

CITY OF BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON

PROCLAMATION

- Whereas:** President Obama has declared January 2015 as Human Trafficking Prevention Month, and calls on law enforcement, businesses, national and community organizations, faith-based groups, families, and all Americans to recognize the vital role we can play in ending all forms of human exploitation and abuse and to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities; and
- Whereas:** Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery and involves the use of force, fraud or coercion to exploit a person for involuntary servitude, labor or commercial sex acts; and
- Whereas:** After drug trafficking, human trafficking is tied with the illegal arms commerce as the second most profitable and fastest growing criminal enterprise with an estimated \$30 billion-a-year global industry; and
- Whereas:** Trafficking victims can be men or women, boys or girls, U. S. citizens or foreign nationals and the victims are often said to be, “*hidden in plain sight*”; and
- Whereas:** The average age for youth being recruited and further exploited through commercial sex acts is 13-14 years old while for males it is 11-13 years of age; and
- Whereas:** Each year as many as 100,000 to 300,000 American children are at risk of being trafficked in the United States; and
- Whereas:** Traffickers may target their victims everywhere and anywhere, from social media sites to schools, shopping malls, employment recruiting ads, the victim’s friends, family and within neighborhoods; and
- Whereas:** Aggressively identifying and prosecuting the buyers and sellers of trafficking victims has shown to be an effective strategy to reduce the commission of human trafficking; and

Now, therefore, I, Claudia Balducci, Mayor of the City of Bellevue, Washington, and on behalf of its City Council, do hereby proclaim **January 2015** as:

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS MONTH

in the City of Bellevue, and reaffirm the City of Bellevue’s zero-tolerance policy for human trafficking, and encourage all residents to raise awareness about human trafficking and work collaboratively with the Bellevue Police Department, the FBI’s Children’s Exploitation Task Force and other local and federal law enforcement agencies, the King County Prosecutor’s office, and non-governmental organizations to combat this tragic epidemic.

Claudia Balducci
Mayor