was a party. Right? No money to eat. I had to make friends to eat. One day he caught us eating with a trick. Right? He called us to the car. The girl I was with she jumped in the front seat and he immediately started beating her up. He dropped her off a strip club and he said, “What am I gonna do with you?” and I said, “Just make me leave.” He said, “You want to leave? I’ll give you $5000 and you can leave.” Sounds great, right? He is going to give me $5000 and he’s going to let me leave. Great idea, right?

Did y'all fall asleep on me?

Great idea, right? He said, “Alright.” We went back to the house. And I remember. He told another girl that same thing. I’m going to give you $5000 and you can leave. And when he was finished with her, her body was floating around the living room floor as if you are sort and dirty close. Okay? So in my mind I knew he wasn’t going to give me $5000. And he went upstairs and I stayed downstairs kinda twiddling my thumbs wondering what is he going to do? And I heard the sound of the gun. I heard the click of the gun. And I had a previous encounter with that gun. Cause when I told him I didn’t want to drive, he said, “Choose. Death or driving?” Now that’s when I said, “Kill me.” I lost hope in life. Death was the best option at that point. He said, “Kill you, huh? Open your mouth.” And I opened my mouth.
And he put the gun in my mouth. And he pulled the trigger. And here I was thinking I was dead. And I’m looking at him and I said, “You can’t hurt me no more.” I said this to myself, I am dead. You can’t hurt me no more. Until I start feeling the blows of the gun to my head. Now I’m saying, “Wait, if you’re dead you’re not supposed to feel anything.” That’s when I realized I wasn’t dead ‘cause I could still feel the hits. And that when I heard the gun and after that previous encounter I ran out the backdoor. Because something in me that day did not want to die. And I ran out the backdoor. And there’s this guy in this gated area, community, that says, “Why you running around here?” And even in that moment when I was running from my life, I told the guy the lies the pimp had programmed me to say when people were trying to help me. I said, “I was running from my ex-boyfriend who was trying to beat me up.” Not my pimp, not my abuser, not my rapist, not my trafficker...my boyfriend was trying to beat me up. And that guy brought me into his garage, closed the garage, put me in a hotel, gave me a phone to call home and that’s how I came out.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** If you are in here and you are that guy that helped me, please raise your hand or approach me afterward. As I don’t even remember this guy. I call him my guardian angel. I don’t even remember what his face looked like. I can’t identify this guy. So he must have been an angel. That is how I escaped sex trafficking. Now what if that guy wasn’t there? What if the pimp had caught me? What I’d be here today? That is something for us to think about.
Criminalization of victims. I escaped. Great, great story! Coming to an end, right? Right? You’re out, you don’t have the trafficker any more, Shamere! You can go, and you can carry on. You can go on and live the life you imagined, right? No. Cause here I was came back home with my mom till I hear. Knock, knock, knock. The FBI came to my house. Locked me up and charged me with, with, [stammering] trafficking [stammering] because I was the girl that was driving trafficking situations and there were minors involved. I am a felon. You are looking at a felon. A felon because I was trafficked. Something was done to me. Someone exploited me. But as the prosecutors and judges put it I have to be accountable for my actions. I did drive. Even though I was forced to drive. Even though they were consequences if I did not drive. Victims continue to be criminalized here in the United States. The laws that were put in place to protect me were used to penalize me. [Silence] We cannot sit back and be comfortable with people who are...go through such an experience but then they are criminalized. So you are exploited by the pimp and you are revictimized to by the criminal justice system when you criminalize victims. Keisha, touch on criminalization of victims for a minute.

KEISHA HEAD: Imagine you’re a 13-year-old girl. You’ve been arrested and you are standing before the judge in shackles. You have an orange jumpsuit and the judge is saying you are being charged with prostitution or using these words for prostitution.
When we know that someone prostituted her. How can a 13-year-old girl prostitute herself? that is what the criminal system is doing. I often use an example, imagine you come home one day and you go into your home, your beautiful home that you work so hard to build. All of your beautiful possessions have been taken. Someone has stolen everything. And you call the police. And the police come and look around and say, “Yep, you’re a victim.” They took everything. And they tell you to turn around and put your hands behind your back, you’re going to jail. And you’re like, “what? You don’t see that, you mean, I’d didn’t steal this from myself. Someone stole this from me. Help me.” And the police officer says, “No ma’am, I have to arrest you. Come with me.” He takes you down to the police station. He asks you a bunch of questions. Then he tells you, “You are a victim.” Can you imagine how that person must feel? Knowing that they were victimized and now the system has done this to them again. There’s a sense of hopelessness. No one understands. So that’s where you get the attitude and the, the girl doesn’t identify as a victim. Because you didn’t identify her as a victim first. When someone is in danger and they call the police, the police come and ask if you are okay. Is there anything you need? Let me look around. Let me go and try to find this person that did this to you. That is how you treat a victim. And that is not what we’re doing to our children who are being traffic today. We’re locking them up. Putting them in jail.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: If you take anything away from this talk, one thing you need to keep in mind victims should not be criminalized. We do not criminalize victims of any other crime. So victims of human trafficking should not be criminalized.
Remember you are following are stories and how it’s different but it still trafficking, right? I received services. Keisha didn’t receive services. Right? I received housing, even though they said I was a criminal. They still saw me as a victim. They sent me to a shelter to receive services. Services is important for survivors of trafficking. I received services so that kept me away from the life. Keisha didn’t receive services. Keisha, what did that look like?

