



NEWS RELEASE



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MLB AND MLBPA COMMIT SUPPORT IN EFFORT TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Initiative Will Include \$500,000 in Charitable Grants, In-Ballpark Education & Awareness Efforts, and Player-Involved Executive Council

Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association today announced they are committing \$500,000, through 2021, to nonprofits focused on efforts to stop human trafficking. This contribution represents an ongoing commitment by MLB and the MLBPA to provide joint support to causes that assist vulnerable populations, which has historically included disaster relief and recovery financial assistance.

The \$500,000 contribution will support efforts by nonprofits that primarily focus on education and programming to stop human trafficking, with extended support intended for survivors as well. *Strike Out Slavery*, the initiative led by three-time NL MVP and 10-time All-Star **Albert Pujols and his wife Deidre**, is among the grantees, and will be joined by additional leading nonprofit organizations receiving funding. *Strike Out Slavery*, started in 2017 to spread awareness about the existence and prevalence of human trafficking and help a global network of nonprofit organizations rally against it, encourages players and fans to take a stand against modern-day slavery through events at baseball stadiums across the country.

A special council, which will include Albert and Deidre Pujols, additional Major League players, experts on the issue, and MLB & MLBPA representatives, will convene to direct funding to organizations over the three-year grant period. The overall mission will be to disrupt human trafficking patterns and put an end to what is considered “modern-day slavery.”

In addition to the financial commitment, MLB and the MLBPA will continue efforts to educate fans on the warning signs of human trafficking through in-ballpark communications and during MLB jewel events.

“Human trafficking is the fastest growing criminal industry in the world with millions of people affected by it, even young children,” said Albert and Deidre Pujols. “United by our love for baseball, we can come together to create awareness in our communities about the dangers of this insidious crime. We are grateful for the leadership

of Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association in recognizing the importance of this issue and for supporting organizations fighting against human trafficking.”

Baseball Commissioner Robert D. Manfred, Jr. said: “Human trafficking is a devastating reality for far too many individuals and families around the world. Major League Baseball is proud to join players, many of whom have already demonstrated their commitment to this cause, to use our sport’s global platform to raise critical awareness of this worldwide issue.”

“Lives and families around the world are being destroyed by human trafficking,” MLBPA Executive Director Tony Clark said. “By putting the power of Players’ voices and the resources of the Major League Baseball community together to grow awareness and raise public consciousness around this important cause, I’m confident we can make a meaningful difference.”

Clayton and Ellen Kershaw said: “We just returned from three days in the Dominican Republic with International Justice Mission, an organization aimed at eradicating modern-day slavery. We witnessed, first-hand, the devastation of young lives affected by this epidemic, but also the incredible hope brought by groups fighting to set people free and repair justice systems. Together with fellow players, MLB and the MLBPA, we are committed to this movement—to fight for change until all are free!”

The United Nations defines human trafficking as: “The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.” The three most common types of human trafficking are forced labor, sex trafficking and debt bondage. In 2016, reports indicate there were more than 40 million victims of human trafficking worldwide, with 81% trapped in forced labor.

To learn about the issue of human trafficking, Strike Out Slavery’s upcoming education events at baseball stadiums and about the leading nonprofit organizations fighting against it in the United States and around the world, visit www.strikeoutslavery.com.

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