



## Donna Gavin

Lieutenant, Human Trafficking Unit  
Boston Police Department

Young women who have run away from home, are victims of sexual assault, have fallen into drug addiction, or have a strong mistrust of law enforcement can be easy prey for pimps. The Boston Police Department's Lieutenant Donna Gavin is changing that scenario.

A 30 year veteran of the Police Department, Donna has spent her career investigating cases involving violent crimes against women and children including domestic violence, sexual assault and human trafficking. Her efforts to create awareness of the dangers of human trafficking prompted her promotion to Lieutenant and head of the Human Trafficking Unit with also command of overlapping units, Crimes Against Children and Internet Crimes Against Children.

Lieutenant Gavin's rise to this position has not been easy. She has always dealt with disturbing events humans inflict on others. Nonetheless, her empathy and ability to build rapport with victims and service providers have prompted convictions and greater awareness of such crimes. She believes, and teaches others in law enforcement, at the BPD Academy and throughout the country, that successfully dealing with human trafficking is not just about arrests and prosecutions, but more importantly about making a victim feel safe and cared for.

In her efforts to achieve safety for victims, Donna builds relationships with law enforcement and non-governmental organizations. One agency she

works closely with is the EVA Center, (Education, Vision & Advocacy) that helps victims attain housing and support. Seeing this agency's limited funding for extending emergency housing and counseling, Donna reached out to the Mayor's Office for support of this program. Thanks to Donna, and a number of city and community partners, the EVA Center is expanding their facility and providing more women a way out of sexual exploitation through housing, provisions and increased counseling.

Donna was instrumental in the passing of the 2012 Act Relative to Commercial Exploitation of People, a Massachusetts law that expands reporting obligations, mandates inter-agency cooperation in providing services to victims and establishes a Victims of Human Trafficking Fund. As a result of this legislation and Donna's leadership, Boston Human Trafficking Detectives have become experts in teaching other law enforcement officers about the nature of the sex trade and building successful prosecutions while ensuring attention to victims' needs. The latter is especially important with the increasing number of young children who become victims of human trafficking.

Lieutenant Donna Gavin is nationally recognized for her work in revealing the harm and violence wrought on victims though human trafficking, her methods to stem this curse while also building trust with this young, venerable population have been successfully implemented in other cities in the country. We thank you Donna for your concern and initiative and congratulate you on your selection as a 2016 Shattuck Award recipient.