KEISHA HEAD: It looked like I’d turned 18, aged out of the system. Foster Care said, “Hey you’re 18. You are grown, take care of yourself.” So I couldn’t go back to them. And so now I’m saying, “I was 16 when this happened and now I’m 18. I was in the 10th grade when this happened, now I’m 18. I have no skills. I have no education but I know this one thing that makes me money.” I don’t even have an ID at this point. Only the one that my trafficker gave me with a different name. And so I said I know what I’ll do. Since I know how to make money I’ll get a bunch of girls who I already hung around with, you know, when you’re in that life you only associate with people that are in that life because that’s all you know. And no one else understand you. And so I said I’ll start, and this is when the Internet was becoming popular, I’ll start an escort service. And that way us girls won’t have to worry about those pimps. Right? Wrong. I became a trafficker. And I lived in that lifestyle all the way until 2006. Making lots and lots of money. And for me I said I would never be controlled and it empowered me.
Because I was making money, right? But on the inside I was dying. And I was dying mostly because I not only had I victimized myself now, now I’m victimizing other people. I know the game and I know the destruction. And I know what this life leads to. There is seven years is a life expectancy of the victim. I know that this girl that I’m sending out to do these different calls or dates or whenever you want to call them. I know that I’m adding to her demise. In 2006 I was in this relationship with this guy. He was a big time dope dealer. The police busted our home. Came in and locked both of us up. We were arrested and I went to prison. I went to prison that’s what happened because I did not receive the services and help that I needed to heal and become a healthy person in society. When a person doesn’t get the help and services that they need, these are the people that come into our communities. And that is why we have a corrupt community because there are a lot of unhealed and unhealthy people. So you have to get people services so that they can heal so they can become healthy the members of our society.
SHAMERE McKENZIE: Restoration is an ongoing process. It doesn’t just stop at the services. Right? It continues to go on and on. You just don’t come out of trafficking, now you’re good. Now she just going around tell everybody what happened to her. She has a smile on her face. She’s good, right? No. We still sometimes have a triggers from different things. You still sometimes think about that process of being trafficked. Right? It is an ongoing process.

KEISHA HEAD: And also, when I got out of prison, I did three years in prison. Let me tell you what that did. That was my services. In prison I went to school. I took the culinary arts. And what that did...what prison for me, it allowed my world to be quiet. I didn’t have to worry about what I was going to eat, where I was going to stay. And I’m not saying this is for everybody because we know that people need real services and not a criminal justice system or prison. But I was able to heal. And I went to a healing process and I got out and I said, “I do not want to...” and I’m going to tell you when women get out of prison they have no resources. They let me out these gates, I walked out and I said, “Oh my God, what next?” Who do I call? They didn’t give me a number to call. They just let me out of the gates. After three years. All of my world that I had knew had... And I forget to tell my boyfriend who had... He got murdered while I was in prison. So I had nothing, I walked out to nothing. And then I saw Rachel Lloyd, and very young girls and documentaries about girls just like me. And I met the
Shamere McKenzie’s and the Karissa Phellps’ and that became my community. And I saw how these women were empowered. And I said and with my story I said I need to empower, to let women know that even though you’ve went through these type of things you can overcome them and you can become healed. And you can stand here and say with a proud and bold face, with and have your head held high and say, “I made it and I survive.” So that’s why ongoing process of restoration is very important.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** So we’re getting there, right?
So today I am the CEO of the Sun Gate Foundation.

KEISHA HEAD: Yea. And I am the Board Secretary.

Audience [applause]

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: [inaudible] Sun Gate Foundation. And it took me, you’re following the story, it took me awhile to get here. Right? So know I want to give back, right? And Sun Gate provides educational opportunities to survivors of human trafficking. Right? So tuition, books. Right? Any educational related things we provide. Funding to help for that. So that’s Sun Gate is all about. You can visit the website www.sun-gate.org, get involved, and encourage your family members to donate to Sun Gate, right?

