

[Subscribe via RSS](#)

5K Walk Raising Money To Fight Child Predators

Written by [Chandra R. Thomas](#) on Sep 21, 2010

A new “Meetup” group in the metro area aims to uncover Atlanta’s dirty little secret. **Stop Child Trafficking Now** (SCTN) officially launched its local chapter last month via **Meetup.com**, an online hub for grassroots community and small business organizations to connect with potential members. SCTN raises money to mobilize investigative teams that gather information used to convict child predators in the United States and abroad. The organization officially kicks off its local initiative with a 5K walk fundraiser next month in Cobb County. **JJIE’s Chandra R. Thomas** spoke with **SCTN’s Executive Director Greg Wark** about the event and the organization’s overall objectives.



Greg Wark is the Executive Director for Stop Child Trafficking Now.

First off, how serious is the issue of child trafficking in metro Atlanta?

Atlanta has an international reputation for its extensive commercial sex trade. Five hundred girls get trafficked per month, serving 7,200 men. One hundred and fifty girls get raped per month and money changes hands for these rapes to occur. That’s just Atlanta alone. Atlanta is one of the biggest cities for this problem.

There are plenty of problematic community issues, why should people care about this one in particular?

A study of predators found that on average these maggots molest 400 different children in their lifetime. Some of those victims will eventually offend themselves. All of [the victims] become a burden on society due to their traumatic experiences. We’ve learned that drug dealers can make a million dollars off of just one child. They have found that it is easy to snatch up a child and their chances of getting caught aren’t as high.

What should happen to those people?

We want to put fear into the people who do this that if they do this, they will be hunted down by people who are good at [investigating.] It’s unconscionable for Americans to allow this to happen and pretend like it’s not an issue. It’s the second largest criminal enterprise on earth. You’d think we would be doing more. Somebody needs to say “enough is enough.”

What is your organization doing to help?

We are a private organization and people donate to us through direct donations and we also raise money through these annual walks. We are well known for putting the most money towards stopping child predators. We’re catching six new guys a day through our cyber division. We do all the (investigative) work and literally hand the case to prosecutors. We legally go online posing as a child in a childrens chat rooms where these predators tend to hang out. We get a conversation going and then they usually ask [the investigator] to go into a private chat. We work with a lot of special forces (law enforcement, military) guys who are experts in the area. We keep the conversation going until we can create a case that we hand over to federal prosecutors.

How far is SCTN's reach right now?

We have 40 cities and next year we intend to double that. We have a very good system of bringing people together in their cities. Atlanta is a huge city that should have an ambassador. How is the organization funded? We raise a lot of money through our walks and we also attend red carpet Hollywood events. We get a lot of support from philanthropists, business people, people with trust funds. Eighty-six cents out of every dollar raised by SCTN goes back to efforts to stop child trafficking. Last year we raised \$750,000. This year we're trying to raise a million. We really need \$10 million to be honest.



How does the walk work?

This is only two years old. This is only our second year doing a walk. This will be going on in Atlanta and the other cities at the same time. We'll have speakers, moms, dads, old ladies, people in wheelchairs – everyone. This is an event that everyone can throw their heart into. Participants sign up and determine how much money they would like to raise. Then they reach out to their family, friends and co-workers for financial support.

Why a walk?

It's an opportunity to bring attention to the issue and educate the community. It's also a great opportunity for us to develop relationships with community leaders. The walks tend to bring together law enforcement, lawmakers, police chiefs. It's also good for people in the community to see that these officials care about this issue.

The Stop Child Trafficking Now 5K Walk is slated for 8:30am – noon October 9 at Cobb County's Jim R Miller Park, North Georgia Fair Grounds, 2245 Callaway Road SW, Marietta, Ga. 30008. For more information, or to sign up visit www.sctnow.org.

Here's what some SCTN Atlanta Meetup members had to say about why they joined.

Terri

"I have been aware of the problem for some time and would like to get involved in advocacy and other volunteer efforts related to this issue for women and children."

LaToya

"I have always been hands on and an advocate for youths. I am working on my dissertation on the relationship between child sexual abuse and teenage prostitution. I look forward to meeting each one of you."

Cheryl

"I have kept up with news of trafficking online and spread the word to my friends/family. Otherwise, I

have not been very active, but I am passionate about this issue. I would like to work with others on this matter again one day.”

Sherrell

“It is bad and I want to do everything I can to help and stop this.”



No related posts.

[« Previous Post](#)