

## “Human Trafficking” Discussion Encourages Awareness

By Blair Cunningham, Partner, Director of SignatureGENEROSITY

Awareness and involvement are key to ending human trafficking. That seemed to be the consensus among the community leaders at SignatureGENEROSITY’s June 24 summit, “Revealing the Truth About Human Trafficking in Atlanta.”

The discussion was the second in a series of summits on issues we believe are of interest to our clients. The goal for these summits is to provide an opportunity for our clients and friends to come together, learn and be encouraged to see how their generosity can have a transformational impact on those around them and themselves. The format of the summits is a panel discussion with leaders who have a great deal of experience and perspective on these important issues.

For the “Human Trafficking” summit, we were privileged to have the following leaders participate on the panel: Sam Olens, **Attorney General of Georgia**; Mary Frances Bowley, **Wellspring Living**; Alex Trouteaud, **youthSpark**; Tajuan McCarty, **The WellHouse**; and Whitney Bexley, **Street Grace**.

We heard startling statistics and stories about how widespread human trafficking is in our city. We learned that 43% of the people who are “buyers” of young children live north of I-285 between I-75 and I-85. Attorney General Sam Olens pointed out, “This is not just an Atlanta problem.” He described cases in small towns throughout Georgia that his office is prosecuting.

We heard Tajuan McCarty’s story of how she, as a girl, was trafficked around the “circuit” of Atlanta, Birmingham, Memphis and Chattanooga. She said, “I have come to put a face to what is happening,” a face that still carries the scars of when she was beaten and left for dead on the street.



[Click here](#) to watch the video from our “Human Trafficking” panel discussion.

Mr. Olens stated, “There is a common thread between domestic violence, campus rape and human trafficking. In all three areas, if guys are not taught to respect women, that is what happens.”

Awareness of this issue is one of the most important ways to address the problem. Mary Frances Bowley shared an emotional story emphasizing the urgent need to end trafficking now because of the number of girls that we are losing. Mr. Olens gave examples of how each of us has the opportunity to use our influence, whether it be in a school PTA, neighborhood association or place of worship. That thought was echoed by other members of the panel, who encouraged each of the people attending to tell five people and for each of those people to tell five more. The Attorney General’s office has created the nationwide “Not Buying It” initiative, and information about it can be found at [www.notbuyingit.org](http://www.notbuyingit.org).

Our next summit is scheduled for early this fall. Details will be coming in the near future.

For more information about SignatureGENEROSITY, please contact Blair Cunningham at [blair.cunningham@signaturefd.com](mailto:blair.cunningham@signaturefd.com).

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