KEISHA HEAD: Education is very important.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: ‘Cause education what you understand is, education is that critical gap that is missing in the anti-trafficking movement right now. When you give a person, why are you in school? Why, anyone, tell me why are you in college? Not because your parents are rich and wanted to send you here. Why are you here in school?
AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible]

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: To get an education. Why? Why do you want to be a journalist?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible] ... investigative journalism and making it known to people... [Inaudible] so they can be better aware was going on in their surroundings.

KEISHA HEAD: So you want to make the world aware of issues and things like that.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Sir in the back.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible] job.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: I want an awesome job. Right? But when we get that awesome job we can become contributing members of society and education helps us to get to that place, right? So when we talk about survivors and the rescuing and game and services and then what? We send them back to trafficking? No, we’ve got to give them the tools.
So now you can take action. How do I take action? “Shamere I’m a student and I’m broke. I have no money to give to Sun Gate.” That’s OK because you can choose your career path. She said she wants to become a journalist.

**KEISHA HEAD:** I we’ll do your very first interview.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Right? So one second sir. So that’s one way. Think about what you want to do after this. Right? Have measures, right? Come out, get involved in the world through that measure. Whether it’s criminal justice or whatever. Do research on this issue, right? Can’t have too much research. Show that it’s real. Show that it’s happening. Write to your legislators. Get laws changed. Right? Donate to organizations that are providing services. Right? Donate to STOP. They have these cans right here.

**Audience applauds**

**KEISHA HEAD:** Awesome.
SHAMERE MCKENZIE: So before you [inaudible] tonight you may have $100 or $1000, no we are not in Jamaica, you all don’t have $1000 bills. But you could drop that $100 bill in the two containers here, right? And those are just some examples. Write to your legislators, anybody got Facebook, Twitter, Instagram? Post it. Post something about trafficking. Share it on your social media platform. Remember you have the power to bring about change.

And while we are wrapping up I want to show you. Anyone ready to take action right now? Are you ready to take action right now?

Audience applauds.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Alright, let’s put you to the test. Let’s see if you’re ready to take action.

Do you want me to do it down there?

KEISHA HEAD: Yeah, my feet are killing me.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Okay.

KEISHA HEAD: Run Shamere McKenzie. Coming to the finish line. I love...

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Okay I want you guys to help me. I’m in the victim chair. I’m taking off my shoes. Nobody look at my corns and take pictures of my corns.

Audience laughter
SHAMERE MCKENZIE: I’m in the victim chair. Who is going to help me? I’m in the victim chair.

KEISHA HEAD: Most times victims will not ask for help. You’re not going to see a victim self-identify. So what can we do to help this victim get from here?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible]

KEISHA HEAD: You are so helpful.

Audience applauds

KEISHA HEAD: Thank you.

Audience commotion.

KEISHA HEAD: Ohhh! She ran from you but she will be back. She sees you standing there.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: No one else is going to help me?

KEISHA HEAD: [laughs]
SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Nobody is going to help-only one person is going to come forward? This is your time to take action guys.

KEISHA HEAD & SHAMERE MCKENZIE: [talking over each other-inaudible]

KEISHA HEAD: These are our children, these are our people in our community. Help Shamere.

Audience commotion

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Who is going to help me?

KEISHA HEAD: This is what happens, like, victims when they are rescued are scared. They are traumatized.

[Audience commotion attempting to help Shamere but she is resisting.]

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Who is going to help me?

KEISHA HEAD: It is OK Shamere. It is OK.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Who is going to help me?

KEISHA HEAD: It is OK.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: It is you time to take action. Who is going to help me?

[More audience commotion as 10 people attempt to help.] Audience member: I’m here to help, take my hand.

KEISHA HEAD: Wow.

[Many audience voices attempting to calm Shamere]

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Don’t worry we are planned to take care of you.

KEISHA HEAD: Shamere survives. She is no longer a victim.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: [screams]

KEISHA HEAD: She wants to go back.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Settle.
Keisha Head: [laughs]

AUDIENCE: [applause]

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [inaudible] breathe easy. You’re a strong woman.

KEISHA HEAD: Wow.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: [many voices inaudible] if you want a hug I will give you one.

KEISHA HEAD: I liked that he asked.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Thank you guys, thank you

AUDIENCE: [applause]

KEISHA HEAD: Good job community, good job.

AUDIENCE: [applause]

KEISHA HEAD: I wish you guys were around when I was 16. I’d be in this university, I promise you.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: So now I’m in the survivor chair. And as you saw, one guy stood up from the back of the room and walked up to help. And as I said, “Is anyone else going to help me?” other people started to come. And if you could hear some of the things that they were saying, “let me help you,” “just take my hand”. That’s just an exercise we did physically. Imagine if we take that outside of this room. How many victims can we get leaving from the victim chair to come to the survivor chair? You just saw what that looks like, right?

