

MOM ON A MISSION

By // Michelle Talsma Everson

"In the past, I was blissfully blind. I thought child sex trafficking was something that happened in developing countries, not in my town," Genice Jacobs shares on her website, AbolitionistMom.org. "And then I learned that sex trafficking is a growing problem across the U.S."

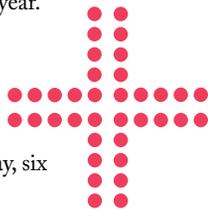
As founder and director of Abolitionist Mom, a human trafficking prevention initiative and social marketing creative agency, Jacobs is preventing child sex trafficking by providing resources and tools to parents, caregivers and educators to protect young people from predators. The organization notes some startling statistics:

- ✦ 100,000 children are forced into prostitution in the U.S. each year.
- ✦ According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, a sex trafficker will approach one in three runaways within 48 hours.
- ✦ Shared Hope International reports that human rights investigations discovered minors were sold 10 to 15 times a day, six days a week (that's 9,360 to 14,040 sex acts a year).

It's for these reasons—and countless others—that Jacobs is committed to raising awareness of child sex trafficking. A mother of three teenagers, Genice began her mission in 2010 when she came across a report about sex trafficking in her hometown of Oakland, California.

"I had never seen this in the news," she said in a 2016 interview with the East Bay Times. "I'm interested in women's rights and human rights. This would have never missed my radar."

Working as a recruiter in the high-tech industry at the time, she began volunteering with groups working to address child sex trafficking and abuse. One such organization was MISSEY (Motivating, Inspiring, Supporting and Serving Sexually Exploited Youth), a nonprofit that advocates for and aids victims of sex trafficking. She also worked on California's Prop 35 campaign in 2012, which increased the penalties for those convicted of sex trafficking.



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Nancy Dellamore

Focus Desk

“The same apps that allow users to share their locations with their friends can be used by traffickers to geo-locate their victims.”

To raise awareness of the issue of child sex trafficking, Abolitionist Mom creates awareness campaigns, including billboards and bus shelter wraps for the Alameda County District Attorney’s Office; PSAs for No Traffick Ahead and Disrupt Sex Trafficking; and radio spots for Youth for Power and 106 KMEL in Oakland. She has also helped produce award-winning documentaries “California’s Forgotten Children” and KTOP TV’s “Bought and Sold: Sexually Exploited Children on the Streets of Oakland.”

The website also offers easy-access apps, education, research, videos and films, as well as a list of helplines and advice on how to spot and report suspected child sex trafficking.

In recognition of her work and advocacy, Jacobs was named Modern Day Abolitionist for Advocacy by the San Francisco Coalition to End Human Trafficking in 2014, and in 2015 she was recognized as a Ford Unsung Hero.

“If you know teens,” Jacobs told *The Chronicle of Social Change*, “you know they don’t always discriminate against who they connect with online. The same apps that allow users to share their locations with their friends can be used by traffickers to geo-locate their victims.”

Considered a respected anti-trafficking activist, Jacobs says better awareness and collaboration is key to solving the issue.

“Technologists love hard problems,” she said in an article by the *Huffington Post*. “Young lives are being destroyed by sexual predators on the Internet. We need some of the smartest technologists on the planet to take on this threat.” 

TO LEARN MORE about child sex trafficking and how to recognize, prevent and report, visit abolitionistmom.org. You can also contact the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 888-373-7888 (or text HELP to 233733).

When Nancy Dellamore’s son Steven was diagnosed with dyslexia at the age of seven, her path in life—and business—took a sudden turn.

One of the hallmark traits of dyslexia is a tendency to fidget while working. In fact, research shows that children with dyslexia, ADHD and other similar conditions process information better when they are moving. After visiting Steven’s second grade class and discovering he was constrained to his chair in an effort to make him sit still, Dellamore quickly set out to find an alternative school that would allow him to be himself and reach his full potential.

Dellamore found the answer at Hyde Park Day School in Northfield, Illinois, where their innovative program supports children with learning challenges. Steven thrived in this less restrictive environment, inspiring her to support the school and the students whose learning challenges were often misunderstood by teachers and educators.

Dellamore realized she could help through her family’s company, The Marvel Group, which specializes in designing and manufacturing office furniture. She met with the teachers and students at Hyde Park and asked them to create their “dream desk,” one that would best fit in a movement-friendly classroom.

The results were no less than fantastic. Ultimately, the desk was designed and named the Focus Desk. It is height adjustable and responds to a child’s needs, whether they need to sit or stand, shifting their bodies in ways that do not interrupt classroom activities. It is fully child-operable and offers organization tools, storage and mobility.

The Marvel Group donated 200 desks to the school and since its launch in 2015, the desks have been placed in schools in 26 states.

Dellamore has now made it her mission to make sit/stand desks the norm in classrooms all across the country and the world. She has shown that children’s lives can be improved by creative, collaborative solutions. 

