

The horrifying truth about human trafficking

According to HTCourts.org, in 2021 Nebraska had 57 different cases dealing with human trafficking which affected 107 victims and survivors. Too often, high schoolers don't find this topic to be that important. However, it is a problem all over our country, including small towns in Nebraska. The color of your skin doesn't matter, where you come from doesn't matter, and your age doesn't matter. You can be a victim of human trafficking.

The first step in protecting yourself is to have a better understanding of how human trafficking works. It often starts with groomers who will build a connection with a child or young person so they can manipulate them. There are many ways that groomers attempt this. First, they try to appear familiar. Then, they might start developing your trust by getting to know you. After that, they try to establish secrecy or slowly erode boundaries that you have set. Finally, they will start using direct intimidation.

Young kids often get into these situations because they are seeking attention, sympathy or love. The organization YouthOnline.SharedHope.org explains, "Instead of kidnapping their victims and keeping them in a dungeon, they use their victim's love and trust to manipulate them into doing whatever they want, including sexual acts, oftentimes without anyone around them knowing something is wrong."

Students must learn that just because someone gives you attention, it doesn't mean that they are a safe person to give your trust or information to. Use safe practices such as not meeting online acquaintances in real life. Don't be alone or isolated with strange or new adults. Always let your parents know where you are going and who you are with. Tell a trusted adult like a parent, teacher, or school counselor if something or someone seems off or makes you uncomfortable. Be aware of your surroundings.

One of the hot spots for human trafficking in Nebraska is Grand Island especially during the State Fair. This is because there are thousands of people in a concentrated area at the same time. Many students and families from Southern Valley attend this event each year. Additionally, throughout the school year, there are many places that Southern Valley travels to for sports and activities that draw large crowds. While you aren't likely to get trafficked every time you step out of your house and attend large events, there is always the possibility of it happening. We know that groomers are out there, so you must be aware of your surroundings; it is a key factor in your safety.

It might seem like human trafficking is a topic that high schoolers don't have to worry about in our small communities. You don't always have to feel targeted because there are many different things that you can do to make sure that you are safe. Stay alert. Know who is around you and what is going on. Stay with a group of friends or with a trusted adult or sponsor at school activities, and have an exit plan just in case something doesn't feel right or something goes wrong. Be safe so you don't become a statistic.

Alexandria Meyers-- Editorial Writing

by Celia Zetterberg

Cash or card? While customers might expect to hear that question in a restaurant, it's not something many people would expect to hear at a high school concession stand. This year Southern Valley Schools installed a card reader for both the outside football and track concessions as well as the inside concession stand. For many fans, it is more convenient to carry a card than cash while attending a sporting event.

The idea of adding a card reader was brought up by the Southern Valley administration over the summer. High School principal Josh Lanik said, "Fewer people carry cash as we now live in a world where using a card or a cash payment app is almost everywhere. We decided to go with the Square so we could incorporate inventory and stock into our process for the students to learn real-life skills."

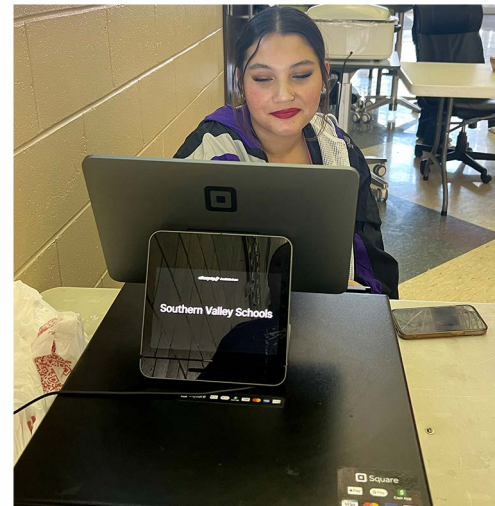
Southern Valley High School business teacher Joe York works with students to organize and run concessions at all home events. It wasn't difficult to implement the new payment option because "It's the same as when you are checking out of a grocery store or coffee shop and you can pay using debit, credit, or cash app," said York.

When it comes to transactions, the behind-the-scenes process is relatively simple. York said, "Our Square point-of-sale account is linked to a school bank account and transfers funds on a schedule to the school."

There is a cost when using the Square. The school is charged a fee which equals 2.6% of the sale when taking a payment. For this reason, the school examined and adjusted concession prices at the beginning of the year. Slightly higher concession prices have not impacted sales. York said, "So far this school year, sales have increased by 25%. It is amazing how many people rely on their cards, especially the cash app cards."

For students working in concessions and using the Square, there was a quick training session that focused on finding the correct screens to enter the items being purchased. The overall system is a quick, easy, and effective way to take care of the finances of the concession stand. York said, "A big benefit is the people in the concessions stand that are making and delivering food do not have to deal with money."

As the winter sports season gets started, be sure to check out the great food options offered at the Southern Valley concession stand. Bring your card; cash is not required.



Cheerleader Brooklyn Santifer runs the register with the card reader at the home wrestling tournament on December 8, 2023.

No cash? No problem SV concessions now accepts cards

Joe's Snack Shack

Menu

Something hot.
Something tasty.

- Hot dogs.....
- Nachos.....
- Pretzles.....
- Candy.....

Snickers, Twix, Skittles, M&Ms

- Pizza.....
- Popcorn.....
- Pop.....
- Water.....

Now accepting
cards!!

Located outside of the
Southern Valley gym.

Open 30 minutes before games
until the 4th quarter.



Square

