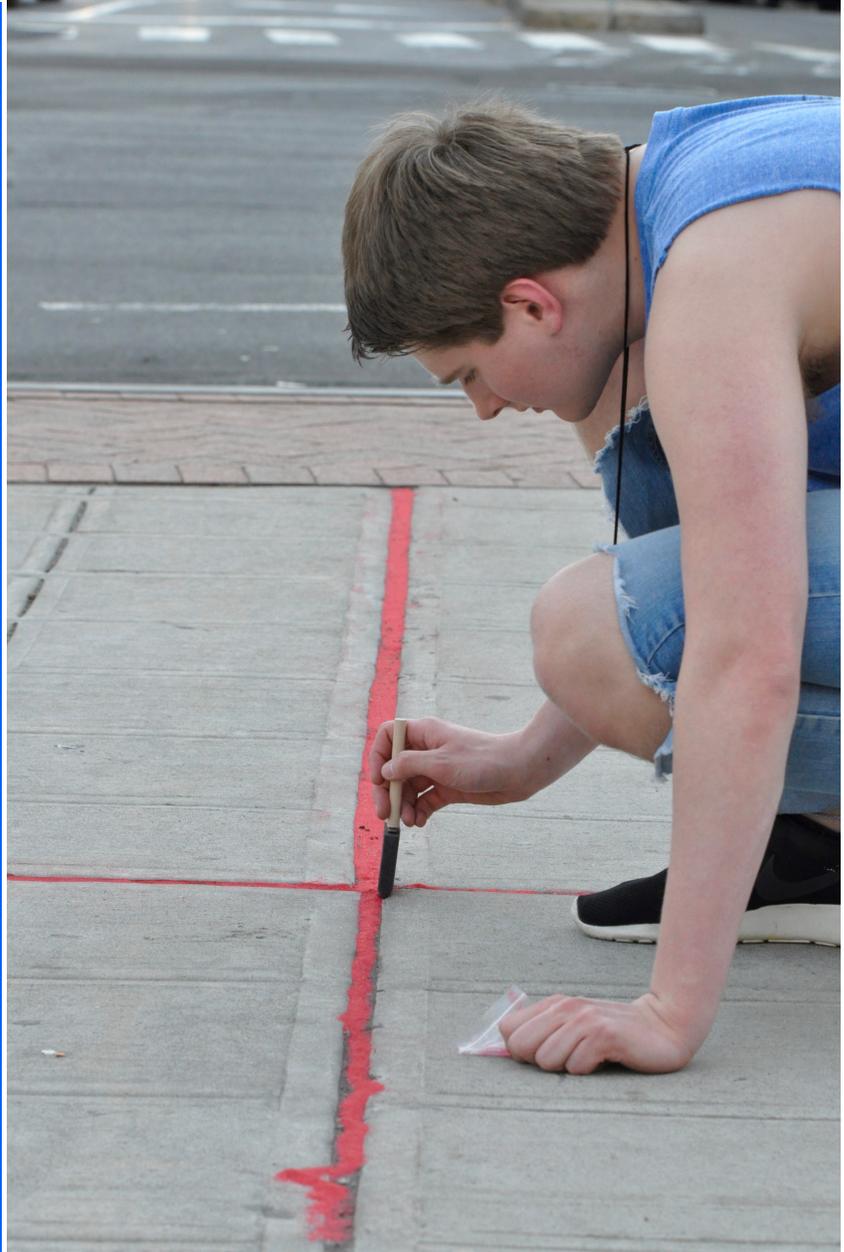


Human Trafficking Legislation

Members of the Center for Youth Leadership at Brien McMahon High in Norwalk were in Hartford on Monday to support HB 5623, *An Act Concerning Violence Against Women and Victims of Human Trafficking*. This omnibus package, which was submitted by the governor, addresses domestic violence and the parental rights of rapists. It also highlights several aspects of human trafficking that advocates have long considered important.

For example, the bill calls for those 18 years of age and under to be considered victims of trafficking rather



Red Sand Project in Stamford

than criminals involved in prostitution. It requires the owners of hotels and motels to verify that every employee has completed training on how to recognize human trafficking. The bill calls for posters to be placed in hotels, motels, truck stops and clubs. And it requires chiefs of police to submit annual reports about trafficking investigations and arrests to the Connecticut General Assembly. This is important because since 2006, which is when Connecticut enacted its trafficking in persons felony charge, there have been ten arrests and zero convictions. "During that same time, the Department of Children and Families received more than 400 referrals of individuals with high-risk indicators for human trafficking and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Connecticut only

prosecuted 20 child trafficking cases" (Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women). We will keep you posted on developments with the legislation.

Photo: Chris Lea was one of several members to lead a session of the Red Sand Project last week in Stamford. Conceived by Molly Gochman, an artist, the project calls for participants to place red sand in sidewalk cracks to honor the victims of human trafficking who have fallen between the cracks of our collective memory. What you don't see in the photo are eight other members: five placing the sand on the sidewalk and three talking to passersby about trafficking in Connecticut.

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