KEISHA HEAD: Very powerful. They could just be giving her a 800 number. It doesn’t have to be physically of removing her from the situation. Just giving her a number for when she needs it because one night I promise you she’s going to need that number. You don’t even have to approach her and say, “hey just take this number just in case you need it. Take care have a nice night.” And walk away. You have planted that seed in her life. And now she has this number. She calls it. She gets her services and now she is a survivor. But it doesn’t end there because oftentimes as survivors, especially me, it was hard when I first admitted I’m a survivor and I needed help. And then she met me, I met Sharmere. And now I see Sharmere walking and going to school and doing so many awesome things and I said I want to be a leader like Sharmere. I want to be a leader like Sharmere and so I started doing stuff. And now I’m here with you today. Awesome, right?
AUDIENCE: [applause]

KEISHA HEAD: And now we are leaders.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: But you see the first exercise, I didn’t wanna do that again.

KEISHA HEAD: She wanted me to do it.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: I’m out of breath, right? You see how it took people. Different hands to get to the different chairs.
And you saw sometimes I’m trying to go over and you see how it was a challenge even though I had all those people around trying to help. But they helped me to sit in this chair. It’s the same process of going from survivor to leadership. It takes people like Kate that can put up with me – several communications, right? That to get me out of this survivor chair to leadership. “Sharmere, I’m gonna book the flight. What do you think about the fight? I’m going to book the car. What are the options, right?” staying on top of me so that I could even be here to talk to you today. Told me to raise my fees last year, right? Right? Right? Sent me books that they wrote to help me understand this issue even more Janja, right?

**KEISHA HEAD:** That is leadership.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** That's what leadership... So these people, when I got into this leadership chair. I’m glad they’re here today to serve as examples that they helped to build me up as leader. ‘Cause I remember coming off this stage and Janja was like, “you need to increase your fees.” And I was like, “Okay.” She was like, this, and this, and this, and this. We went out to dinner, and she was like, “You need to...” And Kate was right there co-signing. And I’m like, “Okay?” But that leader chair when I’m in there I still need that help. When I left here last year I met Polly, a former judge, who was outraged by my story, who sent me emails saying this is how you can get this going. And with school I have not responded to her emails. But she is still here today, even though I did not respond her emails, she still came to support tonight. She’s still understanding that you may have some clouds, right?
Making your life look a little gray. The Polly did not give up on me, OK? Even when I came in the first thing that Janja said, “Polly sent you the email about you getting a partner and you didn’t respond her. Right? Right? Continue to push and push.

KEISHA HEAD: And support.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Support and sometimes we may not even like that. And I know Janja don’t care whatever I don’t like she’s going to continue to push. Polly the same thing. Kate the same thing, right? Continue to push. And that’s what the process looks like, right? And this is our story. Sex trafficking is our story. And I wanna ask you today, what are you passionate about? What is that one thing that is getting to you? What do you care about? What is that issue that has you bubbling? Sex trafficking is my issue. What is your issue? But more importantly, you don’t have to tell me the issue. I want to know what you’re doing about your issue. What are you doing about it? Are you just sitting down in your homes and letting this be a conversation in your home? Are you going to help a person get up and get into a different chair?

KEISHA HEAD: Often... I’m a consultant for the National Center Missing and Exploited Children and sometimes I just wanna go outside and I want to scream, “Do you see what’s happening? Why is everyone being so normal? Kids are being missing. We need to be looking. And we need to be doing.” So we have to be doing something. We have to change the way our world is going. Our world is dying. People, I mean this is crazy. We have to change it. We can make a difference with just one step. One step is all it takes.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: We are going to close this by the menu with a quote. It is a quote by Gandhi. And Gandhi said, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” Stop complaining this is Barack Obama, law enforcement everybody else’s problem. Look in the mirror and ask yourself, “What am I doing about it?” and I know I didn’t take... We were very short on the “Take Action” plan for the sake of time but if you don’t know what to do, email me. Follow the Sun Gate page on Facebook. You will get some ideas about what others are doing. And take action.

KEISHA HEAD: Take action and we’re going to open the floor up for some Q&A.

SHAMERE MCKENZIE: Questions and answers

KEISHA HEAD: Awesome.

Audience applause
**KATE TRANSCHEL:** So we’ve got a couple of microphones on each side. Please hold your question until you get the microphone so everyone can hear your question. And so, yeah. Questions?

**KEISHA HEAD:** I think Shamere answered everything.

**SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Questions? OK. While I want thank you all for coming out. No questions?

**KEISHA HEAD & SHAMERE MCKENZIE:** Thank you guys so much.